



## 5<sup>th</sup> EU Anti-Trafficking Day

*Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings*

### Joint statement of the Heads of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies

We, the undersigned,

Dr. Ferenc Bánfi, Director of CEPOL – European Police College

Mr. Rob Visser, Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office

Ms. Virginija Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality

Mr. Aled Williams, President of Eurojust

Mr. Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol

Mr. Morten Kjaerum, Director of The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Brig. Gen. Ilkka Laitinen, Executive Director of Frontex

Together, we commit to address trafficking in human beings in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner. In partnership with EU Member States, EU institutions and other partners, we will focus on better prevention of trafficking, more efficient investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, and a more effective protection of victims in compliance with fundamental rights standards. To this end, we will work closely with civil society organisations within and outside the EU.

Our approach is in line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and the Stockholm Programme. We will therefore use the new powers provided by the Lisbon Treaty to further implement, together with other involved institutions and the Member States, the EU Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against THB in order to create a coherent pan-European approach of the EU's efforts against trafficking in human beings.

We are equally committed to join efforts supporting the EU Member States in implementing the provisions of the newly adopted Directive of the 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA

The fundamental rights of victims of human trafficking are central to EU policy in this field. Therefore, in addition to our specific mandate and activities, we are all committed to carrying out our work in full respect of human rights in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights. We will also ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in our structures, policies, and programmes and that particular attention should be paid to the protection of rights and adequate treatment of vulnerable groups of victims of human trafficking, in particular women, children and unaccompanied minors.





Using our unique strategic position, knowledge and expertise we commit to working closely with the European Commission and the Member States to ensure that differences in practices and tradition will not jeopardise or prejudice the rights of victims of trafficking.

In our action we will respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, keeping in mind that the agencies should be the operational tools for the Member States and for the EU institutions when protecting the freedom of citizens and ensuring the security of the EU.

A focus shall lie on prevention. In this context, it is important to work towards a high level of awareness in the population in order to combat trafficking. The evolving framework of the EU internal security requires the joint effort of the EU Agencies. This includes improving border security by identifying both traffickers and potential victims of human trafficking. At the same time we are conscious that many victims are trafficked and exploited within the EU borders. Acknowledging the many manifestations of trafficking, Agencies will work to ensure that the rights of victims are respected in practice, which includes due consideration of gender perspective and related factors that, in combination, can increase vulnerability. Towards this aim we will design complementary training programmes targeting senior and front line officials to ensure that the needs and rights of victims are addressed. In doing so, we are committed to enhancing synergies across EU agencies active in the preparation of training for law enforcement and judicial officials.

From the perspective of law enforcement and judicial cooperation, we are committed to assisting Member States to increase the number of human trafficking investigations and prosecutions as well as to coordinate cross-border action, so that human traffickers are brought to justice fairly and efficiently. Judicial cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings should be global in outlook and include cooperation with non-EU countries and the facilitation of investigations outside EU borders where appropriate.

From the same perspective, seizure of criminal assets in trafficking cases requires proper judicial follow-up to ensure that crime does not pay. Our agencies will help coordinate investigations and prosecutions conducted by Member States' authorities which address the financial aspects of organised crime. This means taking concrete steps to improve the tracing, confiscation and recovery of proceeds from human trafficking, while maintaining full regard for fundamental rights. We will promote the social re-use of assets seized, to facilitate the rehabilitation of victims of crime and to help prevent future exploitation. We will also seek to increase the number of Joint Investigation Teams, as well as parallel and mirror investigations, whenever possible and necessary for cross-border anti-trafficking operations.

Developing new threat assessment methodologies at the EU level as part of the new EU policy cycle for serious and organised international crime, refining analytical capabilities, defining intervention priorities and establishing links with national security strategies as well as the EU external security strategy are key elements that will help us developing necessary coordinated planning but also flexibility to respond to emerging threats and react more quickly to the new forms of human trafficking.

We will enhance our present efforts in order to ensure better collection, access and sharing of information related to trafficking victims and organised crime groups. In this process we will take the necessary steps to observe EU data protection rules.





In order to ensure better results in working towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings, each Agency will nominate a contact point, who will have an overview of the Agency's action in his/her field and may represent the Agency in EU and relevant fora. This person will ensure improved communication between the Agency and EU institutions, including the EU Anti Trafficking Coordinator and with relevant Intergovernmental Organisations or Nongovernmental Organisations in the field. The contact persons will meet when needed to discuss common actions at an expert level.

In order to translate this commitment into actions, and as the next step, we will establish and implement concrete joint priorities and activities in our planning and where relevant propose these for our upcoming work programmes.

It is only by working together through a properly integrated approach that we can help address the misery caused by human trafficking.

