

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

LSI NEWS

La Strada International public representation

This month, we contributed with interventions to several public consultations and events, including on 9 March, the European Labour Authority (ELA) Platform subgroup on tackling undeclared work among displaced persons from Ukraine (see [presentation](#)); an expert meeting by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking on conflict-related trafficking and accountability on 20-21 March; the [ERA seminar](#) on Financial Investigation of Trafficking in Human beings on 23-24 March; and the [Regional Expert Group Meeting](#): “Addressing risks, threats and forms of trafficking in persons caused by the conflict in Ukraine” on 28-29 of March.



Joint statements and submissions

La Strada International co-signed several statements and letters related to a [gender-responsive corporate sustainability legislation](#); a [letter](#) to the UK government to remove the family worker exemption and a [joint statement](#) on the forcible transfer, deportation, and adoption of children from Ukraine by Russia. In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced charges which allege that Russia abducted Ukrainian children and sent them to Russian re-education camps.

LSI MEMBERS NEWS

- On 10 March, it was **35 years ago** that the non-profit organization [Payoke](#) was founded. The organisation has been at the forefront of the development of legislation and assistance to victims of trafficking in Belgium. Congratulations Payoke with this anniversary!
- FLEX calls upon UK Government to prevent exploitation on the UK's Seasonal Workers' Scheme, see [more](#).
- MRCI continues to work on [regularisation for undocumented migrants](#) in Ireland. At least 7,809 applicants have been granted a status.
- From March 6 to 16, [CCEM](#) in France organised a study visit for the 5 Moroccan partner associations of the "SAVE" project to Paris and Brussels, to meet with French and Belgian specialized actors on the fight against human trafficking.

- To prevent sexual violence', [La Strada Moldova](#) launched this month an evaluation study on the functionality of the intervention team on sexual violence; organised trainings for child protection specialists and judges and will be joining INHOPE, the global network combatting online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and report child sexual abuse materials in Moldova.

ASI and KOK comment on their countries Human Rights records

Anti-Slavery International (ASI) [calls](#) upon the UK government to improve its human rights record. Earlier this month the UK government announced plans to create a [new law](#) that aims to stop people crossing the English Channel to seek asylum in the UK. During the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in the country, States submitted over 300 recommendations for the country of which 14 focussed on modern slavery and increasing protections for survivors. The UK government now has the opportunity to respond to all questions and recommendations.

In November 2023, Germany will also be reviewed under the UPR procedure. Our member KOK submitted a [report](#) on the developments and gaps in the fight against trafficking in human beings and, in particular, in the protection of trafficked persons in Germany.

CoMensha calls for independent investigation into decline of reported victims

[CoMensha](#) is concerned that the number of victims of human trafficking reported by Dutch authorities has been decreasing: 791 victims in 2021 compared to 1,013 in 2020. The organisation is now calling for an independent investigation into the causes of this decrease as they see no reason to assume that the actual number of victims is falling. For the entire European Union, there has been instead a [10% increase of reported victims](#) in 2021 in comparison with 2020. The Netherlands however still reports the most cases of human trafficking among EU Member States after Luxembourg.

As identification of victims generally lags behind, LSI believes that also actors in other EU MS should wonder why they identify such low numbers and take action to investigate this.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

New call for input next report UNSR on Contemporary forms of Slavery

The UNSR on contemporary forms of Slavery launched a new [call](#) for input on the use of technology in facilitating and preventing contemporary forms of slavery. Deadline for input is 14 April 2023.

UK's Illegal Migration Bill disastrous for victims of trafficking

Human Rights and Anti-trafficking advocates – including FLEX and ASI - have decried the Illegal Migration Bill introduced to the UK House of Commons in March. The Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) [stressed](#) that, if adopted, the Bill would run contrary to the UK's obligations under the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention. See [more](#).

Last public consultation related to the EU THB Directive revision

The EU's public consultation on the revision of the Anti-Trafficking Directive closed on 21 March. La Strada International, PICUM, and the Red Cross called in particular for strengthening of victims' rights, including access to residence, stronger recognition for the vulnerability of

migrants, and better alignment between international protection measures and procedures to address human trafficking. See [all feedback](#) submitted.

EU law under negotiation

Next to the revision of the Anti-Trafficking Directive, negotiations are also ongoing on the [EU Directive for Combating violence against women and domestic violence \(VAW Directive\)](#) and the Report on the [regulation of prostitution](#) in the EU. For the VAW Directive, the FEMM and LIBE are expected to vote on the proposed amendments end of May, while a plenary parliament vote is currently expected to take place in June 2023. As for the negotiations for an [EU Proposal for a regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market](#), the Socialists & Democrats and liberal Renew Europe groups jointly lead the work; voting in the responsible committees (IMCO & INTA) on the report and amendments is foreseen for 18-19 September 2023.

New Dutch legislation on labour exploitation

The government of the Netherlands is working on a draft law to criminalise severe exploitation next to human trafficking. The Bill should criminalise severe exploitative situations, when human trafficking cannot be proven and will also improve and simplify human trafficking legislation in general. The bill is currently under consultation with relevant stakeholders invited to comment on it before it goes to the Dutch House of Representatives. The government may amend the proposal on the basis of the comments received.



Shrinking Civil Space

On 10 March, the EU Council approved conclusions on the role of civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU. The Council invites member states to protect civic space and to **safeguard and promote an enabling environment** for civil society organisations and human rights defenders. See [more](#). This is important, as evidence gathered by civil society researchers indicates that [civic space is under increasing pressure around the world](#), with the fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression at risk in many places. La Strada International is currently conducting research among its members to look into the civil society space in Europe, in both EU and non-EU countries.

ITUC calls for keeping attention on migrant workers in Qatar

ITUC has raised concerns about the situation facing migrant workers in Qatar now that the FIFA World Cup 2022 is over. If the labour law reforms made by the government at the ILO in November 2017, including those on the abolition of the *kafala* system of visa sponsorship, are not fully implemented and built on there will be no positive and lasting legacy of the FIFA World Cup. [See more](#).

WHAT IS NEW

Re/integration of migrant and trafficked women from Southeast Asia

A [new report](#) by the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) describes the main challenges that migrant and trafficked women from Southeast Asia face in their socioeconomic inclusion in Europe and upon return to their country of origin. It highlights recommendations and examples of government and NGO programmes to support women's socioeconomic inclusion, or re/integration, as well as the women's own understanding of the meaning of these words. The report is based on qualitative interviews with 329 migrant workers – 312 women and 17 men – in eight countries: the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the United Kingdom.

FRA survey: 30% of Ukrainian displaced persons report exploitation at work

A new report published by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) called '[Fleeing Ukraine](#)' captures the first-hand accounts of around 14,500 people who fled the war in Ukraine and settled in the EU. The report reveals that 30% of the respondents stated to have been exploited at work. Overall, 16% mentioned having to work very long hours and 10% stated that they had been underpaid or not paid at all. About 8% said that they could not communicate freely with other workers or anyone else. The same proportion (8%) said that they had worked without a contract or with a contract that did not cover all working hours. La Strada International members also report exploitation among displaced persons from Ukraine. Since February 2022, FairWork has registered 213 Ukrainian clients. For 74 of them signs of labour exploitation were reported.

ILO GBNFL launches French and Spanish versions of due diligence toolkit on fair recruitment

This toolkit helps businesses, especially SMEs, to set out a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad. It features step-by-step guidance for companies throughout the recruitment process. See toolkit in [French](#) and [Spanish](#) (or [English](#)).

Innovative AI technology to support survivors of trafficking in the UK

RESTART (*Reporting Experiences of Survivors to Analyse in Real-Time*) a new UK-based project will use innovative AI technology to generate insights to better support survivors of trafficking through advising on policy recommendations to the UK government to improve support for survivors and the legal, health, welfare, and housing system in the country. See [more](#).

UNODC summary report on regional meeting on forced criminality

On 18-19 January, UNODC organised the Regional Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening identification and protection of trafficked persons, especially for the purpose of forced criminality in South Eastern Europe. A [Summary Report](#) was published in March.

Link between forced migration and contemporary forms of slavery

A [new volume of essays](#) published by the *Journal of Modern Slavery* explores the link between forced migration and contemporary forms of slavery, and challenges the perception that economic and aid-based pull factors motivate migrants to leave their homes and expose themselves to risk. Instead, the authors argue, a growing body of evidence suggests that people are compelled to seek refuge and asylum in other countries by push factors beyond their control, and without planned outcomes.



Survivors research

Recently published research [defined the Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set](#) (MSCOS), which provides a standardised set of core outcomes identified as central to recovery and wellbeing by a range of survivors, service-providers, researchers, policymakers, and anti-trafficking experts. The outcomes concern areas such as housing, long-term support, safety, education, and medical help. The [research report](#) also makes recommendations to the UK government, researchers, and service providers how to use the outcomes.

Also, the latest Academy of European Law's [e-learning course on survivor inclusion](#) is now open for enrolment. The course curated by FAST's Leona Vaughn explores the meaning and practice of the survivor inclusion concept in relation to financial inclusion and how the financial sector works with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Anti-Trafficking Review Calls for Papers

The journal *Anti-Trafficking Review* has recently published two calls for papers. The first one is for a special issue themed "Armed Conflicts: Migration, Trafficking, and Labour Markets" and guest edited by Mónica Hurtado. The aim of this issue will be to examine the experiences with migration, exploitation, and labour of people who flee – or remain in – situations of armed conflicts. The deadline for submissions is 1 June 2023. See the full [call for papers](#). The second is for a special issue themed "Following the Money II" and guest edited by Kiril Sharapov, Suzanne Hoff, and Jonathan Mendel. The aim of this special issue is to analyse the funding preferences and practices of major donors and their impacts on grant recipients and the communities they are supposed to benefit. The deadline for submissions is 12 December. See the full [call for papers](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **4 April 2023** – EESC event on Civil society support and funding in the area of fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy – see [more](#)
- **17-18 April 2023** - Freedom Fund USA conference: Calling In: Centering Survivors & Impacted Communities. Register [here](#)
- **17-18 April 2023** - 23rd *High-Level Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* Conference focus on mobilizing anti-trafficking leadership, Vienna, Austria. See [more](#)
- **19 April 2023** - *CERC (hybrid)* workshop challenging the consensus views that shaped the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Register [here](#)
- **24 April 2023** - EMN Montenegro and SEECP Conference: Migration Challenges on the Western Balkans Route – see [more](#)
- **24-25 April 2023** - Fair labour mobility project conference – on posting of workers and care work, with plenary and workshops – register - Krakow Poland
- **25 April – 10.00 – 12.00 CET** Global Detention Project - Webinar on protecting trafficking victims from immigration detention See [more](#)
- **26-28 April 2023** – Regional UNODC workshop on addressing demand for sexual exploitation in SEE – Dubrovnik, Croatia

- **28 April 2023** - World Day for Safety and Health at Work – see [more](#)

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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