



## People are not Property: Understanding human trafficking and exploitation in the EU

***“Trafficking in human beings is the slavery of our times. Often a complex transnational phenomenon, trafficking in human beings is rooted in vulnerability to poverty, lack of democratic cultures, gender inequality, violence against women, conflict and post-conflict situations, lack of social integration, lack of opportunities and employment, lack of access to education, child labour and discrimination. It is for this reason that trafficking in human beings must be addressed in an integrated, multi-disciplinary way and with the involvement of a diverse set of actors.”***

### **European Commission Report of Trafficking in Human Beings, 2013**

Human trafficking in Europe is hard to measure. Europol observes that “criminal activity related to trafficking in human beings can be hidden within other criminality, such as prostitution, illegal migration and labour disputes. This often results in instances of trafficking not being investigated or recorded as trafficking

cases.” Despite the difficulties in measuring the problem, it is clear that human trafficking in the EU is vast and expanding. The OSCE estimates that there are three million trafficked persons in the OSCE territory at any given time, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) believes that there are currently around 880,000 people being exploited for their labour in Europe.

### **Where victims come from**

Of these victims, most originate in the EU. The European Commission (EC) report on human trafficking in 2013 showed that most victims identified in the region were from EU countries (approximately 61% of identified victims, over a three year period). The greatest number are women and girls from Romania and Bulgaria, usually members of the Roma community, Europe’s most vulnerable population. Governments frequently distance themselves from this group, creating no recourse for its most vulnerable members — women and children who are in real danger of exploitation.

CONTINUED INSIDE

## EDITORIAL

### Set my people free

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me." Exodus 9:1*

In 2007 Mauritania became the last country in the world to abolish slavery. Or so read the headlines at the time. But making slavery illegal does not make it disappear, and we don't have to go to Africa to find it.

This edition of Vista takes on the thorny issue of slavery in Europe: people trafficking and forced labour. Our lead article is by Jennifer Tunehag, an expert who has spent more than a decade helping victims and campaigning on this vital issue. She sets out the dimensions and the dynamics of people trafficking with authority and clarity.

Darrell Jackson has written a very thought-provoking article on the missiological aspects of human trafficking. He asks some challenging questions about the engagement of evangelicals in this area, in particular as it relates to forced labour.

I have contributed a short piece on the statistical challenges associated with this topic and highlighted the huge discrepancy between the number of victims registered by the EU (around 30,000) and the 880,000 that are estimated to exist. And Jo Appleton has pulled together a set of resources to allow you to investigate the issues further.

It is shocking to think that there are men, women and children in slavery in many of the liberal social democracies of today's Europe. The church must engage with this enormous challenge, to speak to the Pharaohs of our age on behalf of the oppressed. But the victims live in many of our towns and cities and, in the name of Christ, we must do what we can to find and help “to set the captives free.” (Luke 4:18)

Jim Memory

Victims from outside the EU are increasing; the largest groups trafficked in are from Nigeria and China. Nigerian victims of trafficking, particularly, do not easily fit into the 'mold' of victim; seldom desperate, they are likely to see their exploitation as an immigration opportunity, working with and not for an exploiter (or criminal network) to gain freedom, then profit. Female victims are very likely to progress within the organization, becoming offenders who bring new victims to Europe.

### Sexual exploitation

Trafficking for sexual exploitation continues to dominate the trade in human beings in Europe; nearly two-thirds of all victims are sexually exploited. Women and girls are over-represented in nearly all forms of human trafficking in Europe, comprising 75 – 80 % of total victims. Women and girls are frequently exploited for removal of organs, criminal activity, and benefits fraud, while men are most frequently trafficked for labour exploitation.

Another rapidly growing group in the Euro-zone is children, who are increasingly trafficked for benefits fraud (social security and welfare benefits) and street crime. Family members are often involved in the criminal gangs that move children with relative ease between EU member states.

### The role of organised crime

Human trafficking in the European Union is largely under the control of organized crime groups. While mafia units were historically divided along ethnic lines, modern crime groups are more strategic in the pursuit of profit, incorporating up to 60 nationalities in a single group and functioning in 25 countries simultaneously. Besides EU citizens, traffickers from Nigeria, China, and Turkey are commonly identified. Crime is big business in Europe, and these organisations now operate like major corporations, with lawyers, accountants, bankers, financial advisors, judges, government officials and border guards all on the payroll. Many have "adapted their image to that of helpful 'service providers' and indispensable intermediaries between clients and victims," according to Europol.

Cyber crime is rapidly proliferating, changing the face of crime and exploitation in Europe. Child sexual abuse is rampant on the internet via chat rooms and webcams. Europol reports that public demand to investigate and prosecute these crimes is low (compared to crimes committed in the 'real world'); often, European laws on privacy and freedom prevent police from obtaining information



Campaign to highlight human trafficking

Image: Wikipedia Creative Commons

necessary to shutting down sites used for recruiting and exploitation. Journalist Lydia Cacho comments, "All over the planet, we are witnessing a culture that considers the kidnapping, disappearance, trade and corruption of young girls and adolescents as normal. They become sexual objects for rent and sale, and our global culture celebrates this objectification as an act of freedom and progress."

### Tricked into being trafficked

Fake employment agencies are a key recruiting arm of the trade in human beings. Europol has identified a growing group of individuals who do not fit the stereotypical scenario of vulnerability. Despite coming from reasonably stable backgrounds, they are tricked by promises of employment, good working conditions, and a salary...which is never paid. Even positive trends such as greater freedom of movement, cheap international travel, improved communication links, and self-confidence are exploited to recruit people who would not normally be considered vulnerable. EFN partners recently helped to identify one such agency targeting victims in Bulgaria.

Labour exploitation is growing in the European Union, following the recent expansion of the EU and the lifting of employment restrictions in many member states. Areas known for exploitation include the construction industry, the tourism sector, catering, nursing, and domestic service. Those exploited for their labour are less likely to be identified as victims of trafficking and exploitation, in part because of lack of legal framework and definition concerning what constitutes criminal exploitation. To complicate matters, these victims may not self-identify as victims - either because of pride and/or shame, or because their previous working conditions in

the country of origin were so bad that they do not consider the current situation to be exploitative.

### The role of the consumer

In all forms of trafficking, the uncaring or unaware consumer drives the market. The global economic downturn has created a new permutation, and a boon to traffickers. Not only are more individuals vulnerable because of economic instability or poverty, entire industries have become vulnerable to labour exploitation. When falling profit margins threaten the livelihood of a business, employers may resort to illegal or cheap labour.

### A transnational problem – and response

Organised crime has developed massive networks to perpetuate the evil of human exploitation. This transnational problem can only be addressed by a transnational response, and the complex nature of the problem demands a joined-up, multidisciplinary response.

Against this backdrop, over 130 faith-based NGOs have allied themselves to create a Europe-wide network, the European Freedom Network to prevent and combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation and to seek the restoration of its victims.

In EFN, we believe that 'with God and with each other, we are changing the situation'. We have faith that God is preparing a new David to, once again, defeat Goliath.

Jennifer Tunehag

[www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org](http://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org)

For over ten years, Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag has worked among women and men in prostitution and victims of human trafficking. Among other projects, Jennifer is currently working to help the European Evangelical Alliance to develop the European Freedom Network (EFN). The EFN exists to help the body of Christ in Europe work together effectively to prevent and combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and to seek the restoration of its victims. With others, she is working to provide information and training to churches, to facilitate networking and strategy for emerging networks, and to stimulate prayer on the topic globally.



## VERONICA'S STORY

It was the classic story of boy meets girl.

Veronica\* fell in love with who she thought was the man of her dreams. When he said he that he loved her and would protect her, she was eager to trust him.

So, when he suggested that they should move to Greece to find better jobs and start their life together, it sounded wonderful. She decided to move with him.

When they arrived in Greece, she was told there were no jobs left. Then her boyfriend's behavior suddenly changed and he became abusive and forceful with her. He started bringing men home and forced her to service them while he took all of the money.

Eventually, her boyfriend sold her to a local farmer. One day, the door was left unlocked where she was kept captive and she let herself out and ran for her life. The police found her and she was brought to one of our shelters.

It's been a year since her escape and rescue, and Veronica has made the brave decision to move back to her country. She now has a secure place to stay and will receive assistance to study in her own language and find safe employment through a local organization.

Veronica now laughs a lot and has recently told us, "I am happy."

That knowledge, more than anything, makes what we do worth it. We fight for the ONE.

\*Survivor's name and photos are changed for her protection.



A21 exists to abolish injustice in the 21st century through a comprehensive system achieving preventative measures to help potential victims evade trafficking, victim protection through our shelters and aftercare program, prosecution of violators, and strategic partnerships.

[www.thea21campaign.org](http://www.thea21campaign.org)



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**The European Freedom Network will be holding a 3rd major gathering for their partners across Europe in Romania from the 20th to the 24th of April 2015.**

Why "Bridge 2015"?

Because EFN is all about providing a bridge to freedom for those exploited by human trafficking &/or sexual exploitation. Individual ministries are planks in the bridge. Only by strengthening the collaboration between

us, building each other up and looking at the big picture can the bridge be strong.

Speakers will include Glenn Miles from Chab Dai, Viv & Sheila Thomas from OM and Anne Read from the Salvation Army. As well as plenty of opportunities to pray, reflect, learn, network, strategise and be encouraged, there will be meetings with Christian politicians so that they learn from us, we learn from them and together we can improve policy and practice.

Bridge 2015 starts at 19h30 on 20th April (with an afternoon introductory programme at 16h30 for newer partners) and finishes with breakfast on 24th April after a celebratory dinner.

Bridge 2015 will be held at the Regina Elisabeta Conference Hall in central Bucharest.

For more information and registration: [www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org/bridge-2015](http://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org/bridge-2015)

Written in 1994, the following statement from Kevin Giles appeared in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 'No Christian theologian living today would support slavery. The slave has three defining characteristics: his/her person is the property of another human being, his/her will is completely subject to his/her owner's authority, and his/her labour is obtained by coercion.'

Many evangelicals involved in anti-trafficking activities believe that this is true of the contemporary phenomenon of human trafficking. They shine a bright light on the twin evils of exploitation and coercion that exist at the heart of this miserable trade in human beings and campaign vigorously for the freedom of the vulnerable victims caught up in it. The Earl of Shaftesbury's ceaseless campaigning against the eighteenth century trans-Atlantic slave trade is just one important source of inspiration for the cause.

However, as Giles reveals, traditional theological assessments of slavery prior to the eighteenth century were reasonably unanimous in arguing for its existence as a part of the social fabric. Among theologians who have argued that the Bible endorsed slavery are Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, and John Murray. Hodge wrote, 'if the present course of the abolitionists is right, then the course of Christ and the apostles was wrong', adding that to call slavery sinful, was, 'a direct impeachment of the Word of God' (Giles, p12). John Murray was writing as late as 1957 in support of the traditional view.

Only during the nineteenth century did JB Lightfoot help to establish the view that the Bible did not endorse slavery. He did this in the face of overwhelming biblical and theological scholarship but his assessment has come to characterise the stance of evangelicals like Wayne Grudem, John Piper, and John Stott.

In contrast with these evangelical scholars, however, the Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology article on slavery notes that, 'While early Christian teaching contained humanitarian emphases (Matt 24:45-51; Luke 15:22; 17:7) and has often resulted in social change, there is no social mandate to abolish slavery.' The article highlights the humanitarian regulation and constraints upon the institution of slavery in the biblical world and concludes by noting that 'The revolutionary nature of the early church is contained in the



Opportunity or exploitation? Construction workers in the UAE

concept of being "in Christ." The result of being "in Christ" is, on the one hand, spiritual egalitarianism (Gal 3:23-25), and on the other, *responsible behavior within existing structures.*' [Emphasis mine]

It's important to understand that theological ambiguity and social complexity have characterised the historical debates concerning slavery and that any proposal offered in this brief article on human trafficking will inevitably fall short at a number of points.

The typical evangelical concern for those caught up in human trafficking has focused on human beings trafficked for sexual purposes. Evangelicals have generally been less active (though not totally absent) in mobilising to oppose labour exploitation. This is surprising, particularly if the International Labour Organization's 2012 report is correct that a total of 21 million people have been trafficked for reasons of forced labour compared with 4.5 million people who have been trafficked into the sex trade <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>.

Of course these are informed estimates but they do suggest that evangelical concern has not been wholly equitable in addressing these two areas of social concern. Giles (p.14) observes that many pro-slavery evangelicals in the southern USA were critical of gross cruelty to slaves and particularly the sexual exploitation of women, even if not of the institution itself. Of course, female slaves were primarily trafficked from Africa to the American Colonies for their value as labourers but their slave status left them highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape by their owners.

**Four times as many people may be trafficked for reasons of forced labour as for the sex industry**

An adequate theological assessment of human trafficking will need to address labour exploitation more satisfactorily whilst simultaneously navigating the complexity of trafficking as it relates to the sex industry. In the case of the latter, legislation will typically criminalise or regulate the sex industry and Christians have recognised in it an evil and hellish mix of coercion, enslavement, and prostitution.

The ethical or moral imperative to oppose modern forms of slave labour has so far failed to gain wide traction within the evangelical community. Most of us are content to continue shopping for clothing bargains without asking inconvenient questions about their origins and whether their manufacture involves labour exploitation. We tend to assume that if such goods are manufactured by factories in other countries, their legitimacy rests in the fact that

their governments must surely be regulating their own industries. Such a view is naive and fails to understand that nation-states struggled or failed to regulate the slave industries upon which their wealth was established and that some of them still fail to adequately regulate the human trafficking that continues to boost their tax revenues, whether directly or indirectly.

At its most basic, human trafficking establishes and perpetuates power structures in which powerful individuals and organisations determine every detail of a vulnerable individual's life. Contributing to a discussion about trafficking in 2013, Professor Catherine Mackinnon of Harvard University stated simply that forced 'prostitution is based on inequality—economic, sex, race, age.'

Yvonne Zimmerman, a Methodist theologian in Ohio, volunteers at a shelter for those escaping the sex industry and disagrees with Mackinnon. She argues that it is not always accurate to portray sex industry workers as coerced or exploited. She also asks whether the freedom offered by evangelical agencies to those who have been trafficked is dictated solely by a vision of evangelical morality and rectitude or whether it is informed by the individual's own wishes and intentions.

This will be a difficult issue for evangelicals to address. Zimmerman points to instances where a trafficked woman has escaped from sexual slavery, expresses her freedom to write off men as sexually abusive, and turns to a lesbian relationship for human intimacy and relationship. This is not the 'freedom' that evangelicals might believe is best discovered in either a heterosexual marriage or the status of single celibacy but they may still be asked to offer support to a woman who has made such a choice. This fact need not deter evangelicals active in this area, however, from campaigning to free individuals nor to continue to offer a vision of the Kingdom of God that is liberating, life-affirming, and in which such qualities of life are a consequence of a life lived ethically and responsibly.

Opposition to slavery and human trafficking is arguably best advanced by developing a more robust and applied theological vision of the Kingdom of God. Such a vision will have the potential to move beyond the mere acceptance of the social reality of the day, even if that reality includes slavery, trafficking, exploitation, or alternative notions of 'freedom' as part of the social fabric. Giles again, 'There are within Scripture great principles laid down clearly, for those with eyes to see, which point beyond the advice given to particular people at particular times on these matters. All human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and are therefore worthy of equal respect; all human beings share in the divine mandate to exercise authority in God's world (Gen 1:28); all human beings are loved by God (Jn 3:16); all Christians are to love their neighbour as themselves (Matt 22:39) - a thought which does not give much room for slavery' nor, we may add, the injustices, corruption, exploitation, and coercion involved in human trafficking.

Rev Dr Darrell Jackson is Senior Lecturer in Missiology at Morling College and welcomes comments on this article at [darrellj@morling.edu.au](mailto:darrellj@morling.edu.au)

### Reference

Giles, K. 'The Biblical Argument for Slavery: Can the Bible Mislead? A Case Study in Hermeneutics' *Evangelical Quarterly*, 66, 1, 1994, p3.

**What are the facts about human trafficking in Europe? This is a tremendously difficult question to answer for a number of reasons.**

First, we need to be careful about definitions. It is vital to distinguish between irregular migration, people trafficking and forced labour. Not all irregular migrants are trafficked and not all forced labour or people trafficking involves migrants.

Second, population data in general and migration data in particular is notoriously unreliable. Though some European countries do count all those who enter through ports, airports or across land borders, many do not. Furthermore, without exit controls which count those who leave there is no easy way of identifying those who, for example, enter on a tourist or student visa and then remain.

Third, in the case of Europe, there is the added dimension of the freedom of movement under the Schengen Agreement. Once entry has been obtained to the Schengen area a migrant may move across national borders freely, making it very difficult to establish exactly where people are.

And finally, of course, when we talk about human trafficking, we are dealing with a criminal activity, where the people smugglers, the victims and those who wish to exploit them, all wish to avoid detection.

As a result getting reliable data on human trafficking in Europe is very difficult. Realistically, pretty much all the statistics are educated guesses. Take for example the following quote from a report<sup>1</sup> entitled *Towards Reliable Migration Statistics for the UK*, prepared for a Select Committee of the House of Commons:

"The presence of uncertainty in migration and population estimates is well acknowledged. This uncertainty should ideally be reflected in the statistics in a measurable way, such as through probability distributions, which however may pose challenges to the users of migration data."

So in every case, when considering a statistic about migration, forced labour or human trafficking, the word *probably* might be best inserted beforehand.

### Forced Labour

The International Labour Organization estimates that globally about 21 million men, women and children are in forced labour, trafficked, held in debt bondage or work in slave-like conditions<sup>2</sup>. Forced labour is incredibly profitable. A 2014 ILO report estimated that the total illegal profits obtained from the use of forced labour worldwide amount to US\$150.2 billion per year (€130 billion). Two thirds of this



Image: Ruth (Appleton) Smith, A Level Graphic Art

revenue is generated by forced sexual exploitation alone<sup>3</sup>.

Of these 880,000 live in the European Union, meaning that statistically, per 1000 inhabitants almost 1.8 persons in the European Union are in forced labour. 270,000 (30%) are estimated to be victims of sexual exploitation and 610,000 (70%) the victims of labour exploitation<sup>4</sup>.

However, only a tiny fraction of these victims are identified as such. Eurostat recently published their second working paper<sup>5</sup> on Trafficking in Human Beings which revealed that over the three years 2010–2012, 30,146 victims were registered in the 28 Member States, perhaps one in thirty of those who are suspected to exist.

The research found that 80% of registered victims were female, and that, "the overwhelming majority were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (85%). Among registered male victims, 64% were trafficked for labour exploitation".

The difficulty in handling the statistics must not blind us to the reality that right here in Europe many tens if not hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are living in slavery.

Jim Memory

1. [http://www.cpc.ac.uk/resources/downloads/JB\\_CPC\\_report\\_9.5.13.pdf](http://www.cpc.ac.uk/resources/downloads/JB_CPC_report_9.5.13.pdf)
2. <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>
3. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_243391.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_243391.pdf)
4. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_184976.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/genericdocument/wcms_184976.pdf)
5. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141017\\_mid-term\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_2012-2016\\_eu\\_strategy\\_on\\_trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141017_mid-term_report_on_the_2012-2016_eu_strategy_on_trafficking_in_human_beings_en.pdf)

## SOME RESOURCES ON PEOPLE TRAFFICKING — JO APPLETON

### Websites and Networks

#### European Freedom Network

[www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org](http://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org)



EFN is a strategic network of the European Evangelical Alliance that connects active and emerging ministries and other stakeholders across Europe. In a constantly changing and developing context, EFN shares crucial information, resources, ideas, prayer and encouragement, with the aim of helping the Body of Christ in Europe work together effectively to prevent and combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and to see the restoration of its victims.

#### Freedom Collaborative

[www.freedomcollaborative.org](http://www.freedomcollaborative.org)



An online network enabling sharing of resources and information. Once you login, you can access a huge library of articles and reports on many different aspects of trafficking. In addition, the Freedom registry 'facilitates the opportunity for local, national and transnational referral mechanisms, and promotes regional best practices to ensure quality victims services.

#### International Christian Alliance on Prostitution

<http://www.icapglobal.org/>



A partnership devoted to offering freedom and change to people involved in prostitution and those who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, with regional affiliates in Europe.

### Resources for churches and groups

#### Salvation Army

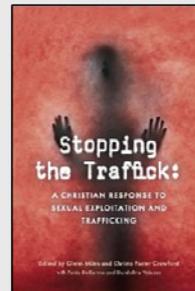
[www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/antitrafficking](http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/antitrafficking)

Prayer resources from the Salvation Army. Scroll down to find resources including sermons, responsive prayers and a powerpoint presentation.

### Books and Reports

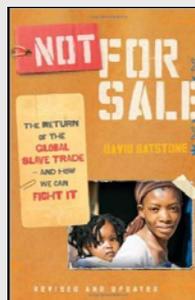
Miles and Crawford, *Stopping the Traffick*, Oxford: Regnum, 2014

This book brings together practical advice and strategic insight from more than 40 global experts and experienced practitioners who thoughtfully explore how best to answer questions such as How should we go about working with exploited people? Where should we focus our response? How do we deal with the challenges? "Stopping the Traffick is for everyone who wants to go beyond merely knowing that something must be done to a deeper understanding of how we can more effectively bring an end to exploitation."



Batstone, *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade—and How We Can Fight It*, New York: HarperOne, 2011.

Human trafficking generates \$32 billion annually and enslaves over 30 million people, half of them children. Award-winning journalist David Batstone, whom Bono calls "a heroic character," profiles the new generation of abolitionists who are leading the movement. This ground-breaking global report is now updated with the latest findings, new stories, and statistics.



European Baptist Federation anti-trafficking resources

<http://www.ebf.org/anti-trafficking-materials>

A series of downloadable resource books by the European Baptist Federation on various aspects of human trafficking.



Please Note: This is not an exhaustive list. If you are aware of other useful resources or networks, why not highlight them by commenting on our blog [europeanmission.redcliffe.org](http://europeanmission.redcliffe.org) JA

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# Vista

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