

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 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

---

#### North Korean labour exploitation case appeal outcome expected in September

On 9 August 2023, a closed court hearing took place related to the lodging of a written complaint with the Court of Appeals in The Hague by La Strada International with legal support from Prakken D'Oliviera. [The complaint](#) relates to two Dutch companies who allegedly acquired ships from Polish shipyards knowing that they were constructed at wharfs employing North Korean workers under inhumane, exploitative conditions. While expectations are low about the outcome – expected in September – a successful outcome would represent a major step forward in combating impunity for aiding, assisting or profiting from human trafficking and/or for the crimes of money laundering and fencing.

---

#### New LSI member in France

La Strada International is pleased to announce a new associate member in France: [Mission d'intervention et de sensibilisation contre la traite des êtres humains \(MIST\)](#). MIST was formed by former victims of trafficking who work to improve the identification of other victims and promote their protection and social inclusion.

---

#### La Strada International and HEUNI webinar on Ukrainian refugees

On 24 August, exactly 1.5 years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, La Strada International, HEUNI and the partners of the ELECT THB project organised a webinar on the risks of human trafficking and other severe forms of labour exploitation faced by those who left Ukraine or remained in Ukraine. See [here](#) the recording. A summary report of the ELECT THB project based on the mapping in five countries is available now: [“Patterns of exploitation. Trends and modus operandi in human trafficking in Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine”](#). La Strada International conducted the mapping in Ukraine and Poland with our members in these countries.

---



### Protest against domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 14 August, Novi Put in Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in a protest titled “Stop femicide and all forms of violence against women” in the city of Mostar. Several dozen participants demanded introduction of a definition of femicide, amendments to the Law on Protection from Violence, stricter sentences for perpetrators of domestic violence, and better legal support for victims.

### MRCI contributes to draft trafficking bill in Ireland

In July, the Irish Parliament introduced a new [Criminal Law \(Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking\) Bill](#) which should help increase victim identification and put in place a new National Referral Mechanism. Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) welcomes the draft law and is working to guarantee the rights and entitlements of victims, including the provision of a long term, renewable immigration status. This is vital to encourage people to come forward, safe from the threat of deportation and will hopefully lead to more referrals, identifications, and prosecutions.

### ASI continues campaign against Illegal Migration Act

Anti-Slavery International launched a new campaign to pressure British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to abandon the Illegal Migration Act, which [came into force](#) in July. It highlights that the law is “cruel and inhumane” and that everyone deserves to live safely, and to be supported and protected, regardless of the reasons they migrate. Read and sign the letter [here](#).

### Engaging trafficked persons in anti-trafficking work

LSI members ADPARE (Romania), MIST (France) and Payoke (Belgium), together with EqualityCoop (Italy), Fondacion Cruz Blanca (Spain), and Luav University of Venice (Italy) are working together on a new EU-funded project to foster the leadership and participation of trafficked persons in anti-trafficking work. Based on the engagement and input of trafficked persons, the partners aim to stimulate a debate within the anti-trafficking community about communicating with dignity and respect about people impacted by human trafficking.

---

## Policy recommendations on identifying victims of trafficking in the context of asylum procedures

Proyecto Esperanza and SICAR cat in Spain contributed to the final [Policy Recommendations](#) to EU Member States and the European Commission of the EU-funded project TIATAS (Transnational Initiative Against Trafficking in the Context of European Asylum Systems). The project partners also developed a number of other useful resources, which are available on the [project website](#).

---

### WHAT IS HAPPENING?

---



## ECtHR decision on case of sex workers v. France

On 31 August, the European Court for Human Rights [decided](#) that it will review the application filed by French sex workers against the 2016 law criminalising the purchase of sex. The Court declared the application admissible after acknowledging the applicants' alleged violation of their rights under ECHR Articles 2 (right to life), 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), and 8 (right to respect to private life). See more about the case [here](#). The Court will rule on the merits of the case in a subsequent judgment.

---

## Stronger protections for workers and victims of domestic violence in Bulgaria

In August, the Bulgarian Parliament adopted amendments to the Penal Code that make it punishable to take actions against workers' right to freedom of association and freedom to form or join a trade union. See [more](#). It also introduced new amendments to the Domestic Violence Act that will extend protections to all people who are in an intimate relationship.

---

## Ukrainian trade unions reaffirm commitment to actively contribute to Ukraine's rebuilding

In July, Ukrainian trade unions and international partners discussed ways to protect workers' rights during and after the war, and to contribute to the rebuilding of Ukraine. Both workers and

employers expressed concerns about Ukraine's ongoing labour law reform, citing a lack of social dialogue and potential reduction in workers' protections. They urged the government to engage in regular consultations with social partners to address the country's significant challenges. As the Ukraine government has also announced its aim to recruit migrant workers to help rebuild the country, it is vital that migrant workers too are well protected and have access to decent work.

---

## UN Working Group calls for inclusion of financial sector in scope of CSDDD

The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights strongly recommends that the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive includes the entire financial sector within its scope without developing a special regime for that sector's human rights due diligence obligations. See [more](#).

---

### WHAT IS NEW

---



## New reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata published his report on homelessness as a cause and consequence of contemporary forms of slavery to be presented to the next Human Rights Council session. The [report](#) outlines the profiles of people most at risk of homelessness, the challenges of protecting people experiencing homelessness from exploitation, as well as existing good practices. It concludes with recommendations to reduce homelessness and the risks of exploitation among people experiencing homelessness.

The Special Rapporteur also published his report to the General Assembly, which focuses on the use of technology to facilitate or prevent contemporary forms of slavery. This [report](#) illustrates how websites, the dark web, chat rooms, social media platforms and smartphone apps are used to facilitate these practices. It also explores the potential of, among others, Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain technology in preventing them, as well as key challenges such as the digital divides, data protection and the need for stronger human rights due diligence among tech companies.

---

## Importance of mental health and psychological assistance for trafficked persons

The Modern Slavery & Human Rights Policy & Evidence Centre published a new [report](#) on the importance of mental health and psychological assistance for trafficked persons, and the effects of harmful policies on their wellbeing. The research was conducted by the Universities of



Birmingham and Nottingham and the Survivor Alliance and was co-designed, implemented and evaluated by formerly trafficked persons.

---

## **Dramatic decrease in the number of identified victims of trafficking in the UK in 2023**

Thousands of presumed trafficked persons in the UK have had their cases rejected in the first half of 2023, reveals the UK newspaper *The Independent*. This comes after the Home Office had changed its criteria for victim identification by demanding those referred for help prove they are victims by submitting police or medical reports. Figures for April to June this year show that 48 per cent of people referred to the NRM as potential victims received an initial positive decision on their case – a dramatic fall from the 90 per cent of cases approved in previous years. See [the full article](#). See the reaction of LSI member FLEX [here](#).

---

## **Migrant smuggling networks and their methods**

This new [report](#) by Europol provides a picture of the most important developments in the migrant smuggling landscape over the last year. It details the main features of current migrant smuggling networks and how these networks administer themselves. It also explains phenomena such as criminal networks operating together in “joint ventures”, where illicit actors cooperate at various stages in the migrant smuggling chain. La Strada international advocates for more regular and safe ways for migrants and refugees to reach Europe, which would reduce the power of smuggling networks and prevent loss of life.

---

## **The road to decent work for domestic workers**

Domestic workers play an invaluable role in many societies; however, their contributions have often been undervalued. [This ILO report](#) finds that 81 per cent of domestic workers are informally employed, due either to gaps in legal coverage or gaps in implementation. It presents a novel five-step strategy that will guide policymakers, employers, and organisations, providing practical solutions to empower and improve the lives of domestic workers worldwide.

---

## **Forced scamming - an emerging form of modern slavery**

In the past two years, law enforcement agencies have seen the rise of a new form of human trafficking – for the purpose of forced scamming. Victims are recruited through fake job ads, taken to casinos, hotels, and gambling centres, and forced to engage in cyber-fraud on an industrial scale. Those who manage to escape are not recognised as victims but prosecuted for the crimes they were forced to commit. While most of the victims so far have been from Southeast Asia and exploited in Southeast Asia, there have also been victims detected from Latin America, Africa, and Europe. [This brief](#) by Justice and Care provides an overview of what is known about this phenomenon so far and the main challenges to preventing the crime and protecting victims.

---

## **Central Asian labour migrants in Russia following the war in Ukraine**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has affected are millions of Central Asian labour migrants, who fill important labour gaps in Russia. The war has altered the costs and benefits of migration for them, given new economic travails in Russia and the fact that many have been targeted for recruitment and conscription into Russia's military. [This article](#) examines the changing circumstances.

---

## WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

---

### Webinar on CSO cooperation with Alliance 8.7

This 90-minute webinar organised by Free the Slaves discusses how civil society organisations can engage with the Alliance 8.7 Accountability Framework to achieve the eradication of forced labour. It also highlights important updates including key innovations on the Alliance 8.7.

---

### Podcast: Trafficked: Marta – part four

The Guardian is revisiting its [Trafficked podcast series](#), including the story of a Ukrainian woman who escaped modern slavery in the UK. Since this series was published, the Illegal Migration Act 2023 has passed into law.

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

---

- **6 September**, 14:00 CET – ILO webinar "Promoting responsible digital wage payments – Recent trends and lessons learnt from research". See [more](#).
  - **7 September** – Webinars on the 2023 updates to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct and why they matter. You can register via the links: [Webinar 1](#) at 10:00 CET and [Webinar 2](#) at 15.00 CET.
  - **21 September**, 11:30 CET – Webinar: Access to remedy - Integrating worker voices into grievance mechanisms. See [more](#).
  - **18 – 20 September** – LSI General Assembly meeting in Bucharest, Romania with [public event](#) on Ukraine on 19 September. Recording will be made available. For more information, check our website and social media soon.
  - **2 – 13 October** – Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, Warsaw, Poland. See [more](#).
  - **4 October** – UNODC Constructive dialogue on trafficking in persons, Vienna, Austria. See [more](#).
  - **6 October** – Think Tank Event – International Expert Round Table TIME TO GET REAL – Beyond Awareness Raising and Recommendations, Vienna, Austria. See [more](#).
- 

## 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.

---



---

*Copyright © 2023 La Strada International, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

---