
















Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2015/2340(INI)	Procedure completed
Fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations		
Subject 6.40 Relations with third countries 7.30.30.02 Action to combat violence, trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 AFET Foreign Affairs	 LOCHBIHLER Barbara	26/01/2015
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 COMODINI CACHIA Therese	
		 CRISTEA Andi	
		 BASHIR Amjad	
		 WEBER Renate	
		 CORRAO Ignazio	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	 MIKOLÁŠIK Miroslav	28/05/2015
 LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (Associated committee)	 VALERO Bodil	02/07/2015	
 FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Associated committee)	 BEARDER Catherine	16/06/2015	
European Commission	Commission DG Secretariat-General	Commissioner TIMMERMANS Frans	

Key events			
17/12/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/12/2015	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
24/05/2016	Vote in committee		
13/06/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0205/2016	Summary
04/07/2016	Debate in Parliament		
05/07/2016	Results of vote in Parliament		
05/07/2016	Decision by Parliament	T8-0300/2016	Summary
05/07/2016	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2015/2340(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/8/05289

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE575.116	02/02/2016	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE578.689	14/03/2016	EP	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE572.999	08/04/2016	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE578.529	28/04/2016	EP	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE576.750	27/05/2016	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0205/2016	13/06/2016	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0300/2016	05/07/2016	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2016)694	23/01/2017	EC	

Fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Barbara LOCHBIHLER (Greens/EFA, DE) on the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations. The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs as well as the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, exercising their prerogatives as associated committees in accordance with [Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure](#), also gave their opinions on the report.

Members recalled that, according to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2014) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 70 % of the total number of detected victims are women and girls; women represent 79 % of the detected victims of sexual exploitation, and men represent 83 % of detected victims of forced labour.

Furthermore, more than 10 000 unaccompanied refugee and migrant children have disappeared in Europe according to the press declaration by the Europol Chief of staff. Many among those children have been forced into sex trafficking rings, begging, the illicit and lucrative organ transplant market or the slave trade.

Global trends in trafficking of human beings: the committee denounced trafficking in human beings, which it considered as a modern kind of slavery, and a serious crime which constitutes one of the worst forms of human rights violations that cannot be accepted in societies that are based on the respect for human rights including gender equality. Trafficking in human beings has to be understood in a holistic manner, focusing not only on sexual exploitation, but also on forced labour, organ trafficking, forced begging, forced marriages, child soldiers and the trafficking of babies.

Recalling that trafficking in human beings is a transnational crime of global nature, the report stressed the need for a consistent approach to the internal and external dimensions of the EU's policies for combating trafficking.

It deplored the persistent lack of adequate legislation to criminalise and effectively combat trafficking in human beings in many countries worldwide, as well as the wide gap between the legislation that does exist and implementation thereof, including on the one hand the limited or non-existent access to justice for victims and on the other hand the lack of prosecution of perpetrators.

Members underscored the critical distinction between the concepts of trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling. While noting that smuggling is also among the activities of criminal networks and organised crime and can lead to a situation of trafficking, they underlined that the two concepts require different legal and practical responses and involve different state obligations.

Observing that the internet and social networks are increasingly being used by criminal networks to recruit and exploit victims, Members called for enough investment in technology and expertise to combat trafficking. They called on the Commission to: (i) evaluate the use of the internet in the context of human trafficking, particularly as regards online sexual exploitation; (ii) adjust its cooperation with third countries to take into consideration the new development of trafficking via the internet.

The economy of trafficking in human beings: the report denounced the fact that trafficking in human beings is a highly lucrative business and that the proceeds from this criminal activity are largely re-injected into the global economy and financial system. It called for a stronger focus on money laundering activities, and for the EU to reinforce cooperation, with third countries to locate and confiscate the proceeds from those criminal activities. Confiscated assets should be used to support and compensate victims of trafficking. Furthermore, governments must make greater efforts to fight against corruption, which contributes to human trafficking.

Different forms of exploitation: in this regard, Members called on the Union and its Member States to:

- make the necessary efforts to combat forced labour in EU industries abroad, and in relation to third countries, by applying and enforcing labour standards and supporting governments in adopting labour laws providing minimum protection standards for workers;
- give more support to charitable organisations offering access to psychological care to victims of forced prostitution;
- consider forced marriage as a form of trafficking in human beings if it contains an element of exploitation of the victim, and include this dimension in their definition of trafficking;
- prevent and adopt a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary approach in addressing illicit human organ procurement, including human trafficking for organ removal, which has developed into a global problem.

The report condemned the practice of trafficking in human beings for forced surrogacy as a violation of the woman's rights and the rights of the child. It insisted that children who are victims of trafficking in human beings be identified as such and their best interests, rights and needs be considered paramount at all times.

Victims rights: Members called on the EU and the Member States to have a human rights-based and victim-centred approach and to place victims and vulnerable populations at the centre of all efforts in the fight against trafficking in human beings, its prevention and the protection of victims. They called on the Member States, including countries of origin, transit and destination, to provide or facilitate access to remedies that are fair, adequate and appropriate to all trafficked persons within their respective territories and subject to their respective jurisdictions, including non-citizens.

Victims of trafficking must have the right to an effective remedy, including access to justice, recognition of legal identity and citizenship, return of property, adequate reparation as well as medical and psychological care, legal and social services, and long-term (re) integration support, including economic support.

Cooperation at regional and international level: the report called for enhanced coordination and cooperation and the systematic exchange of information to investigate and combat transnational trafficking in human beings, stepping up financial and technical assistance and strengthening cross-border communication, cooperation and capacity building at government and law enforcement level, including border guards, immigration and asylum officials, criminal investigators and victim support agencies, civil society and UN agencies, including on how to identify and protect victims. Members insisted on the need for the EU to enhance police and judicial cooperation between Member States and with third countries in particular with countries of origin and transit of victims of trafficking in human beings in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of trafficking in human beings, via Europol and Eurojust. They also called for the establishment of cross-border labour migration mechanisms in the EU and at international level in order to increase and formalise regular labour migration. They called on the EU to develop a regional approach, concentrating on the trafficking routes and offering responses which are adapted to the type of exploitation in the different regions.

EU policy on trafficking in human beings in its external action: Members considered it essential that strategies aimed at the prevention of trafficking in human beings address the facilitating factors and the underlining causes and circumstances behind this phenomenon.

They asked the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to: (i) further develop concrete joint action and measures among the EU, the Member States, third countries and international actors so as to set up a more coherent and efficient cooperation in establishing systems that identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking, (ii) step up the prevention of trafficking in human beings, seek increased prosecution of traffickers and (iii) establish a network capable of responding to emerging concerns.

Members also called on EU representatives to pay particular attention to trafficking in human beings in the EU's political dialogue with third countries, and also through its cooperation programmes and within multilateral and regional fora.

Fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations

The European Parliament adopted by 504 votes to 30, with 148 abstentions, a resolution on the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations.

Members recalled that, according to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2014) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 70 % of the total number of detected victims are women and girls; women represent 79 % of the detected victims of sexual exploitation, and men represent 83 % of detected victims of forced labour.

Furthermore, more than 10 000 unaccompanied refugee and migrant children have disappeared in Europe according to the press declaration by the Europol Chief of staff. Many among those children have been forced into sex trafficking rings, begging, the illicit and lucrative organ transplant market or the slave trade.

According to the latest Global Slavery Index, 35.8 million persons are estimated to be trapped in situations of modern slavery worldwide.

Global trends in trafficking of human beings: Parliament denounced trafficking in human beings, which it considered as a modern kind of slavery, and a serious crime which constitutes one of the worst forms of human rights violations that cannot be accepted in societies that are based on the respect for human rights including gender equality. Trafficking in human beings has to be understood in a holistic manner, focusing not only on sexual exploitation, but also on forced labour, organ trafficking, forced begging, forced marriages, child soldiers and the trafficking of babies.

Recalling that trafficking in human beings is a transnational crime of global nature, Parliament stressed the need for a consistent approach to the internal and external dimensions of the EU's policies for combating trafficking. It deplored the persistent lack of adequate legislation to criminalise and effectively combat trafficking in human beings, as well as the wide gap between the legislation that does exist and implementation thereof, including on the one hand the limited or non-existent access to justice for victims and on the other hand the lack of prosecution of perpetrators.

Parliament underscored the critical distinction between the concepts of trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling. While noting that smuggling is also among the activities of criminal networks and organised crime and can lead to a situation of trafficking, it underlined that the two concepts require different legal and practical responses and involve different state obligations.

Observing that the internet and social networks are increasingly being used by criminal networks to recruit and exploit victims, Parliament called on the Commission to: (i) evaluate the use of the internet in the context of human trafficking, particularly as regards online sexual exploitation; (ii) adjust its cooperation with third countries to take into consideration the new development of trafficking via the internet.

The economy of trafficking in human beings: Parliament denounced the fact that trafficking in human beings is a highly lucrative business and that the proceeds from this criminal activity are largely re-injected into the global economy and financial system. According to the ILO's most recent estimates, the illicit annual profit from forced labour, including through money laundering, is about USD 150 billion.

It therefore called for a stronger focus on money laundering activities, and for the EU to reinforce cooperation, with third countries to locate and confiscate the proceeds from those criminal activities. Confiscated assets should be used to support and compensate victims of trafficking.

Furthermore, governments must make greater efforts to fight against corruption, which contributes to human trafficking and encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships to bring together businesses, anti-trafficking experts and NGOs and carry out joint actions against human trafficking.

Different forms of exploitation: in this regard, Members called on the Union and its Member States to:

- combat forced labour in EU industries abroad, and in relation to third countries, by applying and enforcing labour standards and supporting governments in adopting labour laws providing minimum protection standards for workers;
- give more support to charitable organisations offering access to psychological care to victims of forced prostitution (the clear link between trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes and prostitution has been highlighted);
- consider forced marriage as a form of trafficking in human beings if it contains an element of exploitation of the victim;
- harmonise national legislation and to solicit third-country governments to enact and enforce legal provisions as regards forced begging as a form of trafficking in human beings under Directive 2011/36/EU;
- adopt a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary approach in addressing illicit human organ procurement, including human trafficking for organ removal, which has developed into a global problem.

Parliament condemned the practice of trafficking in human beings for forced surrogacy as a violation of the woman's rights and the rights of the child. It insisted that children who are victims of trafficking in human beings be identified as such and their best interests, rights and needs be considered paramount at all times.

The EU is urged to continue its efforts to combat the phenomenon of child soldiers.

Victims rights: Parliament called on the EU and the Member States to have a human rights-based and victim-centred approach. It called on the Member States, including countries of origin, transit and destination, to provide or facilitate access to remedies that are fair, adequate and appropriate to all trafficked persons within their respective territories and subject to their respective jurisdictions, including non-citizens.

Victims of trafficking must have the right to an effective remedy, including access to justice, recognition of legal identity and citizenship, return of property, adequate reparation as well as medical and psychological care, legal and social services, and long-term (re) integration support, including economic support.

Members also called on the Member States to: (i) ensure that law-enforcement authorities and asylum authorities cooperate in order to help human trafficking victims in need of international protection to lodge an application for protection; (ii) guarantee asylum seekers who are victims of trafficking the same rights as those afforded to other victims of trafficking.

Cooperation at regional and international level: Parliament called for:

- enhanced coordination and cooperation and the systematic exchange of information to investigate and combat transnational trafficking in human beings;
- the EU to enhance police and judicial cooperation between Member States and with third countries in particular via Europol and Eurojust;

- the establishment of cross-border labour migration mechanisms in the EU and at international level in order to increase and formalise regular labour migration;
- the EU to develop a regional approach, concentrating on the trafficking routes and offering responses which are adapted to the type of exploitation in the different regions.

EU policy on trafficking in human beings in its external action: Parliament considered it essential that strategies aimed at the prevention of trafficking in human beings address the facilitating factors and the underlining causes and circumstances behind this phenomenon.

It asked the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to:

- further develop concrete joint action and measures among the EU, the Member States, third countries and international actors so as to set up a more coherent and efficient cooperation in establishing systems that identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking;
- step up the prevention of trafficking in human beings, seek increased prosecution of traffickers and (iii) establish a network capable of responding to emerging concerns.
- Members also called on EU representatives to pay particular attention to trafficking in human beings in the EU's political dialogue with third countries, and also through its cooperation programmes and within multilateral and regional fora.

The EU is urged to make the necessary efforts at international level to prevent and suppress the slave trade, to bring about progressively and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms.