

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

New priority actions

Trafficking in human beings remains a highly profitable form of serious and organised crime, explicitly prohibited in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Behind each victim lie devastating experiences and suffering that must be appropriately acknowledged and addressed, and more importantly, prevented. The EU has put in place a robust legal framework and set out a comprehensive strategy for EU actions to eradicate trafficking in human beings. However, in light of recent migratory, economic and security challenges, the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings continues to evolve. To step up the EU's response, the Commission has outlined a set of targeted actions in three priority areas: (i) disrupting the traffickers' business model and untangling the trafficking chain, (ii) providing better access to and realising the rights for victims and (iii) intensifying a coordinated and consolidated response, both within and outside the EU

Clearly, there are substantially more victims than those covered by official figures. The crime has an obvious gender dimension. Trafficking for sexual exploitation, involving mainly women and girls as victims, is consistently reported as the prevalent form.

1. DISRUPTING TRAFFICKERS' BUSINESS MODEL AND UNTANGLING THE TRAFFICKING CHAIN

In a climate where impunity for perpetrators and users prevails, profits from the exploitation of human beings remain high. While there is a diverse legal landscape within the EU, national laws are failing to effectively discourage the demand for trafficking services.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- ▶ **Member States are further encouraged**, to the extent they have not done so, to criminalise those knowingly using services exacted from victims of trafficking.
- ▶ **Disrupt** the financial business model of traffickers by developing operational activities and methodologies
- ▶ **Improve** effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions
- ▶ **Ensure** trafficking-free supply and value chains in line with international and European standards
- ▶ **Promote** best practices in non-financial information reporting

2. PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO AND REALISING THE RIGHTS FOR VICTIMS

Identifying victims at an early stage is the first step towards making sure they are treated as ‘rights holders’ – that they have access to their rights and can exercise them effectively. This includes ensuring that victims receive appropriate gender specific and child sensitive assistance and protection.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- ▶ **Develop** and distribute tailored guidelines by the European Institute for Gender Equality
- ▶ **Review** Member States’ national and transnational referral mechanisms
- ▶ **Develop** in cooperation with FRA practical guidance to better prevent child trafficking
- ▶ **Use** of EU border and migration management tools for detecting, identifying and sharing information and data on victims of trafficking and traffickers

3. INTENSIFYING A COORDINATED AND CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE, BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE EU

Trafficking does not stop at national or EU borders. An improved coordination of the internal and external aspects of EU anti-trafficking efforts is essential to effectively fight this crime.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- ▶ **Engage** EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies to working together on this matter
- ▶ **Implementation** of the relevant human trafficking aspects in external policy areas:
 - Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals
 - EU - UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls
 - Joint Staff Working Document ‘EU’s activities on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the EU’s external relations’
 - Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies
- ▶ **Review** and identify the priority countries and regions for action against trafficking in human beings

CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

The Commission identified two additional cross-cutting priorities focused on **widening the knowledge base** and improving understanding of this complex phenomenon, and **provision of appropriate funding** in support of anti-trafficking initiatives and projects.



PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- ▶ **Publish** evidence and statistics on the costs of trafficking, criminal justice and the impact of the EU approach to combating trafficking for sexual exploitation
- ▶ **Support** anti-trafficking objectives and priorities through various EU funding programmes such as Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Internal Security Fund (ISF), Horizon 2020, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), European Development Fund (EDF) and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.
- ▶ **Launch** an EU-wide awareness-raising campaign