EWL welcomes strong focus on women’s rights in new EU approach to human trafficking.

**[Brussels, 19 June 2012]** The European Women’s Lobby (EWL), the largest coalition of women’s NGOs in Europe, has welcomed the launch today of the new [EU Strategy to combat human trafficking](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/crime/docs/trafficking_in_human_beings_eradication-2012_2016_en.pdf#zoom=100), which has a strong focus on women’s rights and gender equality.

The Strategy, which aims to provide an integrated, coherent, and outcome-oriented strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings, was presented today by EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström.

The EWL has long maintained that the only effective way to counter human trafficking is to address its roots in gender inequalities, notably demand for prostitution. ‘We are very pleased to see this new Strategy acknowledge the strong gender dimension of human trafficking and focus on reducing demand’, comments Viviane Teitelbaum, Vice-President of the EWL.

[Data](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/crime/infographics/infographics_ht_in_eu.pdf#zoom=100) collected by the European Commission in September 2011 confirms United Nations findings that more than three quarters of victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation, the vast majority of them being women and girls.

The [Statement](http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article3694&lang=en) released today by the EWL also welcomed the provisions of the Strategy for strengthening cooperation with civil society organisations, and called for women’s NGOs to be involved in its implementation ‘at all levels’ and for funding to be ensured for their work beyond 2014 when the current EU budget expires.

‘The EWL would like to remind the [European Commission] of the key role played by women’s organisations and service providers on the ground, which support and accompany women victims of trafficking on a daily basis’, reads the Statement. ‘It is essential that targeted budget lines for projects supporting women and girls victims of prostitution and trafficking and addressing the root causes of trafficking for sexual exploitation are sustained.’