

OSCE States meet to discuss anti-trafficking prevention measures amid humanitarian crisis in Ukraine

VIENNA, 15 March 2022 – The OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey today called together the anti-trafficking authorities from 17 OSCE participating States, including the ones most affected by the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The meeting focused on the risks of human trafficking amid the current crisis and measures being taken to address vulnerabilities of people on the move and to prevent trafficking.

Opening the meeting, Richey briefed national authorities about his visit to the Polish-Ukrainian border on 13 and 14 March, where he assessed the robust efforts carried out by Polish authorities to accommodate and support people entering the country.

Government representatives from Austria, France, Germany, Romania and Slovakia also presented their national measures to respond to the crisis. These include monitoring of online searches (a spike was noted in searches for Ukrainian women for sex and marriage), and distributing leaflets translated into Ukrainian to inform people on the move of their rights and options. Representatives from the EU Commission presented the temporary protection mechanism quickly established by the EU, which includes a temporary residence permit and access to the job market.

Over three million people have left Ukraine in the past weeks, crossing its Western borders into other European countries. These people, mostly women and children, are particularly vulnerable and face significant risks of human trafficking during their journey or upon arrival at a destination country. To respond to these risks and to provide governments with concrete guidance on how to address vulnerabilities and reduce risks of trafficking, the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings issued a set of policy recommendations for countries.

“The way we are going to prevent the current humanitarian crisis from turning into a human trafficking crisis is by investing in prevention and by protecting vulnerable people” said Richey.

The complete set of recommendations is available on the OSCE website: www.osce.org/cthb/513784

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <https://www.osce.org/cthb/514009>