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2.2.2. Intensifying efforts to address trafficking

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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 202332 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

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