

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

28
Nov
2016

EUROPOL TEAMS UP WITH SPANISH AUTHORITIES TO BRING DOWN HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

17
Nov
2016

CRIME GANG ACCUSED OF TRAFFICKING OVER 150 WOMEN INTO PROSTITUTION DISMANTLED BY AUSTRIA

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

08
Nov
2016

EUROPOL SUPPORTS THE SPANISH GUARDIA CIVIL IN DISMANTLING A HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK INVOLVED IN FORCED LABOUR EXPLOITATION

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

08
Nov
2016

EUROPOL AND ASEANAPOL AGREE UPON ENHANCED COOPERATION

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

07
Nov
2016

EXPERT MEETING ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



EUROPOL IN BRIEF (ANNUAL REVIEW)

20
Oct
2016



EUROPOL COORDINATES EU-WIDE HIT ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

19
Oct
2016



GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST AIRLINE FRAUDSTERS: 193 DETAINED

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

19
Oct
2016



GLOBAL OPERATION CICONIA ALBA DELIVERS MAJOR BLOW TO ORGANISED CRIME

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30
Sep
2016



SCOTLAND'S CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE VISITS EUROPOL

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23
Sep
2016



BELGIUM, ROMANIA AND EUROPOL TARGET INTERNATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING GANG

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19
Sep
2016



U.S. DIPLOMATIC SECURITY SERVICE JOINS EUROPOL TO FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

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