
Human trafficking: MEPs call on EU member states to protect victims better

EU member states should do more to protect victims of human trafficking, especially women, and take gender-specific prevention, assistance and support measures to help them, say MEPs in a resolution voted on Thursday. The text points out that EU legislation to protect victims of trafficking is not being properly enforced.

"Progress has been made in the fight against international trafficking gangs, but all too often victims are not being given the help they are entitled to under EU law, said rapporteur [Catherine Bearder \(ALDE, UK\)](#). "EU-wide measures to tackle this vile trade must be fully implemented by national governments, including the proper collection of statistics and identification of victims to give us a clearer view of the real picture", she added.

The resolution, approved by 391 votes to 43, with 53 abstentions, underlines that the European Commission has failed to keep to the timetable of assessment reporting required by the [directive](#).

Women and children are especially vulnerable to trafficking

According to [Europol](#), about 10,000 unaccompanied children have disappeared since arriving in the EU in 2015. Children should be registered upon their arrival and included in child protection systems, says the text.

To discourage the demand that drives trafficking for sexual exploitation, MEPs stress that the burden of proof in criminal cases should rest with those who purchase sexual services of trafficked persons, rather than with those who sell them.

Identify victims early and grant them rights

MEPs call on EU member states to ensure that police, the judiciary, medical staff and social workers all receive adequate training, so that they can identify vulnerable victims early and offer them the support they need. This includes accommodation, medical treatment, translation, legal counselling, including for the purpose of claiming compensation, and a recovery period of at least 30 days.

In order to ensure that support and assistance are provided, member states should grant victims residence permits and access to the labour market in the member state to which they were

trafficked, says the text.

"To help to ensure that victims of trafficking receive adequate support and assistance to get their lives back on track, member states should grant victims residence permits and access to their labour markets. Furthermore, victims of trafficking are often required to give evidence in criminal cases against traffickers and therefore they need to be present, which is not always possible under the current rules", concluded Ms Bearder.

Procedure: *Non-legislative resolution*

30,000

There were over 30,000 victims of trafficking registered in the EU between 2010 and 2012, 80% of them women.

Facts

- Children make up about 16% of registered victims of trafficking in human beings (THB)
- Women and girls together comprise up to 95% of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, (U) whereas the majority of registered victims of labour exploitation are male (71 %).
- 70% of the identified victims of THB and 70% of suspected traffickers in the EU are EU nationals, and most reported victims of sexual exploitation are female EU nationals from Central and Eastern Europe.
- According to ILO, profit of THB is estimated at some 150 USD billion a year.

Interview with MEP Catherine Bearder (ALDE, UK), rapporteur

[Human trafficking: "Like any market, there must be a demand that drives it"](#)

Further information

[Adopted text \(2015/2118\(INI\)\) will soon be available here \(12.05. 2016\)](#)

[Video recording of debate \(click on 12.05.2016\)](#)

[Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims](#)

[EbS+ \(12.05.2016\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

[ILO study: Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour](#)

[Eurostat: trafficking in human beings](#)

[Implementation of the Human Trafficking Directive from a gender perspective](#)

Political groups

[News pages of the EPP group](#)

[Press release by the S&D group](#)

[News pages of the ECR group](#)

[Press release by the ALDE group](#)

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Contacts

Maja OREL SCHWARZ

COMM - PRESS

 (+32) 2 28 32357 (BXL)

 (+32) 473 86 49 74

 [@EP_GenderEqual](#)

 [@EP_Justice](#)

 maja.orel@europarl.europa.eu
