

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

Book Launch: **Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Around the World**

On 13 May 2025, the book **Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Around the World: Law, Ideology, and the Experiences of Sex Workers and Clients** will be launched. La Strada International contributed to the book. Chapter 13 A critical look at the criminalization of the "Use of Services" of trafficked persons. If you want to follow the launch online you can still [register here](#).

**EU Forced Labour Ban: Recommendations for the Designation of National Authorities**

Last year on 27 November, the **EU Forced Labour Product Ban Regulation** was adopted. EU Member States (EUMS) show **stagnance** this regulation by 4 December 2023. Together with Anti-Slavery International, Human Rights Watch and many others, we have closely followed the development and negotiations around the ban and now monitor its implementation. National competent authorities under the regulation will have two core duties: investigate products made with forced labour within EUMS, and decide on and enforce product bans, with complementary obligations of cooperation with the European Commission and other EUMS.

This [page](#) offers recommendations to designate such authorities based on criteria of effectiveness and efficiency. Earlier, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and Anti-Slavery International also published an analysis: [Understanding the EU Product Ban Regulation, Assessment and Recommendations](#), which explains the provisions of the final text and outlines what needs to be done for implementation.

**Research on Forced Marriage and Surrogacy**

LSI is currently conducting research on (the exploitation of) forced marriage and surrogacy, focusing on how these issues are addressed within the legal frameworks of various European countries and their relation to human trafficking. Are you currently conducting research or have expertise on (the exploitation of) surrogacy, forced marriage, or illegal adoption? We would love to hear from you or to receive case law. Please get in [touch](#).

**Compensation & Assets Recovery**

LSI is conducting research on financial compensation for victims of human trafficking. This study focuses on the current situation in the European Union — with a specific focus on Spain, Germany, and France — especially related to existing obstacles, best practices, and how compensation frameworks may evolve under the new EU regulations on Asset Recovery, Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence, and the Forced Labour Ban. Are you an expert on these issues and willing to contribute by being interviewed or completing a short survey? Please let us know! The survey can be answered and interviews conducted in English, Spanish, Italian, or German.

**2025 Europe Regional Freedom From Slavery Forum**

You can still register for the **2025 Europe Regional Forum: Freedom From Slavery**. The Forum will convene in Brussels from 4 to 7 May, and it will be an opportunity to bring together policymakers, CSOs, and rightsholders to discuss key issues on forced labour and child labour in Europe. More information and the registration details can be found [here](#).

**Webinar: The Impact of Funding Cuts on Anti-Trafficking Efforts in Europe**

La Strada International and **Edinburgh Napier University** are hosting a webinar on **19 May** to discuss the growing crisis of anti-trafficking funding and what it reveals about shifting state priorities, civil society's role, and the future of international cooperation. [Read more](#) and register [here](#)!

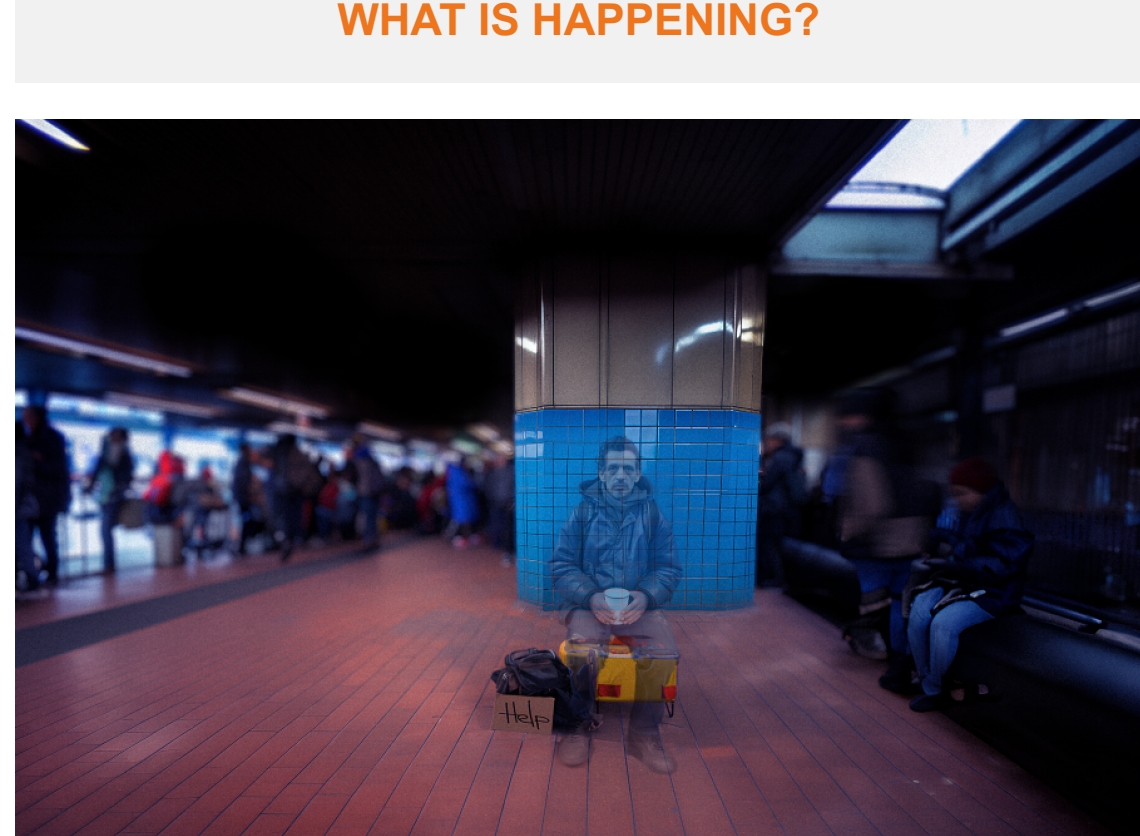
LSI MEMBERS NEWS



**Highlights from LSI Members in April**

- **ACCEM** introduced its [new website](#) of its Training School, where you can access all their (training) courses (in Spanish). **Some** of these courses have been developed in collaboration with the Ortega-Marañón University Institute. Those who complete the expert courses and have the necessary qualifications (bachelor's degree or equivalent) can also apply to enroll for a Master's Degree in International Migration and Asylum Policy and Management. See [more](#).
- **CCEM's** prevention tool [Outils de prévention - Comité contre l'esclavage moderne](#), which provides information on the basic labour law rules in France and offers advice on how to avoid trafficking situations and obtain assistance, is now available in 26 languages.
- **FIZ** organises its 40th anniversary programme in May and June.
- **On the Road** celebrates its 30th anniversary with the **STRADE conference**, a journey of events to tell the value of social enterprises and their role in building fairer, more inclusive, and autonomous communities.
- **ASI** launched a blog [The fast fashion model: why the emblem goes beyond Spain](#) and filed a [formal complaint](#) to the EU Ombudsman, accusing the European Commission of undermining democratic processes by rushing through the Omnibus proposal. The organisation warns that the proposal risks weakening key corporate accountability laws, including the CSDDD, and goes against the EU's stated human rights and environmental goals and values. ASI also handed its petition calling for a ban on forced labour goods to the Prime Minister, next to publishing a [fact sheet](#) examining recent changes to the UK's National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which have lightened the reconsideration process for trafficking decisions.
- **ASTRA** launched a [new publication](#), "(Mis)Use of Human Trafficking Victims' Experiences in Advocacy Processes", and engaged in a discussion with colleagues and experts on this important topic. [English version](#).

WHAT IS HAPPENING?



**Eurostat Publishes New EU Statistics on Human Trafficking**

Eurostat published its [latest statistics](#) on human trafficking for the year 2023, revealing that 10,793 victims were reported across the EU—an increase of 6.9% (700 victims) compared to 2022. Sexual exploitation is still the most identified form of human trafficking, but there is a sharp increase in registered cases of trafficking for labour exploitation over the last years. The data reveal further an increase in the trafficking of Third Country Nationals. The EU ATC presented the new statistics at the Polish EU presidency event "Together against human trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation. Current responses and a way forward", held earlier this month in Warsaw. Read more on our [website](#).

**FEMM Draft Report on New EU Gender Equality Strategy**

FEMM rapporteur Marko Velišaj presented his [draft report](#) on the Gender Equality Strategy 2025, calling upon the Commission to present an ambitious strategy with concrete tangible legislative and non-legislative measures in a number of key areas, such as gender-based violence, women's empowerment in the workplace, equal representation and political participation. His draft report also calls for efforts to advance gender equality through the principles of intersectionality and gender mainstreaming, and to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all Commission proposals, including budgetary procedures. See more about the [draft procedure](#) for this new Strategy. A public consultation is expected to be launched soon.

**Concern that EU Talent Pool Lacks Workers' Protection**

The LIBE Committee has decided - confirmed by the EP plenary in April (Rule 71 - vote) - to enter into interinstitutional negotiations on the Commission's [proposal](#) for an EU Talent Pool. This Pool aims to make it easier to recruit non-EU nationals to jobs in sectors where there are labour shortages through a dedicated digital platform that matches EU vacancies with jobseekers living outside the EU. While MEPs have amended the Commission's proposal to ensure fair recruitment practices and non-discrimination, the Dutch Trade Union FNV raises concerns about the possible exploitation of TCN workers, calling for stricter controls on the equal treatment of migrant workers compared to non-migrant workers and recruitment agencies, also defending that employers who do not comply should be denied access. Read the full article on our [website](#).

**New ILO Programme on Living Wage**

In a step towards ending the [global scandal](#) of poverty pay, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched a new [programme](#) that puts the principle of a living wage at the heart of its support to countries. Read this [article](#) for more information.

**Dutch MEPs Submit Amendments to Legally Establish Non-Punishment Principle in National Law**

Two Members of the Dutch Parliament have submitted an amendment to legally establish the non-punishment principle. In June, Parliament will discuss a bill to make the criminalization of human trafficking (Article 273 of the Criminal Code) clearer and more accessible. Efforts by NGOs (including LSI members) advocating for a provision on non-punishment as part of the trafficking article failed but the two MPs now aim to reverse this. It is hoped that Parliament will adopt this amendment. Earlier, La Strada International strongly lobbied for the EU THB Directive to include binding obligations for EUMS to ensure such national provision.

WHAT IS NEW?



**CBSS: Human Trafficking & Financial Fraud**

CBSS's [latest study](#) "Human Trafficking for Benefit Fraud and Related Financial Fraud", part of the project **FRAUD**, aims to examine the connection between benefit fraud, including related financial fraud, and human trafficking. It studies how the two intersect, and to what extent the exploitation of individuals in connection to benefit fraud and related financial fraud can constitute human trafficking.

**New OSCE Report on Child Orphanage Trafficking**

The OSCE has published a new report, ["The Role of OSCE Participating States in Combating Orphanage Trafficking"](#), building on the earlier work of other organisations in the field, including Lumos. The report sheds light on the exploitation of children in residential care institutions, highlighting how some orphanages are used for profit—through donations, foreign aid, or voluntourism—rather than child protection. OSCE calls on participating States to strengthen national frameworks, raise awareness, and adopt child-protection systems that reduce reliance on institutional care. The report also includes an analysis of current international legal frameworks, contributing factors, and offers targeted recommendations for governments, tourism actors, and technology companies.

**CKM Report on Child Exploitation**

["From Bad to Worse"](#) explores the hidden reality of children exploited by their parents in the Netherlands. The study, based on helpline chat data from the Dutch NGO Fier, focuses on the victim's perspectives while acknowledging gaps in understanding the motivations of perpetrators.

**Assessment of Labour Market Participation Displaced Ukrainian Women**

The **INTAKE** Project by ICMPD provides a [comparative analysis](#) of the labour market participation of displaced Ukrainian women in Austria, Germany, and Poland. It highlights the challenges they face due to the temporality of their legal status in these countries. The study recommends streamlined recognition of their qualifications, and pathways to transition into long-term residence and to address the challenges they face in finding employment.

**Case Study Report on Immigrant Workers in the Meat Industry During COVID-19**

DignityFIRM launched its latest [publication](#) analysing the realities of immigrant workers in the meat industry during COVID-19. By looking at case studies in Illinois (USA), the Netherlands, and North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), the paper examines the structural causes of protection gaps for workers as well as facilitators and barriers to improving occupational safety and health.

**PICUM's New Report on Criminalisation of Migration and Solidarity in the EU**

PICUM has launched a new report ["Criminalisation of migration and solidarity in the EU"](#), highlighting worrying trends across Europe. Between January and December 2024, at least 142 people faced judicial proceedings in the EU for helping migrants and at least 91 migrants were criminalised for steering a boat, driving a vehicle across a border, or assisting other travellers.

**New Resources on Supply Chain Transparency by ICT sector**

KnowTheChain launched several new resources including its **2025 ICT Benchmark** and publications on [supply chain and transparency](#), [purchasing practices](#), and individual [company scorecards](#). The benchmark gives insight into the changing nature of reporting on forced labour risks and impacts across supply chains. The assessment of 45 of the largest global ICT companies reveals a persistent gap between company policies and actual conditions for workers. While some progress has been made in governance and due diligence, key issues like responsible recruitment and freedom of association, as well as meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout due diligence processes and remedy mechanisms remain weak. None of the companies responded adequately to forced labour allegations, of which 42 were tracked. All resources are available on the newly integrated [KnowTheChain website](#) of the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.

**Position Paper: Visibilising the Economic Oppression of Sex Workers**

A new [position paper](#) by Gloss and colleagues calls for urgent political and financial support for sex worker-led initiatives. It highlights the systemic economic exclusion faced by sex workers and the need to ensure they "can access economic and social rights on an equal basis with other workers". The paper stresses that increased donor support and sustained political advocacy are essential for achieving long-term economic justice.

**Systematic Cuts on Human Trafficking Programmes**

Earlier this month, the Trump Administration [stopped](#) 69 global programmes tackling child labour and human trafficking. Cuts to international Human Trafficking programmes are devastating to the fight to end Forced Labour. Katherine Tai & Julie Su write in [The American Process](#) that these cuts also harm American businesses and workers.



**Report: What Can Be Done to Put an End to Human Trafficking?**

On 8 April, the Global Commission on Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking released a [comprehensive report](#) on the current state of human trafficking and labour exploitation across the globe. The report explores trends, data, risk factors, highlighting the role of overlapping crises globally – such as armed conflict, forced displacement, and climate change – and outlines what governments, international organisations and civil society can do to better prevent and combat human trafficking. Read more on our [website](#).

**CoE Migration and Refugee Law reference database**

The **Dilettant** on Migration and Refugees of the CoE has launched a new [database](#) offering a comprehensive and regularly updated overview of its key legal standards on migration and refugee protection. The page brings together essential treaties, recommendations, and other reference documents related to migration.

**Victims' Voices Platform Launched by VSE**

As part of its 2025 campaign ["The Year of Victims' Rights"](#) Victim Support Europe (VSE) has launched the **VICTIMS' VOICES website** – a platform gathering powerful testimonies, films, and stories from victims across Europe. The initiative aims to raise awareness and amplify the voices of those affected by crime. VSE is also tracking EU-level political engagement through its Parliamentarians Platform, monitoring which MEPs uphold their pledges made during the 2024 EU elections to prioritise victims' rights.

**Data Repository on Return Regimes Now Live**

The GAPS project has launched its [Data Repository](#), a comprehensive platform on national return regimes that serves as a valuable resource for researchers, institutions, and policymakers. GAPS is a large-scale study examining the drivers of return policies, the barriers to and facilitators of international cooperation on returns. The Repository offers data on profiles, legislation, infrastructure, international cooperation, and descriptive statistics.

**Calls for Input**

- Public consultation on draft **Council of Europe Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls**. Deadline: 26 May 2025.
- Call for Papers by the **Anti-Trafficking Review** for a Special Issue themed: **"Corporate Accountability and Forced Labour in Value Chains"**. Deadline: 1 June 2025.
- Call for Proposals by PILNET to organize a session for the **2025 Global Forum in Rome**. Deadline: 9 May 2025.
- Call for input for the 2025 report of the **Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus** (русский). Deadline: 31 May 2025.
- The call for input of the **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery** closed on the **role of the financial sector in eradicating contemporary forms of slavery** closed this month. Check the submitted input [here](#).

MORE PUBLICATIONS

- **Human Rights Due Diligence**. Verité published ["Why Traditional Audits are not Sufficient for Human Rights Due Diligence"](#), highlighting the need to prioritize worker-centered approaches. Presenting key components driving impactful supply chain assessments and recommendations to improve supply chain accountability.
- **Gender-Based Violence**: The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [assesses](#) its toolkit for the monitoring of cases of gender-based violence, offering guidance to strengthen victim protection and accountability.
- **Ukraine**: The OHCHR [released a report](#) on the impact of hostilities on children's rights in Ukraine, documenting severe violations and long-term consequences.
- **Online Human Trafficking**: Jonathan Mendel and Kiril Sharapov published a [research paper](#): "Politics without principle: Potential borders and the ethics of anti-trafficking online", exploring the spread of human trafficking online, arguing that "exploitation should be challenged through an ethical response to those marginalised by capitalism today".
- **Forced Labour**: The Remedy Project published a [white paper](#): "Are we fighting forced labour or just managing it?", rethinking how forced labour is identified and addressed.
- **Migration Strategies**: EU launched a new **EMN-OECD joint inform** examining how governments design and implement migration strategies.
- **Tools to Protect TCNs**: The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights released new [practical exercises and guidance](#) to help labour inspectors better identify and respond to the exploitation and abuse of migrant workers.

PODCASTS

**Borders & Belonging podcast episode on migration**

The [seventh episode](#) of season 2 of **Borders & Belonging** is now out. In this edition, experts on migration discuss how bilateral agreements, regional policies, and power dynamics between origin and destination countries shape migration patterns around the world.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **5 - 7 May** - 2025 Europe Regional Freedom Slavery Forum, Brussels, Belgium. Register [here](#).
- **13 May** - 14.00-17.30 CET – On the occasion of the publication of the book **Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation around the World: Law, Ideology, and the Experiences of Sex Workers and Clients**, an online meeting will take place organized by the Open University on **Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation around the World**. **Amsterdam University**.
- **22 - 23 May** - Victim Support Europe (VSE) and the **Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV)** are excited to invite you to the **VSE 2025 Annual Conference – 35 Years of Victim Support in Europe – Transforming Lives Today, Inspiring a Brighter Tomorrow**. This hybrid event will take place in Lisbon on 22-23 May 2025 at the prestigious **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**, with the option to attend digitally.
- **1 - 13 June** - **International Labour Conference**, 113th Session, Geneva, Switzerland.
- **9 - 13 June** - UN Ocean Conference, Nice, France.
- **10 - 11 June** - Council of Europe conference on "Empowering Change: Technology and AI in the Fight against Human Trafficking". The Xara Lodge in Rabat, Malta.
- **16 June - 11 July** - **UN Human Rights Council**, 59th Session, Geneva, Switzerland.

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.





