



7 April 2016

Migrant smuggling in 2015 - The EU's response to this booming business

Péter Dávid
European Commission
DG Migration and Home Affairs
Irregular Migration and Return Policy

- 1. Closer look at what constitutes migrant smuggling*
- 2. Looking at the EU's response*
- 3. Discussion/questions*

What is migrant smuggling?

EU definition according to Council Directive 2002/90
"facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence"

A crime against the state

Trafficking in human beings (Directive 2011/36):
A crime against a person/victim
Elements of exploitation and coercion

Migrant smuggling can occur at various borders

Land – in 2015 Western Balkans very prominent

Air – mostly through the use of false documents

Sea – Aegean Sea and the Central Mediterranean



Photo: AFP/Austrian Police/Handout



Photo: Reuters

Migrant smuggling in 2015

More than 1 million irregular migrants reached the EU – more than 90% of them used facilitation services

Several types of services including provision of transportation, accommodation and fraudulent documents

Europol estimates the criminal assets from migrant smuggling to be around 3-6 billion EUR

What is the EU doing?

European Agenda on Migration (May 2015)

- Immediate actions
 - Saving lives at sea – expansion of Frontex JOs Triton and Poseidon
 - Targeting criminal smuggling networks - CSDP mission, JOT MARE expansion
 - Relocation – initially temporary, with a view to having a mandatory scheme
 - Resettlement - 20 000 places envisaged
 - Working in partnership with third countries – summit in Malta amongst others
 - Help frontline Member States – Hotspots approach

In addition 60 million EUR of EU emergency funding made available to frontline Member States

EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling – adopted on 27 May 2015

Part of the 1st implementing package of the European Agenda on Migration

Four pillars:

1. Enhanced police and judicial cooperation
2. Improving gathering and sharing of information
3. Enhanced prevention of smuggling and assistance to vulnerable migrants
4. Stronger Cooperation with third countries

1. Enhanced police and judicial cooperation

Aim: Enhance the investigation and prosecution of migrant smugglers

Latest steps:

- Evaluating existing EU legal framework
- EUNavForMed Sophia
- Setting up single points of contact in Member States
- Better cooperation of EU Agencies to harmonise work on smuggling
 - e.g. Frontex operational cooperation with Europol

2. Improved gathering and sharing of information

Aim: Crucial to share information on modus operandi, routes etc. to target smuggling effectively

Latest steps:

- European Migrant Smuggling Centre in Europol
- Africa Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC)
- Hotspots
- Monitoring and removal of internet content used by smugglers
- Frontex Liaison Officer in Turkey

3. Enhanced prevention of smuggling and assistance to vulnerable migrants

Aim: Raising awareness of the risks of smuggling and developing a counter-narrative in the media to what smugglers claim

Latest steps:

- Possible review of Directive 2004/81
- Establishing partnerships with business operators
- Information and prevention campaigns in key third countries
- More effective return of migrants denied asylum
- Stronger action against the employment of irregular migrants

4. Stronger cooperation with third countries

Aim: Effective investigation and prosecution as well as targeting the root causes of migration

Latest steps:

- Valetta Action Plan and the Trust Fund for Africa
- Planning of projects to develop national and regional strategies and setting up integrated border management
- Support in drafting and implementing appropriate legislative frameworks
- In the future, coordination platform in third countries

Conclusion

A far reaching and multidisciplinary approach has been planned to address migrant smuggling at EU level. The aim is to turn migrant smuggling from a "low risk, high profit" business into a "high risk, low profit" undertaking.