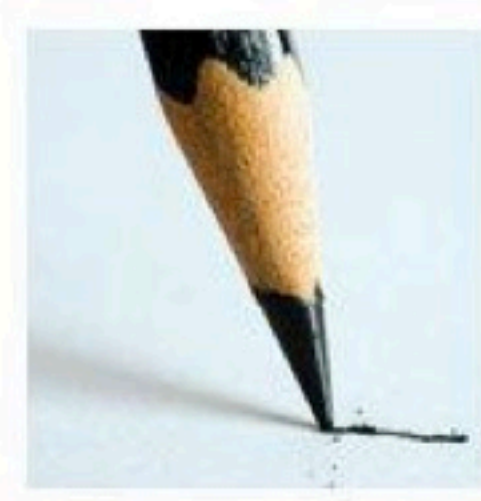




## Trafficking explained



Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime and a gross violation of human rights, which can be classified as a modern form of slavery. It occurs all over the world and affects almost every country as an origin, transit or destination country or sometimes a combination of all.

The global scale of human trafficking is difficult to quantify, due to the hidden nature of the crime. Figures often may have been based on conflicting definitions or compiled for different purposes, and are therefore seldom comparable. Trafficking in human beings is often linked with other forms of organised crime. According to the United Nations, it is considered the second source of illicit profits for organised criminals after those obtained from the drugs trade.

### FACTS & DEFINITIONS

#### What is trafficking in human beings?

Traffickers **exploit vulnerable people for financial gain**, by tricking or forcing them into (mainly):

- **prostitution / sexual exploitation** (79% of cases\*)
- **forced labour** (18% of cases\* though increasing in some EU countries)

\* 2010 estimates from [UNODC The Globalization of Crime](#)

Less-common forms of exploitation include forcing victims to **beg** and removing and **selling their organs**.

Trafficking in human beings is often linked to other forms of **organised crime** the UN estimates it is the second-biggest source of illicit profits after the drugs trade.

#### How does it happen?

- **Recruitment** victims are recruited by acquaintances, relatives or criminal gangs, often with promises of well-paid jobs.
- **Transportation** victims may be moved from remote rural areas to cities or from poorer to richer countries.
- **Manipulation & coercion** traffickers control victims through deception and (the threat of) force.

#### What are the root causes of trafficking in human beings?

- **Vulnerability** due to poverty, marginalisation, economic exclusion, armed conflicts, social and gender inequality, discrimination against ethnic minorities and infringements of children's rights
- **Inadequate laws and policies** in many countries the risk of getting caught is small.
- **Demand** in richer countries/urban areas especially for prostitution and cheap labour.

#### What is the scale of the problem?

The scale of trafficking in human beings is difficult to quantify reliably, and figures are seldom comparable. Estimated numbers of people trafficked, per year:

- **globally** 2.45 million ([UN Office on Drugs and Crime](#))
  - of which, 1.2 million children ([UNICEF](#))
- **across international borders** 800,000, with many more trafficked within their own countries ([International Organisation for Migration](#)).
- **to or within the EU** several hundred thousand people (mainly women and children [Europol](#)).

The European Commission is currently working with national authorities and universities to compile a list of minimum trafficking indicators that will go some way to **standardising information-collecting** across the EU and give robust figures on trafficking trends.

The Commission hopes to reach agreement on the list among EU governments by the beginning of 2011, so **EU-wide data can then be collected** in line with the indicators.

#### Which parts of the world are most affected by trafficking in human beings?

Trafficking in human beings is **global** almost every country is an origin, transit or destination country sometimes all three.

- Most trafficking is **national or regional**, though **long-distance** trafficking (between continents) exists.
- The **EU is primarily a destination region** for victims from across the world. Trafficking into the EU appears to have increased in recent years, particularly through and from **Russia, Ukraine, and central/south-eastern Europe**. Victims are also **recruited in EU countries** and trafficked either internally or to other countries, inside or outside the EU.

#### How does EU law define trafficking in human beings?

The new **Directive 2011/36/EU** provides the following definition:

he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, including exchange or transfer of control over that person, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."

"A position of vulnerability occurs when the person has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved."

"Exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, including begging, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the exploitation of criminal activities or the removal of organs."

This is almost identical to the definition in the [UN protocol on trafficking in persons](#).

#### What is the difference between trafficking in human beings and people smuggling?

There are four main differences between trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

1. **Consent to enter a country illegally:** Smuggling migrants, although often undertaken in dangerous or humiliating conditions, involves consent. Some trafficked persons might start their journey by agreeing to be smuggled into a country illegally, but many do not, and never have any intention of doing so. In cases of trafficking from third countries, the victim may enter a country legally, on a tourist or student visa, (sometimes obtained with the help of traffickers), then be exploited by traffickers and held in the country beyond the expiration date, possibly against their will. Trafficking victims coming from EU Member States move legally all over the EU.
2. **Exploitation:** Smuggling of migrants ends with the migrants' arrival at their destination. In a trafficking case, the person is *further exploited* in coercive or inhuman conditions after crossing the border.
3. **Transnationality:** Smuggling of migrants is always transnational. Trafficking in human beings takes place both across international borders (international trafficking) and within the borders of their own countries (internal trafficking).
4. **Source of profits:** In smuggling cases, profits are derived from the transportation or facilitation of the illegal entry or stay of a person into another country. In trafficking cases, profits are derived from the exploitation.

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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