

# Resolution on preventing trafficking in human beings

2009/2782(RSP) - 10/02/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on preventing trafficking in human beings.

The resolution had been tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE, and GUE/NGL groups.

Parliament notes that the extent and severity of this problem are alarming: based on the available figures, it is reasonable to estimate that several hundred thousand people are trafficked into or within the EU every year, and sexual exploitation is the most commonly identified form of human trafficking, followed by forced labour. 79% of the identified victims of trafficking are women and girls. Members recall that the EU legal framework on trafficking is currently based mainly on: [Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA](#) and [Directive 2004/81/EC](#). However, experience shows that this legal framework is neither sufficiently effective nor implemented adequately, and that the EU must consequently take stronger action.

Parliament calls on the Council and Commission to develop **action against trafficking in human beings on the basis of a holistic approach** centred on human rights and focusing on combating trafficking, prevention, and protection of victims, and it makes a series of recommendations on each of these points. It wants a **victim-focused approach**, meaning that all potential categories of victim must be identified, targeted and protected, with special attention being given to children and other at-risk groups.

Members call on Council and Commission to ensure that the fight against trafficking in human beings stays high on their agenda during times of economic and financial crisis, for instance when preparing recovery plans. They suggest the **establishment of an EU anti-trafficking coordinator** to coordinate EU action and policies in this field – including the activities of the network of national rapporteurs – and reporting to both the EP and the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI).

**Information gathering:** Parliament asks the Council and the Commission to take action with a view to the annual publication of a joint report by Eurojust, Europol and Frontex, to be presented to Parliament and the national parliaments as well as the Commission and the Council. This joint report should work towards a better understanding of several issues, inter alia: (i) root causes and factors in countries of origin and destination that facilitate trafficking in human beings; and (ii) travel routes, and local circumstances in destination countries that are conducive to use of the services performed by trafficked human beings, and different forms of exploitation (sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, organ trafficking, child trafficking, including for the purpose of exploitation by travelling sex offenders, the production of abusive sexual images of children, and other forms of exploitation).

**Prosecution:** the resolution asks for a comprehensive legal framework, including policies to counter cybercrime connected to trafficking, to be adopted as soon as possible. The Commission and Member States are asked to take into account certain elements in drafting any future proposal for a legislative instrument in this field, including the following:

- the level of penalties and sanctions for those – including legal persons – who profit from trafficking in human beings should reflect the seriousness of the crime and have a dissuasive effect, and trafficking in children should be particularly severely punished;

- further action should focus on victims' protection – with due consideration for the situation of children and women – by, inter alia, ensuring that assistance to victims is unconditional, that a victim's consent to exploitation is always irrelevant and that victims are entitled to assistance irrespective of their willingness to cooperate in criminal proceedings;
- further action could also focus on the users of services supplied by trafficked people.

**Protection and assistance for victims:** Parliament underlines the importance of **providing assistance and support for victims** of trafficking, and, furthermore, calls on Frontex and national border-control agencies, in the course of their activities, to **define common practices** in order to raise their staff's awareness of the issue of trafficking and to identify victims of trafficking and ensure their protection. This must be a priority in EU actions in this field. Members call for victims to receive all possible help from the moment they are identified as such, including:

- access to at least a **temporary residence permit**, irrespective of their willingness to cooperate in criminal proceedings, and simplified access to the labour market, including the provision of training, as a minimum on the basis of Directive 2004/81/EC;
- access to **appropriate secure accommodation and specialist support services**, including the provision of a food/subsistence allowance, access to emergency medical treatment, access to counselling services, translation and interpretation where appropriate, help contacting family and friends, and access to education for children;
- a **simplified family reunification policy** for victims, particularly where this is required for their protection.

Lastly, Parliament calls for victims to be given professional help, including **free legal aid** (which is essential to enable them to escape the situation of coercion in which they find themselves), bearing in mind that they lack financial means and would thus be unable to pay for such assistance.