



NEWSLETTER JULY 2023

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 statement on World Day against Trafficking in Persons

On 30 July, World Day against Trafficking in Persons, La Strada International brought attention to the shrinking space for civil society. We called on governments to defend and promote civic space to ensure that no victim of trafficking is left behind. Read our full statement [here](#).

La Strada International's representation in June

On 3-4 July 2023, LSI attended the Regional Consultation "Socioeconomic Inclusion of Migrant Women in Europe", organised by the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women in Berlin. On 6 July, LSI attended a virtual expert workshop on improvement of the protection and recruitment of migrant seasonal workers in the EU related to the evaluation of the implementation of the 2014 [EU seasonal workers directive](#). On 12 July, the LSI International Coordinator spoke at the 34th meeting of the Solidarity Platform, where she [commented](#) on the EU action plan and actions taken to address human trafficking among refugees from Ukraine. LSI also contributed to the [online Summer School](#) on Justice for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, organised by IMPACT and Tilburg University.

LSI MEMBERS NEWS



LSI members mark World Day against Trafficking in Persons

In Belgium, 30 cities joined the Blue Heart Campaign this year. Our members PAG-ASA and Payoke organised stands in Brussels, Louvain-la-Neuve, Leuven, Liège, and Antwerp to raise awareness about the Blue Heart Campaign and World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The government also launched a new [Helpline](#) for victims of trafficking, which is managed by LSI members PAG-ASA and Payoke, as well as SÜRYA.

Adpare joined the campaign in Romania, while in Albania, Vatra organised a public event in the city of Vlora to raise awareness about human trafficking in the community. And in Serbia, ASTRA published a [statement](#) on the need for a victim-centred approach to human trafficking.

LEFÖ joins coalition for care work reform in Austria

LEFÖ is among 30 organisations that sent an open letter to the Austrian Health Minister Johannes Rauch demanding changes to the care reform announced by the government in May. The open letter calls the new provisions inadequate for the more than 60,000 migrant 24-hour caregivers in the country. It asks the minister to meet with members of caregivers' interest group IG24 to discuss workable solutions. See [more](#) (in German).

Exploited in Poland: Trafficked persons speak

In [this video](#), five young people from Latin America who were trafficked to Poland speak about how and why they came to the country, what conditions they were forced to endure, and how La Strada Poland helped them. The video is in Spanish but viewers can turn on English subtitles. The video was launched at the [ERA training for legal professionals on 5-6 June in Krakow](#).

French Poultry Company prosecuted for human trafficking

On 6 July, the Brest Correctional Court in France issued the final verdict in a human trafficking case against a poultry company. The company manager and his wife were sentenced to, respectively, two and one years in prison and ordered to pay a total of 167,000 Euro to the 16 victims. Eleven of the victims had been represented by CCEM lawyers. See [more](#) (in French).

More members news in July:

- ASTRA organised a [round table](#) on the rights of foreign workers in Serbia.
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) is [campaigning](#) for a reduction in the Irish Residence Permit card fees. You can support their campaign by signing the petition!
- FIZ, as part of the Swiss anti-trafficking platform Plateforme traite, submitted an [NGO shadow report](#) for GRETA's third evaluation round.

- Open Gate's documentary 'EXIT' was selected to be part of [Galichnik Film Festival](#). The film depicts three real stories of Northern Macedonian victims and their exit from the trafficking situation.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

European Commission announces Victims' Rights Directive revision

On 12 July, the European Commission [published](#) the proposal for revision of the Victims' Rights Directive, which includes the strengthening of victims' access to compensation. According to the proposal, victims of crimes should have the right to obtain a decision on compensation from the offender as part of the criminal proceedings and states should pay the compensation to the victim directly, seeking reimbursement from the offender afterwards. La Strada International has been advocating for and strongly supports these two proposals. See [more](#). LSI also co-signed a [statement](#) by Victim Support Europe welcoming the Commission's proposal. You can submit feedback to the Commission's [public consultation](#) on the Directive. The deadline is 24 September.



UNODC seeks NGO input for next Global Report on Trafficking in Persons

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is seeking input from NGOs providing services to victims of trafficking to assess the challenges of anti-trafficking responses from their perspective. The survey responses will contribute to the 2024 [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#). The survey can be found [here](#) and the deadline for providing input is 30 November.

GRETA publishes fourth monitoring questionnaire

On 30 June, the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) adopted a new questionnaire for evaluating states' implementation of the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention in the fourth monitoring round. The focus of this round is on addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings and measures taken by states to prevent them, detect and support vulnerable victims, and punish the offenders. See [more](#).

UK Parliament passes Illegal Migration Bill

After months of opposition from civil society, academics, international organisations, and advocates from [the UK](#) and [around the world](#), the British Parliament passed the Illegal Migration Bill on 18 July. As we informed [earlier](#), the government will now be detaining and removing people who arrive in the country by “illegal means”. This will mean that a large number of victims of trafficking will be detained and removed too. Despite this setback, LSI members FLEX and ASI and other human rights advocates are not giving up. See [more](#).

Updates on the Borealis case

In July 2022, 174 migrant workers – of which 96 were assisted by LSI member Payoke - were found to be working illegally in the factory of the Austrian chemical manufacturer Borealis in Belgium. They were allegedly paid extremely low wages and charged for unfair rental arrangements and high recruitment fees. Now, one year later, the investigations into whether the case is one of human trafficking are ongoing and the exploited workers [still wait for their back wages](#). In June, the Filipino website Rappler published a two-part investigative article where some of the Filipino workers recounted their stories (see [part 1](#), [part 2](#)). In July, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre contacted the companies named in the article as recruiters, employers, and subcontractors, to respond to the allegations. See more and their responses [here](#).

Slow progress made on due diligence legislation and forced labour ban

EU Member states and the Parliament have already each adopted their positions on the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and are now trying reach an agreement. However, there are concerns that the negotiations may be slowed down. See [more](#). The same goes for the proposed Forced Labour Ban Regulation. While the EU Parliament is currently discussing compromise amendments, there is no Council position yet. It is therefore unclear if both legislative documents will be adopted before the European elections in June 2024.

UN Human Rights Council adopts resolutions on forced marriage and human rights of migrants

At its 53rd session in June-July, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution calling on states to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage. Another adopted resolution calls on states to prevent human rights violations against migrants in transit. See [more](#).

Session on sex work at ILO Decent Work Conference

On 12 July, a group of academics and civil society advocates organised a special session “Decent Work for Sex Workers” during ILO’s [8th Regulating for Decent Work Conference](#). The session speakers focussed on some of the diverse forms that sex work can take and the blurred lines between formal and informal work as well as between different employment statuses in sex work. Contributions demonstrated that sex work regulation guided by a criminal law approach is harmful for sex workers’ rights as workers. LSI congratulates the organisers for bringing the issues that affect sex workers to this important decent work conference. See [more](#).

German businesses must stop investing in Turkmenistan cotton industry due to forced labour

The Cotton Campaign called on German business associations, consultancies, multi-stakeholder initiatives, and supply chain actors to cut ties with Turkmenistan's textile industry to avoid profiting from forced labour. The call came as seven German business associations and consulting firms hosted an event in Düsseldorf to encourage German investments in Turkmenistan, in particular in its textile and oil and gas industries. See [more](#).

Eurojust launches Centre for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine

On 3 July, the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine (ICPA) began its operations at Eurojust. The Centre will support the preparation of crime of aggression cases, by securing crucial evidence and facilitating the process of case building at an early stage. See [more](#). Since the start of the war, La Strada Ukraine has collected testimonies of sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers in the occupied territories (CRSV) and works closely with the national Prosecutor's Office on collecting evidence and referral of victims.

WHAT IS NEW



EU and national reviews of progress towards SDGs

The US State Department published the [2023 Trafficking in Persons report](#). The report shows an increase in the number of identified victims, as well as prosecutions and convictions of traffickers compared to the previous year but broadly in line with the trend before the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no change in the tier placement of LSI countries compared to 2022. See [more](#).

Return and reintegration key highlights 2022

This [report](#) provides an overview of return and reintegration trends, as well as activities carried out by IOM in 2022. It includes summary statistics at regional and country levels and showcases IOM practices in assisting migrants who wish to return with their reintegration process.

Creating new knowledge on irregular migration

A new EU-funded project, MirreM (Measuring Irregular Migration) will examine the quantitative dimension of irregular migration and related policies. A core aim of the project is to address the uncertainty and contested nature of evidence on irregular migration by fostering a shared understanding of basic features of and policy options to address the phenomenon. The project is a joint initiative of 17 institutions in 20 countries, including PICUM. See [more](#).

Europol publishes cybercrime report

Cyber-attacks, online child sexual exploitation, and online frauds are highly complex crimes and manifest in diverse typologies. On 17 July, Europol published its [Internet Organised Crime Assessment \(IOCTA\) report](#), which assesses the cybercrime landscape and how it has changed over the last 24 months. Accompanying this report is a series of modules released throughout the year, each of which examines a specific crime area relating to cybercrime.

‘State of Remedy’ report for business violations of human rights 2022

OECD Watch's latest [State of Remedy](#) report discusses outcomes of complaints concluded in 2022 under the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises and identifies where the updated Guidelines encourage better performance moving forward. OECD Watch urges the National Contact Points for the OECD Guidelines to adopt the recommendations in the updated Procedures and strengthen access to remedy for the next decade.

Comprehensive report on child trafficking

This [new report](#), co-authored by IOM, analyses primary data from more than 69,000 child victims of trafficking registered by IOM. It provides evidence of important trends and dynamics, linked to factors such as age, gender and geography, that help further our understanding of child trafficking, with the potential to inform policy and programming.

Modern slavery disclosures and gender diversity on company boards

This [research article](#) by Moussa *et al.* examines the Modern Slavery Disclosures (MSD) of UK companies as required by the Modern Slavery Act. Interestingly, it finds that companies whose boards have greater female representation are more transparent about their strategies and actions related to fighting modern slavery. However, a critical mass of at least four female directors is necessary before any positive impact on MSD can be observed.

Human trafficking in the Ukraine crisis

This [research paper](#) examines the trafficking in persons situation in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, based on insights of anti-trafficking experts involved in the regional refugee and humanitarian responses, including La Strada International; surveys and available data on trafficking in Ukraine and previous crisis responses; and other sources.

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

Funding frontline impact

The Freedom Fund launched [Funding Frontline Impact](#), a resource for donors who believe in the power of frontline organisations. It brings together foundational principles, practical guidance and resources to help donors on their grantmaking journey, no matter the cause or geography.

FRA e-learning tools

The Fundamental Rights Agency offers courses on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which provide guidance and case studies for judges, legal practitioners, and trainers. See [more](#).

Webinar series: A stronger Binding Treaty for all

In order to give civil society organisations a platform for discussion and to foster the debate around critical issues in the development of the Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre and its partners are convening a series of three webinars in July, August and September 2023. The webinars will focus on: complementarity of different instruments on mandatory human rights due diligence; regional perspectives; and access to justice for affected communities. See more and sign up [here](#).

A Podcast on responsible business

This [podcast](#) discusses the latest political, legal and business developments in the field of business and human rights and corporate social responsibility. Host Richard Howitt, a pioneer in the field of corporate disclosure and former MEP, speaks about what moves policy makers, business and activists to make responsible business the norm.

Support us

La Strada International is fully dependent on donations and subsidies. By making a [donation](#), you will help us continue our monitoring and advocacy work to ensure accountability for the effective implementation of European anti-trafficking policies and the support to trafficked persons.



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