

Confronting Illegal Immigration –
Eliminating Human Trafficking

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Given the Resolution on Better Integration- Sustainable emigration as approved by the YEPP Council in Prague 2006 and continuously acknowledging the problems human trafficking creates, not only for the victims who are often traumatised but also for the governments and officials who need to respond with specific measures, we the Youth of the European People's Party want to draw attention to human trafficking.

Acknowledging that, during the 1990s, an overwhelming increase has been recorded on attempts of illegal infiltration of immigrants whose main destination was either the three wealthier EU member states (France, Germany, UK), or smaller countries with flourishing economies. Thus, in the international migratory flows of human labour force, two new illegal forms, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, were added. After the EU member states laid firmer restrictions on the applications for asylum, immigrants of this category started seeking entry in the EU via criminal networks. Immigrants living under these conditions tend to become indebted with large pecuniary sums which they usually cannot pay off. As a result they personally become subordinates to their traffickers, often along with their families, resulting in a lot of victims (especially women and children originating from countries of the developing world) becoming objects of sexual exploitation and ill-treatment.

Noting that, the main reason for the spread and strengthening of human trafficking and smuggling as an illegal “enterprising” activity constitutes eventually the dream of a better life combined with the vulnerability of individuals seeking it, mainly women and minors. Beside that, trafficking and smuggling are blossomed in such a manner due to the fact that officials in the public administration of many developing countries, either being those of origin or transit – states to the final destination of trafficked human beings, can easily be bribed.

At the same time, research in secret service files and police data among transit countries have shown that the majority of illegal immigration distribution networks are exceptionally well

- organised and formed in an internationalised cellular manner, in order to secure the identity of the superior hierarchical structure of the network, if any member of theirs is arrested.

The Youth of the European People's Party considers that despite the fact that the European Union at institutional level has reached a consent regarding the serious effort necessary for the confrontation of human smuggling and trafficking already since 1993, many member states have fallen short of effectively opposing illegal immigration and its by-products, smuggling and trafficking of human beings.

YEPP recalls the three Joint Actions that were agreed upon under the terms of the Third Pillar of Maastricht in 1996 – 1997 as well as the special meeting held in October 1999 on the fringe of the European Council held in Tampere (Finland), concerning the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice in the European Union. One of the milestones of the Council Conclusions was the development of a common active policy, in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit, for the prevention and repression of all forms of trafficking in human beings, with special emphasis on the problems faced by vulnerable demographic groups such as women and children. Nevertheless, immigration policy was at the top of the agenda of the European Council in Thessalonica where an agreement was reached upon the Commission's proposal for the creation of a European agency for the management of the external borders. Still, there did not seem to be any political will for the creation of the mechanisms that would ensure the adoption and implementation of all the necessary measures. YEPP acknowledges the work of Council of Europe on the formation of a binding convention on action against trafficking in human beings.

YEPP questions the lack of common standards for border policing and patrolling. YEPP states that the external borders of the EU are of common responsibility for all of the 25 EU - Member States, and furthermore believes that the organisational, financial and judicial questions are to be answered on the European level. YEPP also respects the Protocol of Palermo in its definition of human trafficking and urges for all EU – Member States and neighbouring countries to ratify this protocol.

YEPP remembers “The European Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings- Global Challenge for 21st Century- brought together, on september 2002 , the EU Member States, Candidates Countries, neighbouring countries such as Russia, Ukraine, the NIS, and the countries of the Stabilisation and Association process as well as US, Canada, China, regions, international organisations, non governmental organisations and institutions of the European Union, initiated by European Commision under the STOP II

Programme. Also YEPP remembers conclusions of “High level Conference on Combating Trafficking in Human beings (especially in woman and children)” in March 2006 organised by the OSCE.

70 Under these conditions, YEPP urges the European Union and its member states to take strict measures in dealing with smuggling and trafficking of human beings and proposes to:

- 75 ✓ Introduce an effective strategy combining and balancing punitive measures with protection of human rights, in order to make on the one hand human trafficking “non – profitable” and less interesting to criminal organisations, and on the other to provide maximum protection and respect to the personalities of each and every victim.
- ✓ Take, in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council held in Tampere, broad initiatives, at both an EU and a member state level, for collaboration with countries of origin and transit, in order to effectively combat the criminal organisations that are elevating the smuggling of human beings.
- 80 ✓ Realise a Europewide database whereby information about victims of human trafficking is stored and made retrievable for police forces, and extend the bilateral judicial and political agreements in order to combat the criminals organising human trafficking. This database must contain information on found people, missing people and of people traffickers.
- 85 ✓ Work towards the general application of biometric technology to minimalise visa and asylum fraud as well as the use of health-sensitive scanners at the most vulnerable access points like major harbors and key transport routes.
- ✓ Call upon the governments (or give strong recommendation) of the countries of origin and transit (particularly new border states) to accelerate introduction and adoption of the counter-trafficking action plans and counter-trafficking legislations, start awareness raising campaigns, create institutions for defending trafficking victims and implement controlling mechanisms to prevent (minimize) illegal flow of the trafficking victims through the country.
- 90 ✓ Introduce stricter border control through the creation of a European agency for the management of the external borders, as proposed at the Thessalonica European Council, especially in the Euro – Mediterranean coastal and on the eastern terrestrial border line, in a manner that would effectively reduce elevated costs for
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100 border protection among countries located in Euro borders eastward. This could be achieved through the formation of a European border control force both coastal and terrestrial.

- ✓ We need a framework for the external border policy, with sufficiently remunerated public servants (to minimise corruption) and a clear European penal and penitentiary system must be created to have an allround European institutional framework to combat human trafficking in all its variations.

105 *Adopted at the YEPP Council, 17th June 2006, Palma de Mallorca*

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- ✓ Reduce the requirements for dirty – demanding – dangerous jobs (the so called three – D Jobs) that are characterized as the main pull factor for illegal migration and thus provide the conditions for the evolvement of smuggling and trafficking of human beings.
- ✓ Enact humanitarian visas similar to the US T-visa regime without the premise that the victims should be helping out authorities against their traffickers.
- ✓ Secure the proper treatment of the trafficking victims' during the trials in order to avoid re-traumatizing them or damaging their well – being, especially in cases of trafficked children.

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