
European Commission: stricter rules to fight human trafficking. Putting an end to forced marriages

Every year, over 7 thousand people are victims of human trafficking in the EU, even if the real numbers “can be expected to be much higher” because such phenomenon remains undetected. The estimated turnover from such trade reaches 2.7 billion euros. The victims mainly include women and girls but the number of men exploited as labour is also increasing. Based on such figures, today the European Commission announced it wants to “strengthen the rules that prevent and combat trafficking in human beings”. Such measures will “provide stronger tools for law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute new forms of exploitation”, by adding to the list of crimes “that knowingly using the services provided by victims of trafficking constitutes a criminal offence”. Companies too, not just private people, can receive compulsory fines (exclusion from public benefits, closing down of facilities). Such measures include recommendations to “improve procedures for early identification and support for victims”, and the development of a European Referral Mechanism. So, according to the European Commission’s proposal, forced marriage and illegal adoption shall be criminally prosecuted. Eurostat will collect information about EU-wide human trafficking. In addition, since the forms of human trafficking are evolving in a platform-mediated dimension, measures will also be taken to fight crimes committed or eased by the Internet and social media. Now, the European Parliament and the European Council will have to take position on such proposal; then, the member states will implement them in their national laws.

Sarah Numico