

Newsletter March 2022

La Strada International wishes to inform and update you on developments in the field of trafficking in human beings and activities of the Platform and member organisations. We welcome your feedback and input. Please [e-mail us](#)

LSI news

La Strada International speaks out about the war in Ukraine and risks of human trafficking

In a recent [statement](#) La Strada International raised concern about the war in Ukraine and the safety and wellbeing of people, in particular the possible further exploitation and abuse of displaced persons and refugees within and outside Ukraine. The first reports of exploitation and sexual abuse have been reported, including potential trafficking cases.

La Strada International calls for urgent measures to protect Ukrainians and other refugees and urges governments to take measures to reduce risks for exploitative practices through the establishment of well-coordinated actions, safety routes and transport, and access to international protection and resettlement. Governments should ensure better information provision, assistance and support to all refugees and adequate monitoring of signs of human trafficking and exploitative practices.

Webinars on women rights and the role of Civil society actors in Ukraine

La Strada International and La Strada Ukraine have - jointly with Ukrainian human rights and women rights actors - raised awareness about the situation of civil society in Ukraine and the violation of women and children rights. On 7th of March a Webinar was organised on the role of Ukrainian civil society (See [programme](#) and [recording](#)); a second webinar '[Security from Gender Based Violence for migrants in diaspora](#)' was organised by the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO) on 21th of March (see [recording](#)) and on 24th March a third webinar '[Voices of the Ukraine delegation to CSW: Women's Leadership in Promoting social justice, gender equality, peace, sustainability and environmental safety](#)' was organised by WFUWO.



Joint Manifesto for a truly inclusive approach to gender-based violence

Twelve major international and European networks and organisations, including La Strada International have launched a [manifesto](#) for a truly inclusive EU law and policy, prior to the publication of the new [EU draft law to address violence against women and domestic violence](#). The organisations call on the European Union to adopt a forward-thinking and truly inclusive approach to gender-based violence – that leaves no one behind and strives to achieve real change in the lives of all people, without discrimination.

LSI members news



La Strada information provision and other actions for Ukrainian refugees

La Strada Ukraine and other La Strada members - in particular in Poland, Romania, Moldova and the Czech Republic - offer support to refugees, including (legal) consultation and advice, relocation of persons and where needed the provision of shelter support. To inform Ukrainian refugees about helpline and support programmes, and to raise awareness about exploitative practices, our members have disseminated flyers and other awareness materials. See information shared in [Ukraine](#), [Poland](#), [Moldova](#), [Czech Republic](#), [Austria](#), [Netherlands](#), [Belgium](#), [UK](#), [Ireland](#).

LS Ukraine also published a [infographic](#) on how to detect sexual violence in terms of war. La Strada Poland and La Strada Ukraine have started to collect data on sexual violence related with the war.



Tackling sexual harassment in low-paid and insecure work

FLEX launched a [new publication](#) on the need for better enforcement of sexual harassment protections in low-paid and insecure work. The report *'Tackling sexual harassment in low-paid and insecure work'* includes primary research and case studies collected by FLEX in the cleaning, hospitality and app-based delivery sectors, with input from other key organisations in this space. This publication is particularly timely considering that the UK government has recently announced it will be ratifying the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention which will mean that the UK will have to ensure that labour inspectorates are empowered to deal with workplace violence and harassment. See [more](#)

What is going on?

International organisations raise concern about trafficking risks for Ukrainian refugees

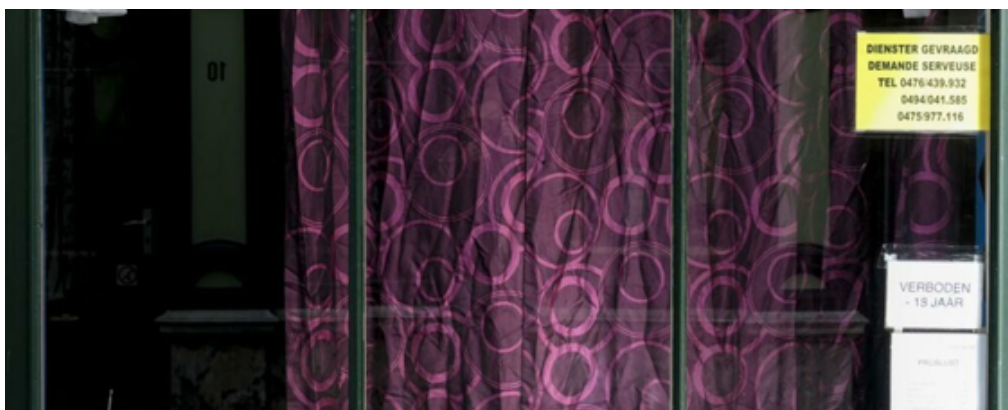
The Russian invasion in Ukraine, resulting in millions of people fleeing the country, has prompted many international organisations to raise awareness about the vulnerabilities of Ukrainian people, and their possible exposure to human trafficking. IOM, OSCE, GRETA, EUROPOL, FRA and several UN Rapporteurs, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, have called upon governments for urgent and coordinated action and prevention of human trafficking. See [more](#).

Public consultation on Victim Rights Directive

The European Commission launched a [consultation](#) related with the ongoing impact assessment for the revision of the EU [Victims' Rights Directive](#). The consultation is aimed at identifying possible ways in which the existing rights of victims, including those already specified in the Directive, can be further strengthened. See [more](#).

EU-wide rules to combat violence against women and domestic violence

On 8th of March, the European Commission proposed new [EU-wide rules to combat violence against women and domestic violence](#). The proposed Directive, which will criminalise rape based on lack of consent, female genital mutilation and cyber violence, strengthens victims' access to justice. The proposal tackles the underreporting of violence against women by introducing new ways to safely report acts of violence, next to proposing safety assessments, respect for victims privacy in judicial proceedings and the right to compensation. The proposal also calls for adequate and specialised protection and support, for instance, through free of charge helplines. It also provides for targeted support for groups with specific needs or at risk, including women fleeing armed conflict.



Belgium adopts legislation on sex work

On 17th March, the Belgium Federal Parliament approved a new sexual penal code with 70 votes in favour, 41 abstentions and 4 votes against. Belgium is now the first country in Europe to officially decriminalise sex work. ESWA, the European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance called it a 'Huge victory for sex workers'. Also LSI's members Payoke and PAG-Asa have strongly supported the new legislative change.

What's new?

ECOSOC Committee urges Serbia to improve position of trafficked persons

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC Committee) urges the Republic of Serbia in its [third periodic report](#), to improve the position and respect the rights of trafficking victims. Special reference is made to the case of exploitation of Vietnamese workers, engaged in the construction of the Ling Long tire factory. See [more](#).

GRETA launches report on online and technology-facilitate human trafficking

On 18 March the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) launched a [new report](#) on online and technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings. LSI and 6 members contributed to an earlier survey, which formed the basis of the report. See [more](#)

European Civic Forum report

A new report: Civic Space Watch report 2021: [‘Stories of hope in dark times’](#), published by the European Civic Forum showcases civil society’s role in the past two years in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report highlights 10 aspects of the challenges civil society faced throughout the year 2021. See [more](#).



Blog: Residence permit on personal grounds for trafficked persons

A new [blog](#) by Julia Planitzer, Second Vice-President of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) explains the importance of a residence permit on personal grounds and reflects on what the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings says on it.

What is happening?

LSI participated in French EU presidency event on forced labour

On 2 - 3 March, La Strada International and its members CCEM, CoMensha and Ban Ying contributed to a high level event on [Zero tolerance for child labour, forced labour and human trafficking](#). The event has been organized within the framework of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union by ILO and Alliance 8.7 as well as various other actors, including our member the Committee against Modern Slavery (CCEM) and the French Ministries of Labour and Foreign Affairs. La Strada International [highlighted](#) in particular the need for unconditional support, access to residence on personal grounds and access to justice including compensation. The livestreams of the event are still available [here](#).

Side event on access to unconditional support

and residence on personal grounds

On 5th April La Strada International, GRETA secretariat, PICUM, and LEFO IBF will jointly organise a side event '[Unconditional support and access to residence on personal grounds is needed to uphold trafficked persons' rights](#)'. This event is organised alongside the 22nd High Level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons "Protection: upholding victims' rights and strengthening assistance" Please register [here](#).

OSCE alliance conference

22nd High Level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons "Protection: upholding victims' rights and strengthening assistance" , will focus on protection of and assistance to victims of trafficking – and specifically, the application of a victim-centred approach to support victims of trafficking in human beings and uphold their rights. You can register [here](#).

- 24 April 2022 – 9th [Rana Plaza Anniversary](#) All-day event - [More info](#)
 - 28 April 2022 - International Workers' Memorial Day.
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Call for input UNSR report on impact of climate change and protection of migrant rights

[Call for inputs](#) from the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants for his forthcoming report to the General Assembly on the impact of climate change and the protection of the human rights of migrants:

Support La Strada's work

La Strada International is dependent on donations and subsidies. If you want to support La Strada's work financially, click [here](#). By making a gift, you will help us to continue our monitoring and advocacy work to ensure accountability for the effective implementation of European Anti-Trafficking policies and regulations and the support to trafficked persons

La Strada International has launched an [emergency fund for La Strada Ukraine](#)



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