

Crime prevention policy	
EU- priority	Trafficking in Human Beings
Country	Ireland
Year	2018

1. Overview of the field

Definition of the crime

Human trafficking is defined in the [Criminal Law \(Human Trafficking\) Act 2008](#) which specifically prohibits trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation, including forced labour in persons, and is applicable to both men and women. The 2008 Act also criminalises trafficking for the purpose of exploitation consisting of the removal of human organs.

The purpose of the [Criminal Law \(Human Trafficking\) \(Amendment\) Act 2013](#) was to facilitate full compliance with the criminal law measures in the 2011 EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. The Act broadens the scope of the definition of 'exploitation' in the 2008 Act to include exploitation consisting of forcing a person to engage in criminal activities (inside or outside the State) and expands the definition of the term 'labour exploitation' to include forced begging;

In addition to the above instruments, the [Criminal Law \(Sexual Offences\) Act 2017](#) seeks to provide further protection to victims of trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation. Amongst the measures included are the criminalisation of the purchase of sex, strengthening of the law in relation to child pornography and the introduction of a statutory definition of consent to a sexual act.

Assessment of trends and developments

In 2017, 75 potential victims of trafficking were detected by the Competent Authority, An Garda Síochána (the Irish Police Force). Caution should be exercised when attempting to derive trends or patterns from the data. Due to the relatively small number of victims in a given year, large-scale detections of victims can have a dramatic impact on the overall figures.

Ireland continues to be a destination country for human trafficking for men and women. Women, mostly from Eastern Europe, are trafficked to be commercially sexually exploited through prostitution. Women and men are subjected to trafficking for exploitation of their labour. In 2017, the numbers of trafficking victims identified in Ireland followed trends of previous years, with a notable upsurge in the numbers of potential male victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation in sectors of the offshore fishing industry. This follows an increased focus on the area led by police and labour inspectors, and concerted activity by the trade union sector and NGOs.

Recent overview of statistics and research

The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit gathers data from both State and non-State organisations on the scale and nature of human trafficking in Ireland. The data is analysed and published in our Annual Reports, available [here](#). The 2017 Report will be published in the coming weeks.

Ireland participated in UNODC-sponsored research on multiple systems estimation in 2017 which found that the 'hidden' figure for victims of trafficking in Ireland may be twice the number of identified victims. This compares very favourably with other jurisdictions where hidden figures were estimated to be a much greater multiple of the identified number. This was a significant data-sharing and cooperation exercise over a number of months in 2017.

2. Crime strategy and coordination

Objectives of the crime strategy

The State's response to human trafficking is set out in our [National Action Plan](#) to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, now in its second phase. The Plan outlines both the Government's strategic approach to this issue as well as setting out a clear work programme for the relevant state authorities to collaborate with civil society and agencies in other jurisdictions in advancing the fight against trafficking and enhancing the protection of victims.

The goals of the Second National Action Plan are to:

- Prevent trafficking in human beings
- Identify, assist and protect and support victims of trafficking in human beings
- Ensure an effective criminal justice response
- Ensure that Ireland's response to human trafficking complies with the requirements of a human rights based approach and is gender sensitive.
- Ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation between key actors, both nationally and internationally
- Increase the level of knowledge of emerging trends in the trafficking of human beings
- Continue to ensure an effective response to child trafficking.

Role of prevention in the crime strategy on state/regional/local level

Ireland has a broad-based prevention strategy which focuses on:

- Training for frontline personnel
- Awareness-raising activities
- Vulnerability reduction

- A data collection system designed to ensure knowledge of emerging trends
- Enhanced co-ordination and cooperation among stakeholders
- Reduction in the demand for services of victims of human trafficking

Delivery on these goals is reliant on a range of bodies across Government and State Services. NGOs play a crucial role in responding to this issue. In addition to providing core funding to frontline NGOs for victim support activities, this Department also supports a range of initiatives undertaken by community organisations at a local level. Partnership between the State and civil society will continue to be central to our approach to tackling this crime.

Implementation of the policy (which level is responsible for the implementation and how is the implementation coordinated?)

The Department of Justice and Equality's Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) has the lead on all policy issues on human trafficking in Ireland and works in close collaboration with other Irish government agencies, including An Garda Síochána, Health Services Executive (HSE), the Child and Family agency (TUSLA), the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Legal Aid Board and the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). Other agencies active in combating human trafficking include the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Department of Health; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and the Victims of Crime Office. An Interdepartmental High Level Group was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality in 2007 to recommend the most appropriate and effective responses to trafficking in human beings. This Group oversees the implementation of the Plan.

Stakeholders (working groups, specialised agencies, partners, etc)

Both the formulation of the National Action Plan and its implementation involve full consultation with our State and non-State stakeholders. The High Level Group mentioned above comprises senior representatives from the key Government Departments and Agencies. In addition, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit chairs several interdisciplinary Working Groups comprising of representatives from the relevant Government Agencies, NGOs and international organisations to progress matters at a practical 'on the ground' level and, in turn, report to the High Level Group. These meetings provide a useful opportunity for frank and open discussions between those representing victims and those responsible for investigating and prosecuting alleged traffickers.

Participation in European/ international networks, working groups, etc.

Ireland is well represented at the various European and international meeting formations. Such networks include, but are not limited to, meetings of the EU's Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms); OSCE meetings and

workshops on THB; and relevant Council of Europe GRETA-related events and meetings. Furthermore, there is excellent cooperation between Irish officials and other EUMS

3. Good practices

Overview of recent good practices, prevention programs, etc.

The major focus at government level in 2017 was the enactment of comprehensive new Sexual Offences legislation. The criminalization of the purchase of sex was cited by the Minister for Justice as an effort to target the demand for prostitution and thus the exploitation, including trafficking, which is associated with organized prostitution. The decriminalization of those involved in providing sexual services was also included in this legislation.

As part of our prevention strategy, the AHTU works with An Garda Síochána and a range of NGOs to fund and participate in awareness raising and training events to a variety of targeted focus groups. Coordinated training for front line professionals and awareness raising for students continued through 2017 and 2018 to various departments and third level colleges. Campaigns have concentrated on those transiting through the airport, those working in the hotel sector, potential clients of prostitutes and those working in agriculture and in domestic work.