**CHILDREN’S RIGHT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN GREECE**

General provisions of the Greek State that benefit underage victims of trafficking and minors vulnerable to human trafficking

- In our country approximately one third of victims of human trafficking are minors up to 18 years old, the vast majority of whom are girls.

- Stricter criminal penalties for perpetrators are provided for by our new Penal Code (entered into force on July 1st, 2019) when the crime of human trafficking refers to children. Moreover the new Penal Code stipulates that the crime of trafficking in children is prosecuted even when committed without the means stated in paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 323A (violence, deception etc.).

- The National Referral Mechanism, Greece's formal identification and referral system for victims and presumed victims of trafficking, which is coordinated by the Office of the National Rapporteur and the implementation partner of which is the National Centre for Social Solidarity, has established Standard Operational Procedures for underage victims.

- The new National Action Plan for Preventing and Fighting against Human Trafficking, Protecting and Supporting the Victims and Prosecuting the Perpetrators (2019-2023) includes several actions to enhance the combating of child trafficking and the protection of underage victims.

- In the case of children victims of human trafficking, minors in need for protection are accommodated either in typical child protection shelters or in shelters provided by the National Centre for Social Solidarity and occasionally by specialized NGOs, the number of which is meant to increase according to our new Action Plan.

- Taking into account the increased vulnerability of children lacking parental care and those who are part of mixed migration flows, the recent Guardianship Law 4540/2018 provides that unaccompanied minors (UAMs) may benefit from the appointment of professional Guardians and the possibility of foster care. Moreover, Safe Areas inside the Reception and Identification Centres (Hotspots) and Safe Zones (inside the structures in mainland) host UAMs to mitigate the risks of their falling prey to human traffickers. The Asylum Services have launched a leaflet for unaccompanied minors, informing them of their rights and protection from risks.

- The Office of the National Rapporteur has worked with competent partners to dedicate a substantial part of its policy making interventions to promote awareness raising campaigns on human rights in schools. Our overriding objective is to reduce ‘demand’ for exploitation and sensitize public opinion to address human rights violations that are premised on an alarming contempt towards the basic values of human dignity, nature and integrity. Within this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs will collaborate with the Council of Europe to jointly organize a series of projects that will bring together policy-makers, academics, educators, grass-root organizations, and, of course, students and schools, so that, among other things, human rights and reproductive health education will be included at all levels of education in Greece.