

Human trafficking is one of the [EMPACT](#) priorities, Europol's priority crime areas, under the 2018–2021 EU Policy Cycle.

Human trafficking is a serious crime that abuses people's fundamental rights and dignity. It involves the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people for the sole purpose of economic gain.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It is often transnational in character and its victims are of both genders and all ages.

Trafficking can take various forms and may involve:

- › sexual exploitation, including prostitution;
- › forced labour or services;
- › slavery, servitude and related practices;
- › the removal of vital organs.

Trafficking can also take the form of exploitation for the purpose of forced criminality, such as pickpocketing, shoplifting and drug trafficking.

EXTENT

Human exploitation can be hidden behind other criminal offences, such as prostitution, irregular migration, property crime or even labour disputes. Victims are often exploited in multiple ways, or may be involved in other illicit activities, thus resulting in cases of human trafficking that are not investigated or recorded as such. Moreover, differences in national legal definitions of human trafficking hinder the comparison and assessment of common trends and patterns across the EU.

In the past decade, law enforcement authorities in the EU have witnessed a considerable increase in intra-EU trafficking. In 2014, for example, the majority of human trafficking victims (71 %) registered in Europol's database were EU citizens.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS NOT PEOPLE SMUGGLING

Although patterns of human trafficking are similar to those seen in people smuggling, they are different legally, a broad distinction can be made between the two.

In general, the individuals who pay a smuggler in order to gain illegal entry to a country do so voluntarily whereas the victims of human trafficking are often duped or forced into entering another country. In addition, people smuggling does not necessarily involve exploitation for economic purposes.

A EUROPOL PRIORITY

Human trafficking is a major problem in the EU and a priority for Europol and law enforcement agencies in EU Member States. Indeed, it is one of the [EMPACT](#) priorities, Europol's priority crime areas, under the 2018–2021 EU Policy Cycle.

In addition, the [EU Strategy on eradicating human trafficking 2012-2016](#) identifies five key ways to do this:

- › identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking;
- › step up the prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- › pursue the prosecution of traffickers more robustly;
- › enhance coordination and cooperation among key actors, including at the level of policy;
- › increasing knowledge of, and producing effective responses to, all forms of human trafficking.

Europol's strategic and operational support focuses on organised criminal gangs engaged in human trafficking in at least two EU Member States.

In 2007, Europol launched an operationally focussed project addressing human trafficking. Twenty-five countries are now participating.

In 2014, law enforcement in these countries made 3 820 contributions to Europol's dedicated team on human trafficking, an increase of 65 % on the previous year.

NUMBER OF ITEMS FOUND: 161

SEARCH



TYPE



TARGET GROUP

Q SEARCH

⊗ CLEAR ALL

COVID-19



STAYING SAFE DURING COVID-19: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

11
Mar
2020

FAKE LOVE: DEVIOS MEN LURING YOUNG WOMEN INTO PROSTITUTION BUSTED IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

20
Nov
2019

NINE ARRESTED AND THREE DETAINED IN ROMANIA AND THE UK IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION NETWORK BUST

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

13
Nov
2019

15 ARRESTED IN A HIT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING GANG IN LITHUANIA AND SPAIN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

18
Oct
2019

476 POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IDENTIFIED DURING THE LARGE-SCALE JOINT ACTION DAYS 2019

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

15
Oct
2019

302 POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IDENTIFIED IN PAN-EUROPEAN ACTION

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

09
Oct
2019

DIGITAL SMUGGLING AND LABOUR EXPLOITATION, LATEST TRENDS REPORTED IN EPMT 400

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

26
Sep
2019

66 SUSPECTED OF ARRANGING ILLEGAL ADOPTIONS AND SURROGACIES, AND HUMAN EGG TRAFFICKING IN GREECE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

23
Sep
2019

BAD HARVEST FOR BULGARIAN-FRENCH NETWORK EXPLOITING VINEYARD WORKERS

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

09
Aug
2019

70 ARRESTS IN PAN-EUROPEAN ACTION AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

02
Jul
2019

NEW TASK FORCE AT EUROPOL TO TARGET THE MOST DANGEROUS CRIMINAL GROUPS INVOLVED IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

07
Jun
2019

EUROPOL AND FRONTEX SIGN NEW JOINT ACTION PLAN



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