



## NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2025

*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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### LSI NEWS



### LSI 30 Anniversary Year

In 2025, we will celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the first La Strada project was established on 15 September 2025. Read more about our [history](#). We plan to celebrate this with different actions, including an anniversary event taking place in Warsaw this September. So keep following us!

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### LSI Representation in January

In January, much of La Strada International's advocacy and representation work focused on monitoring proposed EU legislation, including the revision of the EU Victim Rights Directive, as well as the transposing process of new legislation, including the EU Trafficking Directive, Forced Labour Ban and CSDDD and concerning developments related to the proposed Omnibus proposal. Also, Trump's anti-migration actions and freezing of US funding are closely followed by us with concern.

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### EU Approves New Mobility Programme

LSI will join a new EU-funded project called **Mobility**, which addresses the pressing need for

labour mobility and enhancement of labour rights of third-country nationals (TCNs) in Europe. The 24<sup>th</sup>-month project focuses on research, capacity building, consultations and expert exchange, next to awareness and advocacy. It will be implemented in Poland, Germany, Malta, Serbia, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. It closely relates to our earlier EU funded projects [INFO Rights](#) and [PostCare I and II](#), which focused on the posting of third-country workers in care work, agriculture, and manufacturing in Europe.

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## LSI MEMBERS NEWS

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### Trump Administration's First Week: Aid Freeze and Mass Deportations

In his first week in office, newly elected US President Donald Trump ordered an [immediate pause](#) on new foreign aid spending, as well as a stop-work order for existing grants and contracts on funding for almost all U.S. foreign assistance, making exceptions for emergency food programs and military aid to Israel and Egypt.

The order - which was issued last weekend - has also seriously harmed anti-trafficking action in Europe. For now, at least 9 projects in which seven of our member organisations are involved, have been frozen. Read more about this on our [website](#).



### Highlights from LSI Members in December

- MRCI has been calling on the negotiators of the new Irish Government programme to change the [family reunion rules](#) as well as to make it easier for people in employment persons to move between jobs. While new family reunion rules have unfortunately not been included in the Governmental Programme. Positive is that MRCI managed to secure a [commitment](#) from the new government to make it easier for people on employment permits to move between jobs. [Join the employment permit equality campaign today!](#)
- FLEX published a new [research report](#), which sheds light on the challenges asylum seekers face in accessing work within the asylum system. Based on direct engagement with asylum seekers, the report brings their often-overlooked experiences to the forefront. Despite being crucial for their survival, the ability of asylum seekers to earn an income remains a largely neglected aspect of the asylum process, emphasizing the urgent need for systemic change.

- **Payoke, MIST, Adpare and others** organised an online event within the framework of the [VoiceOver project](#) on 24 January, called "More than their stories: communicating about human trafficking with dignity to challenge stereotypes and empower survivors". The same day LEFO IBF, organised the conference "Care4Care: From precarious to secure working conditions in personal care in Austria". See [more](#).
- **FIZ** marks its 40th anniversary this year, celebrating four decades of unwavering commitment to advocating for and supporting people with lived experience of human trafficking and exploitation. Since its founding in 1985, [FIZ](#) has worked tirelessly to protect rights, provide assistance, and promote awareness.
- **La Strada Ukraine** will organise [weekly therapy sessions](#) specifically designed for women and girls serving in the military starting from this week (1 February). These sessions aim to provide a safe and supportive environment to address the unique challenges they face.
- **Fundación de Solidaridad Amaranta** has launched the [#CuidarEsTrabajar](#) campaign to address and prevent exploitation, violence, and the multiple forms of discrimination faced by migrant women in vulnerable situations, particularly those working as caregivers.



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## WHAT IS HAPPENING?

### European Commission Publishes 5<sup>th</sup> Progress Report

On 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, the European Commission released its [Fifth Report](#) on the progress made in combating Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) in the European Union, covering [statistics](#) for the period of 2021–2022. The bi-annual report identifies key trends, outlines the main anti-trafficking actions from 2021 to 2024, and provides a further analysis of statistics for the period of 2021-2022. The statistics for 2022 were already published in February 2024.

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### Growing Concern on Expected Omnibus Proposal

On 8 November 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced she would introduce a proposal to amend three key pillars of the European Green Deal through an Omnibus law: the new [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#) (CSDDD), the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#) (CSRD), and the [Taxonomy Regulation](#). This Omnibus simplification package, which aims to reduce the burden of private companies by simplification of reporting rules, is likely published on 26 February 2025. While it is still very unclear what the proposal will encompass, there is growing concern that the Commission wants to postpone or delay certain new obligations for the private sector. LSI co-signed a [Joint statement](#) raising awareness that the proposed Omnibus law seriously can undermine the new rules on corporate accountability. Also, major businesses including Primark, Unilever, and Nestlé have raised concern in a [statement](#) towards the Commission.

Also 400+ Chief Sustainability Officers from large and medium-sized French companies have called on the European Commission to protect the integrity of the European Green Deal, opposing amendments proposed through the Omnibus law. Read their full letter [here](#).

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## Italy Resumes Policy of Sending Migrants to Albanian Detention Centres

Italy resumes its controversial offshoring and outsourcing policy of returning Albania migrants to detention after a two-month pause. On [25 January](#), dozens of migrants boarded in the direction to the port of Shengjin, Albania, before being transferred to the detention center in Gjader. This action contradicts the Court of Justice of the European Union's (CJEU) [ruling](#), which states that a migrant's asylum application cannot be fast-tracked if the country of origin is not "wholly safe". Notably, both Bangladesh and Egypt, where most of the migrants originate, have not been judged to meet this criterion. The European court hearing on the case is scheduled for 25 February.

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## A New EU Digital Platform for Declaring Posted Workers

The European Commission has proposed the creation of a [single digital declaration portal](#) to reduce the administrative burden for companies employing posted workers. With 5 million posted workers across the EU single market, the portal aims to streamline reporting processes and enhance cooperation among EU countries, but should also improve worker protection. This is urgently needed as we see that posting is misused to 'employ' and exploit third-country nationals in Europe.

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## GREVIO Launches Monitoring Procedure to Assess EU's Compliance with Istanbul Convention

Following the entry into force of EU's acceding of the Istanbul Convention on 1 October 2023, GREVIO transmitted its baseline evaluation questionnaire used for countries, into [one](#) to be used to evaluate the European Union. Using the same questionnaire, NGOs can submit input to GREVIO regarding the effect given by the EU to any or all chapters from I to VII of the Istanbul Convention by 28 November 2025, to be submitted to [conventionviolence@coe.int](mailto:conventionviolence@coe.int). The EU is expected to submit a consolidated report to GREVIO by the end of November 2025, after which an evaluation visit to EU institutions, bodies, and agencies will be planned for 2026. GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, expected for publication in 2027, will offer a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the level of compliance of EU legislative, policy, strategic, or other measures with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

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## ECHR Condemns Russia for its Failure to Protect Kazakh and Uzbek Irregular Female Migrant Workers from Human Trafficking

On 10 December, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) handed down another conviction under Article 4 (prohibition of slavery and forced labour) of the European Convention on Human

Rights. In the case *F.M. and others v. Russia*, the Court condemned Russia for its failure to protect Kazakh and Uzbek irregular female migrant workers from human trafficking and servitude and to investigate the crimes committed against them. The Court considered that the inaction of the Russian authorities created an environment that enabled and perpetuated their exploitation and amounted to repeated tolerance of trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence. See [judgment](#) and [legal summary](#).

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## EU Minimum Wage Directive at Risk

UNI Europa, representing 7 million service workers from 242 national trade unions in 50 countries, has expressed its deep concern about the recent opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) proposing the annulment of the entire EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. Adopted in 2022, the directive has been crucial for promoting fair wages and strengthening collective bargaining, especially in the services sectors. See [UNI Europa to CJEU: Uphold the EU Minimum Wage Directive](#).

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## Male Trafficking Survivors Face Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Services

A systematic review led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine [highlights](#) the mental health consequences for young male survivors of human trafficking and the challenges they face in accessing services. The study reviewed 31 publications focusing on 11 countries and identified common symptoms such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and issues with self-esteem and self-control. The assumption that male survivors do not need assistance was found to lead to inability to identify concerns or even rejection of boys from services. The study also highlighted reasons that boys and young men do not seek services, such as confidentiality concerns or lack of trust.

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## Addressing Child Labour in Agriculture

At the annual Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country workshop, in December 2024, Pathfinder Countries (in Europe: Albania, France, Germany, and the Netherlands) and candidate countries exchanged experiences, challenges, and progress on the implementation of their national SDG 8.7 Roadmaps. The workshop was also an opportunity for exchange on thematic topics including supply chains, migration, and child labour in agriculture. A new Alliance 8.7 Action Group on Agriculture (AGA) has been established which aims to accelerate progress towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture.

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## WHAT IS NEW?

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## ILO Report on Migrant Workers' Access to Justice Across Borders

ILO's Report [Justice across borders: Access to labour justice for migrant workers through cross-border litigation](#) investigates cross-border litigation as a critical tool for enabling migrant workers to access labour justice and overcome challenges tied to mobility and legal frameworks. It highlights successful case studies and identifies systemic barriers and challenges. Recognizing these systemic hurdles, the report emphasizes the need for robust legal frameworks that ensure equal treatment, flexible complaint mechanisms, and proactive enforcement measures. Recommendations include empowering labour departments to address violations, enabling workers to lodge complaints remotely, facilitating legal aid, and strengthening transnational networks for advocacy and representation.

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## Double Standards in Meta's Content Moderation Practices

AI Forensics' [latest investigation](#) uncovers a double standard in Meta's content moderation practices, prioritizing ad revenue over user safety. Despite the platform's stringent Community Standards, over 3,000 pornographic advertisements containing explicit adult nudity content have been approved and distributed through the Meta Ad Library in the past year. The ads included multiple celebrity deepfakes and AI-generated audio. The investigation highlights a significant inconsistency in Meta's moderation system. While sexually explicit content is removed from user-generated posts, it is greenlit when paid for by advertisers, allowing such content to reach millions of users. The research shows that the transparency mechanisms mandated by the DSA are effective for external scrutiny and hold large platforms to account. These rules must be enforced thoroughly and on all major platforms, regardless of changes in political climate.

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## UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women Calls for Input on Consent

The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UNSR VAW) has [called for input](#) for an addendum of her report to the Human Rights Council on the concept of consent in relation to violence against women and girls, with a deadline of 30 January 2025. Sex workers' rights and anti-trafficking NGOs have submitted [input](#) to ensure she follows the international concept of consent.

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## UN SR on Trafficking Calls for Input for Report on Migrant Domestic Work

The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children will devote her report to the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2025, to the issue of migrant domestic workers and trafficking in persons. The Report will examine labour rights, rights of migrant domestic workers, the migration context, effective rights protection and challenges in ensuring access to justice and effective remedies. [See call](#). The deadline for submissions is 28 February 2024.

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## Call for Input US TIP Report

Around July 2025, the US State Department will launch its next Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. The U.S. Department of State relies on a wide array of sources, including the expertise of the anti-trafficking community, to better understand the trafficking situation on the ground. See how to submit information [here](#). We call upon NGOs to provide input for the TIP report, to highlight the devastating impact of the order to freeze foreign aid for anti-trafficking work.

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## SOMO Launches CSDDD Datahub

The Dutch Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) has launched the [CSDDD Datahub](#)! A database containing the corporate groups, subsidiaries, home countries, and sectors of the companies that will need to comply with the CSDDD. Their new tool is publicly accessible and allows users to easily search and filter for sectors and countries. Read also SOMO's [analysis](#) which reveals that the due diligence law covers actually fewer than 3,400 EU-based corporate groups.

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## Call for Input for ATR Issue on Corporate Accountability and Forced Labour in Value Chains

The 26<sup>th</sup> issue of GAATW's Anti-Trafficking Review will focus on the impact of supply chain transparency and corporate sustainability due diligence legislation, forced labour import bans, and free trade agreements on workers and the risks of trafficking and forced labour. The [call for papers](#) has been published in November and the deadline for submissions is 1 June.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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- **4 February** - Project 2KNOW Final Conference - From Knowledge to Action – Advancing Strategies to End Online Sexual Violence Against Children – see [more](#).
- **11-12 February** - (Hybrid) OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector, focusing on common challenges and risks as well as learnings and solutions to implement due diligence in garment and footwear supply chains. See [more](#).
- **17 February** - 15:00 to 18:00 CET - During the 90th CEDAW session, scheduled to be held from 3 to 21 February 2025 in Geneva, the Committee will hold a [half-day of general discussion on gender stereotypes](#), organised by OHCHR.
- **17-18 February** - European Labour Mobility Congress on Posted Work, Krakow, Poland. Read [more](#).
- **19 February** - launch of UNODC Research Study: Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in the Context of the Displacement caused by the War in Ukraine.
- **20 February** - Victim Support Europe final conference of the BeneVict project, Brussels, Belgium (Renaissance Brussels Hotel). Register before 17/2. BeneVict Final Conference -

[Registration Form](#).

- **22 February** - (EU) Victim Rights Day.
- **5 March** - launch of the EIGE Road Map on VAW.
- **10-21 March** - The sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. United Nations Headquarters New York. More information [here](#).

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## 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**

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