

# **Sexual Exploitation and the European Migration Crisis**



**How has sexual exploitation, through organized crime groups, changed with the influx of migrants in the EU ?**

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**'Organized crime currently  
poses the greatest risk to the  
internal security of the  
European Union'**

**– Head of the European Centre for Organized Crime at Europol, Jari Liukku (2019)**

# + Organized crimes



United Nations and  
European Union

defined



"Structured group existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of **committing crimes** in order to **obtain a financial or other material benefit**"



Where?

- > Eastern Europe, Italy and Albania
- > Emergence new organized crime groups
  - ↳ stemming from Asia, Africa and South Africa
  - ↳ **cooperation** with one another = acquisition of parts in the **illegal market**
- > Benefitting from the worsening of the Syrian civil war and violence in Iraq and Afghanistan => **migrants migrants to the EU**
- > In 2015, over 1.3 million individuals applying for **asylum** in Europe

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Organized  
crime groups

Commonly believed to be linked to

Money laundering, drugs and  
arms trafficking

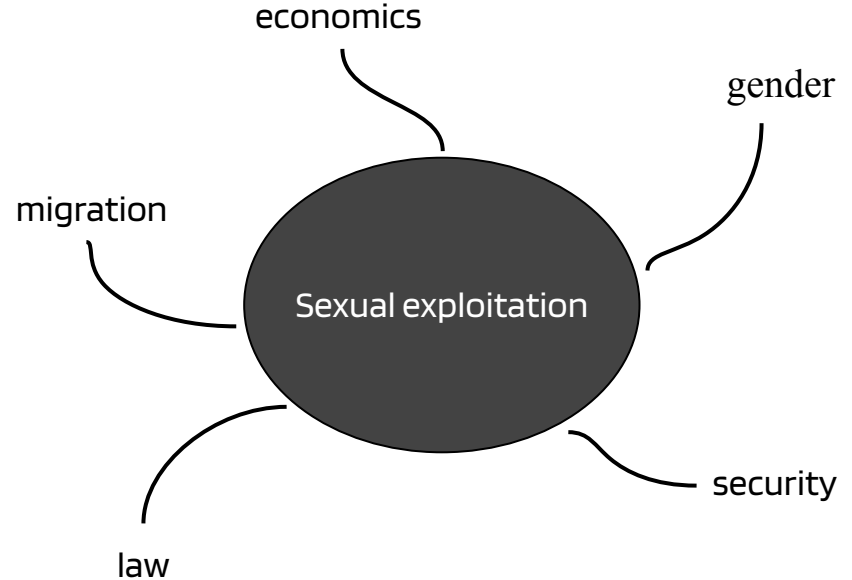
Sexual  
exploitation

Psychological, financial, social  
and physical vulnerability

# + Sexual exploitation

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- > Mainly concerns **young women**
- > Rising since 2013: large influx of **migrant flow**
  - ↳ often labeled as the 'European refugee crisis'
- > Associated with illegal crossing and migrant smuggling
- > **Vulnerability** of women and girls exacerbated by the migratory context
- > Lack of **harmonization** in national legislations on prostitution



A multifaceted topic touching various fields, putting forward the **strengths and weaknesses of transnational cooperation**.

# + Migration

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- > **Mixed migration flows:** refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants, and other types  
=> **lucrative opportunity** for transnational organized crime groups

Estimated turnover of  
criminal networks involved  
in migrant smuggling



**3 to 6  
billion €**

Minimum estimation of  
smuggled migrants in 2016



**2.5  
millions**

Estimated victims' debt  
once arrived in France

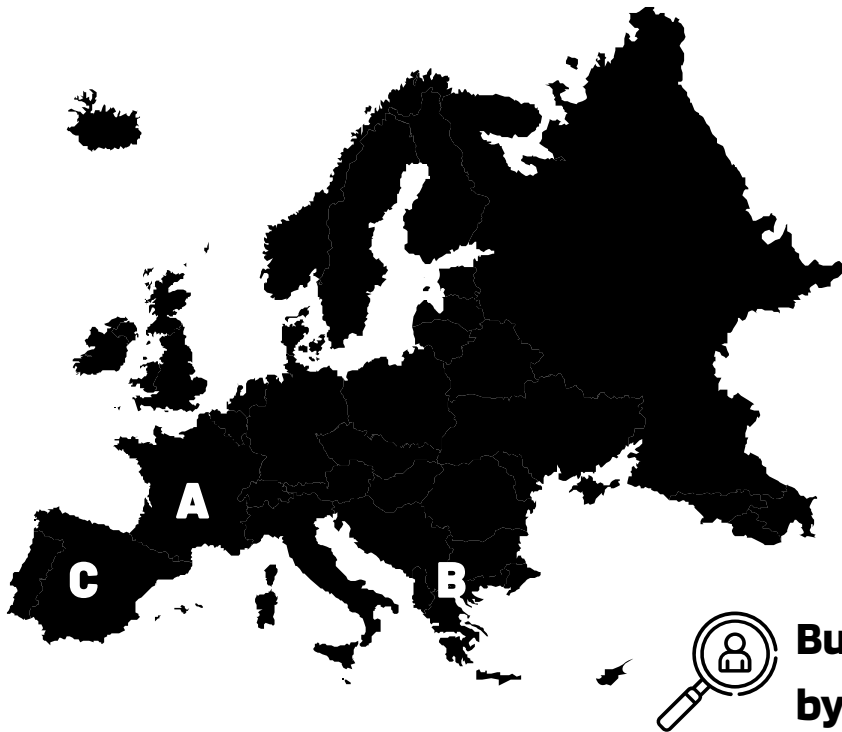


**30.000 to  
60.000 €**

# + Sexual exploitation and forced prostitution

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+ The 3rd largest source of criminal profits



## **A - France**

85 % of women and 93% from foreign nationality

## **B - Greece**

Estimated 1,5 billion euros in 2012

## **C - Spain**

Estimated 18 billion euros



**But prostitution networks that are set up by crime groups often go under the radar.**



# **+ 30,000 registered trafficking victims in the EU in 2015**

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**Victims of Sexual exploitation**

**70%**

A horizontal bar chart with a black bar representing 70% of the total, followed by a white bar representing the remaining 30%. The percentage '70%' is written in white inside the black bar.

**Women and underage girls**

**95%**

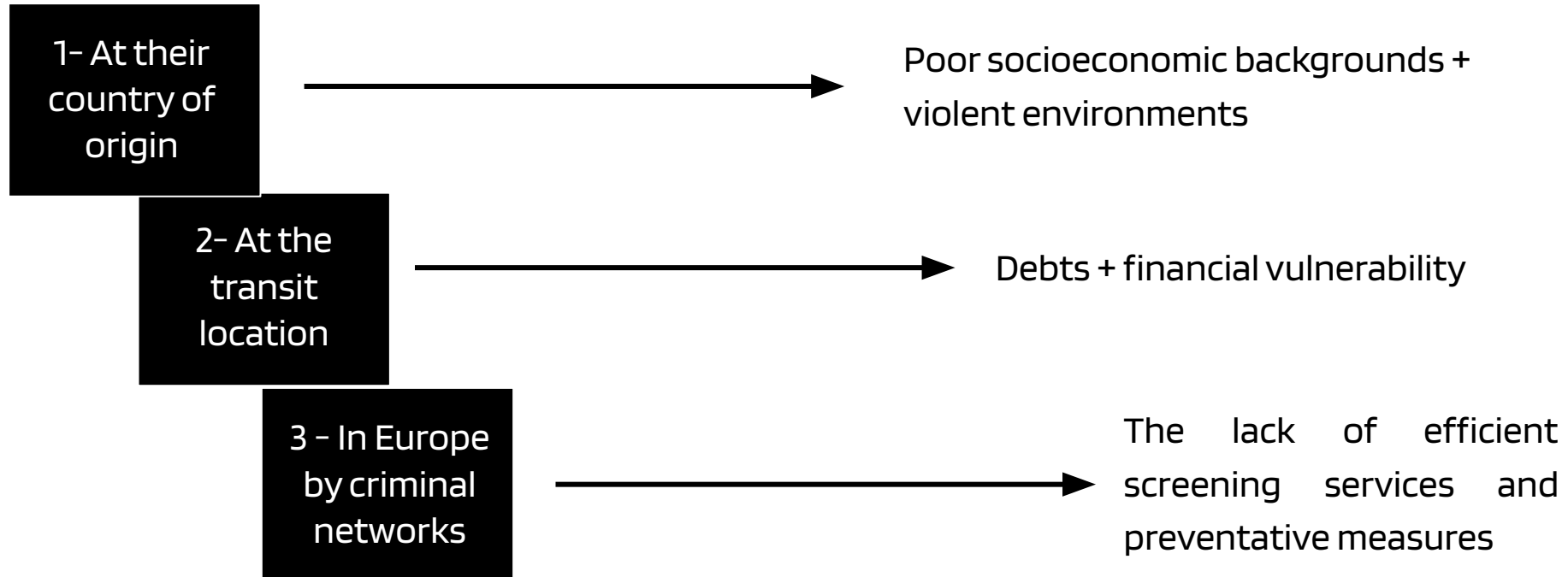
A horizontal bar chart with a black bar representing 95% of the total, followed by a white bar representing the remaining 5%. The percentage '95%' is written in white inside the black bar.

**From outside the EU**

**40%**

A horizontal bar chart with a black bar representing 40% of the total, followed by a white bar representing the remaining 60%. The percentage '40%' is written in white inside the black bar.

# + The victims of sexual exploitation are exploited at mainly 3 different points



**“a kind of warehouse where  
these girls are temporarily  
stored ... before being picked  
up by gangsters”**

**– Salvatore Vella, Deputy Public Prosecutor in Agrigento, Sicily (2016)**

# + The Nigerian Confraternities

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> International mafia specializing in the sexual exploitation of young Nigerian women

Nigerian trafficked womens arriving by boat in Italy



**433 (2013) to 7,768 (2016)**

Dismantled prostitution  
networks in France in 2016



**28% were  
Nigerian**

# + **The Lack of harmonization within the EU**

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**> 3 legal regimes for prostitution**



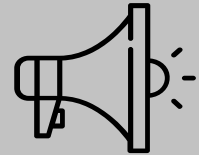
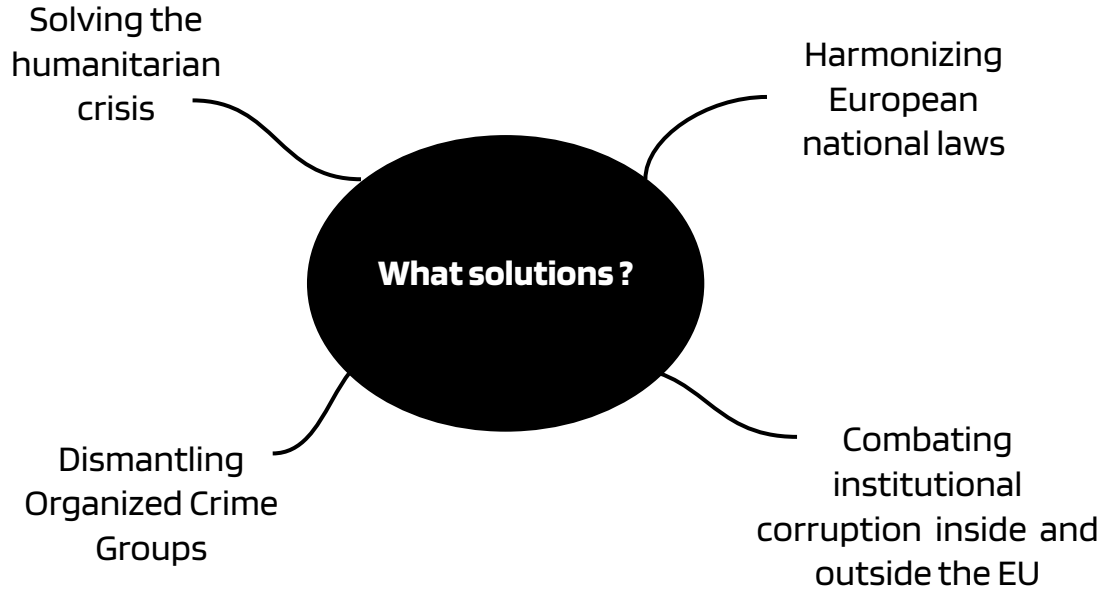
**Prohibitionism**

**Regulationism**

**Abolitionism**

# + Sexual exploitation

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**More than anything, it is a transnational problem consequently requiring more efficient cross-border cooperation**

# + Transnational Cooperation and dismantling the organized crime groups

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## **EU-Turkey agreement**

Reduce pressure on Greece and South Europe hotspots

## **UNODC**

Regional programme focusing on South-Eastern Europe, UNODC intends to act on the Balkan migration route.

## **Europol**

An operational support for the Member States and their police

In October 2020, multilateral cooperation against sexual exploitation  
→ arrested 400 people , 249 potential victims were identified

## **Eurojust**

Assisting Europol in the investigation of organized crime cases

Collaboration with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

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**+ Thank you  
for your attention**