
EU Parliament: trafficking in human beings, new rules against trafficking and to protect the victims

In Strasbourg today, the European Parliament gave the go-ahead to the revised rules on the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings and the protection of victims. With 563 votes for, 7 against and 17 abstentions, The MEPs approved a directive that extends the field of application of the current measures “to better fight and prevent human trafficking and better support its victims”. The new law criminalises forced marriage, illegal adoption and exploitation of surrogacy all over Europe as well. It is expected – or at least this is the ambition of the European Parliament – to: strengthen coordination between anti-trafficking and asylum authorities, “so that victims who also need international protection may receive appropriate support and protection, and their asylum rights may be abided by”; criminalise the use of services provided by victims of trafficking, if the user knows that the victim is being exploited, to reduce demand for exploitation; impose sanctions on companies that have been charged with trafficking; provide support to the victims, including access to safe shelters and housing, with a focus on the more vulnerable groups. Co-rapporteur Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (Spain) stated: “Twelve years after adopting the Directive, MEPs have had to overhaul EU rules, as trafficking has become more sophisticated and the resources at our disposal remained rudimentary. We need to be able to find victims early, and protect and support them: so, we have bravely improved our proposal. Trafficking is torture; the offenders must pay for what they have done, and victims must be compensated for what they have suffered.

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