



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN SPAIN

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest international crime, following illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN SPAIN

Every year in Spain, criminal networks dedicated to the sexual exploitation of children, especially for the prostitution of young girls, are discovered by Spanish authorities. In many cases, thousands of pornographic pictures and videos depicting the sexual abuse of children are found once the authorities track down these gangs.³

Around the world, countries are considered:

- 'Sending' or 'origin' - from where children are sent;
- 'Transit' - where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- 'Receiving' or 'destination' - where the children finally end up.

Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries might be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. Spain is a transit and destination country for children trafficked for sexual purposes. Spanish children are also trafficked within the country. The main problems identified in Spain are trafficking for sexual exploitation, in particular for child pornography.⁴ In 2004, the INTERPOL's Group V received more than 215 reports related to child pornography on the Internet.⁵

During the period 2002-2006, the National Spanish Police Force "Guardia Civil" detected 2749 cases of child trafficking, of which about 750 were trafficked only for sexual purposes.⁶ As well as children from Spain, children from Africa (Morocco and Nigeria), Latin America (Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil and the Dominican Republic) and Europe (Portugal, Romania and Bulgaria) are also often victims of sexual exploitation.⁷

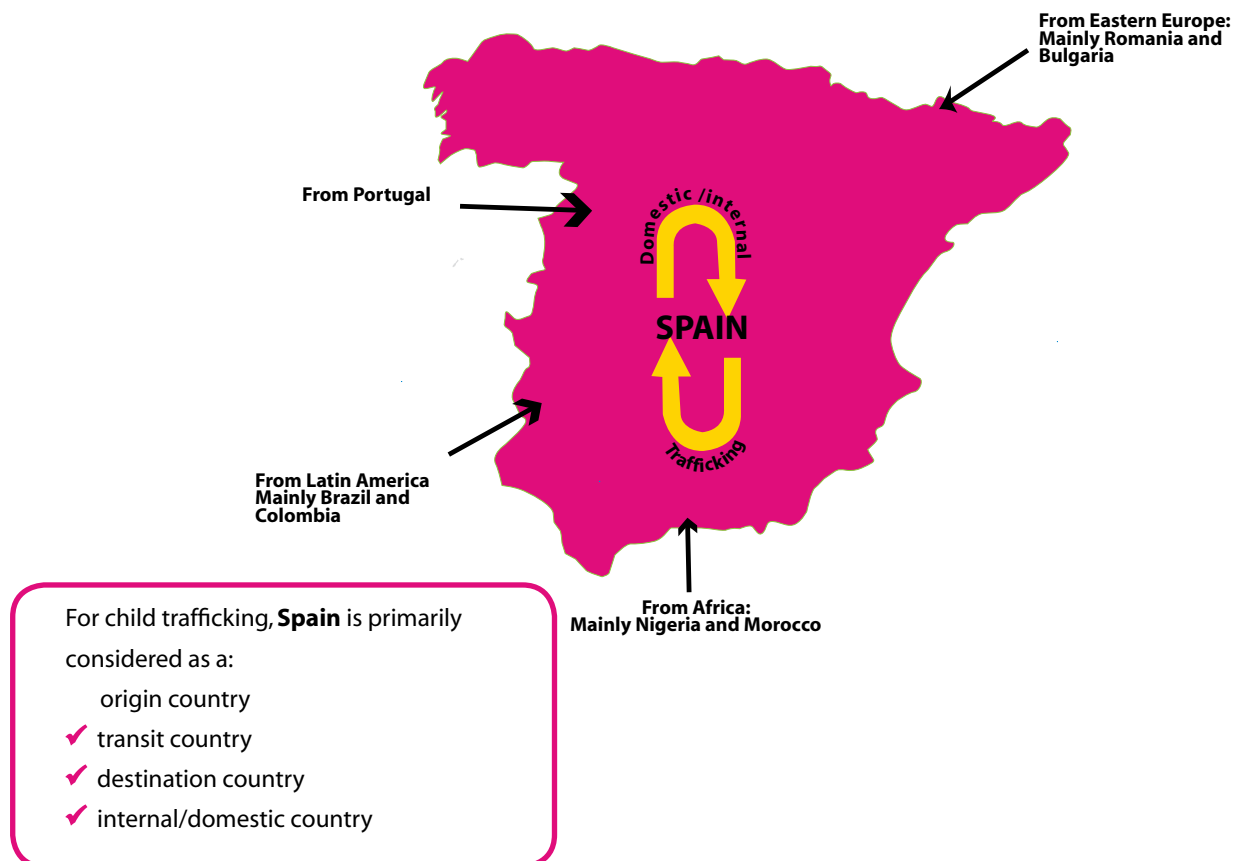
In 2003, 323 cases of sexual exploitation were reported to the police, with almost all of them involving children that came from Romania.⁸ Reports claim that trafficking of Romanians into Spain has increased since they no longer require visas to enter some of the EU countries.⁹ Spain is not only a country of destination for child trafficking. In many cases, children are brought to Spain to transit to other destination countries in Europe.¹⁰

Who gets trafficked?

The demand for sex drives child sex trafficking globally, while poverty, domestic violence and abuse, discrimination and the desire for a better life makes children vulnerable. Children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked because they are often uneducated, easy to overpower and easy to convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children in refugee camps, children whose family and community life has been disrupted and do not have someone to look out for them are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking. Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced, or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived.

Victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation in Spain are usually young girls.¹¹ The young girls are often approached by persons who gain their trust. In Eastern Europe, Latin America and North Africa, serious political, social and economic crises, civil war, religious or ethnic conflicts, persecution and discrimination against minorities, high unemployment, and high crime rates put children in a vulnerable situation. Traffickers describe life abroad as an easy and pleasant one. Sometimes the girls become emotionally involved with the men that traffic them. The young girls are usually taken to a large town, isolated, beaten, and subjected to severe physical, sexual and emotional abuse.¹²

The children who are trafficked (both girls and boys) are generally between 14 and 17 years of age and come from families with socio-economic problems. They often have a negative perception of their chance to achieve something in their country of origin because of their low level of education and the economic difficulties in the area they come from.¹³ In the case of children trafficked from Romania, this is exacerbated for Roma communities who believe their ethnic origin is a social stigma and this 'social inferiority' represents a major obstacle to finding a job.¹⁴



Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions. Spain is also a source country for tourists seeking sex with children and it has been estimated that between 30,000 and 35,000 Spanish men travel to Central and South America to engage in sex with children.¹⁵ Spain is also considered the largest host of child pornography in the European Union.¹⁶

Who are the traffickers?

The recruiter is in many cases known to the victim and of the same nationality. He or she will seek to convince the victim of the economic advantages of working in Spain. In some cases the victims are told some information about the job awaiting them in Spain, but their recruiters lie about the employment conditions. Sometimes recruiters lie about the work that victims will do in Spain, telling them that they will be employed as cleaners in hotels, baby-sitters, etc. In some cases, victims are kidnapped, brought to Spain and forced into prostitution.¹⁷

Recruiters provide all that is necessary for the journey to Spain, from documents - such as falsified passports, invitation letters and airline tickets - to money, to ensure that the children are not stopped by the police. All expenses incurred must always be repaid to the member of the organisation who meets the victims on their arrival in Spain, creating a debt that will be used to control and maintain the child in prostitution. Once at the final destination, the children are handed over for exploitation to night-club owners, sometimes Spanish citizens, or to other Romanians or foreigners living legally or illegally in the country.¹⁸

However, traffickers are not the only ones attracted by the prospects of profiting from the trafficking of children. Employers, such as pimps and the owners of brothels or sweatshops, and various third parties such as recruiters, agents, transporters, 'controllers' and corrupt law and migration officials also make money from the trafficking process. Taxi drivers sometimes collaborate with the rings by transporting victims to their destinations.¹⁹

CASE STUDIES

Romanian girl enslaved by trafficking network in Spain

In June 2006, a 16 year old girl from Romania escaped from her captors in Alicante. She told the police that she entered Spain in 2004 as a tourist travelling by bus. A cousin of hers invited her to come to Spain. When she arrived in Valencia, two Romanian men were waiting for her and with the pretext that her cousin was waiting for her in Granada, travelled with her to that city where they finally sold her to other Romanians for 1700 Euros. She was then moved to Madrid where they kept her in an apartment with other girls. She was raped and treated as a commodity, being told by her captors that they could do whatever they wanted with her. The pimps forged her passport so that she appeared to be over 18 years old. A few days later, she was moved under close surveillance to Alicante, to another house with another 8 girls. A man helped her escape and fearing her captors, she went to the police. In 2006 alone, 95 criminal networks exploiting girls and women were disbanded by the police.²⁰

African girls threatened with voodoo

In Madrid in 2004, the police investigated 17 groups that exploited girls and women. According to Madrid's Provincial Brigade, Spain is an important point for trafficking in humans for sexual exploitation. Nigerian girls, some as young as 17, appear to be the main victims. Their pimps tend to threaten them with physical violence and with harming them and their family with voodoo practices.²¹ In the majority of the cases, the children have been made to undergo religious rituals before they leave their home country, which may include taking nail clippings, hair cuttings or their blood. These tokens are taken to make a curse. If the child breaks the curse, they are told that they and their families will come to harm, or so the traffickers make them believe. Many of the children strongly believe in the curse and therefore submit to the traffickers' demands.

Dominican girls trafficked to Spain

In 2000, journalists from the newspaper El Mundo and the news channel Antena 3 infiltrated a trafficking network. They uncovered Francisco Antonio Maas (Otti Maas), a Dutchman accused of being the head of a major European-Dominican prostitution operation that trafficked girls, most of them teenagers, to Spain, Italy and other countries. The evidence also led to the arrest of his Dominican partner, Silvino Medina Cuevas, a military officer that was part of the Secret Service.²²

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- To strengthen protection of children from trafficking and sexual exploitation, Spain needs to urgently implement the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, and in particular, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. Spain should also ratify the *Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings*.
- The Spanish Government should acknowledge the dimension and seriousness of the phenomenon of human trafficking, especially when children are involved, and allocate more resources to the detection and prosecution of this crime.
- The Government of Spain should develop a national plan of action that will help all the relevant institutions work together to better protect children from sexual exploitation, providing sufficient resources for law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute criminals, as the II National Plan against CSEC comes to an end in 2009.
- The Spanish Government should approve and implement the National Action Plan against trafficking of Human Beings for sexual purposes presented by the Ministry of Equality in December 2008.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Spain	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Spain
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990	Initial Report – submitted in 1993 Second Report – due in 1999 submitted in 2001 Third and Fourth Report were due in consolidated form in January 2008	The concluding observations of the Committee’s recommendations do not mention trafficking in children. However, it does call for a more balanced redistribution of resources at the central, regional and local levels so that the same level of social policies and services can be provided for the most marginalised groups in society, including Roma children and unaccompanied migrant children. The Committee also calls for improved mechanisms for collecting and analysing data on all persons under 18. The Committee also expressed a deep concern about the provision of adequate health care and educational facilities to children of Roma origin, children of migrant workers, particularly when they are not legal, and unaccompanied foreign children.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Spain	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Spain
U.N. Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2002	Initial Report due in 2004 and submitted in 2006	<p>In response to the 2007 report, the UN Committee expressed particular concern about the consideration given to the discrimination against foreign unaccompanied children who have been victims of trafficking.</p> <p>The Committee recommended that Spain implement a central database for registering violations, ensuring that data concerning trafficking and other crimes covered under the Protocol are disaggregated by age, sex, minority group and origin are systematically collected and analysed, as they provide essential tools for measuring policy implementation.</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the State Party expedite the legal reform bill to include provisions on remuneration and improperly induced consent. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that Spain takes the necessary steps to adequately define and criminalise trafficking in persons in accordance with the <i>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children</i>, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Finally, the Committee recommends that the State party consider ratifying or acceding to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005) and the Convention on Cybercrime (2001).</p>
U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	2002	N/A	N/A
<i>ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour</i>	2001	N/A	N/A
<i>Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings</i>	Has been signed in July 2008, but is not yet ratified	N/A	N/A

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Measures should be established to improve protection of separated children, namely their identification, age assessment, registration, family tracing, guardianship, best interests' determination, treatment and care. In this framework, it would be necessary to develop and implement codes of conduct establishing minimum standards for care staff to ensure that children in the care of the social services receive adequate assistance and are not exposed to the risk of being trafficked or revictimised.
- It is necessary to generate social awareness about child trafficking to prevent children being entrapped and for communities to be able to identify trafficking victims without provoking social reproach towards them. This could be done in collaboration with the mass media.
- There is a need for better information about the trafficking of children to Spain and to monitor trends and developments through systematic and disaggregated data collection.
- An awareness raising campaign directed at victims must be developed to encourage them to seek assistance.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

To help a victim, you can contact **La Red Española contra la Trata de Personas** (Network against Trafficking) at <http://www.redconlatrata.org>

MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT Spain: www.acim.es and www.ecpat-esp.org/
- Red Española contra la trata: <http://www.redconlatrata.org>
- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

- ¹ UNICEF. *UNICEF calls for increased efforts to prevent trafficking of children*. 16 June 2007. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html
- ² UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ ECPAT International. *Informe Global de Monitoreo de las acciones en contra de la explotación sexual comercial de niños, niñas y adolescentes – España*. Bangkok. 2005.
- ⁴ ENACT. *A Report on Child Trafficking: Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom*. 2004.
- ⁵ Spanish Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Child Rights Observatory. *II Plan Nacional de Acción contra la Explotación Sexual de la Infancia y la Adolescencia , 2006* (Second Plan of Action against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Teenagers, 2006). Viewed at: (<http://www.mtas.es/SGAS/FamiliaInfanc/infancia/PlanesInformes/ExplotSex.pdf>)
- ⁶ Spanish Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Child Rights Observatory. *II Plan Nacional de Acción contra la Explotación Sexual de la Infancia y la Adolescencia , 2006* (Second Plan of Action against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Teenagers, 2006). Viewed at: (<http://www.mtas.es/SGAS/FamiliaInfanc/infancia/PlanesInformes/ExplotSex.pdf>)
- ⁷ UNHCR. *US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report – Spain*. 2007. Viewed at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USDOS,,ESP,467be3d9c,0.html>
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Terre des Hommes – UNICEF, 2006. *Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe: A Preliminary Assessment*.
- ¹⁰ ECPAT International. *Informe Global de Monitoreo de las acciones en contra de la explotación sexual comercial de niños, niñas y adolescentes – España*. Bangkok. 2005.
- ¹¹ ENACT. *A Report on Child Trafficking: Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom*. 2004.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ ILO-IPEC. *Rapid Assessment of Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation in Romania*. 2003.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Plataforma de Organizaciones de la Infancia, 2001. *Informe complementario al segundo informe presentado por España al Comité sobre los Derechos del Niño de Naciones Unidas sobre la aplicación de la Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño*.
- ¹⁶ Internet Childhood Foundation. 2006 *Half Yearly Report*. Viewed at: www.iwf.org.uk
- ¹⁷ ENACT. *A Report on Child Trafficking: Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom*. 2004.
- ¹⁸ ILO-IPEC. *Rapid Assessment of Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation in Romania*. 2003.
- ¹⁹ ENACT. *A Report on Child Trafficking: Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom*. 2004.
- ²⁰ Revista Autogestión, 23 de agosto de 2006. “Me vendieron por 1,700 Euros”
- ²¹ “Redes de Prostitución”. *El Mundo*. 28 October 2004.
- ²² “Detenido en Santo Domingo el militar implicado en la red de trata de blancas”. *El Mundo*. 2 February 2000.



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