

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 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](mailto:info@lastrada.eu).

LSI NEWS

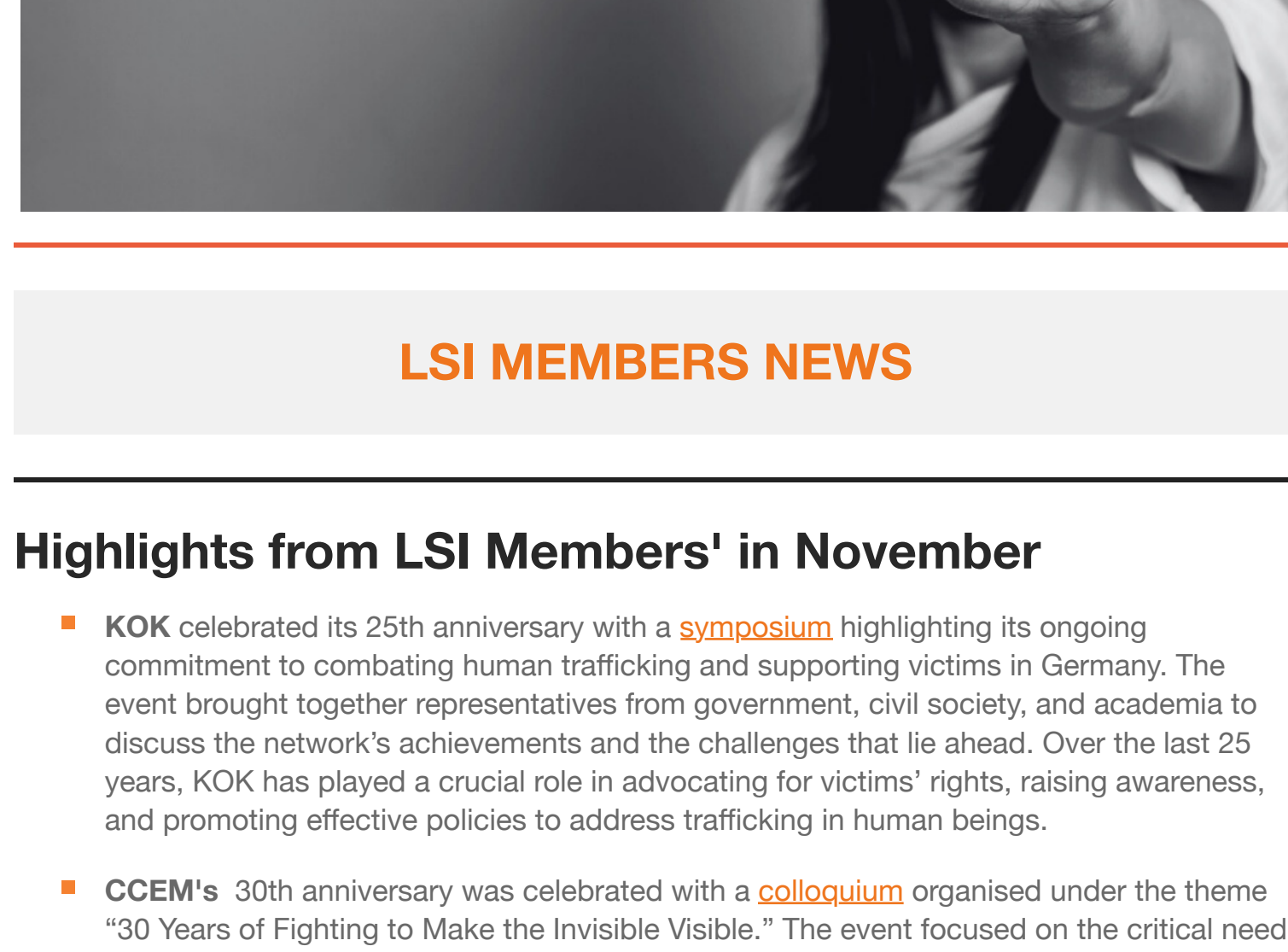
LSI Representation in November

This month, we participated in the [25th Anniversary Symposium](#) of our member KOK, where we spoke about challenges for civil society action against human trafficking and were represented at the [GDEN 36th anniversary](#) in PLIN.

We further contributed to an IOM event, in Warsaw, related to lessons learnt from the Ukrainian response. Furthermore, LSI spoke at an [event](#) organised by Women Beyond Walls, a campaign to decriminalise poverty at the Amsterdam Law Hub. At the EU level, we participated in the ad hoc meeting of the [EU Victims' Rights Platform](#) with a focus on digitalisation and victims' rights. Finally, on Friday 29 November, we were (online) observers of the [GRETA elections](#) of the new GRETA Members. [Read more about these events](#).

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

On 25 November, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence were kicked off globally. This year's focus lies on the upcoming 30th anniversary of the [Beijing Declaration](#) and its goals. LSI joins the campaign and uploads daily posts on our social media surrounding the topic from 25 November until December 10th. [Read more about the campaign](#).



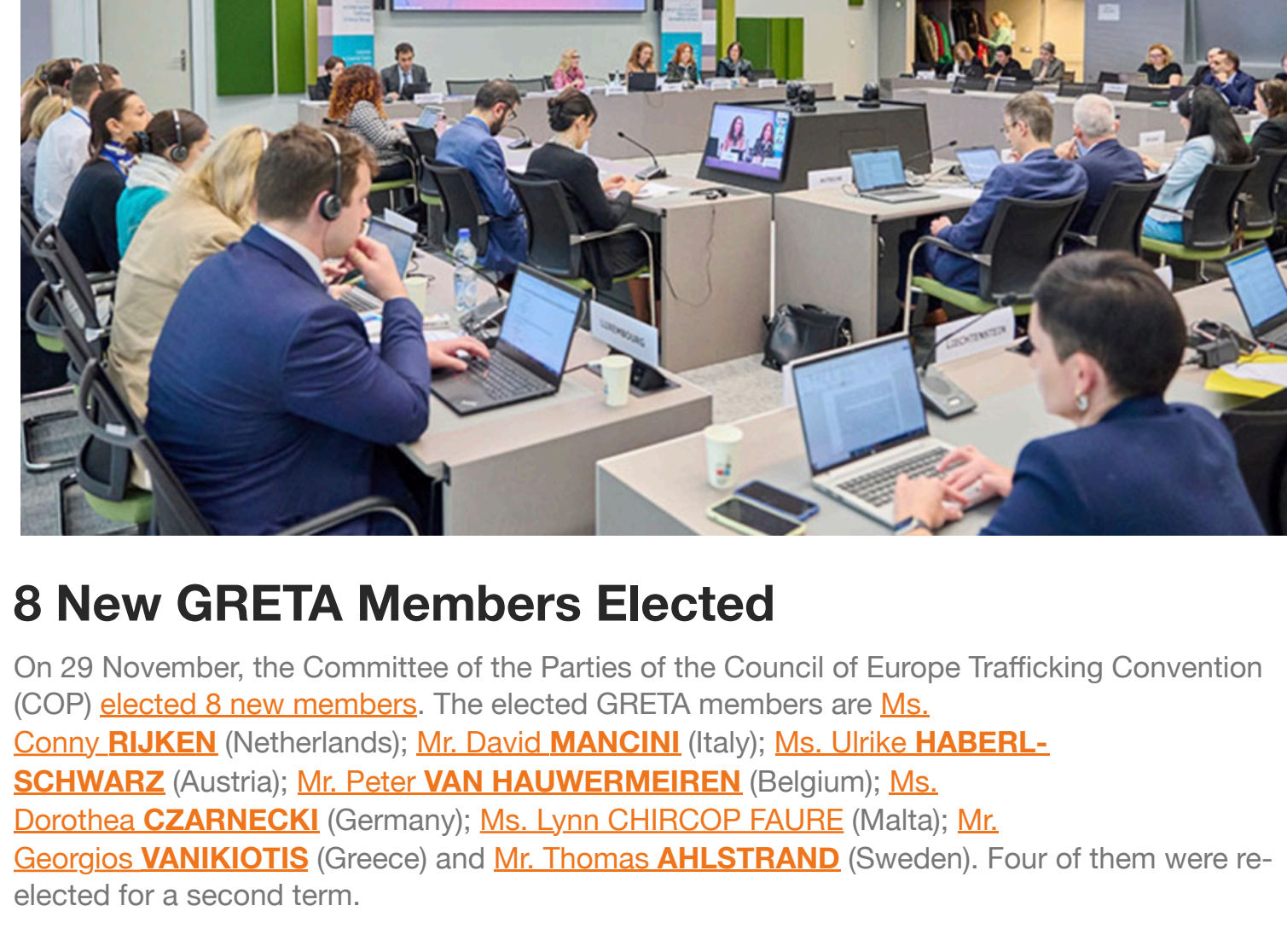
LSI MEMBERS NEWS

Highlights from LSI Members' in November

- KOK celebrated its 25th anniversary with a [symposium](#) highlighting its ongoing commitment to combating human trafficking and supporting victims in Germany. The event brought together representatives from government, civil society, and academia to discuss the network's achievements and the challenges that lie ahead. Over the last 25 years, KOK has played a crucial role in advocating for victims' rights, raising awareness, and promoting effective policies to address trafficking in human beings.
- CCEM's 30th anniversary was celebrated with a [colloquium](#) organised under the theme "30 Years of Fighting to Make the Invisible Visible." The event focused on the critical need for coordinated action among civil society, public institutions, and private sector actors to better support victims, combat domestic violence, and end labour exploitation.
- FLEX wrote a [letter](#) to the UK Home Office urging the government to leverage the Employment Rights Bill to introduce safeguards that systematically prevent human rights abuses in the fishing industry. The letter highlights the exploitative working conditions faced by migrant fishers in the UK, who often endure unsafe working conditions, poor pay, and a lack of adequate legal protections. FLEX calls for urgent measures to address these systemic issues, including stricter oversight, enhanced labour rights, and targeted enforcement to prevent exploitation and protect vulnerable workers.
- Open Gate issued an urgent [statement](#) expressing concern about a recent court verdict in North Macedonia related to a child trafficking case. The case involved the exploitation of a 16-year-old girl who was trafficked and subjected to abuse over several months by adult men. Despite the gravity of the crime, the court handed down relatively mild sentences and insufficient compensation to the victim. Open Gate stresses the need for stronger measures and reinforced legal frameworks to ensure justice and protect trafficking victims.
- La Strada Czech Republic's Director, Marketa Hronkova, has received a bronze medal from the National Central against Organised Crime for her significant cooperation in the fight against human trafficking. The medal, for the first time awarded to someone from outside the state sector or law enforcement, is a distinction and recognition of the work of the entire team, which has been working against human trafficking and exploitation for almost thirty years. It is also a recognition of the mutual need to combat this serious crime and to protect and recover the rights of those who have been victims of such inhuman criminal activity.
- La Strada Moldova's former Executive Director, Daniela Misail-Nichifin, has been [appointed](#) as the new Minister of Internal Affairs in Moldova. Previously serving as the State Secretary of this Ministry, she now becomes the second former La Strada Moldova team member to achieve a ministerial position. La Strada International congratulates Daniela and wishes her great success!



WHAT IS HAPPENING?



8 New GRETA Members Elected

On 28 November, the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Trafficking Convention (COP) [elected 8 new members](#). The elected GRETA members are [Ms. Corine BILKEN](#) (Netherlands); [Mr. David MANCINI](#) (Italy); [Ms. Ulrike HABERL-SCHWARZ](#) (Austria); [Mr. Peter VAN HAUWERMEIREN](#) (Belgium); [Ms. Dorothea CZARNECKI](#) (Germany); [Ms. Lynn CHIBROP FAURE](#) (Mali); [Mr. Georges VANIKIOTIS](#) (Greece) and [Mr. Thomas AHLSTRAND](#) (Sweden). Four of them were re-elected for a second term.

18 Countries nominated an impressive list of 22 highly qualified people. La Strada International followed the nomination process at national level and was also an (online) observer of the elections. We [supported](#) 4 of the 8 elected candidates. This year, it has been more difficult for our members to get information about the national selection and nomination of candidates and in some countries the process lacked some transparency.

The elections itself took several hours, due to all kinds of technical issues, which even led to the elections being repeated after four rounds, to ensure that everything was conducted fairly. There was a repeated call to the COP members to consider the need for a balance in gender and professional backgrounds – which may have influenced the voting - as in the end, 4 women and 4 men were elected. However, no one raised the fact that after 15 years of GRETA, there are still several countries that have never had a candidate elected in GRETA.

It is clear also from monitoring the lobbying process over the years, that not only the expertise, geographical or professional background of GRETA nominated candidates does matter, but that a lot of other political interests are at stake, hence also the use of vote trading among countries.

ECHR Rules Against Slovakia in Human Trafficking Case

Recently, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) [ruled against Slovakia](#) for failing to properly investigate human trafficking allegations involving B.B., a former orphan trafficked to the UK in 2010. The NGO Caritas Slovakia identified her as a victim of trafficking and asked the police to open a criminal investigation into her case. However, the Slovak authorities charged her employer with pimping instead of human trafficking, leading to B.B.'s removal from specialist care.

Represented by Professor Parosha Chandran, a leading human rights barrister, B.B. argued this violated her rights under Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The ECHR found the Slovakian findings, including a critical and growing form of violence that disproportionately affects women and girls around the world. TRFBSV includes any act committed or amplified through digital means, leading to physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or social harm. This resource brings together strategies, research, and best practices from UK Women's global efforts to combat online violence.

While being happy about the progress, Human Rights Watch [criticised](#) the EU's current lack of enforcement capacity to effectively implement the F.L.B., urging significant investment in investigations and targeting high-risk regions. The organisation also questions whether future EU leadership will fully utilise the regulation to tackle systemic human rights violations and unfair trade practices.

Right-Leaning EU Commission Approved

On 27 November the new, right-leaning, EU Commission was approved with a small majority vote of 370 votes in favour, 282 against and 36 abstentions.

Ursula von der Leyen has [outlined](#) a strong anti-migration mandate for the new Commission. While she has [pledged](#) to disrupt the exploitation of migrants in the EU labour market and to ending [worse](#) working conditions for migrants, and accountability for rights violations at borders. The EU must prioritise human rights impact assessments, strengthen public and parliamentary oversight, and ensure migration partnerships are conditional on rights protections.

[Magnum Euronor](#) is the new Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration and will be responsible for human rights and human trafficking policies. He will already speak at the upcoming joint Meeting of the EU Network of National Coordinators and Rapporteurs and the EU Civil Society Platform against trafficking in human beings on 3 December.

La Strada International will closely follow the new commission's work in the upcoming political term and continue to advocate for strong access to justice and (migrant) rights approach.

Civil Society Calls on EU to Stay Committed to Human Rights in the Implementation of the Pact on Migration

The EU's recent migration policies prioritise containment, reducing arrivals, and outsourcing responsibilities to third countries, which undermine international human rights obligations and the right to seek asylum. Proposals for offshoring asylum processing, restrictive border measures, and mandatory procedures for risk-violating EU legal frameworks such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Common European Asylum System.

Fifty humanitarian organisations [urge](#) the EU to focus on implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum in line with human rights, rejecting harmful externalisation practices, arbitrary detention, and unsafe return procedures. They advocate for well-funded, humane asylum systems, expanded safe and legal pathways for migration, and accountability for rights violations at borders. The EU must prioritise human rights impact assessments, strengthen public and parliamentary oversight, and ensure migration partnerships are conditional on rights protections.

Adoption of the Forced Labour Ban

On 18 November, the European Council adopted the Forced Labour Ban (FLB), a regulation prohibiting products into the Union market that are made using forced labour. The new Regulation bans products produced with forced labour both from within the EU onto the EU market, as well as those imported from outside.

During the legislative process, La Strada International, ASI, PICUM, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other CSOs have [called](#) for a stronger inclusion of remedies for workers.

While being happy about the progress, Human Rights Watch [criticised](#) the EU's current lack of enforcement capacity to effectively implement the F.L.B., urging significant investment in investigations and targeting high-risk regions. The organisation also questions whether future EU leadership will fully utilise the regulation to tackle systemic human rights violations and unfair trade practices.

10th Year of Discussion on International Instrument for Business and Human Rights

This year marks the 10th year of discussion on an international legally binding instrument on business and human rights, in a [recent article](#), former Vice-President of the European Parliament, Heidi Hautala states that there could not be a better moment for the EU to step fully into the LBI process as its CSDDD legislation is now in place.

Actors like the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) also [call for a binding](#) international treaty on business and human rights to ensure corporate accountability and prioritisation of workers' rights, including safe conditions and freedom of association. It urges comprehensive coverage of human rights, mandatory due diligence, extraterritorial regulation, and robust enforcement to address abuses and deliver justice.

ILO Launches Website to Highlight Work Surrounding C190

The C190 Arc Task Force, formed in March 2024, brings together women leaders from 12 global labour and gender justice organisations to promote action on ILO Convention 190 (C190) against violence and harassment in the field of work. Convened by Global Labor Justice (GLJ), the Task Force aims to bridge labour and women's rights, with key events to amplify C190's impact.

Recently, a [website](#) was created by the ILO to highlight the goals of C190, the advancements made and current events surrounding the Convention. On the website you can find promising practices, information on the ratification and implementation of C190 as well as awareness raising tools. 19 European countries, including 13 EU Member States have so far ratified C190, hopefully more will follow.

Spain Legalises Thousands of Migrants

Spain [plans to legalise](#) the residency status of 300,000 undocumented migrants annually through 2027, aiming to bolster its labour force and sustain economic growth amid an aging population. This mass regularisation will simplify work and residence permit procedures, providing undocumented migrants with labour rights and protections, addressing a population estimated at 600,000 – one of the highest rates in the EU. Spain's approach is as an outlier in Europe, focusing on inclusion and integration rather than tightening border controls or outsourcing asylum processes.

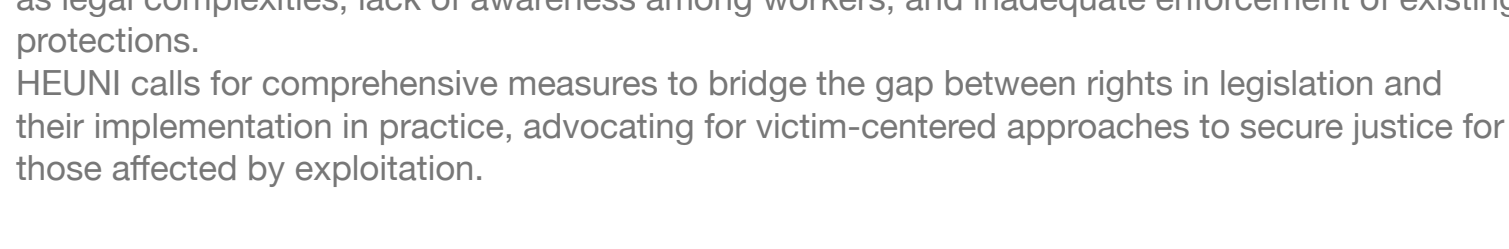
Immigrant labour has played a key role in Spain's economic success, with migrants increasingly filling gaps in sectors like technology and hospitality.

LSI supports Spain's decision to legalise these undocumented migrants. Regularising their status is crucial to protecting them from severe labour exploitation and human trafficking.

Specialised Lawyer Network for Gender-Based Violence Launched

Next to the existing specialised lawyers and NGO network on human trafficking, recently the Council of Europe (Violence against Women Division) also [launched](#) a Network of specialised Lawyers and NGOs assisting female victims of violence.

The Network aims to foster regular exchanges among lawyers across Council of Europe member states and to serve as a knowledge-sharing platform for strategic litigation on violence against women. By advancing innovative case law at national and European levels, it supports the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.



WHAT IS NEW?

HEUNI Report on Migrants Situation in the Baltic Sea Region

The new [HEUNI report](#), From Rights on Paper to Rights in Action, exposes the reality of migrant workers' accessing remedies in the Baltic Sea Region. The report maps existing state-based and non-state-based grievance mechanisms in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, highlighting gaps and limitations in their effectiveness.

It aims to raise awareness of available grievance mechanisms and encourage improvements to ensure migrant workers can access justice and protection. It identifies significant barriers such as legal complexities, lack of awareness among workers, and inadequate enforcement of existing protections.

HEUNI calls for comprehensive measures to bridge the gap between rights in legislation and their implementation in practice, advocating for victim-centered approaches to secure justice for those affected by exploitation.

OSCE Report Highlights Emerging Intersection of AI and Human Trafficking

The OSCE, in collaboration with the Ball Process Regional Support Office, developed a [policy brief](#), including recommendations, examining the emerging intersection of artificial intelligence (AI), trafficking in persons, and transnational crimes. The brief and the launch event highlight how generative AI technologies, such as deepfake creation and automated recruitment systems, are being exploited by traffickers to target vulnerable individuals and evade detection, demonstrating the evolving tactics of human traffickers.

Statewatch Publishes Open Letter on Immigration and Asylum Policies

Statewatch, together with 200 organisations and individuals, including La Strada International, has issued an [open letter](#) to EU leaders urging European leaders to uphold human rights and international obligations.

The letter exposes and criticises anti-migration measures supported by EU leadership including proposals to suspend the right to asylum, establish offshore deportation camps, and create common lists of "safe" countries. It also highlights concerns over Schengen visas, racial profiling, and extended periods of internal border checks within the outer border area, which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms.

Modern Slavery Publication on Prevention of Trafficking

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (PECC) has released a [report](#) focusing on the prevention of Adult Exploitation and Trafficking. The report emphasises upstream prevention through safe migration pathways and employer accountability. Key recommendations include the need for a multi-agency, system-level approach, the implementation of early intervention measures, and the development of tailored prevention strategies for high-risk groups.

Furthermore, PECC released "Open Conversations", focused on improving the early identification of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who may be at risk of human trafficking. The [publication](#) provides practical guidance for educators, social workers, and frontline professionals, offering tools and strategies to enhance early identification and intervention.

G20 Leaders Reaffirm Commitment to Eradicate Human Trafficking

The G20 Rio de Janeiro Leaders' [Declaration](#) reaffirms the commitment to eradicating labour exploitation, and human trafficking as part of its broader goals of social inclusion and human rights. It emphasises the importance of protecting workers' rights, promoting decent work, and eliminating forced labour and child exploitation. Leaders highlighted the need for stronger occupational safety measures, access to social protection, and fostering social dialogue and collective bargaining. The declaration further calls for addressing discriminatory practices and removing legal barriers to ensure that vulnerable groups, including women and migrants, are fully integrated into the workforce.

UN Women's Repository on Gender-Based Violence in Times of Growing Technology

UN Women launched a Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) [Repository](#), addressing a critical and growing form of violence that disproportionately affects women and girls around the world. TRFBSV includes any act committed or amplified through digital means, leading to physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or social harm. This resource brings together strategies, research, and best practices from UK Women's global efforts to combat online violence.

FRA Study on Gender-Based Violence across Europe

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released its [EU Gender-Based Violence Survey](#), capturing the experiences of women across the 27 Member States. The findings reveal that gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue in the EU, with 31% of women reporting to have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15. FRA's report stresses the importance of comprehensive measures to combat sexual violence, including education on consent, improved legal frameworks, accessible support services for survivors, and enhanced enforcement mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

Call for Papers: 'Corporate Accountability and Forced Labour in Value Chains'

The Anti-Trafficking Review has issued a [call for papers](#) for its upcoming special issue on 'Corporate Accountability and Forced Labour in Value Chains'. This issue seeks to explore the role of corporations in perpetuating or combating forced labour within their supply chains. This is a valuable opportunity to contribute to the global conversation on ethical business practices and human rights. Submissions are open until 15 May 2025.

Online Advertising in Sex Work

The European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA) hosted an [online event](#) with a focus on sex work and online advertising platforms to launch its [new report](#). "Labour rights, safety and privacy: How to centre sex workers' needs on advertising platforms." As sex workers increasingly rely on specialised adult entertainment and advertising platforms to connect with buyers, the report shows the challenges sex workers face within these digital spaces, highlighting the need to prioritise their labour rights, privacy, and safety in platform policies. It provides actionable recommendations for platforms to address the specific challenges sex workers face, such as discrimination, data protection breaches, and unsafe working conditions.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2-4 December - Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice hosts [thematic discussion](#) on Pillar IV. A live stream will be available.
- 2 December - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Details can be found [here](#).
- 3 December - Meeting of the EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms and EU Civil Society Platform.
- 3 December - Roundtable on the Ethics of (Mis) Research on Migration and Social Exclusion. Hosted by the BI/Orders Centre, London (3.30-5.30, London Time). Register [here](#).
- 3-5 December - 2024 edition of the annual Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country workshop, open to all Pathfinder Countries and candidate countries, organized at ILO's International Training Centre in Turin ([online participation possible](#)).
- 4-6 December - [OSCE event](#) Human Rights at International Borders: Exploring New Technologies, their Risks and Opportunities, Warsaw Poland.
- 5 December - ILO's Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL) organises its 2024 (online) annual meeting. Register [here](#).
- 11 December - 14.00 – 16.00 CET, ESWA launch of the research report on policing: "Exposed from all sides – European Parliament registration form (Registration [here](#)). You can find the policy brief [here](#)."
- 11 December - Expected launch of UNODC Global Report on Human Trafficking.
- 17 December - International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers.
- 18 December - International Migrants Rights Day.

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 the European anti-trafficking policies and the support to trafficked persons.

[Donate Now](#)

