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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Statistics and trends in trafficking in human beings in the European Union in 2021-2022

Accompanying the document

**Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

**on the progress made in the European Union in combating trafficking in human beings
(Fifth Report)**

{COM(2025) 8 final}

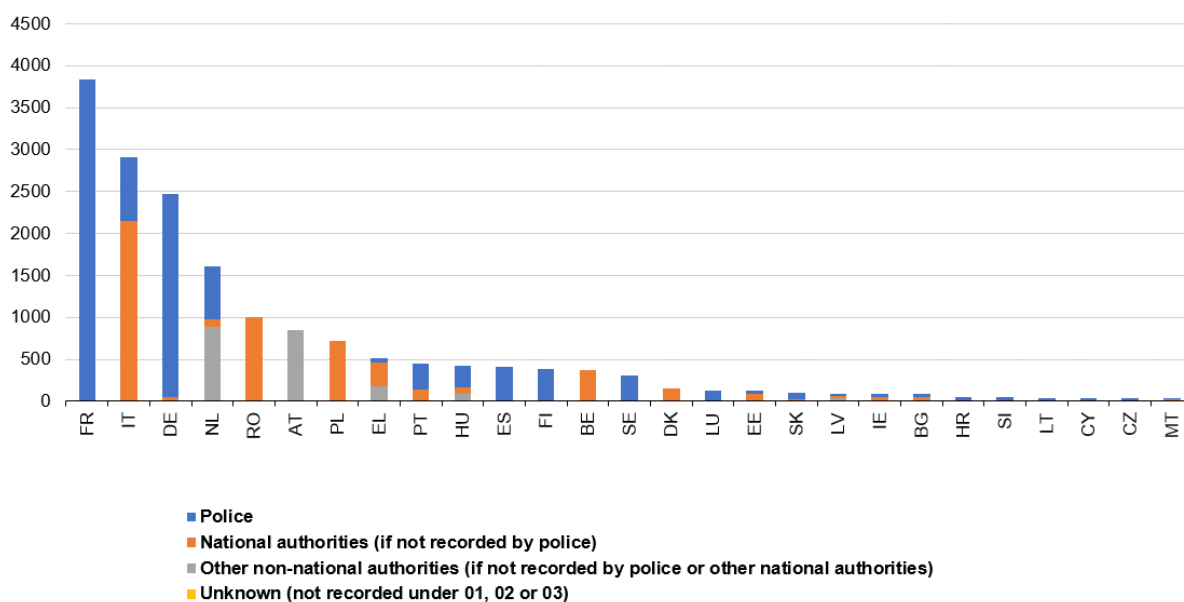
0.1. Total number of victims: current situation and trends¹

The data used in this document was gathered by EUROSTAT from all the Member States via the national statistical authorities. The analysis is based on data provided by EUROSTAT and will primarily focus on the period 2021-2022².

The total number of victims registered in the EU27 increased by 20.5% between 2019-2020 (14 311) and 2021-2022 (17 248). Concerning the registering period, the total annual number of registered victims showed an increase from 7 155 in 2021 to 10 093 in 2022, with an average of 23 registered victims in the EU per million inhabitants in 2022. The actual number of victims is likely significantly higher than reported data suggests, as these statistics only capture victims that become known to one of the registering entities and many victims remain undetected.

In 2021-2022, most victims were registered in France (3 838), in Italy (2 903) in Germany (2 472) in the Netherlands (1 605) and in Romania (1 005).

Figure 1: Victims of trafficking in human beings by registering organisation



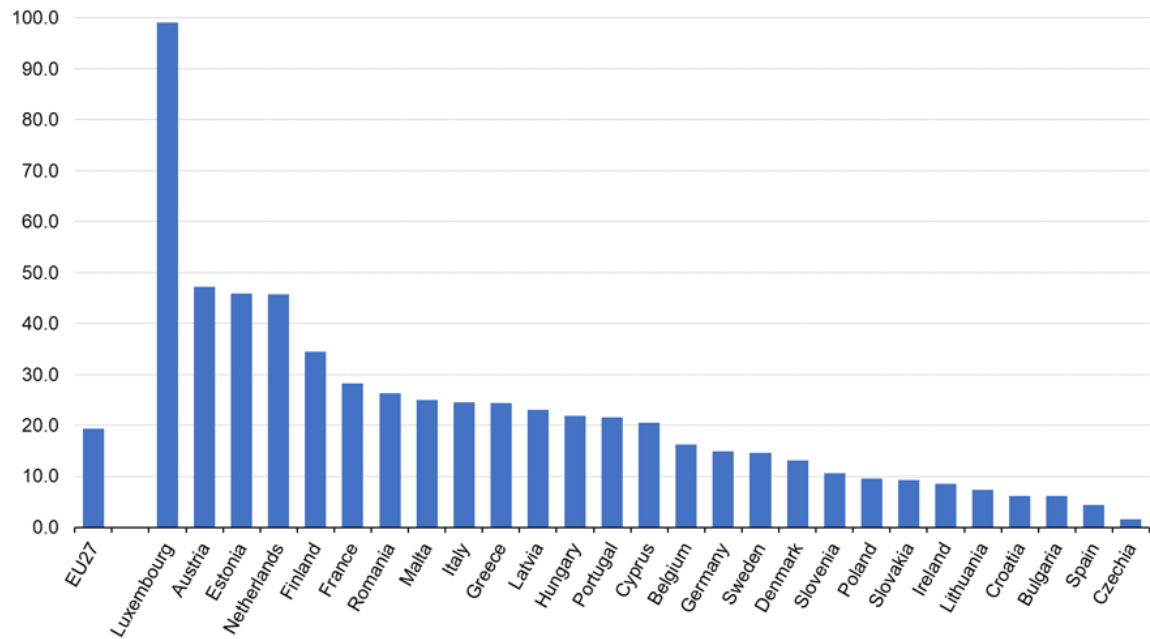
Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_sex)

If one considers the number of victims proportionate to the population size, rather than the absolute number of victims, in 2021-2022 the most victims were registered in Luxembourg (99 permillion inhabitants), Austria (47), Estonia and the Netherlands (46 both).

¹ Note: The figures have been adjusted to reflect only the known values in the dataset, excluding estimates or unknowns. This adjustment ensures the accuracy and reliability of the data presented. Any discrepancies between previous reports and the current figures are due to this refinement process.

² More information on the data collection and coverage is provided in Eurostat metadata: [Crime and criminal justice \(crim\) \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

Figure 2: Victims of trafficking in human beings per million inhabitants of the registering country



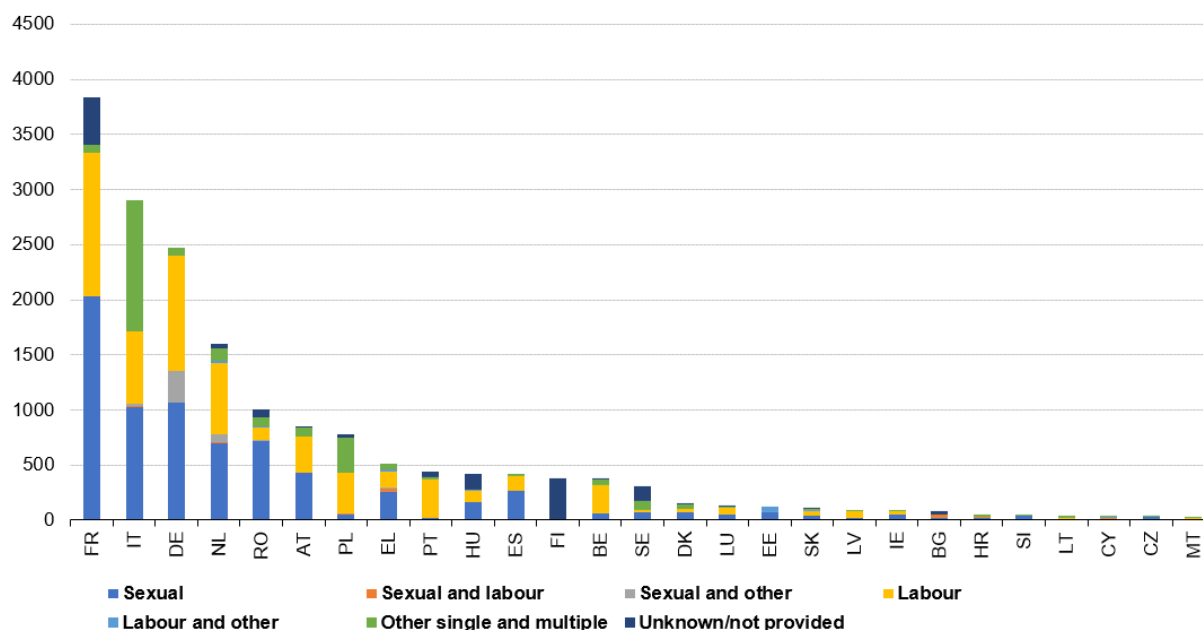
Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_sex)

1. Trends in the forms of exploitation

1. Overview of trends

The main forms of exploitation in the EU are sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. During the reporting period, sexual exploitation made up 49% of the share of trafficking victims, followed by labour exploitation (37%). In the previous reporting period (2019-2020), sexual exploitation made up over half (51%) of the trafficking victims, while labour exploitation made up 28%. The share of sexual exploitation decreased while the share of labour exploitation increased between the two reporting periods.

Figure 3: Victims of trafficking by aggregated form of exploitation



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_vexp)

2. Sexual exploitation

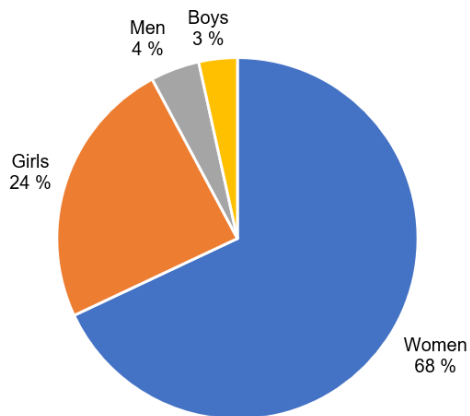
The number of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the EU overall increased from 2021 (3 811) to 2022 (4 014)³. In 2021-2022, the victims of sexual exploitation were primarily female, of which 68% women and 24% girls. In 2019-2020, 68% of victims of sexual exploitation were women and 18% were girls.

In 2021-2022, in all Member States female victims accounted for the majority of victims of sexual exploitation, except in Austria. The Member States registering the highest numbers of adult female victims of sexual exploitation were France (1 356), Germany (782), Italy (744), and the Netherlands (595).

In 2021-2022, children accounted for 27% of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, compared to 21% in 2019-2020. Concerning the registering period, in 2022, children accounted for 22% of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, while in 2021 it was 33%. The Member States registering the highest number of child female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in 2021-2022 were France (593), Romania (370), Germany (331) and Italy (167).

³ The breakdown by form of exploitation was not available for Finland for the whole period 2019-2022 and for Sweden for 2019-2021.

Figure 4: Victims of trafficking of sexual exploitation as at least one form by sex and age (%)



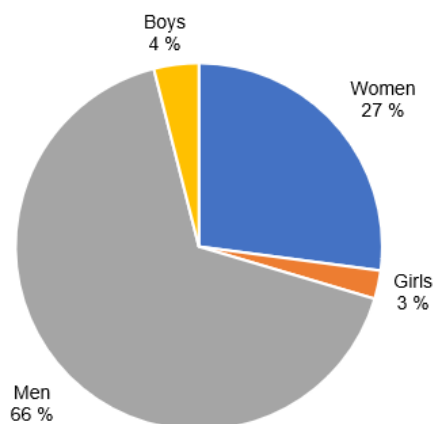
Source: Eurostat (*crim_thb_sex*)

3. Labour exploitation

The number of victims suggests that there is an increase in victims of labour exploitation of 51% between 2019-2020 (3940) and 2021-2022 (5 940). Over the reporting period, the number of labour exploitation victims in the EU was 1 950 in 2021 and 3 990 in 2022. In line with the preceding sections, in 2021-2022, trafficking for labour exploitation or forced labour still is the second main form of exploitation in the EU (37%), although its share increased by 5% since 2019-2020. Labour exploitation includes domestic work, care activities or cleaning services. The Member States registering the highest numbers of victims of trafficking for labour exploitation are France (1 299), Germany (1 047), the Netherlands (674) and Italy (666). The most represented EU citizenships among registered victims in 2021-2022 were France (488), Romania (419), Bulgaria (175) and Hungary (173).

In 2021-2022, the victims of trafficking for labour exploitation were mainly male (70%), while females amounted to 30%. In 2019-2020, the victims of trafficking for labour exploitation were 66% male and 34% female. The share of children victims of trafficking for labour exploitation increased from 4% in 2019-2020 to 7% in 2021-2022.

Figure 5: Victims of trafficking of labour exploitation as at least one form by sex and age (%)

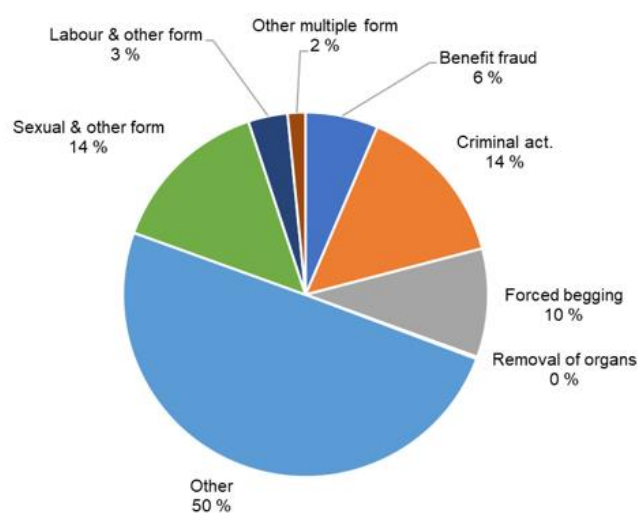


Source: Eurostat

4. Other forms of exploitation

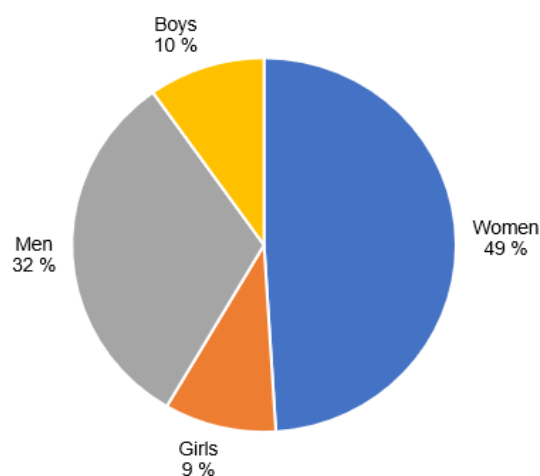
Forms of exploitation falling under the ‘other’ umbrella term include criminal activities (14% of victims of other forms of exploitation during 2021-2022), forced criminality (3%), forced begging (2%), benefit fraud (1%), and removal or organs (0%). Forms of exploitation marked as ‘other’ (i.e., not indicating any of the aforementioned forms) account for 50% of victims of other forms of exploitation during 2021-2022. In 2021-2022, the victims of trafficking for other forms of exploitation were mainly women (49%), while males amounted to 32% and children 19%.

Figure 6: Victims of trafficking of other forms of exploitation



Source: Eurostat

Figure 7: Victims of other forms of exploitation as at least one form by sex and age



Source: Eurostat

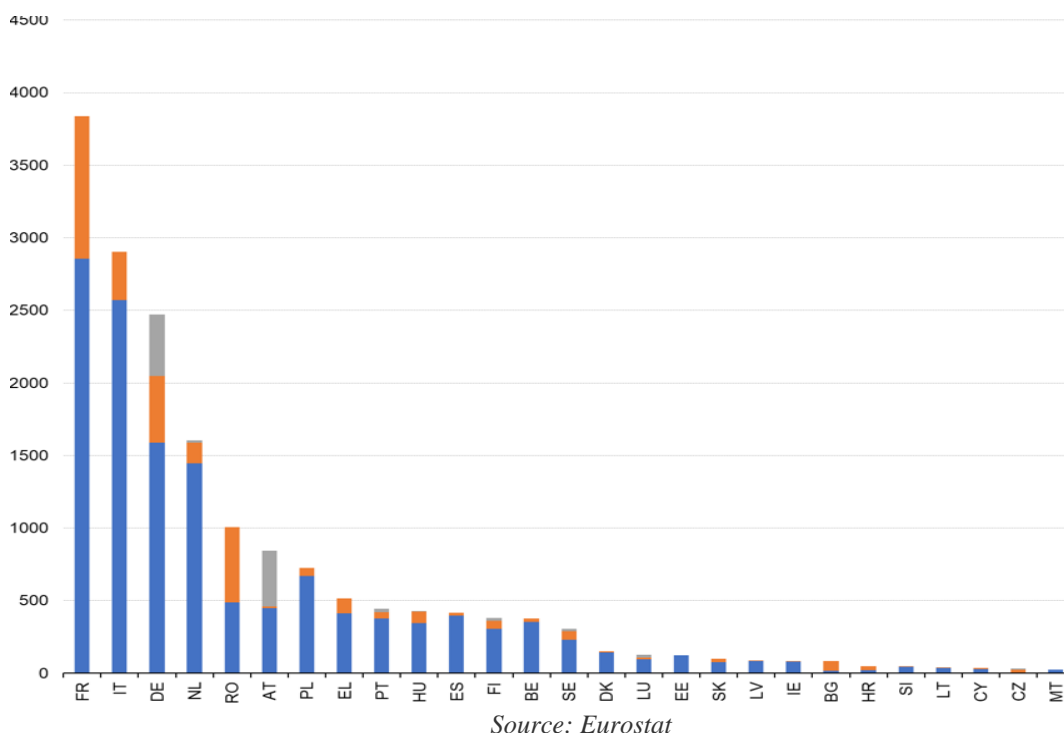
2. Trends in the types of people who are trafficked

1. Victims by age – child victims of trafficking in human beings

In 2021-2022, child victims constituted almost one-fifth of all registered victims in the EU (19%) where the victim’s age group was known, demonstrating a decrease since 2019-2020

(22%). Member States with the highest numbers of registered child victims in 2021-2022 where the age group was known were France (982), Romania (516), Germany (463) and Italy (334).

Figure 8: Victims of trafficking by age



2. Victims by sex

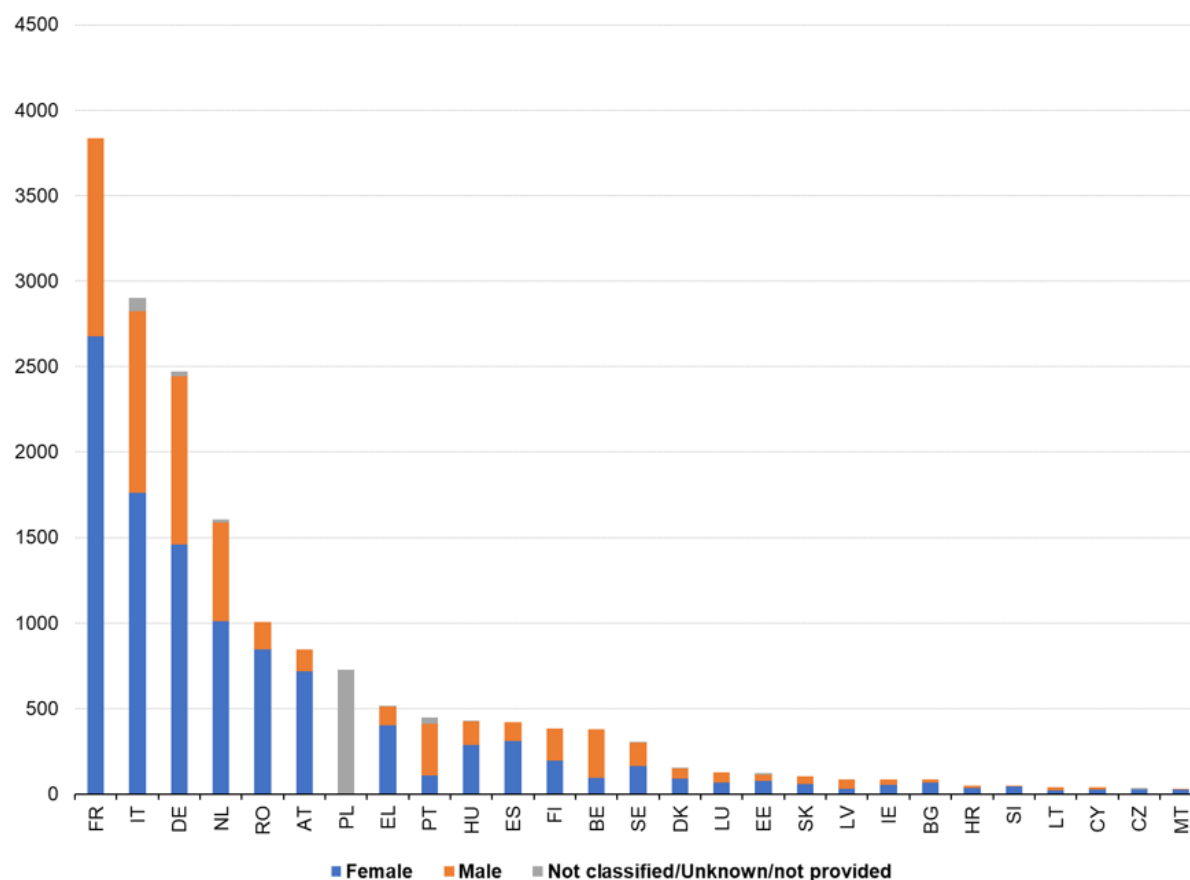
In 2021-2022, 65% of all the victims in the EU were female (women and girls), ranging from 24% in Belgium to 98% in Slovenia. This percentage remained quite steady since 2019-2020 (66%)⁴.

The Member States with the highest percentage of male (men and boys) victims during the registering period were Belgium (76%), Portugal (73%), and Latvia (64%). The Member States with the highest percentage of female victims were Slovenia (98%), Czechia (96%), and Malta (88%).

The Member States registering the most female victims were France (2 677), Italy (1 763), Germany (1 460), and the Netherlands (1 010). The Member States registering the most male victims were France (1 161), Italy (1 062), Germany (985), and the Netherlands (577).

⁴ The breakdown of victims by sex was not available for Poland for the whole period 2019-2022.

Figure 9: Victims of trafficking by sex



Source: Eurostat (*crim_thb_sex*)

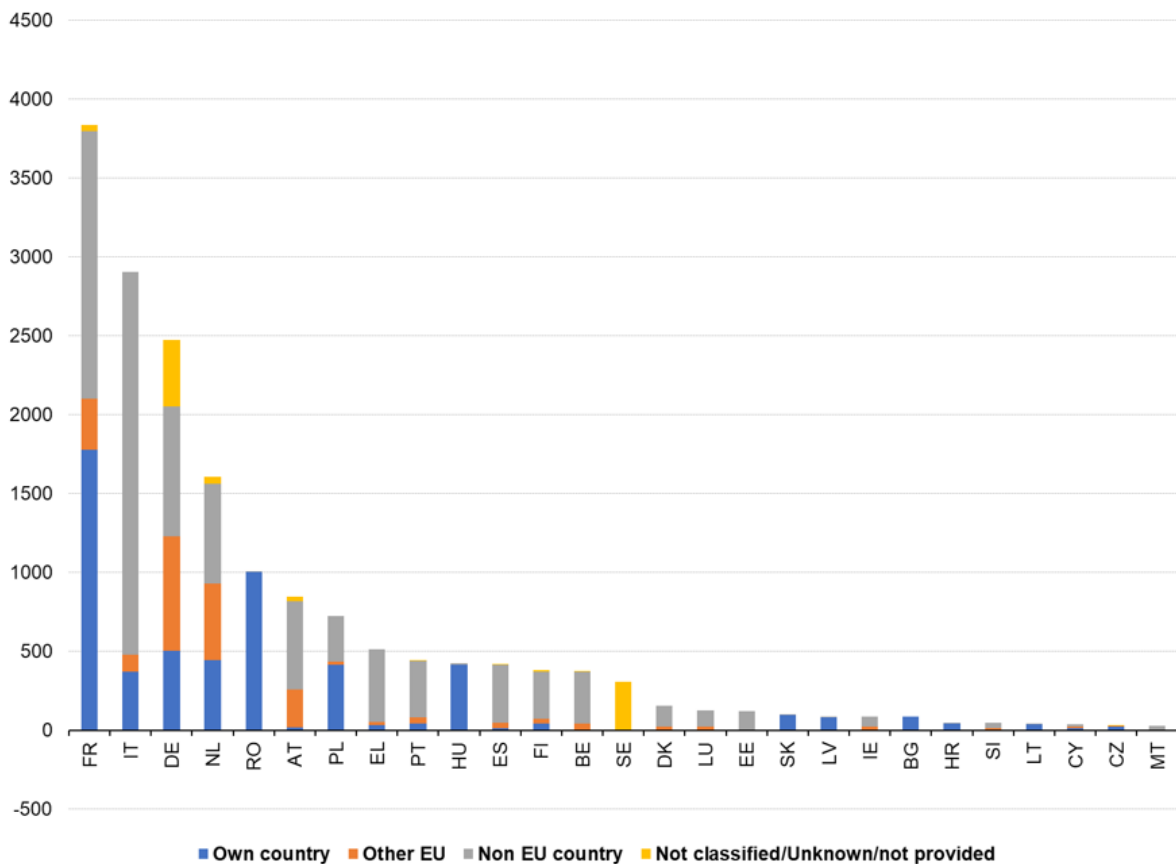
3. Victims by citizenship

In 2021-2022, 46% of the registered victims with known citizenship were EU citizens (7 607) and 54% were third country nationals (8 782)⁵. The majority of registered victims with known citizenship was therefore from third country nationals, demonstrating a shift compared to 2019-2020 when the majority of registered victims was EU citizens (55% EU citizens and 45% third country nationals).

In 2021 alone, 59% of the registered victims with known citizenship were EU citizens (4 112), and 41% were third country nationals (2 817). In 2022, 37% (3 495) of the registered victims with known citizenship were EU citizens and 63% (5 965) were non-EU citizens. The number of non-EU registered victims increased by almost 112% between 2021 and 2022.

⁵ The breakdown of victims by citizenship was not available for Sweden for the whole period.

Figure 10: Victims of trafficking by citizenship

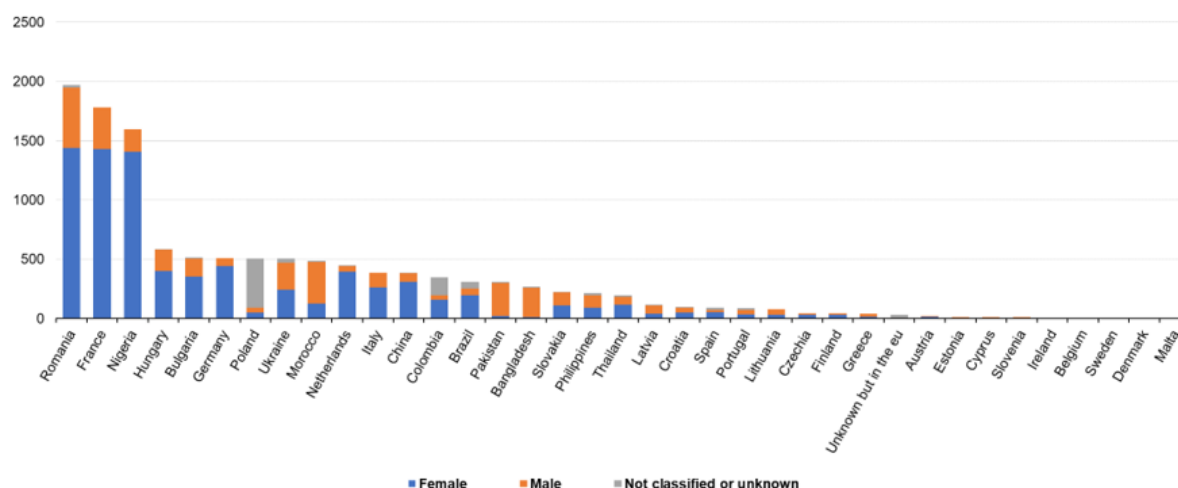


Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_vctz)

Most represented citizenships of EU victims in 2021-2022 were Romanian (1 971), French (1 783), Hungarian (585), Bulgarian (514) and German (510). However, if one considers the number of victims proportionate to the population size, rather than the absolute number of victims, Romanian (49 per million inhabitants), Bulgarian (40), Hungarian (31), Slovakian (28) and Latvian (23) are the most represented EU citizenships in 2022.

The main countries of citizenship of non-EU victims in the EU in 2021-2022 were Nigerian (1 596), Ukrainian (503), Moroccan (485), Chinese (381), and Colombian (350).

Figure 11: Number of victims per citizenship of EU27 and top non-EU victims and sex



Source: Eurostat

Across the EU in 2021-2022, approximately 34% of all registered victims were citizens of the country in which they were registered, compared to 39% in 2019-2020.

The countries with the highest rates of registering their own citizens were Bulgaria and Romania (both 100%), Hungary (97%), Slovakia (95%) and Lavia (93%).

5. Trends in criminal justice system indicators related to trafficking offences

In addition to statistics on victims and types of exploitation, Eurostat collects data on different aspects relating to suspected individuals, prosecuted individuals, convicted individuals, final decisions of prosecutions and Court judgements.

1. Individuals suspected for trafficking offences

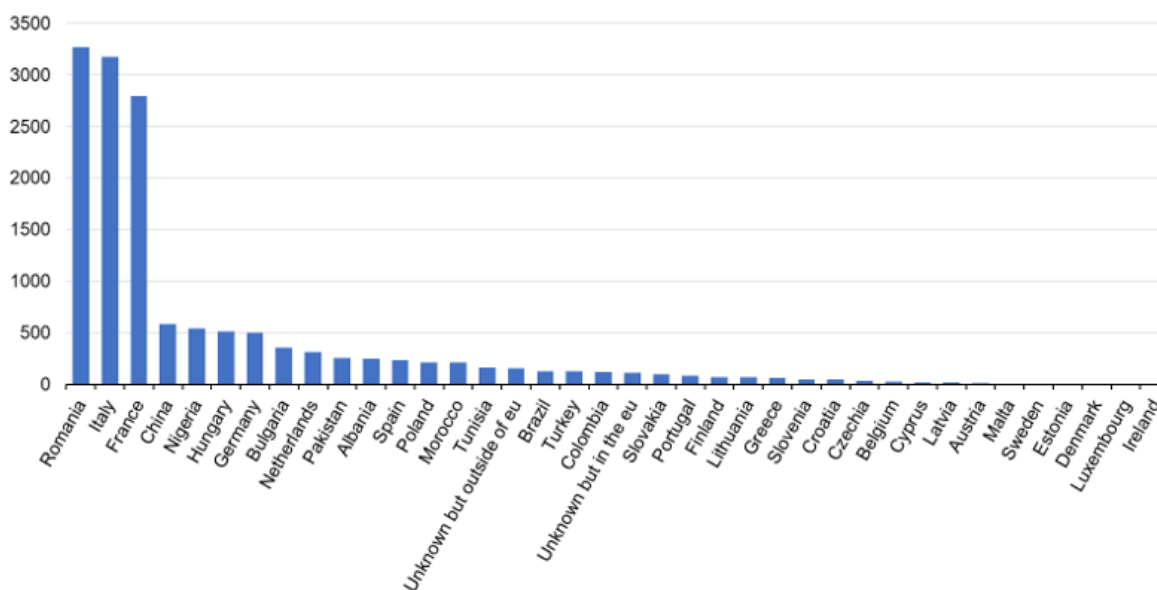
The total number of individuals suspected of THB crimes (both EU and non-EU citizenships) increased by 16% between 2019-2020 (15 214) and 2021-2022 (17 711)⁶. EU citizens accounted for 72% (5 392) of all suspects in 2022.

Member States with the highest number of nationals among those suspected of THB crimes were Romania (3,266), Italy (3,175), and France (2,794) in 2021-2022.

The most frequent non-EU nationalities among suspects were China (586), Nigeria (545), Pakistan (256), and Albania (252).

⁶ The number of suspects was not available for Estonia for the whole period, for Romania for 2019 and 2020, for Ireland and the Netherlands for 2020 and for Belgium for 2021.

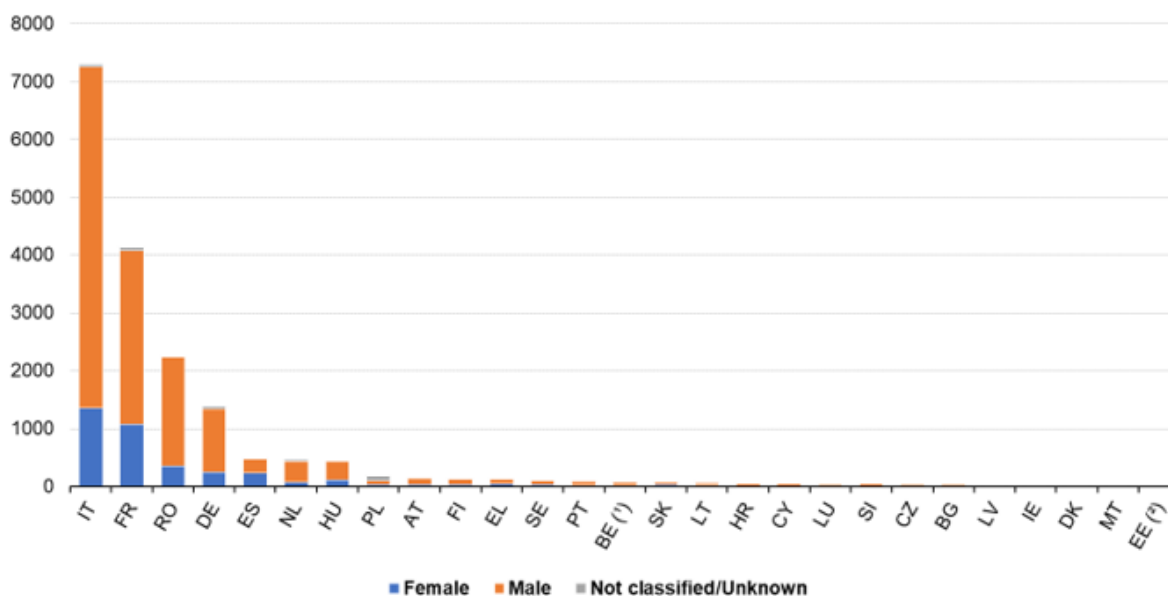
Figure 12: Number of suspects per citizenship of EU27 and top non-EU suspects



Source: Eurostat

Where information on the sex is recorded, 78% of individuals suspected of THB crimes were male (13,664) in 2021-2022. Men accounted for the majority of individuals suspected of THB crimes in all Member States in 2021-2022. In Spain, the proportion of women among suspects was 48%, while it was 41% in Slovakia.

Figure 13: Number of suspects of trafficking in human being offences by sex

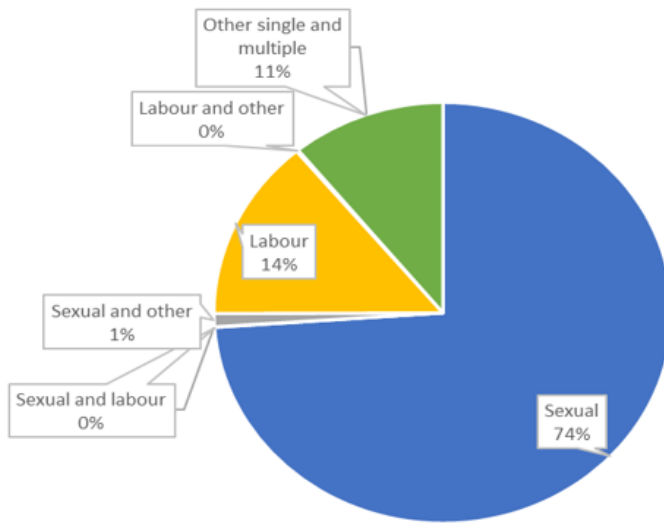


Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_sex)

With respect to various aggregated types of exploitation, in 2021-2022 individuals were most frequently suspected in relation to sexual exploitation (74%), followed by labour exploitation (14%), and other types of exploitation (11%). In 2019-2020, individuals were already most

frequently suspected in relation to sexual exploitation (65%), followed by labour exploitation (23%) and other types of exploitation (12%).

Figure 14: Number of suspects by the aggregated form of exploitation



Source: Eurostat

2. Individuals prosecuted for trafficking offences

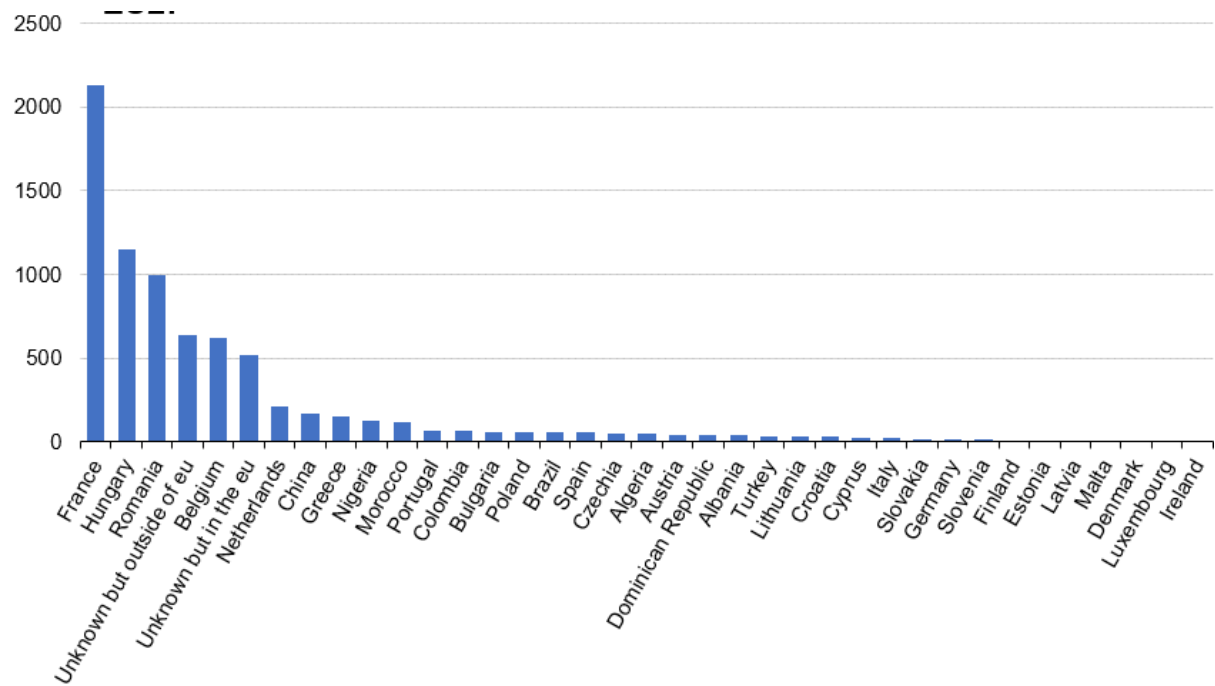
The total number of individuals prosecuted of THB crimes (both EU and non-EU citizenships) increased by 35% (6 539 in 2019-2020 and 8 445 in 2021-2022)⁷. EU citizens accounted for 81% of all prosecuted individuals in 2022.

Member States with the highest number of nationals among those prosecuted of THB crimes were France (2 127), Hungary (1 152), Romania (993) and Belgium (620) in 2021-2022.

The most frequent non-EU nationalities among prosecuted were China (170), Nigeria (123), Morocco (117), and Colombia (68).

⁷ The number of prosecuted was not available for Germany and Italy for the whole period, and for Cyprus for 2019 and 2020.

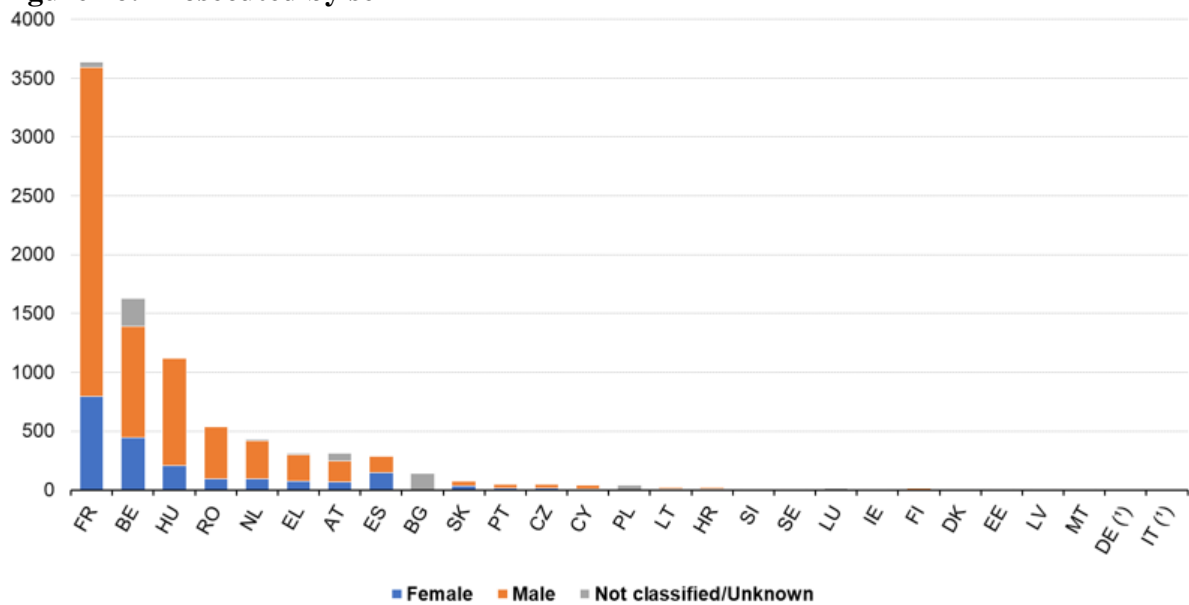
Figure 15: Number of prosecuted persons for human trafficking offences per EU27 and non-EU citizenship



Source: Eurostat

Where information on the sex was recorded, 75% of individuals prosecuted of THB crimes were male in 2021-2022 (6193). The Member States with the highest shares of women among those prosecuted in 2021-2022 were Ireland (67%) and Spain (52%). In 2022, 5% of the prosecuted persons were children.

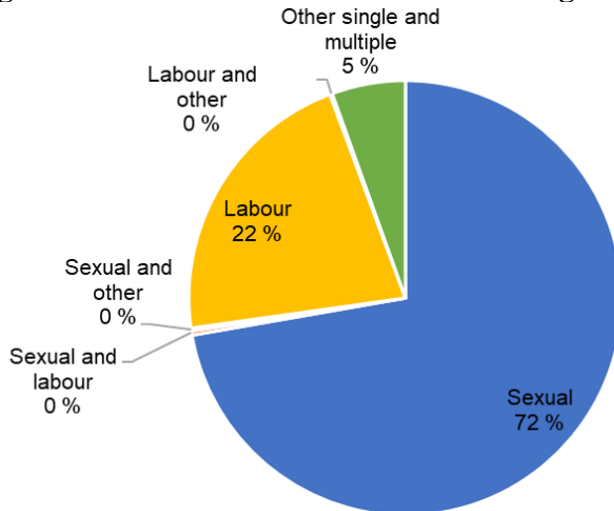
Figure 16: Prosecuted by sex



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_sex)

Sexual exploitation was still the most common reason for prosecution, accounting for 72% (70% in 2019-2020) of all recorded prosecuted persons, and reaching 100% in Malta, the Netherlands and Slovenia. The second most common form of exploitation was forced labour, representing a 22% share.

Figure 17: Prosecuted for human trafficking offences by aggregated form of exploitation



Source: Eurostat

3. Individuals convicted for trafficking offences

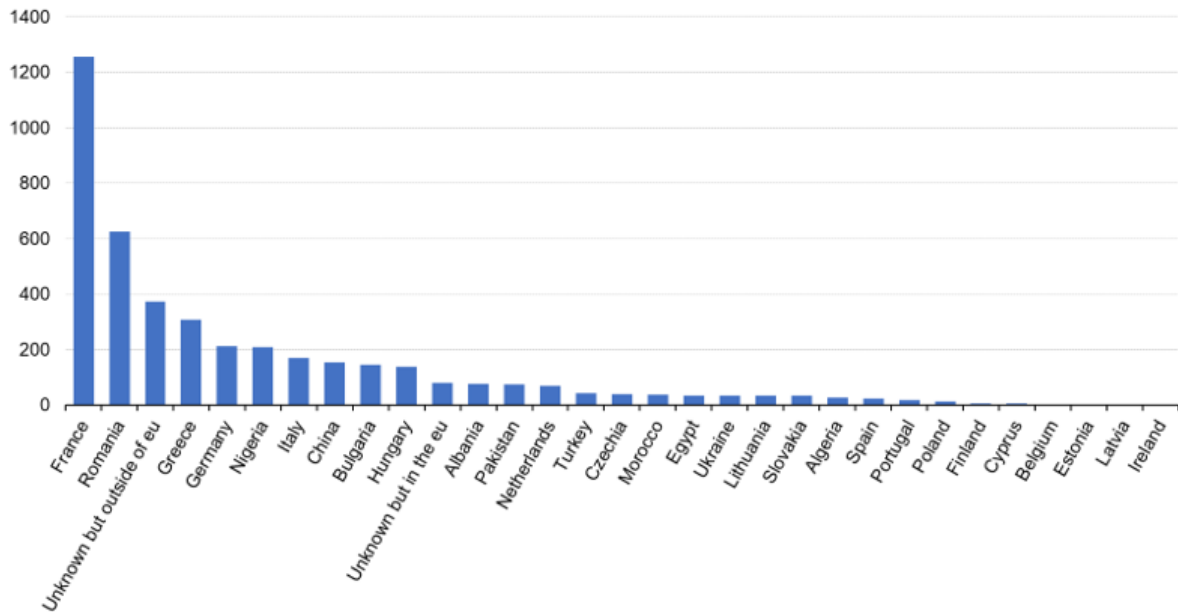
The total number of individuals convicted of THB crimes (both EU and non-EU citizenships) increased by 40% between 2019-2020 (3 019) and 2021-2022 (4728)⁸. Within the reporting period, in 2021 EU citizens accounted for 72% of all convicted individuals for whom citizenship was reported, and 74% in 2022.

Member States with the highest numbers of citizens among convicted individuals were France (1 254), Romania (626), Greece (307), and Germany (212) in 2021-2022.

The most frequently recorded non-EU countries of citizenship among convicted individuals were Nigeria (210), China (153), and Albania (76).

⁸ The number of convicted was not available for Belgium for 2020 and 2022, and for Italy for 2019 and 2020.

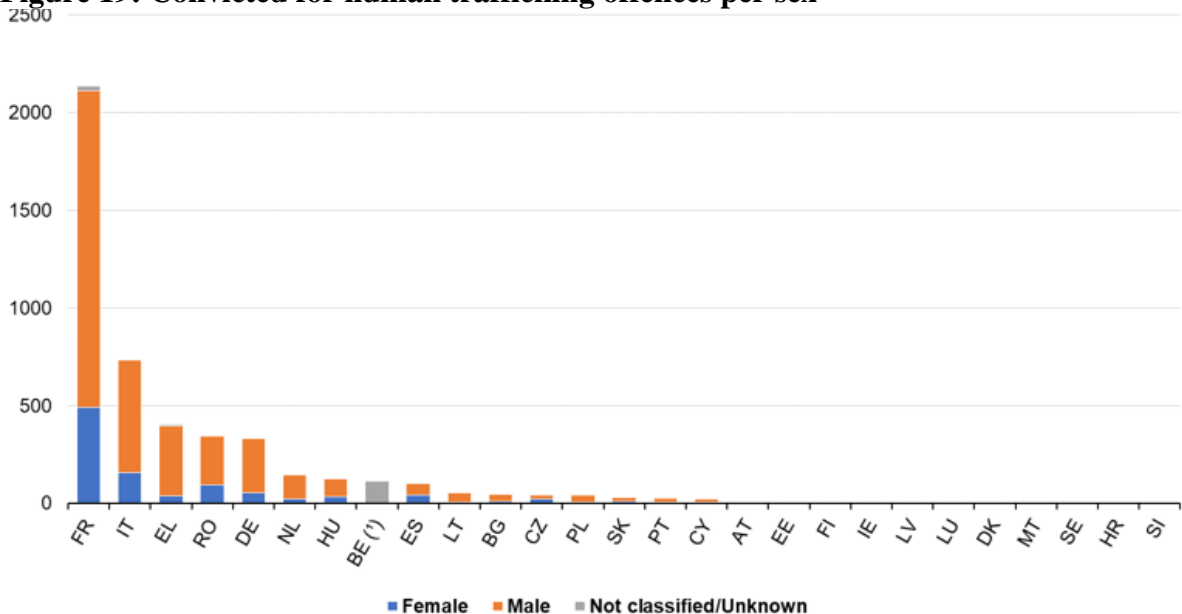
Figure 18: Convicted persons for human trafficking offences per citizenship of EU27 and non-EU citizens



Source: Eurostat

In line with the preceding sections, the overwhelming majority (78%) of individuals convicted for human trafficking crimes in the EU in 2021-2022 were men. Member States with a high share of convicted women in 2021-2022 were Sweden (100%) and Ireland (80%).

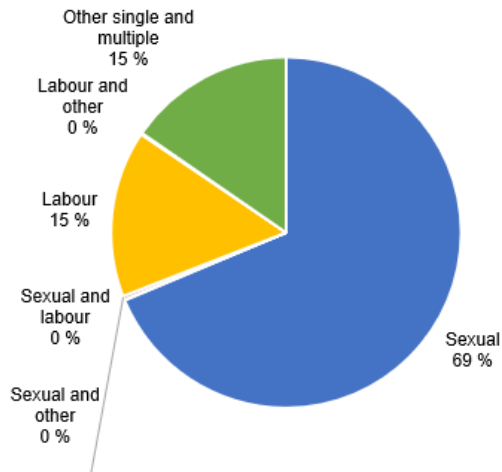
Figure 19: Convicted for human trafficking offences per sex



Source: Eurostat (crim_thb_sex)

Sexual exploitation was the most frequent form of exploitation recorded for convicted individuals (69%), reaching 100% in Malta and the Netherlands, and 85% in Romania. The Member States with the lowest numbers of convictions for sexual exploitation were Lithuania (13%), Finland (17%), and Italy (20%)⁹.

Figure 20: Convicted for human trafficking offences by the aggregated form of exploitation



Source: Eurostat

4. Final decisions of prosecution

In 2021-2022, 42% of total final decisions of the prosecutors in the EU brought charges for trafficking in human beings, 2% for another criminal offence and 38% of final decisions did not bring charges at all¹⁰.

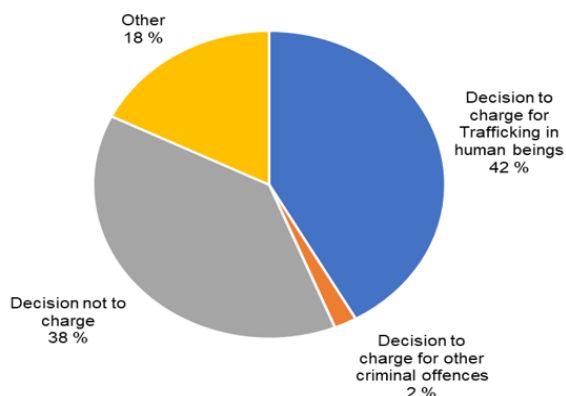
In three Member States, Latvia, Malta and Sweden the totality (100%) of final decisions bring charges for trafficking in human beings. The Member States with the smallest percentage of final decisions of prosecutors bringing charges for trafficking in human beings were Ireland (14%), Belgium (18%), and Romania (20%).

The Member States with the highest percentage of final decisions not charging at all are Romania (80%), while the countries with the smallest percentage of final decisions not charging at all are Cyprus (6%) and France (8%).

⁹ The breakdown of convicted by form of exploitation was not available for Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Sweden in 2021-2022.

¹⁰ The number of final decisions of the prosecution service by outcome was not available for Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Portugal and Finland in 2021-2022.

Figure 21: Final decision by the prosecution concerning persons prosecuted for human trafficking offences by the nature of the final decision



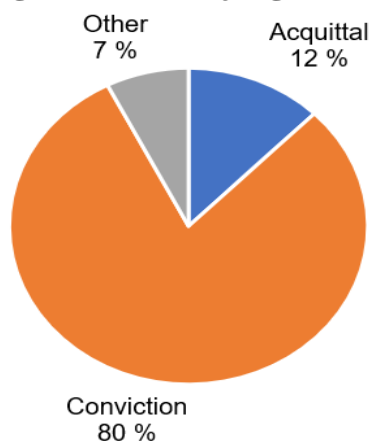
Source: Eurostat

5. Court judgements

In 2021-2022, 80% of court judgements in Member States led to convictions, while 12% led to acquittal¹¹.

The Member States with the highest percentage of acquittals in their total court judgements were Slovenia (100%), Denmark (83%), and Malta (78%). The countries with the smallest percentage of acquittals in their total Court judgements were Romania and Hungary (both 2%), Lithuania (3%) and Germany (6%). The totality (100%) of Court judgements led to convictions in three countries: Estonia, Ireland, and Sweden.

Figure 22: Court judgements for human trafficking by the nature of the decision



Source: Eurostat

6. Use of exploited services

In the EU in 2022, 51 individuals were suspected of using services of victims of trafficking: 30 in Sweden, 16 in Czechia, 2 in Hungary and Latvia. 8 persons were prosecuted and none was convicted. Many countries do not report the data as the use of services is not criminalized or data is not available.

¹¹ The number of court judgements by outcome was not available for Belgium and Spain in 2021-2022.