

PRESS RELEASE TERRE DES HOMMES (embargo until 3 June 11.00)

European Parliament is taking a political stand against child trafficking

Combating child trafficking: EU needs a priority policy says Bulgarian MEP

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Today, MEP Marusya Lyubcheva is pleading for the European Parliament to recognize the fight against child trafficking as a priority for the EU. Specialised on combating child trafficking, the child rights organisation Terre des Hommes is strongly supporting this initiative.

During today's Mini-Plenary Session of the European Parliament, MEP Marusya Lyubcheva, backed by four MEP signatories, will launch a "Written Declaration (n. 50) on combating the trafficking of children".

Trafficking of children is a problem and a challenge for each county nowadays recognizes MEP Marusya Lyubcheva. Its existence in the EU and in partner countries makes us, the Members of the European Parliament, responsible for the future generations; we are called upon to create conditions of security and safeness for our children, she states. MEP Lyubcheva calls on the EU to develop both programmes for child protection and uniform, targeted policies against child trafficking: ***We need a target and priority-oriented EU policy against child trafficking.***

The Declaration is calling on EU Member States to recognize the fight against child trafficking as a priority in national child protection policy, to enhance transnational cooperation, to support authorities and NGOs to shape adequate responses to prevent, protect and provide adequate treatment to victims. To become official, this Declaration must get 400 signatures out of the 785 MEPs by October 2008.

After 8 years of intensive work against child trafficking, we observe that the phenomenon is not only evolving quantitatively but the responses to prevent and combat this crime against humanity are increasingly inadequate, said Raffaele K. Salinari, President of TDHIF, referring to the work done in the framework of the TDHIF **International Campaign against Child Trafficking**.

Benefiting from the know-how of expert NGOs is key to shape adequate policy at EU level, continues Lyubcheva, ***this is why I invited Terre des Hommes to support us in this***. The Declaration is calling on the EU Council and Parliament to provide the necessary resources to fight child trafficking in the framework of the Commission's strategy on the rights of the child.

For the first time, the EP is clearly focusing on the very issue of child trafficking as a priority in the perspective of a future EU strategy on the rights of the child. **This shows that the EU is progressively addressing child trafficking as a specific policy area, and not only as a sub-category of trafficking in persons**, stated Salvatore Parata, from TDHIF Brussels office. **The challenge for the EU is still to shape specific anti child-trafficking programs and allocate respective resources**. The Declaration launched by MEP Lyubcheva is an important step towards that target.

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Note to editors

Terre des Hommes (www.terredeshommes.org) is a leading non-governmental organization in the fight against child trafficking. TDH launched an *International Campaign against Child Trafficking* in 2001 that comprises today more than 75 anti-child trafficking field programmes in 40 countries, awareness raising, capacity-building and advocacy for law and policy improvement. For more resources and information on child trafficking in Europe go to: www.tdh-childprotection.org.