

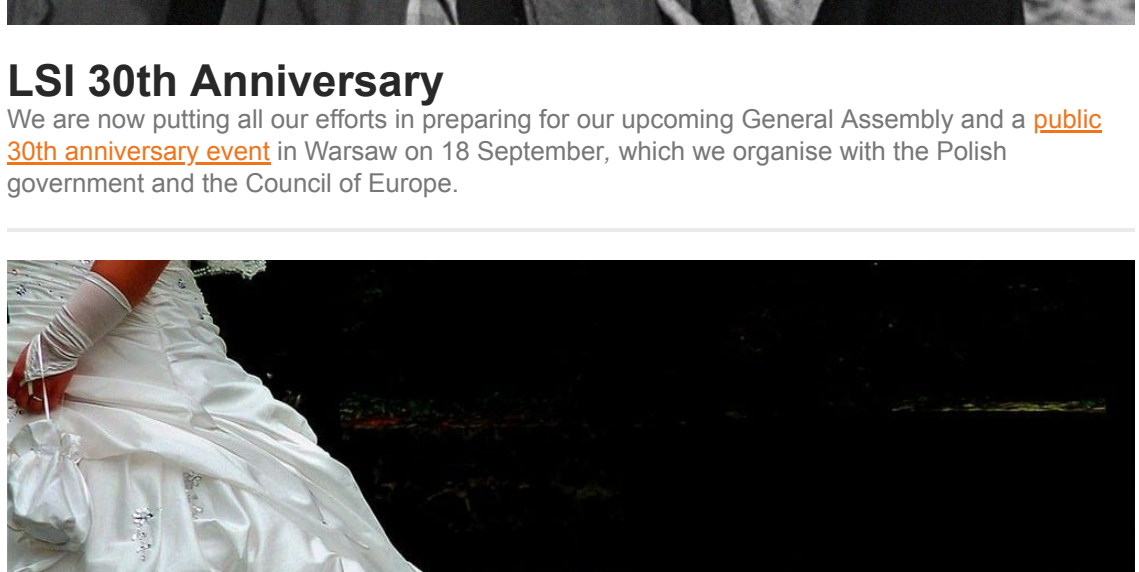
NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2025

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](#).

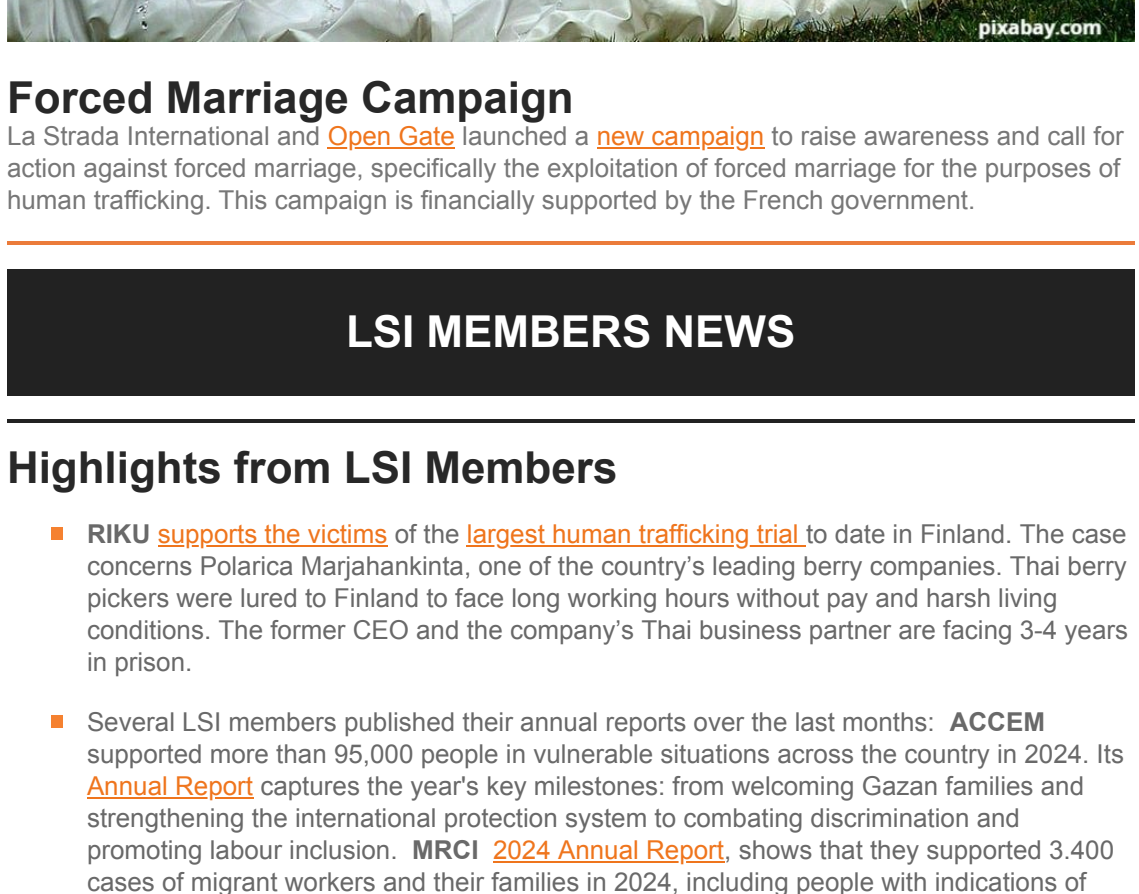
**Do You or Someone You Know Needs Help?** To report suspicions of human trafficking, seek advice or support, check our [members' helpline numbers](#).

LSI NEWS

After a quieter August due to the summer break, La Strada International is back to full operation. LSI is finalising our ongoing European scope research on the exploitation of forced marriage and surrogacy in relation to human trafficking. Both research reports will be published next month. In September, we also organise with our member Open Gate an event on Forced Marriage in Skopje. We are further implementing different new projects and supporting research for the EU Anti-Trafficking Hub on labour exploitation and on statistical anti-trafficking data. So much work ahead for our team!



**LSI 30th Anniversary**  
We are now pushing all our efforts in preparing for our upcoming General Assembly and a [public 30th anniversary event](#) in Warsaw on 18 September, which we organise with the Polish government and the Council of Europe.



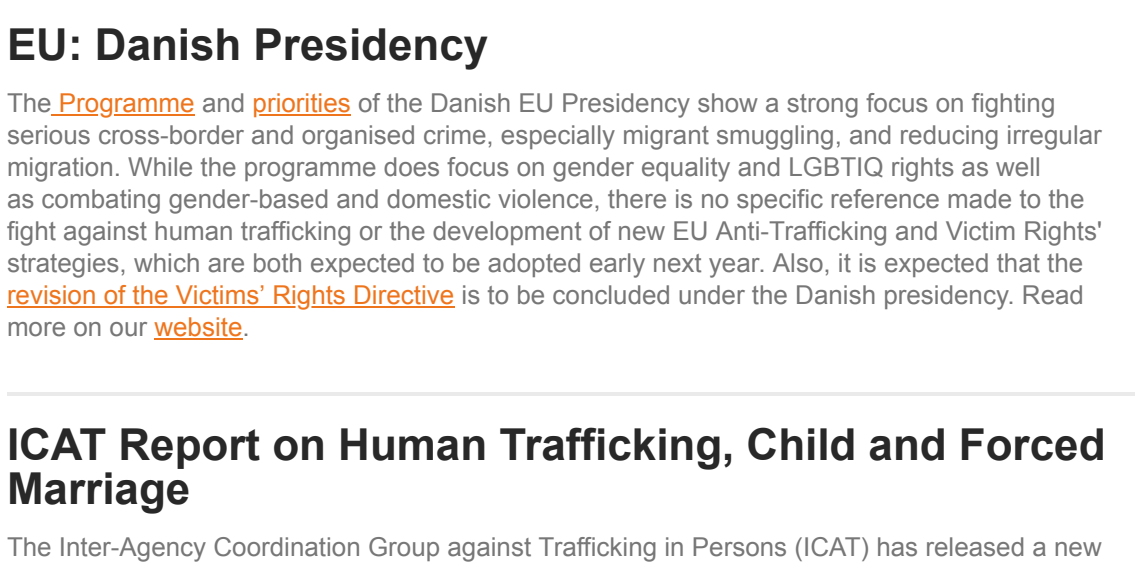
**Forced Marriage Campaign**  
La Strada International and [Open Gate](#) launched a [new campaign](#) to raise awareness and call for action against forced marriage, specifically the exploitation of forced marriage for the purposes of human trafficking. This campaign is financially supported by the French government.

LSI MEMBERS NEWS

Highlights from LSI Members

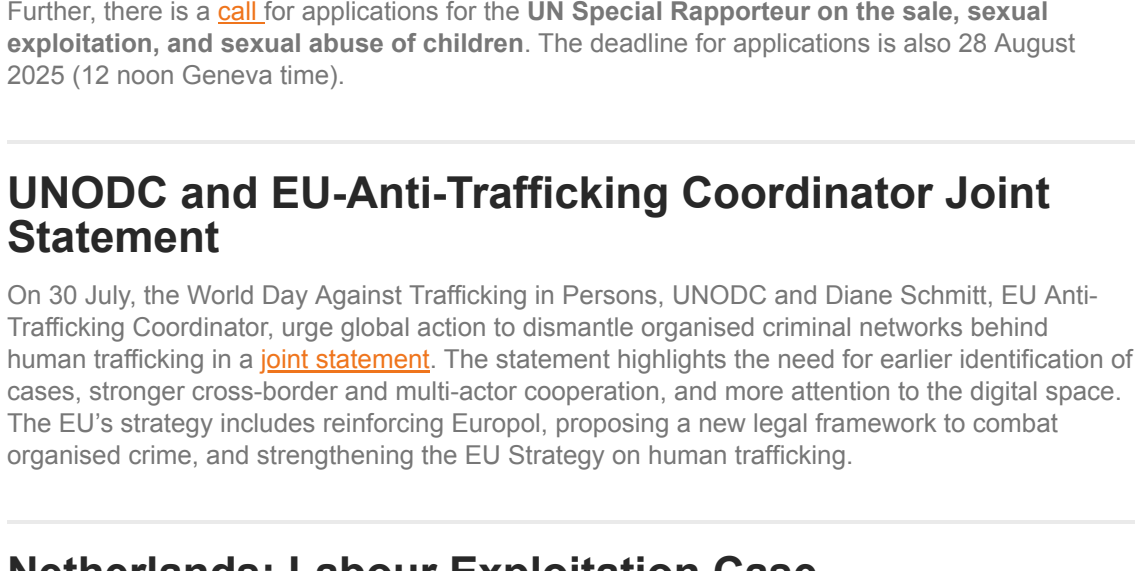
- **RIKU supports the victims of the largest human trafficking trial** to date in Finland. The case concerns Polariina Marjanankinta, one of the country's leading berry companies. Thai berry pickers were lured to Finland to face long working hours without pay and harsh living conditions. The former CEO and the company's Thai business partner are facing 3-4 years in prison.
- Several LSI members published their annual reports over the last months: **ACCEM** supported more than 85 000 people in vulnerable situations across the country in 2024. Its **Annual Report** captures the year's key milestones: from welcoming Casan families and strengthening the international protection system to combating discrimination and promoting labour inclusion. **WRIC's 2024 Annual Report** shows that they supported 3 400 cases of migrant workers and their families in 2024, including people with indications of human trafficking and labour exploitation. Their report also highlights advocacy victories. Following a 15-year campaign, employment permit holders can now change employers without needing to apply for a new permit in Ireland.
- **FLEX** is conducting **research** into the experiences of Filipinos in the UK fishing industry. Read more here. **FLEX** also launched a new publication on seasonal work, named **Uneven fields: women workers' experiences of the Seasonal Worker Scheme**.
- **CoMensha** launched the revamped **Up Room for Sex Trafficking training** and certification programme in the Netherlands this month. This programme supports hotel and holiday park staff in recognising the signs of sexual exploitation.

HIGHLIGHTS



UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking

The President of the General Assembly of the United Nations will convene a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat **Trafficking in Persons** on 24-25 November 2025, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Negotiations for a new UN Political Declaration on Trafficking in Persons are ongoing. ICAT earlier submitted a [joint submission](#) to the 4th Appraisal of the Global Action Plan. Organisations with consultative ECOSOC status can register to attend closer to the event date.



**EU: Danish Presidency**  
The [Explanations and examples](#) of the Danish EU Presidency show a strong focus on fighting serious cross-border and organised crime, especially migrant smuggling, and reducing irregular migration. While the programme does focus on gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights as well as combating gender-based and domestic crime, there is a specific reference made to the fight against human trafficking or the development of new EU Anti-Trafficking and Victim Rights' strategies, which are both expected to be adopted early next year. Also, it is expected that the [revision of the Victims' Rights Directive](#) is to be concluded under the Danish presidency. Read more on our [website](#).

ICAT Report on Human Trafficking, Child and Forced Marriage

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) has released a new report, [Addressing Trafficking in Persons Through the Lens of Child Marriage and Forced Marriage](#). The report highlights the importance of clarifying the definitions and linkages between child and forced marriage and trafficking for these purposes. It explores the overlapping elements, drivers, and challenges associated with these practices. Key recommendations include regulating the minimum age of marriage and registration obligations, specialised training for first responders and legal professionals, developing clear definitions and internal guidelines, strengthening multi-agency and cross-border cooperation, and addressing root causes. This report will be presented at LSI/Open Gate's upcoming event on forced marriage in Skopje, North Macedonia.

Calls for New UN Special Rapporteurs

The term for the UNSR on Contemporary forms of slavery is ending this year: A [Call for applications](#) has been launched. Deadline: 28 August 2025. Find here more details on the [selection process](#).

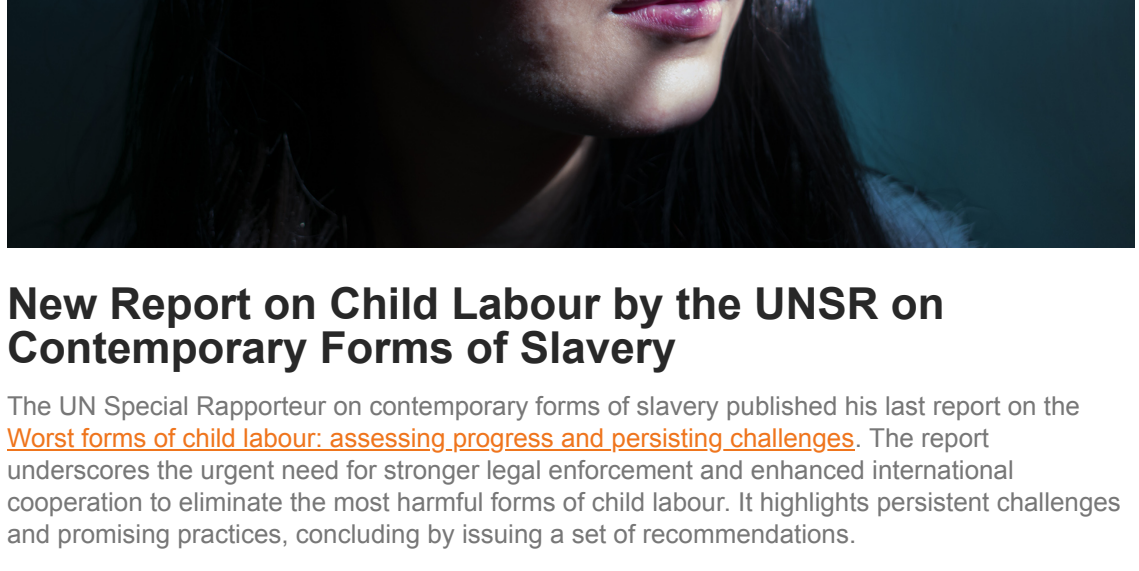
Further, there is a [call](#) for applications for the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of children. The deadline for applications is also 28 August 2025 (12 noon Geneva time).

UNODC and EU-Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Joint Statement

On 30 July, the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, UNODC and Diane Schmitt, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, urge global action to dismantle organised criminal networks behind human trafficking in a [joint statement](#). The statement highlights the need for earlier identification of cases, stronger cross-border and multi-actor cooperation, and more attention to the digital space. The EU's strategy includes reinforcing Europe1, proposing a new legal framework to combat organised crime, and strengthening the EU Strategy on human trafficking.

Netherlands: Labour Exploitation Case

A case of alleged **labour exploitation** has been reported in the Netherlands involving Filipino and Indonesian cleaners at the luxury gym chain Saints & Stars in Amsterdam. Workers reported being forced to work up to 17 hours a day, share beds, and surrender their passports.



Scotland's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy

On 30 July, the Scottish Government published its [Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy 2025](#). The Strategy places a clear emphasis on prevention, involvement of persons with lived experience, the principle of non-discrimination, and the use of data to build evidence-based actions. It proposes a public health approach to human trafficking, highlighting the importance of multi-agency and collaborative responses that address root causes of human trafficking and its impact on both individuals and communities.

(FAIR) MIGRATION

Council of Europe Reference Document on Non-Binding Legal Instruments

The Migration and Refugees' Council of Europe Action has released a [new reference document](#) offering an overview of selected non-binding legal instruments - including recommendations and resolutions - on migration and refugees adopted in recent years by three institutions of the Council of Europe: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

ACCESS TO RIGHTS

UK Home Office Call for Evidence on National Referral Mechanism

The UK Home Office has launched a [call for evidence](#) to strengthen how victims of modern slavery are identified through the National Referral Mechanism. Stakeholders are invited to provide input on definitions, early identification, and formal recognition processes, with the aim of building a more accurate and effective system of protection and support.

CHILD LABOUR & EXPLOITATION



New Report on Child Labour by the UNSR on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery published his last report on the [Worst Forms of child labour, assessing progress and assessing challenges](#). The report underscores the urgent need for stronger legal enforcement and enhanced international cooperation to eliminate the most harmful forms of child labour. It highlights persistent challenges and promising practices, concluding by issuing a set of recommendations.

The ILO mission in Turkey is advancing efforts to eliminate child labour in seasonal agriculture in the Black Sea region of Turkey; read more [here](#).

Sexual Exploitation of Children

A new study by ECPAT Germany, [Pocket Money, Sexual Exploitation of Children and the Role of Online Advertising Platforms](#) (in German), finds that most victims are teenagers and young adults, often introduced to these practices by their peers. The study also points to the lack of regulation and accountability of online platforms regarding child protection.

On 5 August, the European Commission launched a [patron on the prevention of child sexual abuse](#). There is a call for experts to join the expert group. Deadline: 15 September 2025.

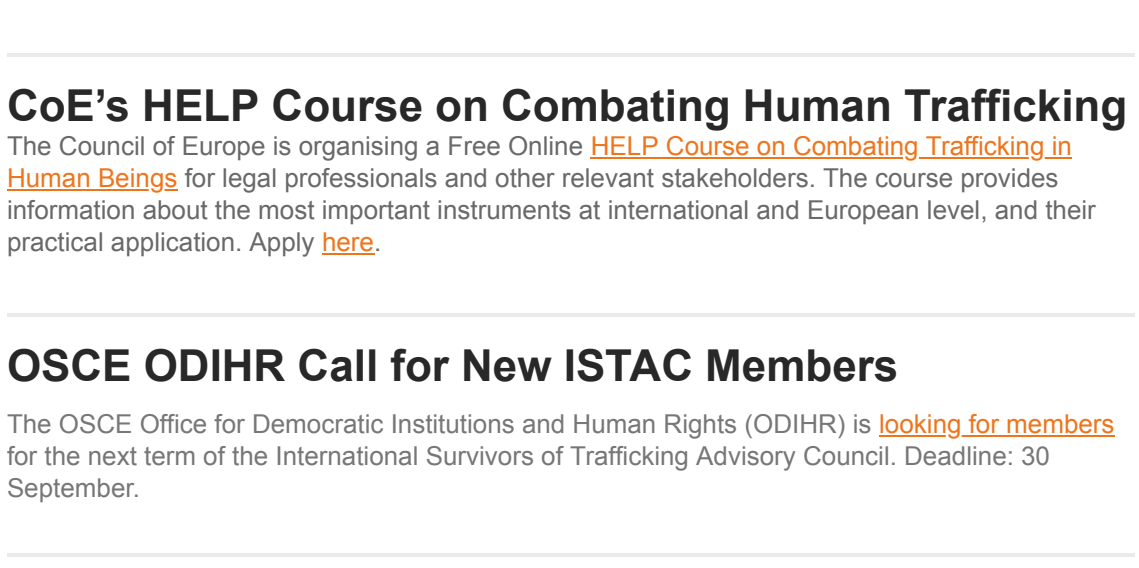
Inconsistent Definitions Undermine UK's Response to Child Trafficking

A [new report](#) by the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, led by ECPAT UK, highlights how inconsistent legal definitions create confusion among frontline professionals, leaving children without support, recognition, or justice. The report calls for legal reform, including a statutory child-centred definition of exploitation, alignment with international standards, and a UK-wide child exploitation strategy.

HEUNI Adaptation of the NICHD Protocol

HEUNI published a [new adaptation](#) of the NICHD protocol for cases involving online child sexual abuse. Available in English, Finnish, German, and Swedish, the revised protocol is designed for trained child interviewers working on cases with physical evidence or online material, such as sexual images, videos, or conversations involving the child.

LABOUR RIGHTS



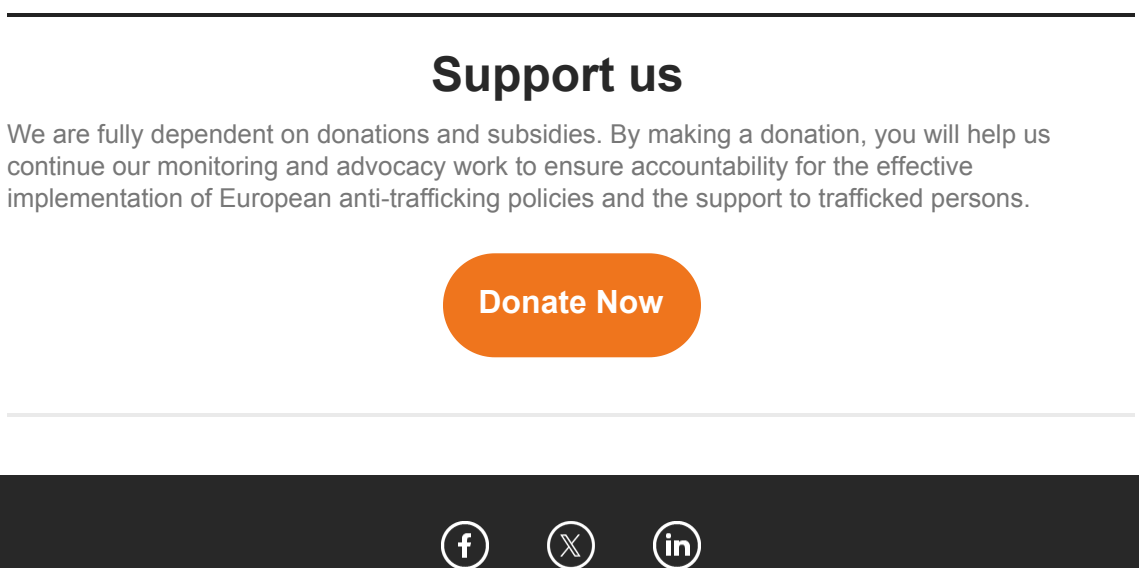
ICMPD: Seasonal and Fair Employment Blueprints

This month, ICMPD launched the [Seasonal and fair employment blueprints](#) (SaFE) project, which will equip EU Member States with modular blueprints and tailored technical assistance to design and enhance seasonal worker mobility programmes for non-EU nationals. SaFE will deliver practical reference tools for the agriculture and tourism sectors, with a special focus on official recruitment and decent living and working conditions. By addressing critical labour shortages in these key sectors and closing policy and implementation gaps, the project promotes dignified and transparent seasonal work across the EU.

ILO Global Policy Tracker

ILO launched the [Global Policy Tracker on Digital Labour Platforms](#), a new ILO resource to support evidence-based policymaking and social dialogue on platform work.

PRIVATE ACCOUNTABILITY



IOM & Bolt's Agreement on Mobility and Food Delivery Sectors

IOM and Bolt, a leading European platform for ride-hailing and food delivery services, have signed a [global agreement](#) aimed at providing integration support for migrants working in the mobility and delivery sectors. The partnership, Bridging the Gap - Integrating Migrants, will start with a pilot project in Malta that will serve as a scalable model for other countries.

SOMO Pro Bono Help Desk on Corporate Information

The Dutch NGO SOMO, which conducts research into multinational corporations, runs a [pro bono helpline](#) to support CSOs and activists. The service can be used to obtain corporate information for campaigns, advocacy, media investigations, or legal proceedings.

CALLS FOR INPUT

- **EU**: Contribute to the [European Commission's Civil Society](#) consultation for the 2025 midterm review of the [Strategy](#) to strengthen the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and highlight remaining gaps and challenges, next to suggesting new measures to further strengthen the Charter's application between 2025 and 2030. Deadline: 5 September 2025.
- **EU**: The European Commission has launched a [public consultation](#) and a call for evidence on the implementation and future direction of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU's roadmap for a fairer, more inclusive Social Europe. Deadline: 10 September 2025.
- **UNODC**: To evaluate the progress of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in persons [adopted in 2010](#), the General Assembly, the UNODC invites CSOs, academics, and the private sector to [submit written contributions](#), latest by 31 October 2025. Read more [here](#).
- **ILO & Innovations for Poverty Action (IIPA)**: Participate in a [survey](#) to inform global research priorities for combating human trafficking and forced labour, helping identify crucial research questions that can lead to scalable solutions, to develop a transparent and inclusive framework for research prioritisation. Deadline: 15 September.
- **IOM**: The International Organization for Migration is developing a Global Strategy on Migration, Business and Human Rights to enhance migrant worker protections and responsible recruitment. Stakeholders are invited to participate in a [public survey](#) to share views on trends, challenges, and collaboration opportunities, helping shape the strategy's focus and partnerships.



OSCE Key Data on Human Trafficking Simulation Exercises

Marking the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE released [key data](#) on its simulation exercises addressing human trafficking. Since 2016, more than 1,000 professionals across 68 countries participated in international, regional, and national simulation-based exercises.

CoE's HELP Course on Combating Human Trafficking

The Council of Europe is organising a Free Online [HELP Course on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#) for legal professionals and other relevant stakeholders. The course provides information about the most important instruments at international and European level, and their practical application. Apply [here](#).

OSCE ODIHR Call for New ISTAC Members

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is [looking for members](#) for the next term of the International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council. Deadline: 30 September.

The End of the Age of NGOs?

A recent paper by Sarah Bush and Jennifer Hudson, [The End of the Age of NGOs](#), reflects on the structural problems of civil society funding and true "empowerment".

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **10 - 12 September** - Conference on Forced Marriage and Human Trafficking organised by LSI and Open Gate, in Skopje, North Macedonia.
- **11 - 12 September** - National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators' meeting organised by the Council of Europe and OSCE, in Strasbourg, France.
- **15 September** - La Strada International's [30th anniversary](#).
- **17 - 22 September** - PILnet & EECA [webinar](#) on Pro Bono Legal Support available for CSOs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- **18 September** - LSI Public Event related to LSI's 30th Anniversary & General Assembly meeting in Warsaw, Poland.
- **18 - 19 September** - Second meeting of the Network of specialised lawyers and NGOs assisting victims of violence against women in Strasbourg, France.
- **22 - 23 September** - annual Women Against Violence Europe conference, Romania [27th WAVE Conference: Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action: Reclaiming our Power to End Violence Against Women](#).
- **24 - 30 September** - [3rd Central and Eastern Europe & Central Asia Summer Academy](#) on Business and Human Rights, taught by leading British scholars and professionals.
- **25 September** - **Human Trafficking, Cyber and Cyber-enabled Crime**, 3pm CEST, organised by Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons ([ICAT](#)). [Register to participate](#).
- **19 - 21 November** - The UNODC is organising a [European Regional Workshop on Non-governmental Stakeholders' Engagement in Practical Application of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#). It will take place in Rome, Italy.
- **27 - 28 November** - 10th [European Migration Forum](#), in Brussels, by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee. CSOs can express their interest through an [online form](#) until 8 September 2025. The exchanges at the forum will relate to the [EU Migration and Asylum Pact](#) and to activities in the field of [combating trafficking in human beings](#), [refugees](#), [migrant workers](#), [well](#), [EU funds for labour integration](#).

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