

English PRESS RELEASE

**Insufficient EU legislation hinders adequate protection for victims of trafficking in human beings
Current EU Directive urgently updating**

The legal framework to protect victims of trafficking from persecution or punishment is inadequate. The victims are not sufficiently central in European legislation. The article 8 of the EU Directive on trafficking in human beings, which wishes to protect victims of trafficking in human beings from prosecution or punishment, takes too little account of the fact that these victims often forcibly violate the law and thus commit crimes.

An update of the EU Directive with new legal provisions is necessary.

This is shown by research by Julia Muraszekiewicz of the Faculty of Law and Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her supervisor is Professor Paul De Hert.

"The people who want to protect the EU Directive are threatening to become even more victims today and are therefore not encouraged to testify in criminal cases against the perpetrators. Therefore, we must understand the boundaries within which the EU legislator acts, by examining the extent of the obligations of European criminal law," Julia Muraszekiewicz says.

Especially the ambiguous definition of what exactly is trafficking makes it more difficult to give victims of trafficking the label 'victim', which is necessary to give them a necessary protection. All too often they are viewed as 'perpetrators'.

Julia Muraszekiewicz argues that the legal and social boundaries between 'victim' and 'criminal' are not always clearly distinguishable.

Improper imaging

The need to protect victims of trafficking has been widely accepted. But the principle of non-liability of victims of trafficking who were forced to commit crimes themselves is more controversial. An incorrect image of what a victim should look like complicates the application of the principle of non-liability.

The legal framework on non-liability for victims of human trafficking: should, and can, the European Union ask more of member states ?, by Julia Muraszekiewicz of Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her supervisor is Professor Paul De hert.

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