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Trafficking of migrant workers for forced labour

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2011 (2013)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Recommendation 2011 (2013) of the Parliamentary Assembly on “Trafficking of migrant workers for forced labour” which it has transmitted to a number of intergovernmental committees or bodies.²

2. Trafficking in human beings is a serious human rights violation which strikes at the fundamental values which the Council of Europe promotes. Therefore, the fight against trafficking is a priority for the Organisation and for member States. In this context, irregular migrants and migrant workers are a particularly vulnerable group and therefore deserve specific attention from States within the framework of their action against trafficking.

3. The Committee of Ministers recognises the importance of having comprehensive and coherent data on the problem, including as regards trafficking for forced labour purposes, firstly, in order to identify the victims so that they can be helped and, secondly, in order to detect and prosecute the traffickers and end-users. It informs the Assembly that the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) is mindful of the problem of obtaining statistical data. It calls on the States Parties to introduce systems for obtaining such data in order to gauge properly the level of trafficking and fine-tune policies and measures to combat it in all its forms.

4. With regard to the Assembly’s proposal to carry out training programmes for those active in dealing with trafficking issues and to involve GRETA in this process, the Committee of Ministers wishes to point out that GRETA does not have an operational mandate to conduct training programmes. It is, however, an authoritative source of information on different aspects of the fight against human trafficking, including for identifying gaps, needs and good practices in the States monitored. In this context, GRETA examines whether appropriate training is provided to all officials who are likely to be in contact with victims or who deal with anti-trafficking intelligence.

5. The Committee of Ministers notes the comprehensive scope of the European Union Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, and the importance that it attaches to avoiding unnecessary duplication of monitoring operations. It shares this approach and notes that GRETA is currently the only independent mechanism whose mandate is to monitor the implementation of international legally binding obligations against trafficking in human beings. It informs the Assembly that GRETA is committed to pursuing co-operation with the European Union within the framework of its mandate.

6. The Committee of Ministers is aware that corruption plays a role in facilitating and sustaining human trafficking. Like the Assembly, it is anxious to ensure that allegations of corrupt dealings by public officials are investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially in order to combat trafficking more effectively. These issues are covered by the work of the Enlarged Agreement on the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and

1. Adopted at the 1176th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (10 July 2013).

2. The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Enlarged Agreement on the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).



GRETA, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.³ The Committee of Ministers notes that the two bodies are considering the possibility of working together more closely.

7. The Committee of Ministers pays great attention to promoting and monitoring compliance with the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. It has acknowledged the relevance of GRETA's work in this regard and has provided it with the necessary funding and staff. Without prejudice to future budgetary decisions, the Committee of Ministers reiterates its support for the activities to combat trafficking in human beings, considering the challenges that lie ahead, having regard to the growing number of Parties to the Convention.

3. The Convention stipulates under Article 24 that domestic law must incorporate as an aggravating circumstance of the offence of human trafficking the involvement of public officials in the performance of their duties. In addition, Article 21 of the Convention states that aiding and abetting the commission of the offence of trafficking, including, for example, in relation to travel or identity documents, must be criminalised.