

# Commission to Strengthen EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

## News

Anna Pingen

On 14 April 2021, the Commission published a [Communication on the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings](#). By identifying key priorities and proposing concrete actions, the Commission aims to combat trafficking in human beings more effectively. The Commission made clear that the Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings is intertwined with the new 2021 [EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime](#) (presented on the same day), as trafficking in human beings is often perpetrated by organised crime groups.

Regarding the new THB strategy, the Commission emphasised that it will build up on the [EU Anti-trafficking Directive](#) of 5 April 2011, which is the backbone of the EU's legislation on combatting trafficking in human beings. In so doing, the Commission intends to further support Member States in implementing the Anti-trafficking Directive.

Further aims of the strategy are:

- **Reducing the demand that fosters trafficking:** The Commission wishes to assess the possibility of having minimum EU rules to criminalise the exploitive use of services of trafficking victims. As part of its aim to prevent human trafficking, the Commission hopes to organise awareness-raising campaigns with Member States and civil society;
- **Disrupting the business model of traffickers:** In an effort to disrupt the business model of traffickers, the Commission plans to enhance the coordination of law enforcement services in cross-border and international cases. This reinforcement of cooperation will be achieved by means of joint investigation teams and joint action days. In response to the relative low numbers of prosecutions and convictions of traffickers and in order to break the trafficking chain, the Commission stresses the importance of a “robust criminal justice response” based on the specific training of law enforcement and justice practitioners. With trafficking operations being increasingly conducted over the Internet, the Commission will push dialogue with the private sector and digital industries forward;
- **Improving the protection of victims:** This strategy seeks to protect especially women and children, as they comprise the vulnerable majority (72%) of all victims of trafficking in the EU. To protect these victims, the Commission would like to facilitate the early identification of victims by training professionals, such as border guards, police officers, social workers, and inspector services. It would also like to improve the victims' referral to further assistance and protection, especially in the cross-border context;
- **Promoting closer cooperation** between EU Member States, countries of origin/transit of victims and international/regional partners, including international organisations.

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