

## Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence

*Graduate Doctoral Research Award 2024*

### Final Report

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**Project:** LGBTIQ+ Human Trafficking: EU Policy and the Impact on South American LGBTIQ+ Forced Migrants

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I am currently completing my Ph.D. in International Relations at Florida International University. My dissertation focuses on the reception and integration of LGBTIQ+ forced migrants from Latin America in the U.S. and Spain, emphasizing the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly faith-based organizations. With the support of the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, I have expanded my research beyond my dissertation to examine the intersection of forced migration and human trafficking of Latin American LGBTIQ+ individuals in Europe, particularly in Spain, Italy, France, and Germany.

This new dimension of my research addresses two key issues. First, it examines how EU migration policies may unintentionally increase the vulnerability of LGBTIQ+ migrants, sometimes fostering conditions that enable human trafficking. My central argument is that the EU's securitization approach, which frequently categorizes migrants as either criminals or bogus refugees, overlooks the unique challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals, potentially creating conditions that facilitate trafficking.

Second, the study highlights the hidden numbers in human trafficking. Significant discrepancies exist between official EU statistics and the victims identified by CSOs, many of whom remain invisible due to various factors. With an estimated ratio of 1:>20 (for every victim identified by the state, at least 20 more remain hidden), it is evident that the data used by governments to craft anti-trafficking policies are incomplete and biased. My central argument is that this gap explains why current policies are ineffective in addressing the full scope of the issue.

With the grant's support, I produced two comprehensive reports: one on EU policy and another on the Latin American victims reported by CSOs in the four countries under review. These reports were informed by a mixed-methods approach, combining policy and legal analysis, official human trafficking statistics, and interviews with CSOs working directly with victims. Collaborations with institutions such as the Chair of Refugees and Forced Migration at Comillas University in Madrid and the Organization of American States (OAS) further enriched this study by fostering dialogue on the legal and societal responses to these issues.

I will present the findings at the IV Dialogue on Combating Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation from the Perspective of Financial Intelligence, to be held in Washington, D.C., on September 20,

2024. The event is organized by the Department Against Transnational Organized Crime of the Organization of American States and the Permanent Observer Mission of Spain to the OAS.

I am deeply grateful to the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence for supporting this vital research. I hope it will contribute to new academic discussions and more effective policies to address the vulnerabilities of LGBTIQ+ migrants in Europe and combat the scourge of human trafficking. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Markus Thiel and Madame Christine Caly for their steadfast support throughout this journey.