

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND BORDERS

Security challenges from human trafficking to international terrorism are drawing Canada and Europe closer together.

It is a fine balance being struck by authorities on both sides of the Atlantic: how to increase security measures to combat terrorism and organized crime, while upholding and promoting human rights and civil liberties.

With their discussion particularly poignant in the wake of the Madrid

bombings, Canada and the European Union pledged at the recent summit in Ottawa to cooperate more closely in areas related to international security, from promoting global governance and

combatting terrorism to collaborating on issues of justice and home affairs.

Security forces in Canada and Europe are grappling with how best to stop human trafficking and other illegal movements of people, while promoting and encouraging the legitimate movement of people between countries.

"We have to make it difficult for people and goods to illegally

cross borders, while facilitating the movement of legitimate people and goods," says Peter Bates, Deputy Director of the International Crime and Terrorism Division for Foreign Affairs Canada.

Authorities are collaborating in particular on efforts to stop both human smuggling, where people are illegally brought into countries in exchange for payment, and international human trafficking, where people are deceived to move, legally or not, to countries where they will be subjected to various forms of sexual exploitation or forced labour.

Canada, through organizations like the RCMP, works with domestic and international partners to stop this illegal human flow by gathering and sharing information and developing intelligence to detect, prevent and investigate offences.


"Human trafficking is recognized as a growing global crime," says Superintendent John Ferguson, Director of the RCMP's Immigration and Passport Branch, which is involved in border security and the fight against organized criminals involved in the smuggling and trafficking of people into Canada. "It has a tremendous human element. We are talking about people who are physically intimidated or assaulted or threatened. We must protect them against further victimization."

Because human smuggling and trafficking involve secreting people across borders, the fight against these activities goes hand in hand with the fight against terrorism, Ferguson explains.

"The illegal migration of people around the world poses an opportunity for tremendous profits for organized crime and creates a great risk for every country affected," he says. "Those who may be looking at it from a terrorist point of view can use these routes to illegally enter other countries undetected... We have to shut down those routes."

Canada is involved in a number of domestic and international agreements and protocols and has undertaken initiatives such as information campaigns in countries where human trafficking victims come from, including a striking advertisement noting that there are "people for sale" in Canada.

The Canada-EU Partnership Agenda sets out a number of areas of closer cooperation on security between forces on both sides of the Atlantic, including improving the exchange of strategic, tactical, technical and operational information with a view to combatting illegal and irregular migration.

"Crime thrives between jurisdictions," says Peter Bates. "International terrorism, human smuggling and many other forms of transnational crime are global in scope and they require global solutions." 

For more information about security and related issues addressed in the Canada-EU Partnership Agenda, see www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadaeuropa/EU/partnership_agenda-en.asp.

To read about what the RCMP is doing to safeguard security, go to www.rcmp.gc.ca.

People for sale in Canada?

THE ANSWER WILL SHOCK YOU.

Every year, people like Sandra are deceived or lured into a life on the street. Sold into the sex trade, locked up in restaurants, made to work for little or no pay. They are victims of human trafficking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A SERIOUS CRIME.