

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

LSI NEWS



Statements on Victim Rights Day

On EU Victim Rights Day, La Strada International [called](#) upon the members of the European Council and Parliament to use the current negotiations on various EU legislation to propose clear and binding measures to strengthen victims' rights. We propose 12 recommendations on how to do this. LSI also joined a civil society [statement](#) on strengthening victims' rights by Victim Support Europe and 56 other organisations.

Input to EU committees on Trafficking Directive and forced labour ban

On 16 February, La Strada International contributed to a [public hearing](#) by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on the revision of the anti-trafficking directive. See LSI's presentation [here](#). Input shared by the different speakers should feed into an EESC opinion on the revision of the directive.

A consortium of CSOs, including La Strada International and Anti-Slavery International also provided [input](#) to the EU Committee on Development (DEVE) on the legislative proposal for a Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market and exporting products made with forced labour within the EU.

MEMBER NEWS

- Human Resource Development Foundation (HRDF) in Turkey is helping with the organisation of earthquake relief for displaced persons. They are now considering next steps, also to prevent human trafficking among the displaced persons.
- A [submission](#) to a call by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, by **Anti-Slavery International** and **FLEX** provides information on modern slavery risks arising for migrant workers, due to obstacles to safe and accessible regularisation pathways.
- **FIZ** Magazine "Protection. Law. Justice?" (November 2022) about victim protection during criminal proceedings is [available in English](#) now. It reflects on the rights and obligations

victims have in criminal proceedings and their (often challenging) situation in practice. If you are interested in other FIZ publications in English, click [here](#).

- A new **KOK** study [Trafficking in Human Beings 2.0](#) examines the influence of the internet and social media on human trafficking in Germany, including on the support of trafficked persons. It reflects on the challenges faced by Law Enforcement and Specialised Counselling Centres.
- **KOK** is raising awareness about the private accommodation of (Ukrainian) refugees and the risk factors associated with it. They published outreach materials and [guidelines](#) which clarify the legal framework of private refugee accommodation and provide information on further counselling services.
- **On the Road** started the '[PrIns Project - Emergency Social Intervention](#) in favour of people in conditions of extreme poverty or marginalization together with the Union of Municipalities "Città Territorio Val Vibrata" and the Solidarity Consortium Open. A desk has been opened where people facing extreme poverty can come for information and support.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

EU accedes Istanbul Convention

The European Council has requested the consent of the EU Parliament to accede the Istanbul Convention. Earlier this month the council [adopted](#) the proposal to accede the convention and in January also the FEMM and LIBE committees jointly did. 6 EU countries have still not ratified the Istanbul Convention. EU ratification will send a robust message about the EU's commitment to eradicating violence against women and establish a coherent European legal framework for doing so. See [more](#)

Other relevant EU legislation developments protecting victims and workers

On 2 February, the EU Parliament approved the decision to start negotiations on the [platform workers directive](#). The directive enshrines a legal presumption of employment for self-employed platform workers and reinforces workers' rights and protection in the face of algorithmic management. Negotiations now continue at the EU Council of Ministers. See [more](#).

Negotiations for a new **Directive on Violence Against Women/GBV** are still ongoing. [1660 amendments](#) were received from MEPs on last year's proposal. Also a **prostitution report** by FEMM is still under discussion and received [389 amendments](#). It is expected that the amendments will be discussed in March. Discussions are also ongoing on the revision of the **EU Trafficking Directive**, the [Forced Labour Ban](#) and the [Due diligence directive proposal](#), which was proposed one year ago. The **Victim Rights Directive** amendment proposal has not yet been presented, but is expected for Spring 2023. The [evaluation report](#) was published in June last year.

Europol dismantles international criminal group exploiting Chinese women

A large Europol operation involving law enforcement of different countries has resulted in the dismantling of an international criminal group that held hundreds of Chinese women trapped in debt bondage across Europe, being forced into prostitution. The investigators were able to identify over 200 victims so far. One of the biggest challenge our members face is that victims from China remain a quite hidden group. Chinese victims do often not seek support out of fear for the authorities or deportation. La Strada International hopes all victims were referred and offered protection and support. See Europol's website for [more](#) information.



Victims Rights Campaigns

On 20 February 2023 Victim Support Europe organised an event titled "Achieving Safe Justice for Victims of Crime". You can still watch the [livestream](#). At this day, also VSE's [campaign](#) was launched. See [website](#) how you can support their campaign.

The European Commission earlier launched the EU # Eyes Open campaign' – you can spread information about victims' rights by following us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#). Visit their [website](#) or download their [stakeholder toolkit](#).

Protect not Surveil campaign

PICUM and coalition partners launched the website [Protect Not Surveil](#), which contains many resources on tech, AI and migration and recommendations to EU policymakers. To give it visibility, the campaign [#ProtectNotSurveil](#) was also launched.

WHAT'S NEW

Italy Reups Funding to Force Migrants Back to Libya

In order to keep migrants and asylum seekers away from its shores, Human Rights Watch reports that Italy is paying for tens of thousands of people to be intercepted and returned to Libya, where they face abuses that the UN describes as possible crimes against humanity. Read [more](#).

Victim Support Europe publishes safe justice guide

The concept of Safe Justice starts from the position that strategies, laws, rights, policies and practices for victims in criminal justice should be designed to address harm experienced by victims and to meet their needs. To achieve this, it must be victim-sensitive – following core principles of recognition, respectful treatment, empowerment, well-being and safety. See [guide](#).



IOM publications on migrant workers employment in European supply chains and on ethical recruitment

This [report](#) aims to examine the challenges and good practices related to the employment of migrant workers in European supply chains in the agriculture, food-processing, manufacturing

and hospitality sectors. In December 2022, IOM launched the second chapter of the [IRIS Handbook for Governments on Ethical Recruitment and Migrant Worker Protection](#). It provides governments with practical guidance on how to implement and improve the administration of private international labour recruiter frameworks, with an emphasis on ensuring recruiters are competent in and accountable to ethical recruitment principles.

ILO Database on Forced Labour

In December 2022, the ILO launched a database on forced labour. The database, developed under the [Bridge Project](#), provides comprehensive global and national information on forced labour, including the prevalence of forced labour, international and national institutional frameworks, national laws and policies, and national efforts towards enforcement, prevention, protection and remedies for all 187 ILO member States. Access the Forced Labour Observatory [here](#).

ODIHR publishes results of survey among Ukrainian refugee women

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) published the [findings](#) of a survey on the Safety and Security among 1000 Women Refugees from Ukraine. Some respondents reported that since leaving Ukraine they had experienced sexual harassment (1 in 22); domestic violence (1 in 50); received requests for sexual favours (1 in 50); received proposals to work in the sex industry (1 in 100) and 1 in 500 (so two in total) suffered sexual violence.

ITUC guide: Ensuring fair recruitment

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) developed a [mini guide that outlines how to ensure fair recruitment](#) and how trade unions can work to advance the fair recruitment agenda. The guide provides information on trade unions' best practices to improve the recruitment of workers through organising, advocacy and social dialogue. It also contains legal and normative framework information for fair recruitment. Unions can make use of the tools provided to promote fair recruitment in their regions.

Union strategies for minimum living wages

Another [new report](#) from the ITUC highlights successful union strategies for achieving minimum living wages. Drawing on evidence from the ITUC campaign [The World Needs A Pay Rise](#), the report looks at the tactics deployed by unions in eight countries to win and improve adequate national minimum wages.

GAATW Anti-Trafficking Review - call for papers

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) has issued a call for papers for an Anti-Trafficking Review Special Issue on "Armed Conflicts: Migration, Trafficking, and Labour Markets." Deadline for submissions: 1 June 2023. The details are available [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **1 March 2023** – UNODC organises an online discussion on the findings of the [2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#). Registration [here](#)
- **2 March 2023, 14:00-15:30 CET**, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, in cooperation with the Border Violence Monitoring Network organises a launch event on how to support criminalised Human Rights Defenders in Europe on a policy, legal and practical level. Register [here](#)
- **6 - 17 March 2023** – 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) – several side events on THB are planned.

- **13 March – 31 May 2023** UNODC is organising training opportunities for NGOs; a [SE4U Self-paced course](#) See [call for](#) participation - Register [here](#)
- **14 March 2023** – 10.00 – 11.30 Webinar: [Access to remedy: Enabling remedy through back-up grievance mechanisms](#) by the Dutch SER and Initiative for Global Solidarity
- **22 March 2023** - ECF and Civil Society Europe will host a policy debate with the theme "Protect Civil Society, Defend Democracy." Register [here](#)
- **23 - 24 March 2023** – ERA organises a seminar on Financial investigation of Trafficking in Human Beings (including on victim compensation) with contribution by LSI. Sofia, Bulgaria. See [more](#)
- **28 - 29 March 2023** – UNODC Regional expert group meeting Addressing risks, threats and forms of trafficking in persons caused by the conflict in Ukraine". For more info contact [UNODC](#)

Support us

La Strada International is fully dependent on donations and subsidies. 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 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](#).



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