



## Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank you for inviting the Council of the Baltic Sea States to this Coordination Group. I certainly hope that the CBSS expertise and work will contribute to ICAT efforts to eradicate trafficking in human beings – globally, regionally, and locally.

The CBSS leads activities in our region in the areas of trafficking in human beings and protection of children against various crimes and abuses of their rights. The Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF THB) and the Expert Group on Children at Risk, both administered by the CBSS Secretariat, are macro-regional networks dealing with these forms of criminality, which pose the most shameful threat to human rights.

Being a regional organisation in this global network and having a political level collaboration among the Members, we are uniquely placed to provide detailed regional specificity and practical implementation of tools and guidelines developed by the ICAT.

I wish to highlight a few examples of the CBSS work, which we consider as valuable contribution to ICAT work, and we pledge to develop them further:

- We have established the Transnational Referral Mechanism (TRM) of the Baltic Sea Region, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.
- We developed guidelines and trained consular-diplomatic personnel of our member-states, helping them to faster and more effectively identify and counter cases of human trafficking.
- A current priority of the CBSS is to raise awareness on the issue of human trafficking in the media and establish cooperation with journalists. The CBSS is implementing activities focusing on the role of media and human trafficking ranging from development of a human trafficking glossary and guidelines for journalists to workshops and panel discussions for students and teachers of journalism.
- We have also published in local languages “Guidelines for Municipalities: Stepping Up Local Action against Human Trafficking“ and we provided training for



local authorities of the region – which should help them better understand and act against human trafficking on local levels.

- Most recently we also focus on the issue of forced labour, which is one of important factors related to the human trafficking problem.
- Our Children at Risk Unit activities specifically focus on building system of care for child victims or witnesses of violence – based on victims' point of view – which results on building Barnahus concept or integrated assistance for child-victims well beyond Baltic Sea region.

Our member-states and the EU declare full support to further develop our work in this area. This year we adopted a CBSS TF–THB Strategic Plan for 2021–2025, which allows for even deeper involvement of our organisation in work on combating trafficking of human beings and reflects many priorities of ICAT.

To conclude, I would like to thank the ICAT for creating the opportunity to exchange knowledge and information. We believe that synergies can be created by the launching of new co-operations within this Group. Common challenges can turn into common priorities – when we address them together. The CBSS is certainly committed to collaborate on these common priorities with all ICAT members.

Thank you for your attention!

CBSS Director General Grzegorz Poznański

collaboration

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