

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004723/25
to the Commission
Jorge Buxadé Villalba (PFE)
(28 November 2025)**

Subject: Child trafficking in the Canary Islands

The latest case of child trafficking in the Canary Islands, in which 13 girls who were in Lanzarote illegally were sold as sex slaves in France, has once again exposed the weakness of the EU's legal framework.

Key features of the case include: the lack of transparency and oversight with which NGOs managing reception centres for illegal immigrants and other stages of the immigration process operate; lack of monitoring of children; lack of cooperation from countries such as Morocco; and a lack of resources to actually carry out returns.

Other legal proceedings launched for the same offences directly involve the organisations managing reception centres. NGOs often run the centres in an opaque manner and are in contact with the trafficking mafias themselves.

In light of the above:

1. Is the Commission familiar with the organisations under investigation and have they received EU funds?
2. Is the Commission working on proposals to determine the age of illegal immigrants and reduce the risk of fleeing or kidnapping?
3. Given the transnational nature of the case, are police authorities working with Europol to put an end to this criminal network?

Submitted: 28.11.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(25 March 2026)**

The Commission is committed to supporting Member States in determining the age of illegal immigrants and reducing the risk of their disappearance or kidnapping.

The Eurodac Regulation ⁽¹⁾ has lowered the age for registering the biometric data of children from 12 years old to 6 years old, and this should *inter alia* help law enforcement to follow up on cases of disappearances of the children. The Commission encourages the exchange of best practices among Member States to enhance child protection measures.

The Commission can provide guidance and financial support through relevant EU programmes. To safeguard the financial interests and the EU budget, the Commission makes use of all means at its disposal based on the legal framework to ensure that the EU funds are used in compliance with the applicable rules.

The Commission will therefore not hesitate to take appropriate measures in case of substantiated evidence that EU funds have not been used in accordance with the applicable rules.

The Commission works closely with Member States and with Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, the European Asylum Agency and the European Labour Authority to strengthen the EU's response to organised crime networks active in trafficking in human beings.

Europol, as reinforced by Regulation (EU) 2025/2611 ⁽²⁾, is to ensure timely and systematic coordination, exchange of information and to provide analytical and operational support to dismantle criminal networks involved in trafficking in human beings at the request of national law enforcement authorities.

A dedicated operational action of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats Trafficking in Human Beings focuses on child trafficking with a focus on unaccompanied minors.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1358 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of biometric data in order to effectively apply Regulations (EU) 2024/1351 and (EU) 2024/1350 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 2001/55/EC and to identify illegally staying third-country nationals and stateless persons and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L, 2024/1358, 22.5.2024.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2025/2611 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2025 amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794 as regards the strengthening of Europol's support and enhancing police cooperation, for preventing and combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, OJ L, 2025/2611, 22.12.2025.

Additionally, the Commission is engaged in dialogue with third countries, including Morocco, to enhance cooperation on migration and security issues.
