Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims

2009/0050(CNS) - 06/04/2009

The Council held a first **exchange of views** on a draft framework decision aimed at strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings. The debate followed a Commission presentation on this proposal issued on 25 March 2009.

Member states made a commitment to step up initiatives and measures to combat these crimes.

The new proposal, which is intended to replace the framework decision 2002/629/JHA, is aimed at improving the existing instruments used to combat trafficking in human beings and to provide victim support, including:

- definition of the crime, aggravating circumstances and higher punishment;
- extraterritorial jurisdiction making it possible to prosecute EU nationals for crimes committed abroad and to use investigative tools such as phone tapping and access to financial data;
- special treatment of the victims in criminal proceedings including not punishing of the victims who bear the consequences of criminal activities;
- higher standard of protection and assistance to the victims. Special protective measures are envisaged for children;
- preventive measures aimed at discouraging the demand that foster trafficking.

The new proposal covers all legal instruments governing decisions in relation to prosecution, victim support, prevention and monitoring.