



## Commission adopts first Report on progress in the fight against trafficking in human beings

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The European Commission is today reporting on progress in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The report presents trends and challenges in addressing trafficking in human beings, examines progress made and highlights key challenges that the EU and its Member States need to address as a priority. Despite progress made, EU Member States need to step up efforts to fight effectively against trafficking in human beings.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs, and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, said: *"It is morally and legally unacceptable and inexcusable that in the EU of the 21st century, there are human beings who are bought, sold and exploited like commodities. It is our personal, collective and legal duty to stop this. We have put in place a strong and forward-looking legislative framework to do this. Our main responsibility is to ensure it is now fully implemented so that those responsible are prosecuted and the victims are fully protected and assisted. Today's landmark report will guide us in further developing our policy framework."*

The EU Anti-trafficking coordinator, Myria **Vassiliadou**, said: *"The adoption of the EU Anti-trafficking Directive in 2011 created important momentum in raising awareness on the scale of the phenomenon in the EU and the need to address it with a wide range of tools, from criminal law to prevention measures. The trends and challenges identified in this Report clearly show that it is now high time for Member States to step-up efforts to effectively implement the Directive and comply with its obligations."*

The report finds that in 2013-2014, 15,846 women, men, girls and boys were registered as victims of trafficking in the EU. Given the complexity of reporting on this phenomenon, the actual number of victims is likely to be substantially higher than those registered by national authorities. According to the Report, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is still the most widespread form (67% of registered victims), followed by trafficking for labour exploitation (21% of registered victims). Over three quarters of the registered victims were women (76%), while at least 15% were children.

One of the most sharply increasing trends has been in the number of children falling victim to human traffickers. Victims with disabilities and victims of Roma ethnic background were also identified as increasing in number. The report also highlights links between human trafficking and other forms of crime and the exploitation of the most vulnerable in the context of the current migration crisis as well as an increased use of the internet and new technologies to recruit victims.

To address the key challenges in the fight against trafficking in human beings, EU Member States need to fully and correctly implement the [EU Anti-trafficking Directive](#) in order to increase the number of investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators, establish appropriate mechanisms for the early identification and protection of victims and enhance measures to prevent the trafficking of human beings.

The Commission will continue working on a coordinated and consistent response to trafficking in human beings. By the end of 2016, the Commission will publish two reports on compliance and criminalisation as well as a post-2016 Strategy on trafficking in human beings. Child protection along the migration route is a top priority and the Commission is also paying particular attention to unaccompanied minors – very vulnerable to traffickers – in its [reform](#) of the Common European asylum system.

### Background

Trafficking in human beings is a violation of fundamental rights, and is explicitly prohibited under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It is also listed as a crime in Article 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The [EU Anti-trafficking Directive](#) adopted in 2011 put forward a victim centred approach, including a gender perspective, to cover actions in different areas such as criminal law provisions, prosecution of offenders, victims' support and victims' rights in criminal proceedings, prevention and monitoring of

the implementation.

In its [EU Strategy on Trafficking in human beings 2012-2016](#), the EU set out 40 concrete and practical measures against trafficking in human beings, putting the protection and rights of the victims at the forefront.

The findings of the first Report on progress in the fight against trafficking in human beings will feed into the development of a post-2016 strategy on trafficking in human beings to be published in 2016.

The [EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator](#) is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States and international actors and developing existing and new EU policies to address trafficking in human beings.

**For more information**

[Factsheet: First Commission Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings](#)

[Commission Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings \(2016\)](#)

[Commission Staff Working Document](#)

[Commission website: Together against trafficking in human beings](#)

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