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icon presenting identifying and supporting survivors of human trafficking

A key element of effective border management is curtailing the work of smuggling networks and human traffickers. According to data from Europol and Interpol, 90% of people who cross the EU's external borders have paid migrant smugglers.^{[31](#)} Following up on the European Commission's legislative proposals of November 2023^{[32](#)} and the launching the [Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling](#),^{[33](#)} the European Parliament finalised the amended 'Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims', which entered into force in July 2024.^{[34](#)} The amended directive expanded the forms of exploitation that fall under trafficking, introduced more stringent penalties for persons or entities accountable for trafficking offences; and reinforced support for survivors to human trafficking.^{[35](#)} To strengthen the operational dimension, in June 2024 EU Member States agreed on the Council's negotiating mandate for a regulation to enhance the role of Europol in the fight against migrant smuggling.^{[36](#)} ^{[37](#)}

A [progress report](#) on combating trafficking in human being was published by the European Commission in January 2025 to provide an overview of the progress made by the EU in the fight against human trafficking over the past years.^{[38](#)}

- [31](#)

European Council | Council of the European Union. (2025, February 5). [Fighting migrant smuggling and human trafficking](#).

- [32](#)

European Commission. (2023, November 28). [Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhancing police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and on enhancing Europol's support to preventing and combating such crimes and amending Regulation \(EU\) 2016/794](#). COM/2023/754 final.

- [33](#)

European Commission. (2024, November 28). [Commission reinforces EU rules and launches a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling.](#)

- [34](#)

[Directive \(EU\) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims](#), June 13, 2024.

- [35](#)

European Commission. (2024, May 27). [The EU adopts stronger rules to fight trafficking in human beings](#). Pingen, A., & Wahl, T. (2025, March 11). [New Directive to Strengthen Anti-Human Trafficking.](#)

- [36](#)

Council of the European Union. (2024, June 19). [Migrant smuggling: Enhanced role of Europol in fighting migrant smuggling.](#)

- [37](#)

European Commission. (2024, December 18). [EU-funded projects contribute to countering migrant smuggling with AI.](#)

- [38](#)

European Commission. (2025, January 20). [New Progress report on combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.](#)