

Ending trafficking of human beings

The European Liberal Democrats note with concern that:

- i) it is estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders each year, with approximately 80 percent of them being women and girls and up to 50 percent minors
- ii) human trafficking is the fastest growing means by which people are forced into slavery and the third largest source of illegal income after drugs and arms.
- iii) there has been an enormous increase in human trafficking in Europe, especially related to illegal prostitution and the black economy.

In order to safeguard and protect human rights, European Liberal Democrats call on EU member States and neighbouring countries and Council of Europe members that have not yet done so to:

1. sign, ratify and implement the UN Trafficking Protocol signed in Palermo, Italy, on 15 December 2000 and the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings signed in Warsaw, Poland, on 16 May 2005.
2. comply with the Council Framework Decision on combating trafficking in human beings 2002/629/JHA which provides for a series of measures to harmonise criminal law in the field of trafficking in human beings and with the Council Directive 2004/81/EC on residence permits for victims of trafficking and for coordinated schemes to assist victims who choose to go back to their home country.

Human trafficking is one of the most serious violations of human rights. European Liberal Democrats call on member parties and liberal democrat politicians to:

1. take the lead in setting free the victims of trafficking.
2. ensure trafficking data are better collected and propose to establish an anti-trafficking day as requested by the European Parliament in its recently adopted report on trafficking in human beings in order to raise awareness on the issue.
3. promote the sharing of best practices on prevention of trafficking, identification, protection and reintegration of victims and the prosecution of traffickers.
4. promote the launch of awareness campaigns and free telephone help lines targeted at potential victims, warning of the dangers of trafficking,

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with advice on their rights and obligations and where to get help in EU member states and neighbouring countries.

5. calls on member states to set up safe havens, which will treat trafficked people as victims, providing medical care, counseling and legal aid, in particular the possibility of helping to prosecute traffickers.

6. propose that police forces in EU member states and neighbouring countries in cooperation with Europol work together to mount intelligence-led operations to liberate victims of trafficking and to arrest the criminals responsible.

7. look at the root causes of trafficking and examine the links between trafficking, immigration and employment policies and promote the integration of combating trafficking in the EU employment, immigration, trade, development and foreign and security policies.

8. encourage employers and trade unions to work together in uncovering and supporting the victims of trafficking, with multi-agency monitoring of vulnerable employment sectors.

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