



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT

JOINT MEETING

- **SPECIAL STANDING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS**
- **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC ORDER AND JUSTICE**

The aforementioned committees of the Hellenic Parliament convened to a joint meeting on Thursday, July 23 at 13.00 in order to adopt an

OPINION

On the Proposal for Council Framework Decision on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and protecting victims, repealing Framework decision 2002/629/JHA
COM (2009) 136 final

The members of the aforementioned Committees considering:

- The Proposal for Council Framework Decision on **Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** and protecting victims, repealing Framework decision 2002/629/JHA, [COM (2009) 136 final]
- The Commission Staff Working Paper Accompanying document to the. Proposal for a COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and protecting victims, repealing Framework decision 2002/629/JHA, **Summary of Impact Assessment**, [SEC(2009) 359]
- the Council of Europe's Convention text on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- the written reports by Ministries of joint competence as well as of NGOs providing assistance to human trafficking victims in our country
- the oral reports by the Alternate Minister for Home Affairs Mr Ch.Markogiannakis, the Secretary General of the Ministry for Justice Mr A. Andreoulakos and representatives of interested NGOs,

Have reached by majority the following conclusions:

- The proposal fully complies with the **subsidiarity** and **proportionality** principles
- A **problem of coordination at national level** is observed between the various services involved, as the nature of the problem is such that requires close cooperation between social, police and judicial services under the supervision of a joint authority.

The **provision of a monitoring mechanism** of EU joint action shall contribute to the enhancement of national authorities' coordination.

Therefore, the competent Committees of the Hellenic Parliament call the Government on the one part to support the Proposal in the Council's framework and on the other part to take all necessary measures for its soonest possible implementation at a national level, with the criterion of a systematic both preventive and suppressive action, as well as a substantial victim support. Special emphasis should be given to the early

identification of trafficking victims and the creation of specialized mechanisms to this end.

- Unfortunately, the enhancement of EU border guarding against uncontrolled migration flows favors the exploitation of human beings seeking at any cost access to developed societies resulting in their becoming victims of human trafficking networks.
- The close relation of human trafficking with the intensification of clandestine migration dictates- in the opinion of Hellenic Parliament Committees' members- the **close interlink of relevant actions with the European policy on asylum and migration management**. More emphasis must be given –at the level of preventive measures- on action programmes in the victims' countries of origin. Further to the criminalization of use of services provided by the victims of trafficking, other measures must be examined, such as, for example, awareness campaigns in the countries of origin, both on issues of human rights protection and gender equality and on the hazards of being exploited by organized crime networks. In this frame, the possibility of third countries' (victims' origin) participation in the network of national rapporteurs, which is envisaged in the framework decision, must be examined

Furthermore, **these mechanisms must be linked to the European Asylum Support Office**, when its establishment is adopted, given that in many cases of trafficking victims, there are concurring grounds for granting international protection status.

- For the proposal's effective implementation, **certain terms interpreted in different ways** between member-states **must be clarified**. Differentiations have been observed under the term **vulnerable victim**, whereas in the opinion of NGOs, with which the Hellenic Parliament falls in line, all victims of trafficking are equally vulnerable by definition , as well as in need of support and protection and free legal counseling .
- Finally, suspension of prosecuting trafficking victims, for actions committed as a result of their situation, should be regarded as a general rule and not as a possibility of the national legislator.