Trafficking in human beings: more victims in the EU but Member states are slow to respond

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23,632 people were identified or presumed victims of trafficking in the EU over the 2008-2010 period. This is the most striking figure emerging from the first report on trafficking in human beings in Europe, published today by the European Commission. The report also highlights that the number of people being trafficked in and to the EU increased by 18% from 2008 to 2010, but less traffickers end up behind bars, since convictions decreased by 13% over the same period.

Despite this worrying background, to date, only 6 out of the 27 EU Member States have fully transposed the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive into their national legislation and three countries have only reported partial transposition of the directive, with the deadline having expired on 6 April 2013.

"It is difficult to imagine that in our free and democratic EU countries tens of thousands of human beings can be deprived of their liberty and exploited, traded as commodities for profit. But this is the sad truth and trafficking in human beings is all around us, closer than we think. I am very disappointed to see that, despite these alarming trends, only a few countries have implemented the anti-trafficking legislation and I urge those who have not yet done so to respect their obligations", said Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Full and swift transposition of the EU Directive
In order to curb these trends the ambitious legislation and measures to address trafficking in human beings have to be adequately transposed and implemented.

If the Directive is indeed fully transposed, it has the potential to have a real and concrete impact on the lives of the victims and to prevent others from falling victim to such a heinous crime. This new EU legislation covers actions in different areas such as criminal law provisions, prosecution of offenders, victims' support and victims' rights in criminal proceedings and prevention. It also foresees the establishment in each Member State of a national rapporteur or equivalent mechanism reporting on trends, gathering data and measure the impact of anti-trafficking activities.

EU rights of victims of trafficking in human beings
Today the European Commission is also presenting an overview of the rights of the victims of trafficking in human being to provide clear, user-friendly information on the labour, social, residence and compensation rights individuals are entitled to under EU law. Such an overview will be used by victims, and practitioners (NGOs, the police, immigration authorities, labour inspectors, border guards, health and social workers) working in the field of trafficking in human beings. It will contribute to the effective realisation of these rights by helping authorities in EU Member States to deliver the assistance and protection that victims need and deserve.

Data collection: some key findings
Eurostat and DG Home Affairs are publishing the first report on statistical data on trafficking in human beings at EU level, covering the reference years 2008, 2009 and 2010. All EU Member States have contributed to the report - the collection of comparable and reliable data remains however challenging and figures should be interpreted with caution, as it only represents the tip of the iceberg. A study by the International Labour Organisation shows that 880,000 people in the EU are victims of forced labour, including forced sexual exploitation.

- Victims

The total number of identified and presumed victims was 6,309 in 2008; 7795 in 2009 and 9,528 in 2010, with an increase of 18% over the 3 reference years.
The profile of victims by gender and age in the three reference years was 68% women, 17% men, 12% girls and 3% boys.
The majority of the identified and presumed victims over the three reference years are trafficked for sexual exploitation (62%). Trafficking for forced labour (25%) comes second and trafficking in other forms such as trafficking for the removal of organs, for criminal activities or for selling of children follow with much smaller percentages (14%).
The majority of the identified and presumed victims over the three reference years are from EU Member States (61%), followed by victims from Africa (14%), Asia (6%) and Latin America (5%).
Most victims detected in EU Member States are citizens from Romania and Bulgaria.

Most victims having citizenship outside of the EU Member States are from Nigeria and China.
The number of residence permits for victims of human trafficking having citizenship outside of the EU increased from 703 in 2008 to 1,196 in 2010.

- Traffickers
The total number of suspected traffickers in EU Member States decreased by approximately 17% from 2008 - 2010.
75% of the suspected traffickers are male.
Suspected traffickers for sexual exploitation represent approximately 84 % of the total number of suspected traffickers over the three reference years.
The total number of convictions for trafficking in human beings decreased by 13% from 2008 to 2010.
Useful Links
MEMO/13/331

Cecilia Malmström's website

Follow Commissioner Malmström on Twitter

DG Home Affairs website

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European Commission Anti-trafficking website

News page:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2013/20130415_01_en.htm

Infographics:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/multimedia/infographics/index_en.htm#0801262488c18d4a

The statistical report on trafficking in human beings:

The victim's rights:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/multimedia/publications/index_en.htm#08012624899cc746

Contacts:

Michele Cercone (+32 2 298 09 63)
Tove Ernst (+32 2 298 67 64)

Company Contact:

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CoinShares

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