

Annual report

2024

Annual Report 2024

Text: La Strada International, Amsterdam, June 2025

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of La Strada International. None of the donors are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein. The contents of this publication may be freely used and copied for educational and other non-commercial purposes, provided that any such reproduction is accompanied by an acknowledgement of La Strada International as the source.

La Strada International
Postbus 15865
1001NJ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Contents

La Strada International	4
Human trafficking in Europe in 2024	5
Operational environment and challenges	6
Building evidence: data collection and research	12
Contributing to policy and advocacy.....	13
Global Advocacy	13
European Advocacy	13
Advocacy at European Union level	13
Addressing Shrinking space	14
Identification of trafficked persons	14
Promoting the non-punishment principle	14
International projects in 2024	16
Visibility and (social) media work	18
Campaigns.....	18
Statements.....	18
(Public) Events.....	19
Cooperation and partnerships	20
LSI Membership and exchange among members	22
Annual NGO Platform (General Assembly) meeting.....	23
LSI board and board meetings.....	23
LSI staff	23
Engaging trafficked persons.....	24
Financial management and fundraising	25

La Strada International

Vision, Mission, Working principles & Core work

La Strada International is a European NGO Platform against human trafficking, that works from a human rights perspective in support of trafficked persons, by preventing human trafficking and by providing adequate assistance and support and access to justice and effective remedies.

We believe in a world where all people are free to migrate and work in the labour sector of their choice, and are free from trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, knowing that their rights are respected at home, abroad, and on the way. Human trafficking can only be stopped if people's rights as human beings are recognised, respected, and realised.

La Strada International is active at a broad European level. While human trafficking is a global issue, the Platform focusses on the situation in Europe (both EU and non-EU countries) and on addressing all forms of human trafficking. The Platform comprises 32 member organisations, including 3 associate members¹, from 24 European countries.

Members provide (psycho) social, medical, legal and vocational counselling, safe accommodation, long-term reintegration and employment support, and other direct and indirect services for trafficked persons and at-risk groups. Furthermore, members build the awareness, knowledge and capacity of relevant stakeholders, conduct awareness campaigns and engage in policy advocacy on the national level to realise change.

LSI's international secretariat facilitates cooperation, capacity building and expertise sharing and provides support in setting standards and incorporating international developments into national actions. The secretariat collects and analyses this information for evidence-based advocacy and invites international organisations and other social movements to cooperate and support our work.

La Strada International aims to be a transparent, open-minded, and reliable knowledge actor, which takes up a critical watch dog role. As such, we engage independently with other actors to enhance and multiply our joint actions and ensure greater impact and accountability. We realise that counter-trafficking policies can have (unintended) negative effects on the rights of trafficked persons and affected groups. Hence, we call for impact assessments of all counter-trafficking actions, policies and legislation, built on evidence and adequate data.

In 2024 we worked on the development of policies related to due diligence and engagement of trafficked persons. We further finalised and adopted the standards for our services. To enhance consistency and harmonisation of members (statistical) data collection we developed an overview of definitions used.

¹ MIST, SHOP and Fundación Solidaridad de la Amaranta

Human trafficking in Europe in 2024

Trafficking in human beings is a crime and a human rights violation. All over the world, men, women and children are brought, through coercion, abuse of power or vulnerability, into situations of severe exploitation. This can include sexual exploitation, forced labour, the forced removal of organs, and slavery or similar practices. Such exploitation occurs in particular in the most precarious sectors with weak labour rights, such as the sex industry, construction, agriculture, and domestic work. Increasingly, people are also trafficked for begging or illegal acts such as pickpocketing, drug dealing and cybercrime.

Trafficked persons experience a series of rights violations, ranging from restriction of movement and confiscation of pay to severe physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Trafficking does not always involve the crossing of borders; it can also occur within a country, also known as domestic or internal trafficking. Although trafficking is widely recognised as a serious human rights violation, support for trafficked persons is still inadequate, with only a small fraction of trafficked persons identified, and an even smaller portion receiving support.

Human trafficking is rooted in global inequality, (gender) discrimination, oppressive social structures, exclusion, poverty, political instability and (armed) conflicts. These factors lead large groups of people to seek work, safety, and stability away from their home. The demand for cheap labour and products, globalisation, and deregulation of labour have made workers more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Restrictive migration policies and the growing anti-migrant sentiments and xenophobia by public and political figures in many countries also lead to discrimination of migrants, further driving situations of exploitation and abuse.

The latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage² suggest that 50 million people are in a situation of modern slavery globally, including around 28 million people in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage. For the region Europe and Central Asia, it is estimated that 4.1 million people are in a situation of forced labour. For the EU (447.7 million inhabitants), that means nearly 3 million people to be in a situation of 'modern slavery', including 1.68 million in forced labour. However, only around 10,000 victims of human trafficking are identified annually within the EU³. In 2023, La Strada International members assisted 5103 (presumed) victims of trafficking; for 2024, this number was higher and comprised over 7000 victims.

² [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, 2022](#)

³ On 24 January 2024, EUROSTAT published the 2022 statistics for trafficking in human beings. The newly released data show that 10,093 victims of trafficking in human beings were registered in the EU in 2022, representing a 41% increase compared to 2021. CHECK FIGURES TO BE PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2025.

Operational environment and challenges

The LSI Platform operates in a challenging environment. The current anti-migration sentiment in European politics – as noted from the last EU Parliament and national elections in EU MS and the strong support for the restricting EU Migration policies and the new EU Asylum and Migration Pact - makes it difficult to advocate for greater rights for migrants who are victim of trafficking and those who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Also in 2024, national and European policy measures remained focussed on fighting crime, restricting migration, and repressing prostitution/sex work, rather than tackling the root causes of human trafficking and improving protections for victims and vulnerable persons. Indeed, the criminal justice framework often undermines the rights of trafficked persons and vulnerable groups, and its scope is far too limited to deal with the complexities of human trafficking.

Many of the people supported by La Strada International members – who have experienced often severe forms of exploitation, violence and abuse – are not officially identified as victims and are therefore excluded from accessing those rights. Through our members, we work diligently at the grassroots level and have a strong insight into the varying national situations on the ground and remaining gaps.

New Developments that impacted our work

There were several important developments that had a huge impact on the work of La Strada International and that of our members. We highlight a few of these developments and challenges:

- The still **ongoing war of Russia against Ukraine** and the large number of displaced persons from Ukraine, needing information and support in Europe. This has impacted the work of our member in Ukraine, but also the work of our members in neighbouring countries.
- The **large group of other refugees and migrants** seeking help, who faced severe forms of exploitation or are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, especially as they have little access to rights in Europe. When the exploitation has happened before they entered an EU country, they are generally not granted any support after the reflection period, as all (temporary) support is linked to criminal investigations and successful prosecution, which is quite unlikely. We see that TCNs with a Dublin claim are not always offered the reflection period; even when regarded as presumed trafficked persons; as states fear to take responsibility for persons with a Dublin claim and suggest that EU countries of first entry should take this responsibility and identify and assist these persons, which seems a violation of international legislation.
- More **anti-migration measures**, focusing on limiting access, return, and detention of migrants in general, as well as the criminalisation of undocumented persons and those that support them. European governments continue to externalize border control, seeking agreements on (offshore processing of) asylum seekers, such as the EU or bilateral country deals with Tunisia, Libya, Turkey and Albania and the initially proposed deal between the UK and Rwanda.
- A growing **Shrinking Space** in parts of Europe, with civil society organisations in Europe being labelled “foreign agents” or “undesirable organizations”, limiting their participation in public life. Changes in the legal environment, challenges in funding and access to resources and obstacles in accessing policymaking have hindered our members in their work. LSI members from Belarus remain and continue to operate in exile for the fifth year.
- **Challenges to support victims and ensure access to justice** - Victims still have very limited access to protection, support and assistance, if they are unable or unwilling to cooperate with the authorities or if the criminal procedure has not started or is discontinued. Moreover, there is hardly any access to residence for victims, based on personal or humanitarian grounds.
- **Trafficked persons in Europe are often still wrongly detained, prosecuted and punished** for offences they have been compelled to commit in the course, or as a result of their trafficking situation.
- **Many workers in Europe work without adequate protection or decent minimum wage**, and those in irregular work or in an irregular situation are especially at risk of severe labour exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking and forced labour.
- **Businesses find legal loopholes to avoid compliance with labour rights standards**, like abusive subcontracting practices and making use of letter box companies to deny responsibility for the exploitation and abuse. It is very difficult to hold businesses accountable. While the Directive on Due Diligence (CSDDD) and the EU Forced Labour Ban are adopted, the Omnibus proposal will seriously weaken earlier agreed due diligence responsibility of businesses.

- Adequate **safe reporting to report exploitation and access justice** remains lacking in most European countries, with people who are undocumented facing arrest, detention, and deportation if they approach the police to report violence or abuse.
- The number of **identified trafficked persons in Europe** remains low. Only a small percentage of the estimated high number of victims is recognised as such and some groups of victims or forms of human trafficking are hardly recognised.

Addressing the impact of the war in Ukraine

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has led to the largest movement of people in Europe since the Second World War. Thus, much of our attention in 2024 still related to Ukraine and the situation of the displaced persons.

In 2024, LSI and members continued to raise awareness and monitor the situation; provided information and direct support to refugees in the neighbouring countries (Poland, Romania, Moldova) as well as other EU and non-EU countries. Often, jointly with other stakeholders including governments, information was provided about the rights provided under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), including the rights to financial support, housing and legal residence; as well as about the importance of registration for the TPD.

LSI members worked with Ukrainian and Russian speaking mediators to conduct outreach and provide information to displaced persons from Ukraine. Also, social media channels were monitored and used to reach out and communicate with those in need for information, housing, employment, etc.

Online and offline materials were developed, including videos and an information Portal. The LSI portal includes information on (international and temporary) protection & asylum, housing, employment, exploitation and human trafficking, and provides information on rights for Ukrainians and other displaced persons, support services and prevention of risks and links to LSI members websites, as well as to websites of other relevant stakeholders and information portals.⁴

Refugees from Ukraine were further informed – via counsellors and (voluntary) cultural mediators - about decent work, the risks of exploitation, including human trafficking and how to seek help or report the crime.

In 2024, LSI started to collect information on assisted cases by LSI members to get more insight in the most vulnerable persons and to assess remaining risks, challenges and the impact of the temporary protection period. A total of 42 cases were analysed and revealed that many Ukrainians are still subject to numerous forms of exploitation and abuse regardless of their entitlement to adequate assistance and support. This report was published on 24 February 2025, to mark the 3rd year of the war.

LSI members organised trainings and events, as well as joint workshops during the LSI NGO Platform in Paris, France, on the issue, especially related to the sobering of assistance and support in several EU countries. La Strada International and members further contributed to high-level events and meetings on the situation in Ukraine and human trafficking, including an event on 5 November in Warsaw Poland, organised by IOM. Data collected via the helplines was recorded via databases and analysed, and LSI members in Poland and Romania (La Strada Poland and Adpare) contributed to research by IOM on the situation in their countries.

LSI and members also supported research conducted by IMPACT for the office of Ms Pramila Patten, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We also contributed to research by others on Ukraine.

⁴ <https://www.lastradainternational.org/displaced-from-the-ukraine/>

We further gave interviews to around **20 media representatives** related to human trafficking and the war in Ukraine (and 35 media interviews in total). On 15 March, we organised an online virtual parallel event NGO CSW68: 'Preventing exploitation among displaced women from Ukraine' jointly with La Strada Ukraine, The Government's Office of the Government of Ukraine Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy, the Council of Europe (GRETA Secretariat) and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In addition, we provided two lectures for international students related to the war and human trafficking.

We further participated in the working group of PICUM on Ukraine and with PICUM, ECRE and their members, we advocated for extension of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which was extended in June 2024, until March 2026⁵. The work on Ukraine was funded by OAK, WP fund and COFRA.

⁵ See joint NGO statement - The EU must provide future-proof solutions for people displaced from Ukraine

Providing assistance to (presumed) trafficked persons

In 2024, our members assisted **over 7000 (presumed) victims** of trafficking; in comparison: in 2023, a total of **5103 persons were assisted**. Generally, the nationality of assisted victims differs widely among LSI member organisations; those that assist many foreign victims, see that victims originate from all parts of the world.

The data from LSI, as well as other international reports, still shows that the number of assisted (presumed) trafficking victims of Ukrainian origin is rather low, given the number of displaced persons from this country. However, despite the continuation of the war, there is less attention, and several European countries have sobered their assistance for refugees from Ukraine, which might increase their vulnerability in the coming period.

Building evidence: data collection and research

La Strada International and its members register and analyse data about human trafficking in Europe, in line with international privacy and data protection rules. All LSI members collect data related to victims' assistance, including victims' country of origin, gender, age, type of exploitation, and the sector of exploitation. They provide this data, in anonymised form, to national and international bodies for statistical and analytical purposes.

The LSI secretariat and members conduct research at national and European level to build evidence for our advocacy work. To get more insight into the assisted Ukrainian refugees, we conducted a case collection study from November 2024 until February 2025. It was published on 24 February 2025.

Publications/research

In 2024, La Strada International worked on five research publications

- An academic paper based on our 2023 research on criminalising the knowing use of services by trafficked people (published in 2025)
- A report on Shrinking Space in Europe (to be published 2025)
- A case collection report on non-punishment (published on 30/7/2024)
- A case collection report on Ukrainian assisted cases (published on 24/2/2025)⁶
- Research on the exploitation of forced marriage. This research will be published around August 2025.
- A report on the exploitation of surrogacy, including an investigation into how surrogacy entered EU law on THB. This research will be published in 2025.

In addition, La Strada International analysed the statistical data of LSI members related to the year 2024. Further the Platform secretariat and members contributed to numerous studies of external parties, including academic students, by providing information and advice.

⁶ https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lsidocs/3598-LSI_CaseAssessementReport_AssistingDisplacedPersonsFromUkraine.pdf

Contributing to policy and advocacy

Awareness raising and advocacy is an important part of LSI's work to promote victim protection and accountability. The Platform advocates for the rights of trafficked persons and vulnerable groups and promotes women's rights, labour rights and migrants' rights to ensure people are protected from exploitation and abuse. This also includes the protection of those working in irregular sectors, like domestic workers and sex workers.

To ensure compliance with international legislation and accountability for the effective implementation of policies and regulations, LSI advocates for legislation that recognises and respects the rights of all trafficked persons and monitors the implementation of legislation to help ensure that those rights are realised. For this, the Platform targets European and inter-governmental bodies (European Union, Council of Europe, OSCE, and UN bodies) through news media and social media, petitions, statements and campaigns, and joint NGO advocacy.

Global Advocacy

At global level, we continued following the UNTOC review mechanism. In July 2024, LSI and several members participated (online) in the constructive dialogue for the Review Mechanism to brief stakeholders, including NGOs on how the review process has developed. LSI and members submitted written input, highlighting also LSI's concern about the slow and limited progress the UN Review Mechanism has made.

LSI further followed developments around the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; ratifications of relevant ILO conventions; the work of the UN Special Rapporteurs; and CEDAW, as well as the work of IOM, ILO and the Alliance 8.7.

European Advocacy

In April 2024, La Strada International participated in the OSCE Alliance conference in April 2024 and one online meeting of the OSCE Alliance Expert Group as well as webinars organised by OSCE. The OSR was met at several occasions, including during the EU Civil Society Platform on 3 December 2024.

With the Council of Europe and the GRETA secretariat, LSI was in frequent contact. The Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings attended the LSI NGO Platform in June 2024, and CCEM's anniversary event in November 2024. LSI joined the meeting of the specialised Lawyers and NGO network, held in October and also followed the work of CINGO, the Conference of International Organisation to the CoE.

Advocacy at European Union level

In 2024, La Strada International continued to closely monitor the EU legislative processes around the amendment of the EU anti-trafficking Directive (adopted on 13 June 2024), the new EU Directive on Violence against Women/Gender Based Violence (adopted on 14 May 2024) as well as the Directive

on Corporate Social Responsibility (adopted on 13 June 2024) and the Forced Labour Ban regulation (27 November 2024), next to the still ongoing revision of the EU Victims' Rights Directive.

LSI further followed developments around the revision of the Single Permit Directive, and discussions around the EU action plan on smuggling and the EU Asylum and Migration Pact. In June 2024, PICUM provided a workshop for LSI members on the Pact and the vulnerability assessments foreseen in the pact, that should help to identify trafficked persons.

Next to more reactive work related to international legislation and policies, our advocacy focussed on specific thematic priorities as per our 2021 – 2025 strategic plan: Countering shrinking space for Civil Society; Unconditional support; Recognition of all forms of human trafficking; Safe reporting; Access to Residence; Fair migration policies; Access to justice; Fair labour rights; and Non-punishment.

Addressing Shrinking space

Changes in the legal environment, challenges in funding and access to resources and obstacles in accessing policymaking hinder LSI members in their work. As a follow up to the 2023 research project on 'Shrinking Civic Space in the Anti-Trafficking Field', LSI secretariat continued to monitoring change to civic space, and also took the issue up in international advocacy. We joined the Civil Society Europe campaign around the European Parliament elections, that raised concern among MEP candidates, about the shrinking civic space in Europe. We further contributed to joint statements on the issue and worked with other NGOs on the issue.

Identification of trafficked persons

The number of identified trafficked persons in Europe remains low. Only a small percentage of the estimated high number of victims is recognised as such. Many persons, facing severe forms of exploitation – with clear indications for human trafficking – are not recognised as victims of trafficking. To address this issue, La Strada International set up a special members Working Group on the issue of identification back in 2022. A template was developed to collect information from LSI members about good and bad practices in their countries. This template was tested and filled by members of the working group and later also other LSI members were asked to submit responses.

The input collected has been used to develop an advocacy policy paper, including best practices and recommendations, which will be published in 2025. This issue will continue to get attention, also given the EU plans to strengthen NRMs, establish focal points and possibly develop a European Referral Mechanism, as foreseen in the amended EU Anti-Trafficking Directive.

LSI members further worked on trainings for different professional groups to enhance the detection and identification of trafficked persons, next to direct and online outreach work.

Promoting the non-punishment principle

Despite international and European legally binding standards on non-punishment and the adoption of specific legislation in several countries, trafficked persons in Europe are often still wrongly detained, prosecuted and punished for offences they have been compelled to commit in the course, or as a

result, of having been trafficked. This is a serious human rights violation and a denial of justice. It serves to reinforce distrust towards the criminal justice system by victims and others.

Overall, we observe a variety of interpretations, a lack of awareness among legal professionals, and serious shortcomings in the implementation of the non-punishment provision. Successful applications of the non-punishment provision do exist, but these positive experiences are far more often the exception than the norm. LSI members report failures to apply the non-punishment provision for all forms of human trafficking, but particularly in cases of trafficking for forced criminality, where victims seem more likely to be automatically regarded as perpetrators.

To address the issue, the LSI members working group aimed to further promote the non-punishment principle at national and international level. Firstly the group developed an Explanatory Brief and an Advocacy Document on Non-Punishment, for awareness raising and advocacy towards (legal) professionals and policy makers. Both documents have been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Serbian and Danish and Romanian now. All are available on the LSI website. In addition, a template was developed to collect non-punishment cases to showcase how the principle of non-punishment is applied in practice (or its lack of application). This case collection report illustrating the implications this principle has for the victims of human trafficking and how national authorities could, by applying this principle, protect these victims from further harm. The report was published on 30 July 2024, the global day against human trafficking.

La Strada International and its members further actively push for legislative changes and more guidance at European level to promote a better application of the Non-Punishment Principle across Europe.

International projects in 2024

In 2024, La Strada International was involved in 6 international projects.

Postcare II

In 2024, LSI continued to implement the EU funded project Postcare II, focusing on research related to the posting of third-country nationals in European care services, which aims to inform and raise awareness among posted care workers about their rights and among employers on how they should use the EU posted workers directive to prevent exploitation and abuse. For this project an [online information portal](#) was launched, next to other tools to inform posted workers across Europe.

INFO Rights – Posting of Workers in Agriculture and Manufacturing

In March 2024, the EU funded project Info Rights was launched at a Kick off meeting in Spain. This project aims to enhance information and awareness on the rules and procedures regarding intra-EU posting of workers. It foresees to build capacities of involved stakeholders, such as workers, employers and social partners to ensure that posting procedures can be carried out in compliance with EU law and under decent conditions. The focus lies on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors and within the framework of posting through temporary work agencies. For 2024, the consortium has been working on the development of a chatbot to provide accessible and quality information on employment conditions of displaced workers, next to vlogs.

EU posting is one of the schemes that is misused to recruit and employ third country national workers for cheap and exploitative labour.

North Korean forced labour case and appeal against two Dutch companies

On 4 December 2020, La Strada International with (legal) support of Prakken D’Olivera and Global Legal Action Network (GLAN) filed a complaint with the Dutch Public Prosecution against two Dutch shipbuilding firms. These two companies are suspected to have acquired ships from Polish shipyards, aware that these ships were constructed at wharfs employing North-Korean workers under inhumane, slave-like conditions that are in clear violation of international labour laws. On 8 December 2021, the complaint was dismissed by the Dutch Public Prosecution, after which La Strada International decided to lodge a written complaint with the Court of Appeal in The Hague, pursuant to Article 12 of the Dutch Code of Criminal Procedure.

On 15 of April 2024, the Hague Court of Appeal decided that two Dutch companies were not to be prosecuted for profiting from human trafficking, money laundering, or fencing. The Court found that there was not enough evidence to establish a direct link between those offences and the accused companies. This outcome shows again how difficult it is to hold companies accountable for severe forms of labour exploitation. See [North Korea Forced Labour Case](#)

Consultancy for HEUNI – ELECT THB project

In the first months of 2024, LSI contributed to the ELECT THB project aimed to enhance the identification and investigation of trafficking in human beings (THB) for sexual and labour exploitation and increase collaboration between law enforcement authorities and other key actors to combat it. The project has been developed in close cooperation with law enforcement and other

authorities in Finland, Estonia and Latvia to strengthen the knowledge of and approach to human trafficking.⁷

COMCRIM

On 16th and 17th of December 2024, the COMCRIM project was officially launched. La Strada International participated in the launch, including as speaker in one of the panels organised during the launch event. Next to being a partner in the project, we are also part of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

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 – next to La Strada International, also 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.

⁷ https://heuni.fi/-/elect_thb#9fd8fb6a

Visibility and (social) media work

Awareness of the problem of trafficking in human beings has significantly increased and has gained more attention, including of national and international governmental bodies and the media. However, the way that human trafficking is portrayed and discussed by the media, governments and other actors is often one-dimensional and primarily focussed on exploitation in the sex industry. Therefore, LSI contributes to the creation of a more realistic picture of human trafficking, its root causes and different manifestations.

In 2024, we tried to develop new and interactive communication strategies and enhance our social media work. Next to two webpages⁸, LSI maintains two Facebook pages, a Twitter and LinkedIn account and also opened an Instagram account. Information on new developments and related LSI and LSI members activities was regularly shared via LSI's social media channels and monthly newsletter. LSI also continued to work on the website pages related to different LSI projects.

The following statistics can be provided related to our (social) media work in 2024:

- 35 interviews provided to international media channels (mainly related to Ukraine)
- 12 newsletters published
- 69 Website posts (slightly more than in 2023: 64)
- Facebook: Impressions: 4644 / Projection: 18576; Engagement: 111 / Projection: 444
- LinkedIn profile Views: 344; Impressions (People who have seen our Posts): 42.926 and engagement (Likes, Shares, Comments): 1013
- Instagram posts (only operational for 90 days); impressions: 2793 / Projection: 11172; engagement: 174 / Projection: 696
- 1 Campaign around Violence Against Women (VAW)/16 days
- 1 small campaign targeting MEPs related to criminalising the knowing use
- Adventscalendar with posts for a series of 24 days from 1 till 24 December 2024.

Campaigns

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 joined the campaign and uploaded daily posts on our social media surrounding the topic from 25 November – 10 December.

La Strada International joined several campaigns by others in 2024, related to the Forced Labour Ban and a campaign related to shrinking space towards MEPs (EU elections).

Statements

LSI published the following 10 statements in 2024

- 4 March joint statement on Ukraine and Temporary Protection Directive
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3541-Statement%20133%20NGOs.pdf>

⁸ www.lastradainternational.org and www.justiceatlast.eu

- 8 March, LSI statement Women Rights Day
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3542-La%20Strada%20International%20Statement%20International%20Women's%20Day%20-%208%20March%202024.pdf>
- 18 April joint statement Forced Labour Ban
https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3550-Joint-Statement_-EP-to-support-FLR-in-Plenary_April24_2024-04-18-100022_tsbp.pdf
- 25 April, joint statement on recast THB Directive
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3551-Joint%20statement%20on%20recast%20EU%20THB%20adoption%20EP%20-%20final.pdf>
- On 7 May, joint statement on VAW Directive
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3555-Joint%20civil%20society%20reaction%20to%20the%20adoption%20VAW%20Directive%207%20May.pdf>
- On 7 July Joint Statement in Reaction to the Councils Position on the Victims 'Rights Directive Revision <https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3565-LSI%20VRD%20STATEMENT.pdf>
- On 26 July a joint statement with ESWA and Sex Workers Rights Coalition on the ECHR ruling https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3566-Joint_statement_-ECHR_ruling.pdf
- On 30 July statement on non-punishment
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3568-Statement%20on%20non-punishment.pdf>
- On 31 July with GAATW on the UN Review Mechanism and Constructive Dialogues
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3569-UN%20Review%20mechanisms%20constructive%20dialogue%20statement%20-%20LSI%20Jully%202024.pdf>
- 18 October statement on Identification -
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3578-LSI%20Statement%20EU%20THB%20Day%2018%20October%202024.pdf>
- In December joint VAW statement on Human Rights Day
<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3586-Joint%20CSO%20Statement%20V2.pdf>

(Public) Events

In 2023, LSI (co) organised 1 webinar on Ukraine, 1 public event during the NGO Platform in Paris on sport and labour exploitation and a side event during the UNTOC meeting in Vienna, Austria. Moreover, LSI attended **56** events.

Cooperation and partnerships

The La Strada Platform has built an extensive network of contacts and allies over the last 29 years. These include law enforcement, legal professionals, service providers and NGOs, media, and governmental actors. LSI is a member of the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN), the OSCE Alliance Expert Coordination Team (AECT), the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and the European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA). LSI has observer status to the Council of Europe and is a member of the Conference of International NGOs (CINGO), the UN (ECOSOC), and is a member of the EU Civil Society E-Platform on trafficking in human beings.

LSI's advocacy work is done in close cooperation with, in particular, PICUM, ESWA, Victim Support Europe (VSE) and the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW). In 2024, LSI undertook several common advocacy actions with these networks and held regular exchange meetings. LSI joined two working groups of PICUM and was also part of VSE's NGO round tables that discuss and prepare actions related to Victim Rights (including the evaluation of the VR Directive). Through its HRDN membership, LSI mainly follows human rights issues at EU level and related to EU's cooperation with third countries.⁹¹⁰ With GAATW, cooperation relates to European advocacy and joint monitoring of the UN Review Mechanism.¹¹ In October 2024, GAATW celebrated its 30th anniversary, and LSI and members were represented at the International Members Congress (IMC).

With ESWA, La Strada International follows policies that impact sex workers' rights. La Strada International jointly with 14 other organisations is part of a coalition calling for decriminalisation of sex work and meaningful inclusion of sex workers and sex worker rights defenders in decision-making.¹²

ECtHR Ruling in Case of Sex Workers vs. France

On 25 July, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has found that France's law which criminalises the purchase of sex does not violate article 8 of the Human Rights Convention. The case was brought to the ECtHR by a group of 261 sex workers. La Strada International and other CSOs regret the decision of the ECtHR. UN Rapporteurs Divided on ECtHR Ruling.

In 2024, La Strada International developed and strengthened strategic partnerships with new relevant stakeholders, in particular ELA, EUAA, ECRE, child rights organisations and other European networks with whom LSI started to cooperate related with monitoring EU law and the situation in Ukraine. La Strada International is also member of the specialized THB lawyers and NGOs network (around 45

⁹ <https://envr.eu/find-my-victim-support/>

¹⁰ See for example this [statement](#).

¹¹ [UN Review Mechanism](#).

¹² The organisations who make up the Coalition are leading European civil society networks and human rights organisations. Next to La Strada International and the European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA), the coalition includes Aids Action Europe (AAE), Amnesty International, Correlation European Harm Reduction Network (Correlation EHRN), European Aids Treatment Group (EATG), European Digital Rights (EDRI), European Network Against Racism (ENAR), Equinox – Racial Justice Initiative, Fair Trials, Human Rights Watch, International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN), International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Europe (ILGA-Europe), Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), and Transgender Europe (TGEU). See more information on [ESWA's website](#).

lawyers and legal representatives of NGOs) established by the Council of Europe and attended the annual meeting of this network in October 2024. LSI also tries to engage businesses more in its work.

On 14 October LSI, together with Victim Support Europe (VSE) and Victim Support Asia (VSA) hosted a UNTOC side event on Empowering trafficking victims across borders: Access to Justice and Support Services. LSI was represented by LEFÖ-IBF. Challenges faced by victims trafficked across borders by organised crime networks were addressed and an emphasis was put on their need for safe justice and robust support systems, including compensation and non-punishment [3580-UNTOC flyer side event VSE VSA and LSI - 14 October.pdf](#)

LSI Membership and exchange among members

In 2024, La Strada International comprised 32 member organisations in 24 European countries. There were some changes related to members; the French organisation ALC withdrew its associate membership due to lack of capacity reasons. Two associate members (SICAR cat and Proyecto Esperanza) merged into a new organisation, called Fundación de La Solidaridad Amaranta and the associate members VATRA and Payoke became full members. 3 new organisations applied for LSI membership; one was rejected due to not fulfilling all membership criteria; one withdrew itself for the same reason and the last one, the organisation SHOP from the Netherlands was accepted as new associate member.

La Strada aims to further grow into a platform with membership in all European countries. To ensure we maintain our role and capabilities in the field, it is not only important to build our cooperation with the 'outside world' and extend our membership, but also to continuously invest in the organisation, in the expertise of our staff, and in our member organisations.

In 2024, we actively reached out to, and sought cooperation with, NGOs from multiple strategic European countries where La Strada International is not yet represented. We also worked on capacity building programmes and exchange for LSI members by organising monthly members meetings and other regular live and virtual events, including capacity building training and events and (bi-)annual NGO Platform meetings.

Ten monthly exchanges (not in July and in December due to holidays) were organised for LSI members by LSI secretariat. At these meetings, updates were provided related to international policy developments, next to regular exchanges via LSI's members mailing list. In addition, many more bilateral meetings online or live were held with LSI members. In particular, the membership provides them with more access to (strategic) information and updates, joint advocacy, and a bigger voice at the European level.

We further worked on developing joint policies and strategies and to invest in the capacity and quality of the platform and its members. We initiated common projects and (advocacy) actions with members.

Annual NGO Platform (General Assembly) meeting

From 24 – 26 of June 2024, the LSI annual NGO Platform meeting was organised in Paris, France. Next to plenary sessions on strategic LSI actions, European advocacy and legal developments, 6 workshop sessions were organised, as well as a public event with relevant French anti-trafficking stakeholders, including the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and the National Rapporteur on human trafficking, the labour inspectorate and others.

The workshops focussed on various themes including access to the reflection and recovery period and strategic litigation; the EU Migration and Asylum Pact with PICUM, the establishment of focal groups and NRMs, a workshop on Ukraine and one on definition and the inclusion of trafficked persons.

On 25 June, ahead of the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris from 26 July to 11 August 2024, LSI and CCEM organised a public event on the link between human trafficking and sport (events). While evidence on the link between human trafficking and major sports events is generally lacking and the links remain complex, panelists discussed the risks of severe forms of labour exploitation prior and during sport events, highlighting preventive measures to take and lessons learnt.

LSI board and board meetings

The LSI secretariat and board ensured exchange and knowledge building between the members through regular email updates and policy exchanges; monthly online exchange meetings and webinars; as well as joint (advocacy) actions, related to new proposed legal and policy measures. Two live board meetings were held in 2024, next to consultation calls with board members, including one live board meeting in June in Paris, prior to the NGO Platform meeting and on 2 December in Brussels, Belgium related with the EU Civil Society Platform.

LSI staff

In 2024 La Strada International staff comprised an International Coordinator, also responsible for Public Affairs; a Project Manager; Nuala Keyser, Financial manager and a Communication Manager for social media work. For marketing, design, website and internet facilities, as well as for salary administration, La Strada International makes use of external agencies and freelancers. From February until June 2023, a legal intern worked for LSI for a report on Shrinking Space.

- Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator
- Merel Brouwer, Researcher and Project Manager (until February 2024)
- Nuala Keyser, Financial Manager
- Shana Perumal, Communication Manager
- Ria Meinema, Office Manager
- Irina Ionita, Intern, conducting research on non-punishment and identification
- Bruna Franco, intern, supporting communication work

- Zsófia Bagó, intern, conducting research on forced marriage
- Djordje, volunteer, conducting research on the exploitation of surrogacy
- Koen Hogewoning, design of all communication materials
- Veronika Pišorn, consultant for LSI's data strategy

LSI also works with other freelancers for communication design, website maintenances, and developments of websites and campaigns.

Engaging trafficked persons

Both at the international and national levels LSI aims to ensure more engagement of trafficked persons in our work, in order to inform our services, policy and advocacy. LSI has been working to further integrate the voices of trafficked persons in our services through self-monitoring and the participation of trafficked persons into our daily work. Following workshop sessions in 2019 and 2021 on how to engage victims more in the work of the Platform and its members, the LSI board has been developing a policy on how to engage the target group in LSI's work and several LSI members have involved trafficked persons in their work as well as in participatory research.

Financial management and fundraising

In 2024 LSI has invested more in fundraising strategies. The following donors supported La Strada International over the year: the European Commission (Postcare II and Info Rights); Porticus (non-punishment), COFRA; OAK, WP fund, Chooselove (Ukraine programme), HEUNI (research); the Freedom Fund (strategic litigation) and Comcrim (scientific research project). La Strada International further received some donations, including from Rosemary Rogallo, who died in 2023 and in her last will provided a donation of 10,000 US dollars to La Strada International to address trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe, for which we are grateful.

See also LSI's financial report.