



Amsterdam, 30 April 2016

To: Civil Society Organisations in: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Re: Call for civil society input: Election of new members of GRETA

Dear Colleagues,

Your country has signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Since 2009, member states' efforts for the implementation of the obligations of the convention have been reviewed by the independent group of experts created for that purpose - known as GRETA (the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.¹)

GRETA is an independent monitoring body composed of experts from various backgrounds, which are selected for their expertise in action against human trafficking. The current GRETA members include representatives from law enforcement, the judiciary, medical field, academia, providers of social assistance and civil society representatives. GRETA reviews the implementation of the Convention by all states which have become parties to it. For each state it issues a report containing conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving the state's implementation of the treaty.

Election of new members of GRETA

This year, in November 2016, the elections of new members of GRETA are foreseen, as recently also announced at the website of the Council of Europe.² The terms of office of 13 of the 15 current members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) will expire on 31 December 2016.

¹ At this moment GRETA has 15 members who are nationals of the (states) parties to the Convention. The *Committee of the Parties* is composed of representatives of all states that have ratified the Convention and represents the other - more political - pillar in the monitoring mechanism established under the Convention. For more information on GRETA, the Convention and its monitoring mechanism see: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/default_en.asp.

² See http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/News/Forthc_elect_GRETA_members_2016_item_en.asp

Only 8 of the current members can apply for a second term, but the remaining five can no longer be re-elected³. The elections to fill the vacant seats will be held at the 19th meeting of the Committee of the Parties, on **4 November 2016** in Strasbourg, France.

All countries that have signed and ratified the convention (except for the Netherlands and Austria, who have members in GRETA, whose terms end in 2018) have the right to nominate candidates for GRETA membership.⁴

Now is the time for you, civil society organisations to advocate with your governments for the best candidates for GRETA that have expertise in (combating) trafficking in human beings from a solid human rights approach.

According to the rules on the election procedures of GRETA members⁵, the government of your country has been invited to submit, by **4 September 2016**, the names of up to three experts known for their *recognised competence in the fields of human rights, assistance and protection of victims and action against trafficking in human beings* or having *professional experience* in the areas covered by the Convention. The composition of GRETA should reflect a gender and geographical balance, should have a multidisciplinary expertise and the main legal systems should be represented.

GRETA members serve in their *individual capacity* and have to be *independent* and *impartial* and be available to service GRETA effectively. It is the responsibility of each Party (State) to ensure that the national selection procedure leading to the nomination of candidates for GRETA is *in accordance with published national guidelines* or otherwise *transparent* and designed to lead to the nomination of the *most qualified candidates*.

Importance of the Convention and of GRETA

La Strada International, GAATW and Anti-Slavery International consider that the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is an important human rights treaty that enables states to effectively fight trafficking in human beings. It sets out a series of minimum measures that states are obliged to take with a view to ensuring the protection of the human rights of trafficked persons, the prevention of trafficking and the prosecution of those responsible for it. The binding assistance and protection measures include a recovery and reflection period as well as a range of assistance and protection measures for persons reasonably believed to have been trafficked that are not conditional on a person's agreement to cooperate in any law enforcement efforts against the traffickers, and in some circumstances, a renewable residence permits to trafficked persons.

The strengths of the treaty's provisions are reinforced by the commitment of the parties to the treaty have to be monitored by GRETA. GRETA's monitoring mechanism and standards have proven to be a very unique, important and influential instrument in the protection of the rights of trafficked persons. The reports from the first evaluation round show that GRETA is a strong promoter and rapporteur of the human rights based approach to trafficking in human beings.

³ GRETA members leaving in 2016, as their second mandate finishes on 31/12/2016 are: Nicolas Le Coz (French - President of GRETA), ; Gulnara Shahinian (Armenian); Vessela Banova (Bulgarian); Alexandra Malangone (Slovak); Leonor Ladrón de Guevara y Guerrero (Spanish). GRETA members that can stand for a second term and are re-electable in 2016, as only their first mandate finished on 31/12/2016 are Siobhán Mullally (Irish); Alina Braşoveanu (Moldovan); Olafs Bruvers (Latvian); Frédéric Kurz (Belgian); Kateryna Levchenko (Ukrainian); Ryszard Piotrowicz (British); Mihai Şerban (Romanian) and Rita Theodorou Superman (Cypriot). GRETA members staying after 2016, as their second mandate finishes only on 31/12/2018, are Jan van Dijk (Dutch) and Helmut Sax (Austrian).

⁴ Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

⁵ See [Resolution CM/Res\(2013\)28 on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(GRETA\)](#), as adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 24 October 2013.

NGO involvement in the national procedures

In the past we have approached many civil society organisations working in the field of trafficking in human beings in those countries that were to be evaluated by GRETA. We encouraged you to cooperate with GRETA and many of you have done so. Given the independence, experience and direct work with trafficked persons, NGOs are in a unique position to provide key information on the authorities' implementation of the Convention, and the impact of anti-trafficking measures on the rights of trafficked persons.

The current GRETA members have indicated that the involvement of civil society is very much appreciated and the country reports show that input by NGOs has been included in the reports and the recommendations.

We therefore believe it is also important that you get involved in the national procedures in your country to make sure that best possible experts are elected to GRETA.

As deadline for your government to submit national candidates is already on 4 September 2016.

There are several ways you can get engaged in the national selection procedure in your country:

- Find out who is responsible in your country for the national selection process. You might want to point out to your government the emphasis the Committee of Ministers have put on transparency of the national election procedure, which can be achieved by a multidisciplinary working group. States are required to ensure that their national selection procedure leading to the nomination of candidates for GRETA is either in accordance with published national guidelines or is otherwise transparent and designed to lead to the nomination of the most qualified candidates⁶.
- In several countries, the National Working Group or the Task Force on trafficking in human beings is a multi-disciplinary group in which NGOs are represented. If your organisation is represented in a national working group or task force, try to have other civil society organisations invited in the national selection procedures, or make sure that you can speak for/represent more NGOs in your country. If your organisation is not represented, contact the NGO that is and discuss with them their possibilities and responsibility to represent the voice of civil society in the national working group.
- Prior to the working group meeting you can organise a consultation with other civil society organisations to discuss the best candidates for your country. The influence of civil society to the national selection process is much stronger if you are united and recommend the same candidate(s).
- Identify three experts in the field of trafficking in your country that qualify for GRETA and investigate whether they may be interested in applying. If they are, encourage them to do so and set up an advocacy plan for your candidates. For countries that currently have members in GRETA that can be re-elected find out if they are considering applying again and have the support of your government.
- As GRETA should be multi-disciplinary, identify qualified persons with a background in civil society, social work, academia, criminal justice system or international organisations. It can be a strategic decision to support a very good candidate from outside civil society.
- It will be good to keep track of who is applying for GRETA and discuss whether your group could support this candidate or not.

⁶ See [Electronic version of the model curriculum vitae set out in the Annex to Resolution \(2013\)28](#)

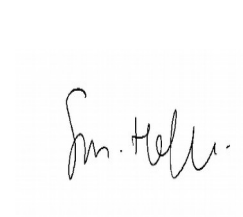
We understand that it might be difficult to organise structured meetings with all stakeholders, but you can set up consultations through other channels such as Skype and email. We encourage you to cooperate with other civil society organisations and stakeholders on this.

Feedback

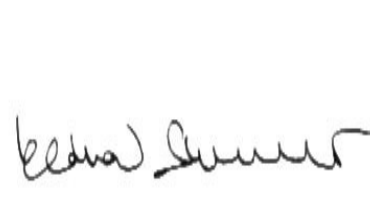
Once the names of the candidates are submitted to the Committee of Ministers, we would be interested to receive your feedback on the candidates from your country. This would enable us to explore the possibilities for joint advocacy for the best group of expert for GRETA. We would also be happy if you can update us on the process in your countries and share information before.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together. If you have any clarifying questions, please get in touch with either of us.

Best regards,



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La Strada International



Klara Skrivankova
Programme & Advocacy Coordinator
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Evelyn Probst
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