



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN THE EU: A GENDERED ISSUE

The **European Women's Lobby** (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 27 EU Member States and three of the candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide organisations, representing a total of more than 2000 associations.

What is trafficking in human beings (THB)?

Trafficking in human beings in the EU: a serious policy issue

- The EU has a new directive on THB since April: Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.
- EU member states have to bring into force its provisions by April 2013.
- The EU has appointed an EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. MS should establish national rapporteurs.
- The EU defines THB as a criminal offence. Traffickers can get from 5 to 10 years of imprisonment.

The definition of THB is about exploitation

THB always involves the recruitment or transport or transfer of a person across continents, countries, regions or cities, **for the purpose of exploitation.**

“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.” (Art 2.3)

→ **As long as those forms of exploitation are tolerated, THB will happen to fuel the systems of exploitation.**

Facts and figures about exploitation and THB

A low risk – high reward activity...

- There are 2.45 million adults and children in exploitation as a result of trafficking at any time.
- Of these, at least 1.39 million are victims of sexual exploitation.
Trafficking in Persons Report 2009, US Department of State
- The profits generated during the exploitation of trafficking victims reach US\$ 31.6 billion annually.
- Victims of sexual exploitation account for US\$ 27.8 billion.
- In the EU, the value of THB amounts to 3 billion euros (including internal THB).

Europol May 2007

→ **We need to turn THB into a ‘high risk – low reward’ activity.**

Deterring traffickers and exploiters: No demand, no supply, no profit...

The best ways to deter traffickers are to criminalise them and to eradicate the demand for exploitation.

- Consumer demand (including prostitute-users)
- Employer demand



The demand for exploitation (fueling trafficking in persons) proliferates in sector characterised by:

- Informality or illegality and poor regulation
- Low profit margins and low wage
- Low status unskilled work
- Temporary or seasonal employment

Demand can be reduced or fueled by government policies, social and cultural attitudes, and the economics of trafficking.

Addressing the demand

The EU directive suggests MS to take measures to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation related to THB (Article 18).

Addressing the demand is about:

- Awareness raising campaigns
- Criminalisation of consumers and employers
- Minimum standards against exploitation (minimum wage, legal age for marriage, prohibition of child prostitution...)

THB is a gendered phenomenon

The EU directive “recognises the gender-specific phenomenon of trafficking, and that women and men are trafficked for different purposes” (recital 2).

This is due to the relative value and roles that societies attach to each gender.

Women are trafficked for different purposes than men

Women are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic and care work:

- Women are reported to be victims in more than 80% of trafficking cases
- Women constitute 85% of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation

*UNODC 2009 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, and
UNODC Preliminary findings of the human trafficking database (2003)*

- In Ireland, migrant women make up 1/3 of elder care labor force and more than 1/3 of those working in private homes.
- They are **vulnerable workers**: lack of employment alternatives, lack of social support networks, fear of being deported...

Walsch & O'Shea

Women and girls are also victims of organ trafficking:

- In a survey performed in India, 71% of donors were female. When they were asked why they had acted as commercial living donors instead of their spouses, the most frequent reason proffered was that the man was the breadwinner and/or that he was ill.
- Commercial living donors are frequently illiterate, which makes them especially vulnerable.

*Joint Council of Europe / UN study, Trafficking in organs,
tissues and cells and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of the removal of organs, 2010*

Structural gender inequality leads to women's higher vulnerability to exploitation.



Many women victims might face several forms of exploitation

“In certain cases, the servants are forced to perform other tasks in addition to household-related ones, such as begging, selling in the streets, working in a restaurant, providing sexual services or prostitution.”

OSCE, Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude, 2010

New forms of THB are gendered and build on the tolerated violation of women's rights

- 2009, 'Romanian scandal': Israeli doctors involved in the trafficking of eggs of young poor women in Romania, some of whom were only 15 years old.
- A 16-year-old factory worker was left in critical condition after the procedure

Scott Carny, Red Market Blog, "International Baby Market"

Moreover, men and women suffer from trafficking differently

- 95% of female victims said they experienced physical and sexual violence during trafficking.
Stolen Smiles: A summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

This is due to gender inequality and the tolerance for violence against women.

An example of the perpetuation of violence against women and violation of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights within THB:

- Women from Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Cameroun, trafficked to Oujda, are forced to become pregnant, so that they are less likely to be deported. Some male migrants said they'd paid higher fee to be related to one of the pregnant women with the goal to claim family reunification under the Spanish law.

Source: FRONTEX

A lack of gendered policies

As THB is gendered, we need gendered policies to tackle trafficking.

EWL 2011 Barometer looks at National Action Plans (NAPs) on violence against women

→ The majority of NAPs on THB are gender blind...

The root causes of THB are gendered

We can reduce the vulnerability of women to THB by:

- Combating violence against women
- Ensuring women an equal access to and control over economic and financial resources
- Promoting respectful sexuality education
- Breaking stereotypes on migrant women, combating racism and developing legal migration paths in order to reduce their risk of becoming undocumented and homeless

The system of prostitution: the biggest drive for THB

- 79% of reported trafficking in human beings is for sexual exploitation

UNODC 2009 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, and UNODC Preliminary findings of the human trafficking database (2003)

→ **It is urgent to address the system of prostitution in order to stop trafficking for sexual exploitation**



The trend of increasing prostitution use is linked to:

- Increasingly consumer-oriented society
- Pushback against changing gender roles
- Greater mobility of populations
- Greater income disparities
- Greater access to prostitution as a result of the internet & a boom in prostitution and sex-related venues

Marttila, 2003 & 2007

The work of the European Women's Lobby on trafficking in women

Three-year project 'Nordic-Baltic Network' (2005-2008), with NGOs and government agencies
→ concrete activities to support and assist women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation

Nordic Baltic Network - Standards for implementation of a victim-centred approach

- Identification of women victims of THB
- Residence status and Reflection delay
- Shelter and specialised services
- Referrals and Safe returns
- Victim protection and data protection
- Compensation and Financial assistance

The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook (2006, EWL-CATW)

- Tools for a gendered approach to trafficking for sexual exploitation
- Looking at the impact of prostitution legislation on the scale of THB

Film 'Not for sale' (2006, EWL-CATW)

- Awareness raising tool on survivors of the system of prostitution

EWL publications and projects on violence against women

- *Unveiling the Hidden Data on Domestic Violence in the EU (1999)* → first European-wide data!
- *Towards a Common Framework to Monitor Progress in Combating Violence against Women (2001)* → Indicators on violence against women
- *Reality Check: When women's NGOs map policies and legislation on violence against women in Europe (2007)* → shadow report to Council of Europe publication
- *Three-year project 'Nordic-Baltic Network', with NGOs and government agencies* → concrete activities to support and assist women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (2005-2008)
- *The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook (2006, EWL-CATW)*
- *Not for sale (2006, EWL-CATW)* → awareness film on women survivors of prostitution
- EWL position paper *Towards a Europe free from all forms of male violence against women (2010)*
- EWL contribution to the EC consultation on an EU strategy on violence against women (2010)
- EWL lobbying kit for a strong Council of Europe convention on violence against women (2010)
- EWL study on sexual violence (commissioned by EIGE – 2011)
- EWL Barometer *National Actions Plans on violence against women in the EU (2011)*
- EWL campaign *'Together for a Europe free from prostitution' (2010-12)*