

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-006707/20
to the Commission
Patryk Jaki (ECR)
(9 December 2020)**

Subject: Child trafficking in the European Union

I would like to ask the Commission for information on child trafficking in the EU. The signs of child trafficking in the Member States are becoming increasingly serious.

1. There are two aspects to this problem. The first is the sale of children to brothels and criminal groups where they are sexually abused and very often killed. Is the Commission taking any action on this?
2. The second aspect is child trafficking in general. How can we accept the sale of children by their mothers in the EU in order to satisfy the need for third parties to possess children? This should not be happening — people should not be traded. This was one of the topics to which the recent two-day International Children's Fair in Brussels was devoted. The media stated that the 'Men Having Babies' event was of an itinerant nature: it took place in Paris in September, in Taipei in October and in Tel Aviv in December. Link to the page: ⁽¹⁾ Human dignity should be a priority for the EU — the era of slavery and human trafficking is long past. We can only imagine the kind of trauma children will go through when they find out years later that they have been purchased. Will the Commission be taking decisive action on this matter?

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission
(10 March 2021)**

Trafficking in human beings is a grave violation of human rights and a serious crime driven by high profits ⁽²⁾. Addressing this crime, including child trafficking, is a priority for the EU. The scale of child trafficking in the EU is alarming with nearly one in four victims of trafficking being a child ⁽³⁾. The majority of child victims of trafficking are EU citizens and are girls predominantly trafficked for sexual exploitation.

The EU legal and policy framework to address the crime, anchored in the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive ⁽⁴⁾, has a victims-centred, gender-specific and child-sensitive approach with zero tolerance to anyone involved in trafficking in human beings.

This framework identifies children as inherently vulnerable to trafficking and provides for specific measures for the assistance, support and protection of child victims of trafficking and to unaccompanied minors. Investigation and prosecution of the crime is the sole responsibility of the Member States. Many operational actions, including against child trafficking, continue to take place with the support of EU agencies ⁽⁵⁾.

Preventing the trafficking crime from happening and bringing perpetrators to justice, including through the effective implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, continues to be our priority.

The Commission is working on a new strategic approach to combat trafficking in human beings. The forthcoming EU Strategy on the rights of the child, which will be adopted by the end of March 2021, will propose concrete actions to combat all forms of violence against children.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.menhavingbabies.org/>

⁽²⁾ Europol (2015) The THB financial business model, The Hague.

⁽³⁾ Commission Third Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings, COM(2020) 661 final and SWD(2020) 226 final.

⁽⁴⁾ 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 (OJ L 101, 1 15.4.2011).

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/targeting-child-trafficking-388-arrested-across-europe>