

# EMSC Activity Report 2018 Published



**Cornelia Riehle**

## News

On 25 March 2019, Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) published its [activity report for the year 2018](#).

The EMSC was set up in February 2016 to support Member States' investigations and to increase cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies.

According to the report, with regard to migrant smuggling in 2018, the EMSC handled 3657 new cases and 18,234 messages received by Europol's Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA). It also took part in 39 Action Days against migrant smuggling. Even more new cases were received with regard to trafficking in human beings (1601 cases).

According to the migrant smuggling intelligence picture, the overall migration flow towards Europe decreased in 2018. At the same time, facilitated secondary movements increased. Common *modi operandi* for secondary movements observed in 2018 were – often life threatening – concealment methods, intra-Schengen flights by means of fraudulent documents, and misuse of asylum procedures. In the future, the report sees continued migratory pressure from African countries. New anonymising technologies are increasingly impeding the tracing or monitoring of criminal targets by law enforcement agencies.

Recent trends with regard to trafficking in human beings see persons being trafficked not only for the purpose of sexual exploitation but also for the purpose of labour exploitation, forced begging (including disabled victims), forced sham marriages between EU and third-country nationals, and, to a lesser extent, social benefit fraud. With regard to labour exploitation, the report expresses hope that the creation of the European Labour Agency will contribute to an improved response to these developments.

Lastly, the report sets out the EMSC's response to these crimes in the form of coordinated, EU-wide investigations. The approach focuses on high-value targets (HVT), namely those individuals that constitute the highest risk of serious and organised crime in the EU. In addition, the EMSC supports regional, operational platforms. Ultimately, an Information Clearing House (ICH) has been established to enhance the intelligence picture on organised migrant smuggling from source and transit countries.

Looking at the future, the EMSC will continue focusing on the identification of HVTs. Furthermore, a Joint Liaison Task Force on migrant smuggling (JLTF-MS) will be established at Europol.

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