



Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

#EUagainstTHB | 19 December 2022

Trafficking in human beings is a violation of fundamental rights and a serious crime.

More than 7 000 victims of trafficking are registered in the EU every year.

The actual number of victims is likely to be significantly higher as many victims remain undetected.

Victims of trafficking in human beings



EU citizens are more than half (**53%**) of the victims



Women and girls represent **63%**



Almost one in four victims (**23%**) is a **child**

Forms of exploitation*

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of:

51%

sexual exploitation

The vast majority of victims are female (87%). They were 92% in 2017-2018.

28%

labour exploitation

The majority of victims are male (66%). This form almost doubled compared to 2017-2018.

High-risk sectors: agriculture, construction, forestry, food processing, cleaning services, housekeeping, domestic assistance.

11%

other forms of exploitation

Begging and forced criminality; removal of organs; forced marriages; illegal adoption; benefit fraud.

*10% "form of exploitation not known"



Traffickers

In 2019–2020, there were **over 15 000 individuals** suspected of trafficking crimes. But only **6000** were prosecuted and **3000** convicted.

New measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings

The European Commission put forward new rules covering:

- ✓ **Forced marriage and illegal adoption** explicitly added as forms of exploitation that Member States should criminalise
- ✓ **Mandatory sanctions** for companies held liable for trafficking crimes
- ✓ **Criminalisation of the knowing use** of a service provided by a victim of trafficking
- ✓ **Formal National Referral Mechanisms** to improve early identification of victims and referral to support and assistance, while creating the basis for a **European Referral Mechanism**
- ✓ **Improved criminal law response to the online challenges** posed by increasing online recruitment, advertising and exploitation of victims of trafficking
- ✓ **EU-wide data collection** on trafficking in human beings to ensure adequate prevention, detection, and improving the monitoring at EU level

Main benefits

The updated rules will bring:



Increased security and legal certainty for everybody in the EU



Strengthened protection for victims



Stronger sanctions against companies for trafficking crimes