



EU Actions Explained



Trafficking in human beings is specifically prohibited by Article 5 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The political commitment at EU level to address the problem of trafficking in human beings is reflected in the large number of initiatives, measures and funding programmes established in the area both within the EU and third countries as early as in the 1990s. The scope of the EU's framework includes both trafficking into Europe and intra-regional trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation in third countries.

The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 sets the policy framework and identifies **five priorities** the EU should focus on. It also outlines a number of actions which the European Commission proposes to implement during 2012-2016 in concert with other actors, including Member States, European External Action Service, EU institutions, EU agencies, international organisations, third countries, civil society and the private sector. Those priorities are as follows:

1. **Identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking**
2. **Stepping up the prevention of trafficking in human beings**
3. **Increased prosecution of traffickers**
4. **Enhanced coordination and cooperation among key actors and policy coherence**
5. **Increased knowledge of and effective response to emerging concerns related to all forms of trafficking in human beings.**

Legal measures - A new EU framework

A dynamic legal framework

The legal framework for addressing trafficking in human beings is the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, which is the first EU measure of criminal law nature to be adopted under the Lisbon Treaty. It harmonises the definition of the crime and the penalties. It further sets robust provisions for the protection, assistance and support to victims, as well as provisions to prevent the crime and provisions to better monitor and evaluate our efforts. It places the victims at its heart, and ensures that people who are victims of trafficking are given an opportunity to recover and to re-integrate into society. The main points in new directive are described below.

- **Criminal law and prosecution**

Rules requiring tougher criminal laws to make prosecution easier, including:

- an **EU-wide definition** of the crime
- **non-prosecution or non-application of penalties to the victim** (such as using false documents) that are a direct consequence of them being trafficked
- possibility to prosecute EU nationals for crimes committed in other countries (**extraterritorial jurisdiction**).

- **Prevention**

Includes measures to:

- **discourage demand** for trafficking (employers hiring trafficked persons and clients buying sexual services from trafficking victims)
- **promote training** – both for victims and officials likely to come in contact with them (border police, police, social workers, healthcare professionals, labour inspectors, etc.)

- **Victim protection and support**

Includes measures to:

- set up national mechanisms for **identifying and assisting victims early** on, based on cooperation between law enforcement and civil society bodies
- **provide victims with support** (shelter, medical and psychological assistance, information and interpreting services)
- ensure victims are **treated appropriately** as soon as there's an indication they have been trafficked, and are given assistance before, during and after criminal proceedings.

Other EU legislation and Policy documents

Directive 2004/81/EC on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities. Third country nationals victims of trafficking in human beings or smuggling victims who are in the EU illegally must be allowed to stay for a "reflection period"– and given a chance to:

- recover – with access to medical care
- establish an independent existence, free from the traffickers' influence or decide whether to cooperate with the authorities in investigating and prosecuting the traffickers
- Victims who then decide to cooperate with the authorities can be issued a **temporary residence permit** entitling them to receive at least the same treatment as during the reflection period, and allowing access to the job market, vocational training and education.

Brussels Declaration on human trafficking and May 2003 Council conclusions on the declaration effectively introduced a new policy framework for the EU's efforts to curb human trafficking on many fronts. Led to setting up of a Commission expert group on people trafficking.

2005 EU plan on combating and preventing human trafficking – best practices, standards and procedures

- set scope for collective EU action and action by individual EU governments
- action taken on coordination, collecting of data, prevention, reducing demand, investigating and prosecuting, protecting and supporting victims, return and reintegrating victims and external relations.

Other EU initiatives

Establishment of an EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

The establishment of an EU anti-trafficking coordinator is provided for by the Stockholm Programme, which was adopted by the Council in December 2009, and further reflections on the mandate thereof are included in the Directive 2011/36/EU. The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator tasks include:

- To provide overall strategic policy orientation to the policy in the field of trafficking in human beings;
- To improve co-ordination and coherence of the EU's external policy against trafficking in human beings in close co-operation with the EU institutions and agencies as well as with EU Member States and international actors;
- To contribute to the elaboration of existing or new EU policies relevant to the fight against trafficking in human beings, and in particular in relation to third countries.

For more information on the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Ms Myria Vassiliadou, [please check her page](#).

The EU Anti-Trafficking Day

The EU Anti-Trafficking Day was established by the European Commission in 2007 and is marked on 18 October of every year.

The main purpose has been to raise awareness on trafficking in human beings and increase the exchange of information, knowledge and best practices amongst the different actors working in this field. Each year, the respective EU Presidencies, together with the European Commission, as well as Member States organise events to mark this day at the EU and the national level. Outcomes from the EU level events include the **Recommendations on the identification and referral to services of victims of trafficking in human beings** (2007), input to the **Action Oriented Paper on strengthening of the external dimension on actions against trafficking in human beings (2009)** and the **Joint Statement of the Heads of EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies (2011)**.

To mark the 6th EU Anti-Trafficking Day, the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission organised a high level conference in Brussels on 18 October 2012.

The conference **'Working together towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings: The Way Forward'** focused on the recently adopted **EU Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings**. It served as a forum for exchange of views among representatives from EU Member States, academia and civil society on shaping future actions to strengthen cooperation, victim protection and assistance, prevention and prosecution in the field of trafficking in human beings.

On the occasion of the Fifth EU Anti-Trafficking Day the Directors of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies announced a joint commitment to address trafficking in human beings in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner. Joint efforts will focus on better prevention of trafficking, more efficient investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, and a more effective protection of victims in compliance with fundamental rights standards and ensuring a strong gender perspective.

National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms

An informal EU Network of National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms was set up by the Council Conclusions adopted on 4 June 2009. National Rapporteurs are responsible for monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level and will play a key role in data collection on THB at national and EU Level. The first informal network at EU level of "national rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms" was established in June 2009. With the help of the European Commission the network meets every year.

EU Funding Programmes

EU funding programmes serve as important tool for developing and implementing EU policies against trafficking in human beings, both within the EU and between the Member States and candidate countries. Programmes where actions against trafficking in human beings are prioritised include Daphne III (2007-2013) and Prevention of and Fight against Crime (ISEC) (2007-2013), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); Thematic Programme Migration and Asylum.

External dimension

Over a period of more than ten years, trafficking in human beings has been an important issue. The overarching framework of the EU external migration policy – **the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility** – highlights the importance of cooperating with third countries of origin, transit and destination and identifies as one of its four pillars the prevention and reduction of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings. This line is also followed in the 2009 Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension against trafficking in human beings.

Trafficking in human beings is also addressed in numerous external relations instruments, such as the annual progress reports on candidate and potential candidate countries, the roadmaps and action plans regarding visa liberalisation dialogues with third countries, the Country Strategy Papers and National and Regional Indicative Programmes and programmes in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It is also addressed in bilateral Action Plans and ongoing political dialogue with third countries.

Tags

[EU Actions Explained](#)

Share

Search

EU Actions Explained

EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

National Rapporteurs and/or Equivalent Mechanisms

Media Outreach

Trafficking Explained

FEEDS

Contact us

Subscribe to the newsletter

Tags in Sections

[Member States](#) |
 [Publications](#) |
 [EU Projects](#) |
 [EU Policy](#) |
 [Legislation and Case Law](#) |
 [Case Law](#) |
 [EU Projects and Funding](#) |
 [EU Legislation](#) |
 [National Rapporteurs](#) |
 [International Legislation](#) |
 [Videos](#) |
 [United Nations](#)

More

CALENDAR

October 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5