

## NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024

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](#).

### Announcement

La Strada International strongly condemns the actions of those who targeted the KISA office in Cyprus with a bomb attack earlier this month, on January 5<sup>th</sup>. The building was seriously damaged, but fortunately, no one was hurt. KISA assist refugees and migrants including victims of human trafficking in Cyprus. KISA is a member of PICUM and a close partner of La Strada International. La Strada International expresses its strong solidarity with KISA and calls for effective investigations into the perpetrators. You can read the organisation's statement [here](#).

### LSI NEWS

#### Are you

eating in restaurants or have your food delivered?



### Monitoring EU law and campaign

In January, La Strada International continued to monitor pending legislative changes at EU level. To advance victims' rights in the EU Directive on Trafficking a final statement was shared with EU lawmakers before the last negotiations on 23 January. Today LSI launched a [campaign](#) to raise awareness among EU policymakers on the binding criminalization of the knowing use now embedded in the revised EU anti-trafficking directive. La Strada International opposes the binding provision, as this not only seems to have very [limited impact](#) on combatting human trafficking, but is also very likely to have severe harmful effects.

Ahead of the final negotiations on the VAW Directive, a group of European Civil Society Human Rights networks including La Strada International have sent in an [open joint letter](#) to urge governments to agree on the most robust Directive possible to prevent, prosecute, and redress violence against women. It is hoped that in February a political agreement will be reached. See [more](#).

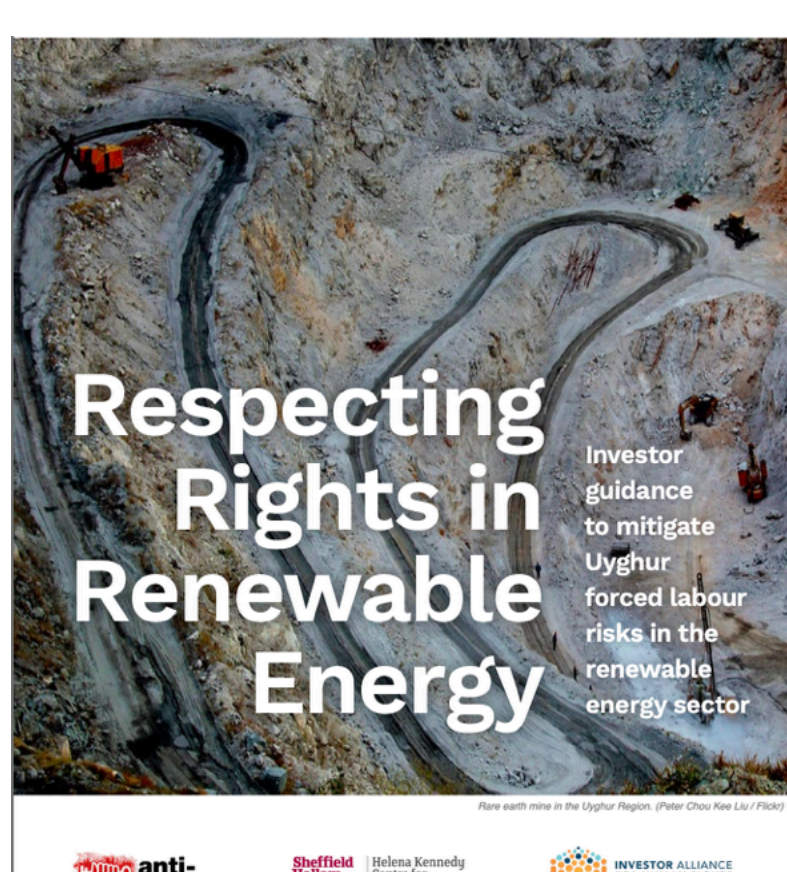
### LSI joins international COMCRIM project

On 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024, the [COMCRIM project](#) officially started. COMCRIM is an interdisciplinary research project conducted by a public-private consortium into crimes, that undermine democracy and the rule of law in and via the Netherlands, including human trafficking. Over 28 scholars, financial institutions and other public and private partners - including La Strada International and our members FairWork and CoMensha - will cooperate to detect such crime in unconventional data sources such as banking records, follow the money and discern criminal networks, patterns, and effects.

### LSI MEMBERS NEWS

#### Highlights from LSI members' work in January:

- **CCEM** and other civil society actors participated in a meeting where the 3rd National Action Plan against human trafficking was introduced. The 3rd NAP will run from 2024-2027 and foresees the establishment of an NRM. CCEM will remain vigilant to the effective implementation of this new Plan.
- **ASTRA** Anti-Trafficking Action released the 3rd edition of a "Human Trafficking - Manual For Journalists", which was funded by the ModernSlaveryUnveiled program. There is also a [Serbian version](#).
- **FLEX**, published a [position paper](#) about preventing the exploitation of migrant care workers. The paper follows a stark increase in human trafficking cases in the UK care sector between 2021 and 2022. The report was covered in [Home Politics](#) and also features a range of positive recommendations.
- **ASI** published an investor guidance and a policy brief for the UK government regarding Uyghur forced labour in the renewable energy sector. Find the full guidance [here](#).



### WHAT IS HAPPENING?

#### UNSR cautions UK government about potential breaches of international law

The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata, has [cautioned the UK government](#) about potential breaches of international law in connection with reports of forced labour within the country's seasonal worker visa scheme, introduced in 2019 to address labour shortages post-Brexit. Obokata expressed concerns over the government's failure to investigate abuse reports, emphasizing the need for proper labour inspections and accountability to fulfill international human rights obligations, and highlighting vulnerabilities caused by the scheme's reliance on private-sector recruiters. The charity [ATLEU](#) has brought a legal challenge to the UK government's seasonal worker visa scheme on the grounds that it breaches Article 4 of the ECHR.

#### Political agreement reached on revision of the EU anti-trafficking law

On 23 January, EU lawmakers reached a [political agreement](#) on the revision of the Anti-Trafficking Directive. While the revision now addresses also the online dimension of human trafficking and foresees sanctions on legal persons, such as companies, La Strada International regrets that the revision did not bring meaningful improvements in the rights and protection of trafficked people and those at risk. Except for some minor adjustments related to assistance and support and reference to the right to international protection, the EU negotiators were unfortunately not willing to improve victims' access to unconditional support, residence, unpunishment and or remedies. See [more](#).

#### Council adopts its position on Forced Labour products ban

The Council recently adopted its position (negotiating mandate) on the regulation prohibiting products made with forced labour on the EU market. The negotiating mandate of the Council supports the overall objective of combatting forced labour, and it introduces several improvements to the proposed text.

NGOs, including La Strada International, are concerned that the Council position lacks access to remedies for workers. Remediation of the consequences of forced labour should be provided to all affected workers and all indicators of forced labour should be lifted before companies should be re-allowed again, to bring their earlier banned products back on the EU market.

#### All EU institutions want billions more for borders

Under the heading of "Migration and Border Management," the European Council wants an extra €2 billion (as proposed by the European Commission) to strengthen EU borders, while the Parliament would like to see an extra €3 billion added to the pot. Read the full story [here](#), and check Statewatch in-depth report on the EU's security budgets [here](#).

#### France Highest Constitutional Court rejects large part of controversial immigration and Asylum Law

In a decision issued on Thursday, January 25, the French Constitutional Council, the country's highest constitutional authority, rejected more than a third of the controversial new "Immigration and Asylum Law" including measures aimed at toughening the access to social benefits and family reunification, set by the French Parliament. However, the Council still upheld most of the bill, while NGOs including LSI's member CCEM have been strongly opposing the bill. See [more](#).

#### Migrant protection platform

The IOM will soon launch [The Migrant Protection Platform](#), an online space dedicated to a broad community of policymakers and practitioners in different specialized protection programming areas, such as counter-trafficking, addressing gender-based violence, child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and the return and reintegration of vulnerable migrants. The Platform will be available in English, French and Spanish. It has a focus on digital accessibility and is built to allow peer-to-peer exchanges on migrant protection and offers a space for online dialogues and consultations. For more information, get in touch with [MigrantProtectionPlatform@iom.int](mailto:MigrantProtectionPlatform@iom.int).

### WHAT IS NEW



#### Report on large-scale exploitation of Central Asian truck drivers in road transport in Europe

Together with the international trade union umbrella organizations ITF and IUF, the Dutch Trade Union FNV has established the Road Transport Due Diligence Foundation (RTDD). RTDD recently published a [research report](#) into the conditions of Central Asian truck drivers working in Europe. For this research they interviewed 166 drivers. The research offers a glimpse into the world in which truck drivers experience exploitation by companies they work for. Read [more here](#) or see the [full report](#) for more information.

#### FRA report on implementing temporary protection at a local level for Ukrainian Refugees

The recently published FRA report explores the measures taken to ensure access to housing, education, employment and healthcare in 26 cities and regional authorities across 12 EU Member States for people fleeing the Ukraine. The report describes good practices and challenges.

One of the most consistent challenges has been the uncertainty about the length of stay, which makes it hard to plan the demand of housing or schooling. The temporary protection is extended until March 2025, however it is unclear what will happen afterwards.

#### MPI report on protection options for refugees from Syria, Venezuela and Ukraine

A new Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report has been published on expanding Protection options. The report examines all of the cases in detail and offers an analysis of similarities and differences in the approaches taken to offering protection to the refugees of these cases. Read the full report [here](#).

#### FRA report on EU funding

To make sure that funds are spent in ways that do not violate people's fundamental rights the EU strengthened their rules about how funds can be spent in 2021. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) now published a report which examines how these rules and standards can be upheld in practice. It discusses the potential roles of national human rights institutions, ombudsperson institutions and equality body in upholding these new rules. See [more here](#).

#### New PICUM video

PICUM recently published a new video highlighting the human impact of regularization. In the video, they show in an easy way, how residence papers help people and society. Watch the video [here](#).

#### Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking podcast on asset recovery and restitution

In this 2-part podcast FAST talks about how anti-money laundering (AML) frameworks can help to close the remedy gap for victims' and survivors of human trafficking and forced labour. Insights from key stakeholders are shared on the importance of victims' compensation and strategies to increase it. The key recommendations emerging from FAST's latest Asset Recovery and Restitution research make this podcast highly relevant.

#### Call for input on challenges facing NGOs supporting refugees and other migrants

The [Expert Council on NGO Law](#) is currently preparing a thematic study on challenges to civil society space pertaining to NGOs which are supporting refugees and other migrants in the Council of Europe member states. The practice once gathered will be assessed in the light of the applicable European standards governing freedom of association and the rights of NGOs, and will also consider the impact on the rights of refugees and other migrants. You can still provide input to the [questionnaire](#) until 31 January 2024.

#### FRA civic space consultation covering 2023

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) launched a consultation to hear about the experiences of civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU, regarding the challenges that they faced in their day-to-day work and their suggestions on ways forward. This survey is open to all civil society organisations working in an EU Member State or in Serbia, Albania or North Macedonia or at EU level. Your insights will help to promote actions that can improve the conditions for civil society organisations across this area. If you are interested, please fill in the survey at this [link](#) by 8 February 2024. Should you have questions, you can send an email to [fra@fra.europa.eu](mailto:fra@fra.europa.eu).

#### Systemic Justice: the community toolkit for change

[Systemic Justice](#) has released a [Community toolkit for change](#), which is the first of their resources showing how communities can leverage the power of the courts for change. The toolkit is designed to build the knowledge and power of communities who want to learn more about strategic litigation and how it can support their causes and campaigns.

#### Award nomination for child labour actors

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Child labor, forced labour and human trafficking distributes the non-monetary Meish Award. Persons, organisations or national governments can be nominated for the award. Special efforts such as extraordinary efforts to the reduction of child labor or adding to constructive change regarding labour exploitation can be rewarded. Nominations are due March 1, 2024. Find full information [here](#).

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **31 January** – 2nd online seminar Human Trafficking Research Network, addressing Human Trafficking during Armed Conflict: Perspectives from Ukraine and its Borders. Register [here](#).
- **21-22 February** – OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector. OECD Conference Centre Paris and online. More information and registration [here](#).
- **22 February** – Victim Support Europe will organise the Symposium: "Leave No Victim Behind: Victims and the Sustainable Development Goals". Lavee No Victim register [here](#).
- **11-22 March** – the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). ECOSOC, UN Headquarters, New York. A [guide](#) has been published for NGO activists to build their capacity to advocate for their organization, work, and global gender equality at the CSW.

#### In memory

La Strada International would like to thank deceased Rosemarý Rogallo, for her last will donation of 10,000 US dollars to La Strada International to reduce trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe. See [more](#).

#### Support us

We are 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.

[Donate Now](#)

