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## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE**

Human trafficking is a serious crime that abuses people's fundamental rights and dignity. It involves the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people for the sole purpose of economic gain.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It is often transnational in character and its victims are of both genders and all ages.

Trafficking can take various forms and may involve:

- sexual exploitation;
- forced labour or services;
- slavery, servitude and related practices.

Trafficking can also take the form of exploitation for the purpose of forced criminality, such as pickpocketing, shoplifting and drug trafficking.

Human exploitation can be hidden behind other criminal offences, such as prostitution, irregular migration, property crime or even labour disputes. Victims are often exploited in multiple ways, or may be involved in other illicit activities, thus resulting in cases of human trafficking that are not investigated or recorded as such. Moreover, differences in national legal definitions of human trafficking hinder the comparison and assessment of common trends and patterns across the EU.

In the past decade, law enforcement authorities in the EU have witnessed a considerable increase in intra-EU trafficking. In 2014, for example, the majority of human trafficking victims (71 %) registered in Europol's database were EU citizens.

Human trafficking is not people smuggling. Although patterns of human trafficking are similar to those seen in people smuggling, they are different legally, a broad distinction can be made between the two.

In general, the individuals who pay a smuggler in order to gain illegal entry to a country do so voluntarily whereas the victims of human trafficking are often duped or forced into entering another country. In addition, people smuggling does not necessarily involve exploitation for economic purposes.

A Europol priority. Human trafficking is a major problem in the EU and a priority for Europol and law enforcement agencies in

EU Member States. Indeed, it is one of the EMPACT priorities, Europol's priority crime areas, under the 2018–2021 EU Policy Cycle.

In addition, the EU Strategy on eradicating human trafficking 2012–2016 identifies five key ways to do this:

- identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking;
- step up the prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- pursue the prosecution of traffickers more robustly;
- enhance coordination and cooperation among key actors, including at the level of policy;
- increasing knowledge of, and producing effective responses to, all forms of human trafficking.

Europol's strategic and operational support focuses on organised criminal gangs engaged in human trafficking in at least two EU Member States. In 2007, Europol launched an operationally focussed project addressing human trafficking. Twenty-five countries are now participating. In 2014, law enforcement in these countries made 3 820 contributions to Europol's dedicated team on human trafficking, an increase of 65 % on the previous year.

Another factor contributing to the rise in trafficking has been militarization and war in the Balkans. The presence of a large number of foreign men in the Balkans after the war in Yugoslavia led to the trafficking of thousands of women for commercial sex exploitation. The connection between military bases and sex work is a well-known phenomenon and soldiers have helped drive the demand for brothels in this region.

Outside Balkan nations, the legalization of soliciting prostitution has also been linked to increased trafficking, with the Netherlands being identified as having a large percentage of trafficking victims transported there.

Combating trafficking in human beings. Trafficking in human beings is a complex, multi-faceted crime and a severe violation of human rights, concerning all OSCE participating States. It intersects with issues of fundamental rights and the rule of law, law enforcement and crime control, inequality and discrimination, corruption, economic deprivation and migration.

The Organization set up the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to help participating States develop and implement effective policies for combating human trafficking. The Office of the Special Representative ensures co-ordination of the OSCE's efforts in combating trafficking in human beings across all three dimensions

of the OSCE and acts as a focal point for the OSCE's efforts in this area. It assists participating States in the implementation of OSCE commitments through technical assistance and capacity-building. It also conducts research and helps develop policies on persistent and emerging trends in the field of human trafficking.

The OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings provides the framework for OSCE activities in support of the anti-trafficking efforts of OSCE participating States. It contains core commitments for action at the national level, known as the "3 Ps":

- Prevention, including addressing root causes and awareness-raising;
- Prosecution, including investigation and adjudication;
- Protection of victims' rights, including assistance and compensation.

OSCE added a fourth "P" – partnerships – highlighting the need for enhanced co-operation with international organizations and other external partners, including on issues related to law enforcement, National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs) and joint work between public institutions and the private sector.

A number of OSCE field operations participate in this work and help strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities, as well as civil society organizations, in preventing human trafficking, strengthening prosecution efforts by training law enforcement agencies and other practitioners and assisting victims.

#### ***Список використаних джерел***

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