

**Statement by ITALY on**  
**Working Group on Trafficking in Persons**  
*Vienna, 2 and 3 October 2023*  
**Item 3 of the provisional agenda**  
**National issues and priorities concerning child**  
**trafficking**

M. Chair, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

On 29 September 2023, last Friday, the Italian Government in cooperation with UNODC hosted a Ministerial Conference in Palermo, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), to renew the shared commitment to counter organized crime.

32 delegations, led by 16 Ministers and 10 vice Ministers, gathered in Palermo and focused in particular on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in the broader Mediterranean Region.

On that occasion, and with no surprise, delegations strongly stressed the importance of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air as well as the importance of their full and effective implementations and of further ratifications and accessions. Great attention was also devoted to the importance of enhancing international cooperation efforts in order to fully implement the Palermo convention and the two above-mentioned Protocols.

M. Chair, I wanted to mention today both the Protocols because, although trafficking in persons is a different crime from smuggling of migrants, empirical data show that the former often finds fertile ground in the results of the latter. And this is all the more true, from what we can see in criminal proceedings, with reference to trafficking in children, where poverty, marginalised conditions, school drop-out and lack of education, uprooting from one's family environment are factors of greater exposure to the risk of exploitation. And here is where smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons meet, producing new victims, because children victim of migrant smugglers, including asylum-seeking children, face an increased risk of becoming missing persons and becoming more vulnerable to trafficking.

Given the seriousness, complexity and multifactorial dimension of this criminal phenomenon, Italy has long taken a comprehensive approach to combatting trafficking in human beings, starting from prevention, through protection of victims, to prosecution and conviction of traffickers. On 19 October 2022, the Italian Government adopted the National Action Plan against trafficking and serious exploitation of human beings covering the period 2022-2025, and defining multiannual strategies and actions aimed at awareness-raising, prevention, emergence and social integration of victims.

Based on our national experience, I would therefore like to propose two recommendations for considerations of the room:

1) (Bearing in mind that trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants are different crimes that require distinct legal, operational and policy response) States Parties should take into account the increased risk for children victim of migrant smugglers of becoming also victims of trafficking and therefore strengthen their anti-trafficking prevention efforts and activities when addressing migrants smuggling cases.

2) States parties should strengthen international cooperation efforts including, as appropriate and with the support of technical assistance activities, by appointing liaison magistrates and liaison officers and expanding the use of joint investigations teams and possibly joint investigations bodies, considering - for trafficking in persons cases - additional arrangements in order to ensure that victims are properly treated and protected.

Thank you M. Chair