

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

15
Jun
2018



CROSS-BORDER OPERATION SEES 57 ARRESTED FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

25
May
2018



POLY-CRIMINAL GROUP INVOLVED IN MONEY LAUNDERING, HOME BURGLARIES AND DRUG TRAFFICKING BUSTED

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

10
Apr
2018



THOUSANDS OF EUROS FOR A LIFE-THREATENING JOURNEY TO THE EU: MIGRANT SMUGGLERS ARRESTED IN AUSTRIA AND ROMANIA

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

22
Mar
2018



300 MIGRANTS SMUGGLED A MONTH: SLOVENIA AND KOSOVO* APPREHEND MAJOR ORGANISED CRIME GROUP IN THE BALKANS

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

22
Mar
2018



TRAFFICKED BY VODOO THREATS: ONE OF THE LARGEST OPERATIONS IN EUROPE RESCUES 39 NIGERIAN WOMEN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

21
Feb
2018





12 ARRESTED AND 4 WOMEN SAFEGUARDED IN SPAIN AND THE UK IN OPERATION AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



08 Feb 2019

HIGH-PROFILE INVESTIGATION: FUGITIVE MEMBER OF MIGRANT SMUGGLING NETWORK WANTED IN HUNGARY ARRESTED BY GUARDIA CIVIL IN TENERIFE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



01 Feb 2018

EUROPOL, THOMSON REUTERS AND THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM LAUNCH COALITION TO FIGHT FINANCIAL CRIME AND MODERN SLAVERY

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



01 Feb 2018

11 ARRESTS AND 16 VICTIMS SAFEGUARDED IN OPERATION AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



23 Jan 2018

EUROPOL REVIEW 2016 - 2017

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT



21 Dec 2017

BIG HIT AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: CRIMINAL GROUP DISMANTLED IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



15 Dec 2017

11 ARRESTS AND 9 VICTIMS SAFEGUARDED IN OPERATION AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

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◀ PREVIOUS

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LAST ▶

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