

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1562/05
by Brice Hortefeux (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Trafficking in human beings

According to a study published on 7 April 2005 by a private foundation, prostitution, sex tourism and child pornography have reached alarming levels in Europe. For those involved in organised crime, people trafficking is now more profitable and less dangerous than drugs.

According to Interpol sources, a pimp in Europe earns EUR 110 000 per year from a prostitute.

People trafficking affects between 120 000 and 500 000 people in Europe. Pornography is worth EUR 52 billion and is all over the Internet.

According to Le Bouclier, a French child protection association, the number of websites featuring children went up by 46 per cent in September 2003. ChildRight, an Amsterdam-based NGO, puts the number of child prostitutes at 15 000, 11 000 more than in 1996!

The main cause of the explosion in this trade, that has no place in modern society, lies in the disparities in the Member States' laws on sexual exploitation.

In this context, could the Commission say whether any discussions or practical steps are planned at Community level to tackle this scourge?