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## **Regional Seminar on “Moving Forward in Addressing Migration- related Crimes in South-Eastern Europe”**

19-20 September, 2017

*Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

### **KEY FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES**

## **Introduction**

Over the past few years, the flow of migrants, originating especially from the Middle East and North Africa, has been a challenge for European States, in particular for Southern European countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Considering the gravity and the permanence of the situation, the responsibility placed on countries of origin, transit and destination is immense and entails a substantially pressing obligation to react not only to human rights violations and security challenges, but also to criminal organizations making large profits from migrants' and refugees' vulnerable situation.

The seminar aimed at strengthening co-operation between criminal justice, law enforcement and relevant public and private actors, in order to address irregular migration-related crimes, such as migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, in South-Eastern Europe. A particular focus laid on prevention, prosecution, international and cross-border co-operation and assistance to victims and migrants. The objective was to identify gaps, challenges and good practices, as well as to strengthen information sharing networks between countries of origin, transit and destination using a multidisciplinary approach, paying also attention to the issue of vulnerability of migrants.

The seminar was jointly organized by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department's Strategic Police Matter Unit (TNTD/SPMU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in co-operation with the OSCE's Office of the Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB), the Office of the Co-ordinator of the Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the presentations and discussion at the Seminar, the following recommendations were compiled:

1. Strengthening the co-operation and co-ordination between law enforcement representatives of the countries affected by migration will enhance the effectiveness of criminal investigation as well as of the combat against migration-related crimes;

Creating a database as part of a homogeneous software package, in which the work-flow management, information from communication surveillance and IT forensics are integrated; such a database should be universal in covering all types of organized crime within the scope of a holistic approach for combating crime.

2. Increasing the efficiency of information exchange on victims of trafficking between countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as at the national level, can improve victim protection.

3. Increasing information exchange on trends, patterns and modus operandi between all competent authorities, and in particular with countries of origin, can assist in identifying means and patterns and better addressing migration-related crimes along the route.
4. Establishing joint operational offices at the national level in order to facilitate joint investigation teams (e.g. Joint Operational Office in Vienna, Austria). Joint operational offices serve as regional operational platforms for international investigations into migration-related crimes.
5. Planning appropriate training courses to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement and the judiciary, including on special investigative techniques, to recognize and investigate organized crime groups' activities based on their respective modus operandi and to collect data and intelligence.
6. Strengthening the criminal justice response to human trafficking in mixed migration flows (migrants and refugees) is required. Whether individuals are asylum seekers, smuggled persons, or unaccompanied minors, they have particular needs and vulnerabilities and require an adequate criminal justice response to their situations.
7. Strengthening the capabilities and capacities of law enforcement agencies in financial investigation and ensuring that financial investigations are always part of the general investigations, since the "route of the money" represents an important element for painting a full picture of all criminal aspects and actors.
8. Identifying ways of addressing the challenges of informal transfer systems (e.g. Hawala), with capacity building ensured across the board. If the direct flow of money is not traceable, capacities to investigate through alternative approaches need to be fostered (e.g. credit card data, online payment, mobile phones, car rentals, data from gas stations, etc.).
9. Increasing governments' and civil society's capacities to identify and assist migrants in vulnerable situations. This has to go beyond the criminal justice response and needs to be based on individual vulnerability assessments. Age and gender-sensitive protection services need to be made accessible to all migrants in vulnerable situations in countries of origin, transit and destination. Further efforts to work more closely with the private sector could also support greater efficiency of the response to migration-related crimes.