



Largest ever human rights petition to European Commission calls for action to stop sex trafficking of children!

Brussels, 28 June 2011. The Body Shop and ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) today presented a petition of 2.3 million signatures from across Europe to European Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. The petition urges the European Commission to put pressure on Member States to speed up the incorporation of the EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims in their domestic legislation to ensure more action is taken to prevent child trafficking, prosecute criminals and provide adequate support services for those affected.

The petition - the largest trafficking petition to date - is part of The Body Shop and ECPAT's ground breaking campaign to urge governments to do more to protect the 1 million children and young people trafficked annually for sexual exploitation.

The petition was presented to Commissioner Malmström, responsible for EU's Home Affairs, outside the European Commission's Berlaymont building by a large team from ECPAT and The Body Shop decked out in campaign colours and carrying campaign symbols.

Christopher Davis, International Campaigns Director from The Body Shop says: "*Today, only nine EU Member States have developed anti-trafficking policies that contain adequate measures to address specifically child trafficking (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK)¹. The incredible response to the petition from people visiting The Body Shop stores and ECPAT groups across the European Union shows that people want change. We believe all EU Member States must listen to these voices and take swift action to accelerate the incorporation of the EU Directive into domestic law. We hope Commissioner Malmström will respond by issuing a statement urging Member States to take action*

Accepting the petition Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, responsible for Home Affairs, said "*Trafficking in human beings is an extremely serious crime and a gross violation of human rights. The Directive I proposed will help to severely hinder what can be classified as a modern form of slavery. In response to the 2.3 million people who have signed this petition I commit that we will do our utmost to ensure that Member States give priority to the implementation of the Directive.*"

The Body Shop and ECPAT launched the campaign petition in 2010 in response to the increasing vulnerability of children to child sex trafficking in the EU and across the world.

¹ ECPAT – The Body Shop, *Country Progress Cards*, 2010. Available at: http://www.ecpat.net/TBS/HTML/MakeHistory_country.html



“The recent economic downturn is set to drive more vulnerable children and young people to be exploited by the global sex trade. Trafficking of children for sexual purposes happens in virtually every country in the world – developed and developing” said **Kathleen Speake**, Executive Director of ECPAT International. She added *“We are very pleased that the European Union has created this Directive. Now national governments must develop strong policy frameworks on human trafficking, including specifically child trafficking, to support the effective implementation of the Directive”*

For further information contact:

Photos of the petition handover will be available from 12.30 CET on June 28th at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thebodyshopevents/> and at
<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photoByDate.cfm?sitelang=en>

Broadcast footage will be available on June 28th following the event at

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs>

The “Stop Sex Child Trafficking” campaign website is at: www.thebodyshop.com/stop

About ECPAT International

ECPAT International – which stands for End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes - is a global network made up of independent grassroots organisations, working in 75 countries world wide to combat commercial child sexual exploitation. ECPAT International calls for governments and decision makers to fulfill commitments in implementing the Rio Declaration Call for Action and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby ensuring children and young people are protected from the heinous crime of trafficking. For further information, see www.ecpat.net.

About The Body Shop

The entire The Body Shop network across 64 countries is supporting the Stop Trafficking campaign. The Body Shop has been involved in this issue since 2007, participating at the World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children, which took place in November 2008 in Brazil. The Body Shop and ECPAT International introduced the world's leading experts on the issue, international governments, NGOs and activists to the “Stop Sex Trafficking of Young People and Children” campaign.

More information on EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims is

[here](#). The new Directive provides for a robust legal framework against human trafficking, which contains comprehensive measures and mechanisms to be implemented by all EU member States (with the exception of Denmark, which has opted out of the Directive) to better prevent child trafficking, to prosecute criminals with more rigor and effectiveness and to ensure that child victims of trafficking receive adequate support, assistance and protection. EU Member States have two years to incorporate this Directive into their domestic legislation (until March 2013).

“ The new ambitious rules (...) will keep the EU at the forefront of the international fight against human trafficking by protecting the victims and punishing the criminals behind this modern slavery”, **Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs**
<http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?id=77172b8d-5d04-4cf0-b276-49f733ab93c8>