

EU anti-trafficking action 2017-2019:

At a glance



Trafficking in human beings (THB) is prohibited by the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) (Article 5.3). At the same time, it is defined by the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#), as a particularly serious form of organised crime (Article 83), with links to immigration policy (Article 79). As such, trafficking in human beings is driven by considerable profits and complex interplay of supply and demand. It involves a chain of actors who are knowingly or unknowingly involved. The links in this chain must be broken if the crime is to be eradicated. The cornerstone of all EU action remains to prevent the crime, including by countering the culture of impunity that fosters it.

Trafficking in human beings is systematically embedded in multiple policy instruments and a wide range of policy areas. Extensive work at the operational and political level is conducted in EU internal and external policies, in areas ranging from security to migration, justice, equality, anti-discrimination, fundamental rights, employment, development, research, humanitarian aid and fisheries, amongst others.

The EU has in place a solid, comprehensive and ambitious legal and policy framework to address trafficking in human beings, anchored in the [EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#) (Directive 2011/36/EU) under the horizontal mandate of the [EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator](#) (EU ATC). In line with Article 20 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, the EU ATC is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States and international actors, and for developing existing and new EU policies to address THB. As recalled in the [2017 Communication](#), through the coordination effort, the EU ATC contributes to a coordinated and coherent Union response against trafficking in human beings, within and outside the EU. The EU approach is based on human rights. It is victim-centred, gender-specific, and child-sensitive. It is complemented by the [EU Strategy 2012-2016](#) and the [2017 Communication](#) stepping up EU action to address THB.

Key counterparts in the joint efforts are EU Member States, in the 2017 Communication and beyond, not least through the EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms on THB, the EU Civil Society Platform against THB, and relevant EU Agencies.

A number of strategic EU documents address trafficking in human beings in the period 2017-2019, including the [2017 European Parliament Resolution on fundamental rights aspect of Roma integration in the EU](#), the [2018 Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'The situation of Roma women'](#), the [2017 Council conclusions on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2016](#), requesting action addressing the risk of women and girls being trafficked in the asylum and migration context, the [2019 Council conclusions on Eurojust - the Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit in the Digital Age](#) and the [2019 Council conclusions on combating the sexual abuse of children](#).

EU Legal and Policy Framework

EU Anti-Trafficking Directive

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Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (EU Anti-Trafficking Directive) is the fundamental EU legislative act addressing trafficking in human beings. It establishes robust provisions on victim's protection, assistance and support, but also on prevention and prosecution of the crime. The Directive is legally binding on all EU Member States apart from Denmark. Following the requirements of the Directive, the Commission has produced two Progress reports (as per Article 20), the Transposition report (as per Article 23.1) and the Users report (as per Article 23.2).

Second Progress Report

European Commission, December 2018

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Member States report to the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, based on Article 20 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive for the Commission's progress report every second year.

The Commission's second progress report examines progress made and highlights key challenges that the EU and its Member States need to address as a priority. It is based on a wide range of sources, including information gathered by

the national rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, actions taken by the Commission and other stakeholders under the 2012-2016 EU Strategy and the 2017 Commission Communication, contributions submitted by civil society organisations participating in the EU Civil Society Platform and the e-Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings and information from relevant EU agencies and international and regional organisations.

Taking stock of measures taken since 2015, the report highlights the main trends in trafficking in human beings and outlines a number of priority areas for Member States to focus on to effectively combat trafficking in human beings.

The report includes also an update on the actions taken under the 2017 Commission Communication and an update on the application of EU rules on residence permits for victims of trafficking (Directive 2004/81/EC).

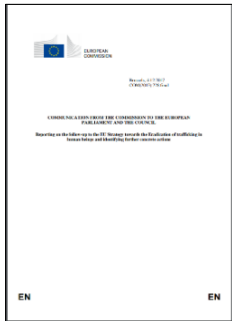
2017 Communication stepping up EU action to address trafficking in human beings

European Commission, 2017

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In the 2017 Communication, the Commission has put forward a list of concrete actions to better prevent trafficking in human beings. Building on the EU strategy and in light of recent migratory,

economic and security challenges, the priorities set out by the Commission identify key areas that require immediate action from the EU and Member States to disrupt the modus operandi of traffickers, strengthen victims' rights and intensify internal and external efforts. The identified targeted priorities are to disrupt the business model of traffickers, including by increasing prosecutions and convictions and encouraging the criminalisation of the use of services exacted from victims of trafficking; to provide better access to and realise the rights for victim and to intensify a coordinated and consolidated response, both within and outside the EU. The cross-cutting priorities include first, to improve the knowledge base on trafficking in human beings and second, to provide EU funding for anti-trafficking initiatives and objectives.

Since the adoption of the 2017 Communication, the EU ATC presented the EU policy priorities to various bodies and Committees, such as the European Parliament Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), as well as the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), the Council High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum and the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security.

Data collection on trafficking in human beings in the EU

European Commission, 2018

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This is the fourth report published by the European Commission that presents a compilation of statistics at the EU Member State level on trafficking in human beings. This data collection exercise approached all 28-

Member States. It covers the years 2015 and 2016 and updates the 2014 data collection as relevant. With this data collection, EU wide-statistics on trafficking in human beings are available as of year 2008 until 2016.

Highlights:

A total of 20 532 of victims was registered, of which 68 percent were female and the rest male. 23 percent of registered victims were children. The most widespread form of trafficking was for sexual exploitation, with 95% of the victims being women and girls. One in four victims were trafficked for labour exploitation and nearly one in five were trafficked for other forms. Nearly half of the victims were EU citizens.

5 979 prosecutions and 2 927 convictions for trafficking in human beings were reported; Over 70 percent of traffickers (suspects, prosecutions, convictions) were male;

Around three quarters of suspects, prosecutions and convictions concerned trafficking for sexual exploitation;

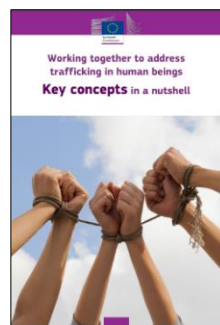
Over three quarters of suspects and those prosecuted held EU citizenship; Two 'suspects', 135 prosecutions, and 18 convictions were reported for the offence of using the services of victims of trafficking.

Key concepts in a nutshell

European Commission

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Implementing a key action set forth in the 2017 Communication stepping up EU action to address trafficking in human beings (Priority B), the European Commission published 'Working together to address trafficking in human beings: key concepts in a nutshell'. The document is to be seen in the context of

contributing to a coordinated and consolidated Union response against trafficking in human beings. It is intended to disseminate knowledge by providing the conceptual clarity that is necessary for concrete policies, operational action and funding allocations. The selection of widely used concepts is based on publicly available information on trafficking in human beings published by the European Commission, EU agencies, and international organisations.

A coordinated and coherent response to Trafficking in Human Beings

Addressing trafficking in human beings requires joint efforts by a wide range of relevant actors at all levels. To operationalise the close cooperation, the Directive calls for and translate into action the motto “Working together to address trafficking in human beings” through the coordination effort under the mandate of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, a reasoned structure has been put in place, which proved essential and instrumental to achieve concrete results. Key pillars of this unique and pioneering framework are the EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms on THB, the EU Civil Society Platform against THB and the Coordination Group of the EU agencies.

Within the Commission, coordination is further fostered through the Inter-Service Group on THB, bringing together 16 Directorates-General, including Eurostat - the statistical office of the European Union, and the European External Action Service.

EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms

More information [here](#)



The EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms (NREMs) was established

following the [Council Conclusions in June 2009](#). The role of the NREMs is set out in the Anti-Trafficking Directive, Article 19. The NREMs are responsible for monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level, and play a crucial role in the preparation of the progress reports assessing the effort to address THB as per Article 20 of the Directive. The [EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator](#) works closely with the EU Network of NREMs by sharing information and exchange of best practices, as well in order to coordinate tasks at EU and national level. The Network meets twice per year, including in Joint Session with the EU Civil Society Platform. The EU ATC, on behalf of the European Commission, co-chairs the meetings with the incumbent Presidency of the Council of the European Union, since 2017 including the Presidency of Malta, Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria, Romania and Finland.

EU Civil society Platform and ePlatform against trafficking in human beings

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The key role of civil society in the joint efforts to address THB is explicitly acknowledged in the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive and the

European Commission considers civil society organisations as equal partners. The EU Civil Society Platform was launched in 2013 as an action of the EU Strategy 2012-2016, and currently brings together around 100 participant organisations from across the EU and beyond. The Platform meets twice per year, including for a joint meeting with the EU Network of NREMs. The meetings are chaired by the EU ATC. The discussions held in the context of these meetings, the further exchanges, common experience and synergies created through the consistent and systematic participation to the meetings, have been fundamental to facilitating the close cooperation between relevant national authorities and civil society that the Anti-Trafficking Directive calls for. The Platform is strengthened with an online [ePlatform, launched in 2014](#) to include further participants and to give continuity to the discussions held in the meetings in Brussels, fostering information exchange and facilitating its dissemination.

EU Agencies working together against THB

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Building on the work and synergies that have been ongoing since the first Joint statement was signed by the heads of seven JHA Agencies back in 2011, the Heads of ten EU Agencies signed in June 2018 a new Joint Statement of

Commitment to working together to address THB (*EASO, FRA, Europol, Eurojust, Eurofound, CEPOL, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, EBCG, EIGE*). This implemented a key action of the 2017 Communication, and commitments undertaken are fully in line with the EU policy priorities on trafficking in human beings. The commitments emphasize the importance of an enhanced multiagency approach, to

counter the culture of impunity and enhance the focus on prevention. In line with the EU legal and policy framework, the Joint Statement adopts a gender-specific and child-sensitive approach to address this grave violation of human rights and serious form of organised crime.

As a result of the Joint statement of commitment, contact points have been nominated in each relevant Agency, whose tasks include participating in the meetings organised by the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator; ensuring an overview of the Agency's action in this field and represent the Agency in the relevant fora as appropriate; creating synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts. In order to materialise the commitments undertaken in the Joint statements and in line with the 2017 Communication, Agencies committed to include relevant activities in their planning and, where relevant, work programmes.

Commission Inter-service Group on THB

Fostering policy coherence across EU institutions is one part of the overarching and horizontal mandate of the EU ATC. In this framework, close cooperation is ensured with a wide range of relevant services in the various Directorates-General of the European Commission, through the Inter-Service group on THB, bringing together 16 Directorates-General, including Eurostat - the statistical office of the European Union, and the European External Action Service. In this context, work is carried out through regular meetings organised by the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and daily exchanges.

European Parliament

The European Parliament, across political groups and Committees, has been highly supportive of EU anti-trafficking action under the horizontal mandate of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. Amongst other

initiatives, the European Parliament issued two relevant resolutions on: 1) [Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings](#), and 2) [The fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations](#).

Since the adoption of the 2017 Communication, the EU ATC presented the targeted priorities to the European Parliament. On 12 September 2019, the EU ATC presented the findings of the 2018 Commission's Second Progress report and EU policy priorities to address trafficking in human beings in the context of a Joint Session of the European Parliament Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM).

International partners

Cooperation continues to be fostered with strategic partners at the international level and policy coherence is ensured in several multilateral processes, such as the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, the preparatory work for the Global Compact for Safe and orderly Migration, the High level meeting for the Appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in human beings and others. In addition, further engagement with the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) was sought.

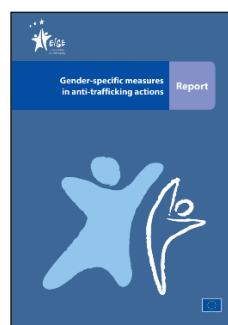
Gender specificity

Gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions Report

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and European Commission, 2018

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As a key deliverable of the 2017 Communication on trafficking in human beings, the European Institute for Gender Equality published this report, in cooperation with the European Commission. The report

provides guidance to Member States on gender-specific measures to better identify, help and support victims of trafficking in human beings. In this report, a gender perspective is applied as an analytical framework to examine the provisions and obligations under the Anti-Trafficking Directive and the Victims' Rights Directive. The analysis seeks to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the protection and response to the needs of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

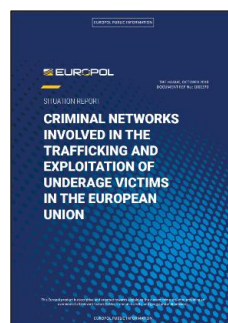
Child trafficking

Criminal networks involved in the trafficking and exploitation of underage victims in the European Union Report

Europol, 2018

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This report was produced in the framework of the EU Policy Cycle for Organised Crime and Serious International Crime and was published on the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October. The

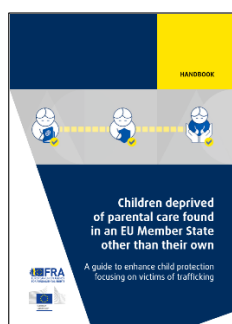
report provides an up-to-date intelligence picture and key findings on the criminal phenomenon for the period 2015 – 2017. For the first time ever on such a scale, this report provides an in-depth picture of the features of criminal networks involved in one of the most ominous crimes of all – the abuse of vulnerable children. For the purpose of the report, operational intelligence from almost 600 contributions involving trafficked underage victims was used, all of which were reported to Europol by the Member States between 2015 and 2017.

Children deprived of parental care found in an EU Member State other than their own - A guide to enhance child protection focusing on victims of trafficking

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and European Commission, 2019

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The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) developed this guide in cooperation with the European Commission. It implements an action set forth in the 2017 Communication and builds on the 2018 EU Agencies Joint Statement. Amongst other things, the guidance recalls that one in four registered victims of trafficking in human beings in the EU is a child trafficked into and within the EU, and often within their own Member State. Girls are overwhelmingly targeted. Registered EU child victims are twice the number of non-EU child victims. The guide targets professionals who may come into direct contact with children who are deprived

of parental care and found in need of protection in a EU Member State other than their own, including child victims of trafficking.

Funding matching EU priorities and identified patterns

More information [here](#)



programmes.

The EU continues to support anti-trafficking actions, in the EU and beyond, through various funding

The [2017 Communication](#) sets forth as a cross-cutting priority for the EU to support anti-trafficking actions with a focus on the gender dimension of the phenomenon and high-risk groups and reiterates that the Commission will prioritise in its funding support actions to meet the specific needs of people in vulnerable situations, including victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the context of combating all forms of violence against women and children, including in emergencies and keeping children in education.

Relevant EU funding programmes include:

The Asylum Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF); the Internal Security Fund (ISF) Police & Borders; Horizon 2020; the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation; Justice Programme and Rights, Equality & Citizenship Programme; European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Mobility Partnership Facility; the European Development Fund; the Development Cooperation Instrument, the EU Instrument contributing to Stability & Peace (IcSP); the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

Outreach

EU Anti-Trafficking Day

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Since 2007, the EU continues to mark on 18 October the EU Anti-Trafficking Day, as a reminder that our key responsibility remains eradicating the crime, to ensure accountability towards the victims. Multiple events are organised every year throughout the EU by national authorities, civil society and a wide range of actors. The Commission joins the efforts with dedicated initiatives, ranging from events, publications and outreach initiatives. On the occasion of the 12th EU Anti-Trafficking Day in 2018, the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) presented the Report on gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions in an event hosted by the European Parliament. Press releases on the event of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day in 2017 and 2018 are available [here](#) and [here](#).

The EU Anti-Trafficking Website

Visit [here](#)

The thematic website aims at providing a wide range of information with respect to the work under the EU legal and policy framework to address trafficking in human beings, to ensure availability of information to all relevant actors. The website has been revamped in the course of 2018 to improve accessibility and reorganise the resources in a more user-friendly format. Regular work is carried out to update the content and improve accessibility. Dissemination through a wide range of social networks, including the twitter account [@EUHomeAffairs](#), is currently accompanied by the now established hashtags [#EUagainstTHB](#) and [#endimpunity](#).

Looking ahead, the European Commission, through the horizontal mandate of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, will continue working towards achieving what remains the ultimate goal: preventing the crime, including by countering the culture of impunity that fosters the crime. Anything else comes too late for the victims.