

**Question for written answer E-005458/2014/rev.1  
to the Council**  
Rule 117  
**Roberta Metsola (PPE)**

Subject: Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime and a gross violation of human rights. It is very often linked to organised crime and is considered to be one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide. The Commission estimates that the number of people trafficked to or within the EU amounts to several hundred thousand a year. The Commission's approach to trafficking focuses on prevention, prosecution of criminals and protection of victims. This is reflected in the new directive on trafficking in human beings, which was adopted on 21 March 2011. It establishes robust provisions on victims' protection and supports the principles of non-punishment for petty crimes and of unconditional assistance.

The Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report is published by the United States of America on a yearly basis. All countries are grouped into different tiers, with tier 1 comprising those countries whose governments fully comply with minimum standards as regards the trafficking of human beings. However, the following EU Member States have been placed in the second tier: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and Romania.

Could the Council elaborate as to whether it considers the TiP Report to give a fair and accurate description of the situation vis-à-vis the above-mentioned EU Member States, which have been placed in tier 2? Has the Council held any talks with the US or the 11 EU Member States in question on this issue? If not, are any planned for the near future?

Moreover, what further action, if any, does the Council consider to be necessary in order for the 11 EU Member States which have been placed in tier 2 to fulfil the recommendations made with regard to the trafficking of human beings?