**Access to remedies for victims of trafficking and labour exploitation: What are the critical barriers and next steps?**

*Side event organised by La Strada International (LSI) and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) on the occasion of the European*

*Anti-trafficking Day*

**18 October 2019, Room 7, Palais de l’Europe**

**12:30 - 13.30**

**Working language: English**

**Background**

The third evaluation round of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings focuses on trafficking victims’ access to justice and effective remedies, which is essential for victims’ rehabilitation and reinstatement of rights, as well as an instrument of empowerment and prevention. A number of provisions of the Convention establishing substantive and procedural obligations are relevant to this topic. Access to justice and effective remedies must be guaranteed to all victims of trafficking subject to the jurisdiction of State Parties, irrespective of their immigration status or presence on the national territory and notwithstanding their capacity or willingness to co-operate in any criminal investigation.

However, **evidence shows that very few victims have the means to seek remedy.** The ability for trafficked persons to actually seek and obtain compensation or due wages remains difficult to exercise in practice. For people with a precarious or irregular residence status, a fundamental barrier is the inability to safely report crime or file complaints against their employers, and have those complaints investigated. **Instead of receiving protection and justice, including fair compensation and unpaid wages, they face arrest, detention and deportation.**

The event will focus on legal, policy and practice measures that can be taken at national level to promote safe reporting, effective complaint mechanisms, and access to justice for all victims, including those with precarious or irregular residence status.

**PROGRAMME**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **12:30 - 13:30** | **Access to remedy in practice: What are the critical barriers and next steps?**  **Moderator:** Petya Nestorova, Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Begins |
|  | * **Access to compensation and back wages – findings from Justice at Last project -** Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator, La Strada International * **Access to police and complaints mechanisms -** Lilana Keith, Senior Advocacy Officer, PICUM * **Claiming justice – learnings from the *Chowdury v. Greece* case -** Vassilis Kerasiotis, Country Director for the Greece Office of HIAS   **Questions & Answers with participants** |