



EU Side Event
***"Trafficking of women and girls
as a form of violence against women:
the EU response"***

Side event organized by the EU
on the occasion of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

When: Wednesday 6th March 2012, 11:30-12:45 am
Where: Room D, UN NLB Conference

Speakers:

- **Maria Arnholm**, Minister for Gender Equality and Deputy Minister for Education of Sweden
- **Raimonda Murmokaite**, Ambassador of Lithuania to the United Nations
- **Representative from the United States of America (tbc)**
- **Representative from the Brazilian Government (tbc)**
- **Mikael Gustafsson**, Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, European Parliament, European Union
- **Ms Viviane Teitelbaum**, President of the European Women's Lobby

Chair: Myria Vassiliadou, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission

Aim of side event

This side event will present the European Union's framework for addressing trafficking of women and girls as a form of violence against women. It will bring together EU Member States, EU Institutions, other countries, international organisations and civil society to exchange practices and approaches.

The EU wants to underline that a gender-specific, human-rights approach is needed in tackling this complex transnational phenomenon, as is the active involvement of all relevant actors and sectors. The event will be moderated by Myria Vassiliadou, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission.

Background

Trafficking in women and girls is **the slavery of our times** and constitutes a form of **violence against women**. As such, trafficking in human beings is prohibited by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (article 5). The EU legal and policy framework for addressing trafficking in human beings is dynamic and comprehensive following a human-rights and gender-specific approach.

- **EU Legislation**

For the first time EU legislation from 2011 adopts a gender-specific approach to trafficking in human beings recognising that women and men, girls and boys, are trafficked into different situations and that they require gender-specific assistance and support. According to the [Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims](#) trafficking in human beings is a human-rights violation. It highlights that "the 'push' and 'pull' factors may be different for women and men depending on the sectors concerned, such as trafficking in human beings into the sex industry or for labour exploitation in, for example, construction work, the agricultural sector or domestic servitude".

Furthermore, this EU legislation sets the frame by obliging Member States to take effective and **practical measures to curb demand**, including by urging Member States to consider measures for **criminalising the use of services** with the knowledge that the person is a victim of trafficking. The European Commission will **report** to the European Parliament and the Council by 2016, assessing the impact of existing national law, accompanied by adequate proposals.

- **EU Policy**

Taking EU legislation a step further, the European Commission launched the new and integrated [EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016](#). For the first time the EU Strategy identifies **violence against women and gender inequalities as a root cause** of trafficking and sets out a series of actions to address the gender dimensions thereof, as vulnerability to trafficking for different forms of exploitation is shaped by gender. Among others the **EU Strategy places demand reduction as one of its priorities**.

Member States of the European Union in the October 2012 [Council Conclusions on the new EU Strategy](#) acknowledged the gender-specific nature of trafficking in human beings and affirmed that trafficking in human beings needs to be addressed in an integrated, multidisciplinary way and that measures should be human rights based, victim-centered, and gender specific, taking into account also the best interest of the child. They further called on Member States to ensure they translate into national laws EU legislation and to ratify, without delay, the **UN Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings**.

- **Data**

Preliminary data collected by the European Commission for the period 2008-2010 demonstrate that three quarters of registered victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation (an increase from 70 per cent in 2008 to 76 per cent in 2010) and the rest for labour exploitation (a decrease from 24 per cent in 2008 to 14 per cent in 2010), forced begging (3 per cent) and domestic servitude (1 per cent).

Twenty-one EU Member States were able to give gender-specific information. This shows that over 2008-2010 women and girls are the main victims of trafficking in human beings;

female victims accounted for 79 per cent (of whom 12 per cent were girls) and male victims for 21 per cent (of whom 3 per cent were boys). Most Member States reported that the majority of victims come from within the EU, mainly from Romania and Bulgaria. Most reported victims from non-EU countries are from Nigeria, Vietnam, Ukraine, Russia and China.

- **EU Action**

Member States commit themselves on working together towards eradication of trafficking in human beings, as reflected in the Council Conclusions on the new EU Strategy, as well as to ensure that EU legislation is translated into national legislation.

Demonstrating the importance of understanding and addressing demand reduction, the EU has launched **a research on reducing the demand for and supply of services and goods** by victims of trafficking in human beings. The research will provide material for the European Commission's 2016 report on assessing the legal measures that some Member States have taken to criminalise the use of services of victims of trafficking in human beings and proposing further action. The **gender** dimension of demand will also be analysed in this context.

In 2013, the European Commission will launch the ***EU Civil Society Platform***, which will serve as a forum for civil society to interact and exchange experiences and best practices and contribute to advocacy efforts. The EU Civil Society Platform is open to civil society organisations and service providers working on victim protection and assistance in Member States and selected third countries.

In 2013, the European Commission will launch an ***EU study on the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings***. While women and girls tend to be trafficked for exploitation in the sex industry, in domestic work or the care sector, men and boys tend to be victims of forced labour, in particular in agriculture among others. In addition, the short and long term consequences on trafficked women and men might differ, depending on the form of trafficking and gender. It will further analyse prevention initiatives already in place to target trafficking in human beings carried out by various actors. The European Commission will then develop EU-wide guidance on future prevention measures and gender-specific information campaigns with the Member States.

In 2012 the European Union adopted the second and [final Report of the "Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against trafficking in human beings; Towards Global EU Action against Trafficking in Human Beings"](#). This report **adopted a list of priority countries and regions** for further strengthening and streamlining cooperation and partnership¹.

For further information please visit the **EU Anti-Trafficking website**:

<http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/>

¹ Specific countries in alphabetical order: Albania, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam; (sources of most identified traffickers and victims in the EU); Priority regions shall include: candidate and potential candidate countries from the Western Balkans, countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, both Eastern Partnership and Southern Mediterranean countries. Other regions and countries of particular importance for cooperation on trafficking in human beings based on the statistical data and information referred above: the CELAC countries (Community of Latin America and Caribbean States) (in particular Paraguay and Colombia), the Silk Route region (in particular India), South East Asian countries (in particular Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines) and Western Africa (in particular Sierra Leone).