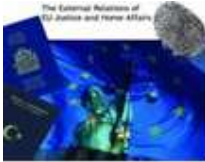


JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
12.02.10

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Human trafficking: EP Resolution calls for protection of victims

Trafficking takes many forms. It is linked to sexual exploitation, forced labour, the illegal trade in human organs, begging, illegal adoptions and domestic work. According to Europol's assessment for 2009, trafficking of women for sexual exploitation has not decreased and trafficking for forced labour is increasing. Of the identified victims of trafficking, 79% are women and girls.

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution in which it demanded that further EU action in this field should focus on the protection of victims, especially women and children. MEPs argued that assistance to victims must be "unconditional", that a victim's consent to exploitation should always be deemed irrelevant and that victims are entitled to assistance irrespective of their willingness to cooperate in criminal proceedings.

In their resolution, which was adopted last Wednesday, MEPs claimed that victims should receive all possible help including access to at least a temporary residence permit, and simplified access to the labour market, including the provision of training and other forms of upskilling. The EP also asks for a simplified family reunification policy for victims, access to appropriate secure accommodation, including the provision of a food/subsistence allowance, to emergency medical treatment, to counselling services, translation and interpretation where appropriate, help contacting family and friends, and access to education for children. Free legal aid should also be given to the victims. Additionally, MEPs claimed that the penalties for traffickers should be reconsidered and ways must be found to discourage demand for services supplied by the victims.

Read more:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/019-68647-039-02-07-902-20100209IPR68645-08-02-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm

International convention on locating and recovering assets derived from transnational organised crime

The Convention, held between the 10th and 12th February 2010 was organised by the Fiscal and Economic Crime Unit of Spain's 'Policía Judicial'. It was led by the Spanish Secretary of State for Security, Antonio Camacho, and brought together experts on economic crime from the European Union and South America to examine measures which improve the identification, location, recovery and management of assets belonging to international organised crime groups. The event forms part of the Centre of Excellence on Asset Recovery and Training (CEART) for specialists in economic crime, which at present is the most important police project at European level subsidised by the European Commission and which will last until the middle of 2012. CEART plans to draw up a white paper on best practices for detecting and confiscating the assets handled by organised crime, largely obtained by means of money-laundering operations; it also plans to set up a training programme. The conclusions of this seminar will be submitted to the EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council.

EU-US Agreement on the Transfer of Financial Messaging Data for purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme

In June 2009 the Commission presented draft negotiation guidelines for a short-term Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) Agreement to the Council. At the end of July 2009, the Council adopted the negotiation guidelines, knowing that in the absence of such short-term Agreement an important security gap would arise in which there would be a risk of losing the benefit of important leads obtained through the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme from European financial transactions for future terrorism investigations. Consequently, when authorising the signing of the Agreement, the Council decided that the Agreement should have a transitional nature and should be applicable only for a very short term, having a maximum duration of nine months.

A longer term EU-US TFTP Agreement is currently being proposed. In this regard, the Council has adopted a declaration stating that it shares Parliament's concerns regarding the need to strike the right balance between security measures and the protection of civil liberties and fundamental rights, while ensuring the utmost respect for privacy and data protection. Consequently, the Council called on the Commission to adopt draft negotiation guidelines that fully take into account the concerns expressed by both institutions. The Council is of the opinion that a longer-term Agreement should contain strong guarantees concerning effective redress, the deletion of data and greater specificity regarding the sharing of TFTP-derived information with national authorities and third countries. The significant data protection safeguards already set out in the short term agreement, such as the strict purpose limitation and the absolute prohibition on data mining, should also feature prominently in any future TFTP Agreement.

Read more:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/112850.pdf