

BRUSSELS, September 25, 2013 /PRNewswire/ --

Ahead of the Vilnius Summit in November where member states of the European Neighborhood Policy such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova will be looking to sign association agreements, yesterday's seminar hosted by Nikki Sinclair MEP and member of the Committee for Women's Rights and Gender Equality as well as Human Rights Without Frontiers, highlighted the pressing issue of human rights including human trafficking which is ever so present in the EU and Europe.

Sinclair argued that the third largest organized crime after arms and drugs still remains to be human enslavement and trafficking.

Introducing the work of HRWF, Policy Advisor Alfiaz Vaiya focused on Ukraine, urging EU leaders to address the concerns regarding the country's democracy and rule of law and therefore suggesting "the association agreements should not be ratified until these reforms are examined".

He also added that "it is the EU's responsibility to fight discrimination of any basis and need to reassess prior to expanding on strategic partners". Vaiya further discussed the deteriorating press freedom in Ukraine and made reference to the allegations of physical and psychological mistreatment by police claiming that "Ukraine needs to uphold fundamental human rights as put forward by EU legislation".

James Wilson, Director of EUUBC made reference to a recent report by La Strada, an international NGO network addressing the trafficking of persons in Europe, which points out that despite having the worst record in the world for human trafficking, Moldova is being hailed as the success story for the ENP and is expected to sign the association agreement with the EU. Despite working for a business organization Wilson argued that "commercial interest of the EU should not subdue essential human rights, but must take greater action to stamp out such issues".

Former UK MP and Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, Phil Woolas outlined the EU's "complete inadequate system of services to provide help to victims of human trafficking". Woolas added that, "the EU has failed to breaking the chains set up by organized criminals and there needs to re-prioritize to address these problems and lack of proper policy, especially considering that the majority of the 21 million people currently forced into labor are in Europe".

Member of the Ukrainian Parliament, Aleksander Prisyazhnyuk drew attention to the fact that there is a lack of consensus in Ukrainian government on this issue, where thousands of persons are having their basic rights violated. Prisyazhnyuk urged that "all voices in Ukraine should be heard in regards to EU integration, where only 1% of the population has trust in the country's justice system", in reference to lack of court verdicts being implemented in regards to human rights.

"Ukraine is ready to adopt anything positive for the country and fight for human rights, but the issue of LGBT is largest yet. We need to enforce guarantees in defending human rights including law enforcement".

Other speakers of the seminar included Justina Vitkauskaite Bernard MEP, and Christian Meulders head of the Liege Office, Surya and Gregoriy Petrenco Moldovan MP.

SOURCE EU- Ukraine Business Council