

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



LARGE-SCALE JOINT ACTION DAY (LS-JAD)

OPERATION



JOINT ACTION DAY AEOLOS

OPERATION



CYBER-PATROLLING WEEK

OPERATION

01
Dec
2017



OPERATION DRAGON DELIVERS MAJOR BLOW TO ORGANISED CRIME

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

01
Dec
2017



JOINT ACTION DAYS 2017

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT

26
Oct
2017



MAJOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATION DISMANTLES MIGRANT SMUGGLING NETWORK

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

20
Oct
2017

EU-WIDE OPERATIONS IDENTIFY POTENTIAL VICTIMS AND SUSPECTS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

24
Jul
2017

107 SUSPECTS DETAINED AND OVER 900 POTENTIAL VICTIMS IDENTIFIED IN PAN-EUROPEAN HIT AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

04
Jul
2017

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RING TAKEN DOWN BY SPANISH AND BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

22
Jun
2017

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RING DISMANTLED BY ROMANIA AND THE UK WITH EUROPOL SUPPORT

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

20
Jun
2017



WORLDWIDE OPERATION DRAGON SEES 52 COUNTRIES TEAMING UP TO THWART ORGANISED CRIME

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

19
Jun
2017

EUROPOL COORDINATES EUROPE-WIDE ACTION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Source URL: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/trafficking-in-human-beings?page=4>