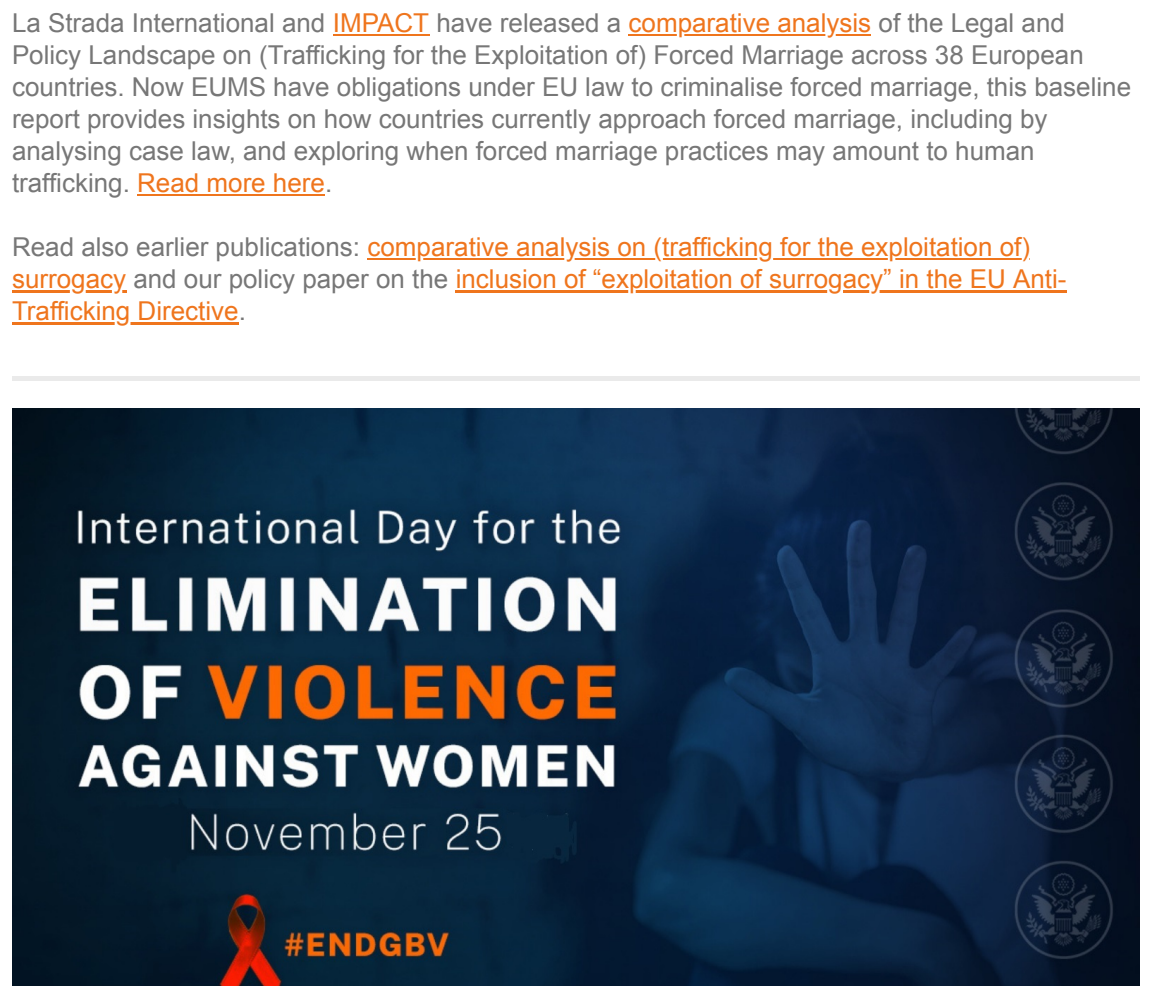


NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2025

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](mailto:info@lastrada.eu).

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

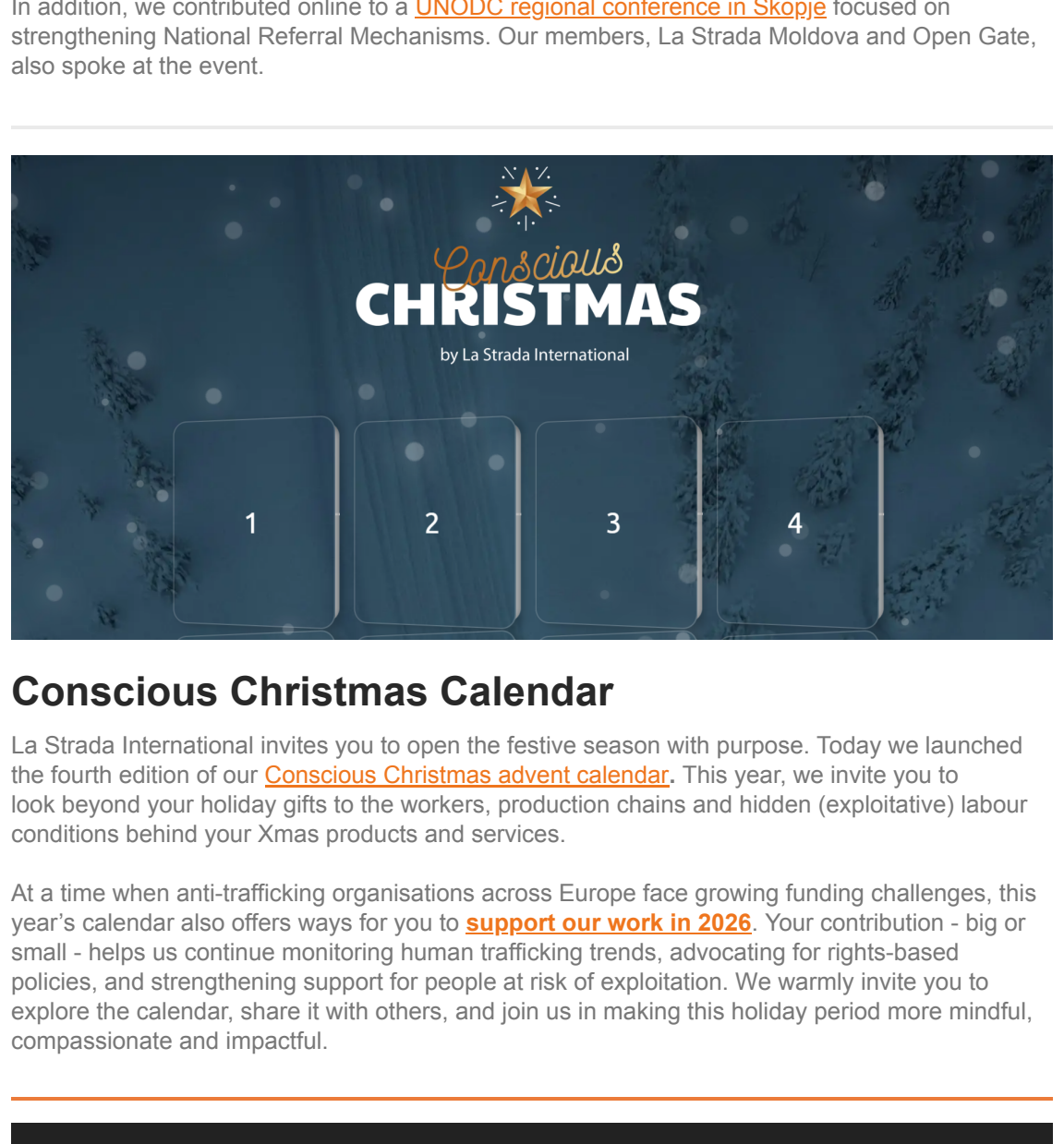
LSI NEWS



(Trafficking for the Exploitation of) Forced Marriage Across Europe

La Strada International and [IMPACT](#) have released a [comparative analysis](#) of the Legal and Policy Landscape on (Trafficking for the Exploitation of) Forced Marriage across 38 European countries. Now EUMS have obligations under EU law to criminalise forced marriage, this baseline report provides insights on how countries currently approach forced marriage, including by analysing case law, and exploring when forced marriage practices may amount to human trafficking. [Read more here](#).

Read also earlier publications: [comparative analysis on trafficking for the exploitation of\) surrogacy](#) and our policy paper on the [inclusion of "exploitation of surrogacy" in the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#).



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

La Strada International joins the [16 Days of Activism campaign](#), which started on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, until 10 December, the [Human Rights Day](#). We invite you to follow, like, and share our posts to help raise awareness and amplify the call to end all forms of gender-based violence. See here also the [UN Campaign](#).

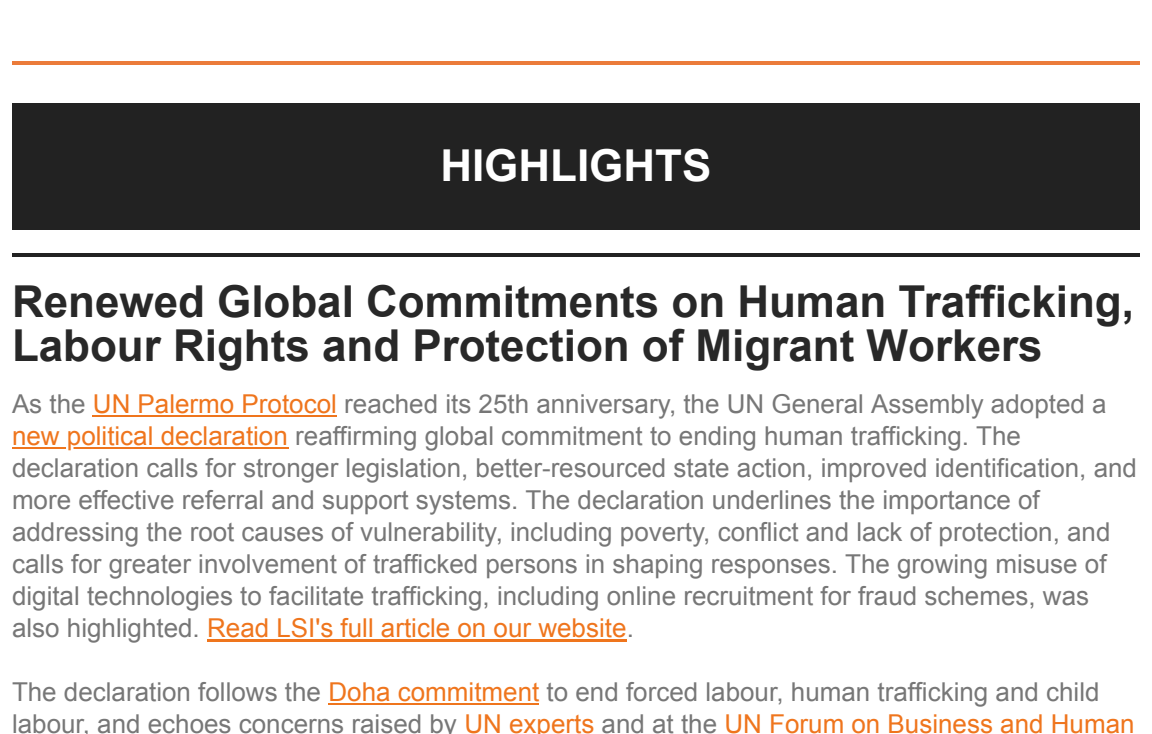
Kick Off RESILIA Project

On 5 and 6 November, we publicly launched the [Project RESILIA – Resilient Mental Health and Empowerment for Migrant and Displaced Women in Vulnerable Contexts](#) in Lisbon. The project, running from 2025 to 2028, aims to improve access to mental health and trauma-care support for migrant and displaced women in vulnerable situations, particularly those who have been trafficked or exploited. The project, funded by the European Union, through EUEHEALTH, is coordinated by [Instituto PIAGET](#), in partnership with La Strada International and 4 LSI members – [PAG](#), [ASA](#), [CCEM](#), [MIST](#) and [Animus Foundation](#).

International Representation

This month, we contributed to several important exchanges, including the [CoEcol of Europe's Network of specialised lawyers and NGOs](#) meeting in Strasbourg, alongside CCEM, PAG-Asa and ASTRA, to discuss ongoing challenges in ensuring effective access to justice. LSI also took part in two GAATW meetings in Bangkok on the global criminal justice framework, namely "Alternative justice approaches to gender based violence and human trafficking", and "How can justice be achieved without going criminal law and the institutionalisation of [SAATW's strategy directions](#), including issues related to forced labour and human trafficking".

In addition, we contributed online to a [UNODC regional conference in Skopje](#) focused on strengthening National Referral Mechanisms. Our members, La Strada Moldova and Open Gate, also spoke at the event.

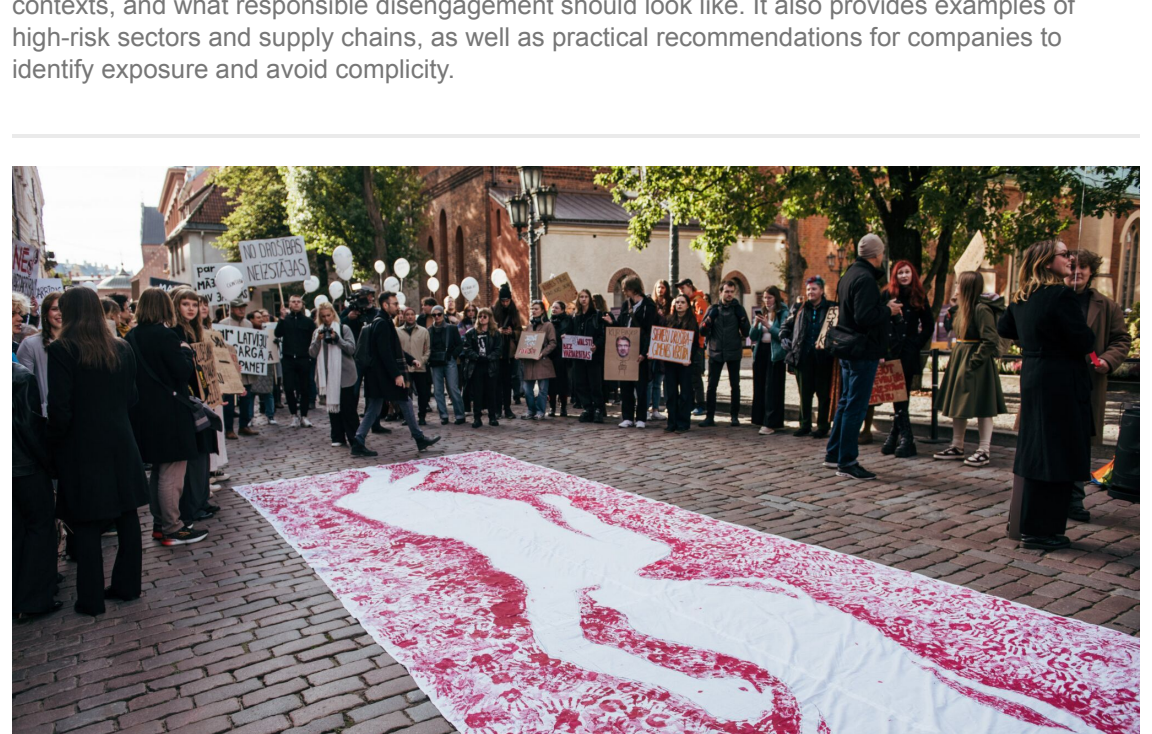


Conscious Christmas Calendar

La Strada International invites you to open the festive season with purpose. Today we launched the fourth edition of our [Conscious Christmas advent calendar](#). This year, we invite you to look beyond your holiday gifts to the workers, production chains and hidden (exploitative) labour conditions behind your Xmas products and services.

At a time when anti-trafficking organisations across Europe face growing funding challenges, this year's calendar also offers ways for you to [support our work in 2026](#). Your contribution - big or small - helps us continue monitoring human trafficking trends, advocating for rights-based policies, and strengthening support for people at risk of exploitation. We warmly invite you to explore the calendar, share it with others, and join us in making this holiday period more mindful, compassionate and impactful.

LSI MEMBERS NEWS



Highlights from LSI Members

- FLEX**, in the UK, published "[Blueprint for Safer and Fairer Migration](#)", and their latest briefing "[Rooted in Justice: Reimagining migration into UK agriculture](#)" proposes overhauling the way that the Seasonal Worker Scheme visa is structured, and what essential components must be included in its replacement. FLEX has also published a [Statement on Asylum Reforms](#), highlighting that the announced reforms in the UK will drive exploitation.
- ASTRA**, concludes the project SPOT-ONI With the publication "[Trends in the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking \(2022–2024\) in Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia](#)". Progress is noted in identifying and supporting victims, especially through mobile teams and social services, while challenges related towards stable funding, stronger institutional capacities, and effective prosecution remain.
- Fundacion Amaranta**, in Spain, announced its 6th Edition of its training for key agents under the theme "[Prevention and addressing of situations of labour exploitation, discrimination and violence against migrant women workers, especially in the domestic and care work sector](#)". Registrations open until 12 December.
- Open Gate**, in North Macedonia, has published the [Joint Conclusion on the Regional Conference on the Prevention of Forced Marriage](#), held from 10-12 September, reaffirming their commitment to prevention and combating forced and child marriage in all its forms. The document highlights key discussions and recommendations from the event.
- Anti-Slavery International**, organised a [side event](#) at the [14th UN Business and Human Rights Forum](#) 2025, addressing forced labour and human rights due diligence, discussing the consequences of state-imposed forced labour on conducting human rights due diligence.
- CoMensha**, the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Association of the Netherlands Municipalities (VNO) organised a [symposium](#) focusing on networking among all relevant Dutch anti-trafficking parties, such as healthcare workers, police, municipal agencies, and inspection services, and seeking a deeper understanding of approaches to tackling human trafficking. See [video of the event here](#).
- HopeNow & Payoko**, were present at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the [appraisal of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons](#) in New York. Discussions highlighted important issues such as identifying victims earlier, ensuring real access to support, navigating more complex forms of exploitation, and trying to coordinate across systems that are often overstretched.

HIGHLIGHTS

Renewed Global Commitments on Human Trafficking, Labour Rights and Protection of Migrant Workers

As the [UN Palermo Protocol](#) reached its 25th anniversary, the UN General Assembly adopted a [new political declaration](#) reaffirming global commitment to ending human trafficking. The declaration calls for stronger legislation, better-resourced state action, improved identification, and more effective referral and support systems. The declaration underlines the importance of addressing the root causes of vulnerability, including poverty, conflict and lack of protection, and calls for greater involvement of trafficked persons in shaping responses. The growing misuse of digital technologies to facilitate trafficking, including online recruitment for fraud schemes, was also highlighted. [Read LSI's full article on our website](#).

The declaration follows the [Doha commitment](#) to end forced labour, human trafficking and child labour, and echoes concerns raised by [UN experts](#) and at the [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) about the need to strengthen labour protections, fair recruitment and accountability across global supply chains.

UN Experts Opinion on EU Forced Labour Ban

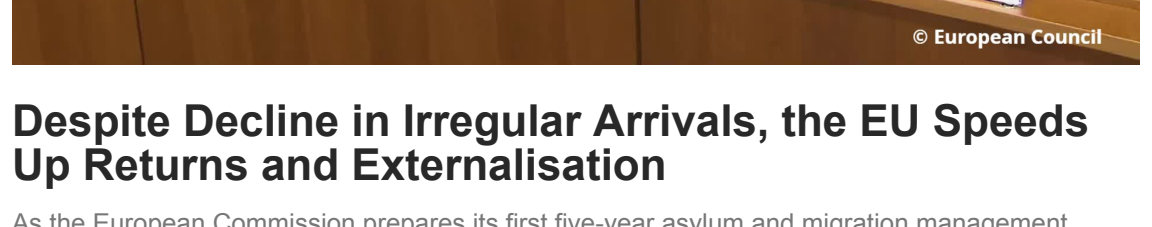
The UN Special Rapporteurs on contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons, together with the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, issued a [statement](#) welcoming the EU Forced Labour Regulation as an important milestone, while stressing that it still requires clearer guidance and stronger safeguards. [Read the full article on our website](#).

Europol's Surveillance Powers Expanded

The EU Parliament [endorsed](#) a revised Europol Regulation, which would grant the agency [unprecedented authority](#) to gather, analyse and share vast quantities of personal data, and exchange information with countries outside the EU, including states with poor human rights records. Presented as a necessary response to counter migrant smuggling, it allows Europol to process and share data not only on people on the move, but also on those who support or report on them, such as humanitarian workers, human rights organisations and journalists – with minimal transparency and limited oversight. More than [120 civil society organisations](#) urged MEPs to reject the proposal, calling it "unlawful, unsafe, and unsubstantiated."

Human Rights Due Diligence for State-Imposed Forced Labour

Anti-Slavery International has released a new briefing on conducting human rights due diligence in relation to [state-imposed forced labour](#), supported by La Strada International and others. The document aims to inform the EU Commission's forthcoming guidance under Article 11(f) of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, while also highlighting concerns regarding the blanket condemnation of all surrogacy practices and the endorsement of demand-criminalisation approaches to sex work, which risk increasing vulnerabilities. We applaud the Resolution's strong focus on poverty, social exclusion, migrant women's rights, and as well as its acknowledgement of the crucial role of civil society. LSI also welcomes the Parliament's emphasis on trauma-informed support, improved victims' rights and services, and the integration of gender and intersectionality across all EU policies. [Read LSI's full assessment on our website](#).



Latvia Must Uphold the Istanbul Convention

Latvia's parliament has [voted to begin withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention](#), claiming that its definition of "gender" promotes an unwanted ideology and that national laws already cover domestic violence. NGOs, protesters and the President have criticised the move, warning it would weaken oversight and send a negative international signal. The decision appears politically driven. Although Latvia must still implement the new EU Directive on violence against women, which overlaps with the Convention, the Directive lacks GREVIO's monitoring system. The withdrawal is therefore largely symbolic but raises concerns about Latvia's long-term commitment to protection standards. Currently the EU is under review. See [here](#) the European Commission's response to GREVIO and [more info](#).

EP Resolution: New Gender Equality Strategy

The European Parliament has adopted its [Resolution](#) on the upcoming Gender Equality Strategy, reaffirming that gender inequality and gender-based violence remain systemic challenges across the EU. LSI welcomes the Parliament's call for a comprehensive implementation of the revised Anti-Trafficking Directive, while also highlighting concerns regarding the blanket condemnation of all surrogacy practices and the endorsement of demand-criminalisation approaches to sex work, which risk increasing vulnerabilities. We applaud the Resolution's strong focus on poverty, social exclusion, migrant women's rights, and as well as its acknowledgement of the crucial role of civil society. LSI also welcomes the Parliament's emphasis on trauma-informed support, improved victims' rights and services, and the integration of gender and intersectionality across all EU policies. [Read LSI's full assessment on our website](#).



The New EU Strategy for Civil Society Is Out

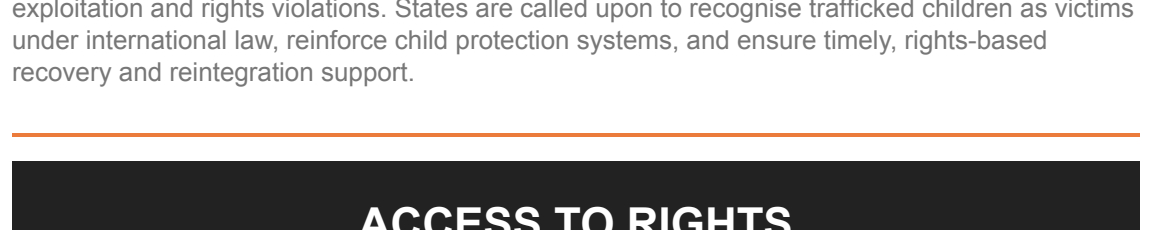
The European Commission presented its new [EU Strategy for Civil Society](#), outlining measures to strengthen civic space, improve access to funding, and enhance support for organisations across the EU. The Strategy acknowledges the essential role of CSOs, while recognising the growing pressures. LSI welcomes the Strategy and the promises of increased funding, improved protection mechanisms and the incentive for Member States to develop or update national strategies to support CSOs. However, further efforts will be needed to ensure meaningful participation of CSOs and better access to sustainable, long-term funding, particularly for smaller organisations. [Read the full article on our website](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

BTS Calls for Cross-Movement Solidarity

As the [Beyond Trafficking and Slavery \(BTS\)](#) project concludes its work this month, it urges anti-trafficking activists to strengthen alliances with wider social movements and broader struggles against inequality and oppression. The report stresses that a grassroots-based approach, shaped by funding constraints, limit meaningful political change and stresses the need for "solidarity beyond silos" to address exploitation and inequality. Although the project is ending, BTS will continue publishing articles throughout November on lessons learned and building stronger, community-driven coalitions.

LABOUR RIGHTS



CJEU Upholds EU Minimum Wage Directive

The Court of Justice of the European Union has upheld the [EU Minimum Wage Directive](#). Roxana Mirzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, expressed that the Court's judgement reinforces the need for a European social model based on [fair and adequate](#) wages, and strong collective bargaining. The judgment is expected to support efforts to promote adequate minimum wages, improve working conditions, and reduce vulnerabilities that contribute to labour exploitation.

Forced Labour: Handbook for Employers & Indicators

ILO and IOE published the third edition of [Combating Forced Labour: A Handbook for Employers and Business](#). Grounded on international labour standards, it offers practical tools for due diligence based on the [11 indicators of forced labour](#).

The Global Gateway's Contribution to Decent Work

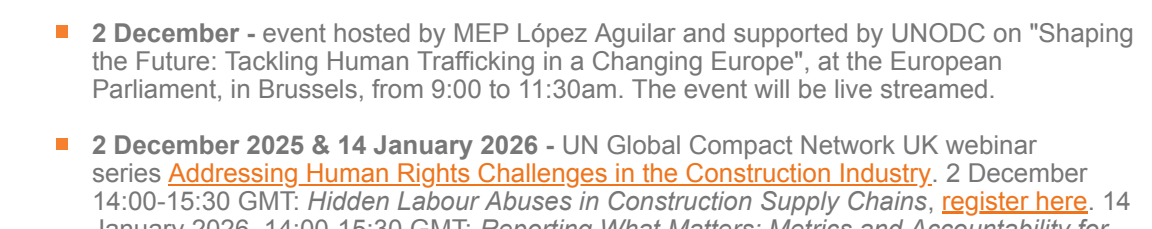
The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) published a [new report](#) examining how funding under the EU's Global Gateway strategy promotes decent work. Although the strategy aims to expand global infrastructure development, the report finds that the integration of fair employment and labour standards is frequently overlooked. It highlights significant monitoring gaps and a concerning lack of transparency.

Netherlands: Reversal of Wage Withholding Ban

The Dutch Demissionary Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Mariëtte Paul, has [reversed a planned ban](#) on employers withholding housing costs from migrant workers' minimum wage. The ban, which was proposed to improve the position of labour migrants and had already been included in nearly all party's election programmes during the recent elections, is now to be reversed by the Minister.

LSI member FairWork, the Dutch trade union FNV, the Salvation Army and others have jointly called on the Minister to reconsider the decision. Tying workers' wages and housing to their employers increases dependency and makes it harder to report abuses, as people risk losing both their job and accommodation. This, in turn, undermines effective enforcement.

BUSINESS ACCOUNTABILITY



EU Parliament Backs Omnibus I, Undermining Human Rights and Corporate Accountability

The [European Parliament](#) adopted its position on the Omnibus I proposal through an alliance between the European People's Party (EPP) and far-right parties. The vote significantly weakens key EU rules on sustainability, workers' rights, and human rights due diligence. The outcome shows that the "red line" publicly vowed by [EPP's leader Manfred Weber](#) has been erased.

The decision goes against warnings from [the European Central Bank](#), [major business associations](#), [more than 100 lawyers and academics](#), [over 30 former EU leaders](#), and many civil society organisations, including LSI.

The adopted position prohibits the standard practice of asking suppliers for data needed to understand risks and impacts, limiting it to business partners with fewer than 5,000 employees. The threshold for companies reporting under the CSRD was also reduced to 1,750 employees and €450 million in revenues. [Trilogue negotiations](#) started on 18 November. This is a final opportunity to recalibrate Omnibus "simplification" and maintain the substance of laws vital for rights-holders and EU [long-term resilience](#).

Read the [full article on our website](#) and the Podcast on "[Unraveling the EU](#)".

(FAIR) MIGRATION

Trafficking Risks for Women Migrant Workers

OHCHR released a [new policy brief](#) warning about the heightened risks of exploitation and human trafficking faced by migrant women working in poorly regulated and informal sectors, with women being disproportionately represented in domestic work and in the garment and textile industries, as well as in agriculture and farming. The report stresses that limited access to information, services and support networks further increases risks, making it harder for women to seek help, understand their rights or access essential protection mechanisms. These structural barriers, combined with weak regulation and oversight, create conditions in which human trafficking can flourish.

Despite Decline in Irregular Arrivals, the EU Speeds Up Returns and Externalisation

As the European Commission prepares its first five-year asylum and migration management strategy, new [Frontex figures](#) show that irregular entries fell by 22% in the first nine months of 2025. Despite this decline, EU discussions remain focused on accelerating returns and limiting regularisation pathways. At the [Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg](#), member states discussed new measures to accelerate returns, with stricter cooperation obligations for returnees and tougher rules.

At the same time, the EU Parliament Committee on Development (DEVE) has [discussed a draft report](#) proposing material and the solicitation of children, and will allow national authorities to require the removal or restriction of harmful content. It also establishes an EU Centre on Child Sexual Abuse to support implementation. Online service providers will be required to assess how their services could be misused and introduce mitigation measures based on those risks.

As online platforms continue to facilitate exploitation, recruitment, and the circulation of child sexual abuse material, stronger EU rules are essential to better protect children in digital spaces.

UN Expert Calls for Stronger Child-Centred Response to Trafficking in Conflict Zones

The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons urged states to adopt urgent child-centred measures to address [child trafficking in conflict zones](#). The UNSR warned that persistent failures in prevention, protection and justice systems are exposing many children exposed to severe exploitation and rights violations. States are called upon to recognise trafficked children as victims under international law, reinforce child protection systems, and ensure timely, rights-based recovery and reintegration support.

ACCESS TO RIGHTS

CBSS Anti-Trafficking Handbook

On 8 October 2025, the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration, under the Polish CBSS Presidency, hosted a training in Warsaw for embassy and diplomatic staff on strengthening responses to human trafficking. Held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it featured the [CBSS Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions – How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking](#).

Updated UK Care Standards

The Human Trafficking Foundation in the UK has launched the 2025 [Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards](#), developed with more than 150 experts and people with lived experience to strengthen victim support across the UK. The updated framework expands guidance beyond the National Referral Mechanism, adds sections on work and education, children, and disability inclusion, and has been formally endorsed by UK, Northern Ireland, and Scottish ministers as a national benchmark for victim-centred care.

STRATEGIC LITIGATION

FRA Launches New Database on EU and Human Rights Case Law

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has launched a [new database](#) compiling case law from the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights, and selected national courts. All cases include direct references to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, offering a central resource for practitioners, researchers and policymakers across all Member States. See also [HUDOC database](#) of the ECtHR, [UNODC's Case Law Database](#) and [HUDOC-GRETA](#).

CALLS FOR INPUT

- UNSR**: the applications for Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons are open [Human Rights Council resolution 60/25](#). This position is expected to be filled during the Council's 61st session (23 February – 2 April 2026). Read more on [policy page](#) & [Note Versage](#). Deadline: 6 December 2025.

- Special Procedures Branch**: Call for inputs on good stories and impacts of special procedures system and their engagement with various stakeholders at the national, regional, and international levels. Civil society organisations are invited to share their positive impact stories through [phcrh-subpoordinates@un.org](#). The information provided will be featured in relevant internal and external communications as well as on this [website](#).

- Anti-Trafficking Review**: calls for papers for a special issue themed "[Engaging Impacted Communities](#)". The aim is to examine engagement with impacted communities as the inclusion of people with lived experience is widely recognised as crucial. Deadline: 1 June 2026.

Global Organized Crime Index 2025

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime has published its [Index 2025](#), a five-year assessment covering 193 countries, showed that global efforts to counter organised crime are falling behind, with rising financial and cybercrime, growing involvement of private and foreign actors, and weakening institutional safeguards.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2 December**: event hosted by MEP López Aguilar and supported by UNODC on "Shaping the Future: Tackling Human Trafficking in a Changing Europe", at the European Parliament, in Brussels, from 9:00 to 11:30am. The event will be live streamed.

- 2 December 2025 & 14 January 2026** - UN Global Compact Network UK webinar series [Addressing Human Rights Challenges in the Construction Industry](#). 2 December 14:00-15:30 GMT: [Hidden Labour Abuses in Construction Supply Chains](#), [register here](#). 14 January 2026, 14:00-15:30 GMT: [Reporting on Frail Matters: Metrics and Accountability for Sustainability in Construction](#), [register here](#).

- 3 & 4 December** the CoEBS is organising "[EU Forum on Human Rights](#) against [Trafficking in Human Beings – Countering Organised Crime and Protecting Victims](#)", in Stockholm. Civil society organisations can apparently not attend.

- 4 December** - UNICEF is organising a webinar on "[Enabling Access or Automating Empathy? Using Chatbots to Support Survivors of GBV](#)", from 10:00 to 11:00 am (CET).

- 5 December** - International conference ["As Seen The Unseen: Advancing Collaboration Against Labour Exploitation and Human Trafficking in Europe"](#), by KMOP, from 14:00 to 18:00 (CET) at Residence Palace, Brussels, Belgium, with hybrid participation available.

- 8 December** - First meeting of the informal [EU Expert Group on Forced Labour](#).

- 10 December** - Human Rights Day.

- 11-13 February 2026** - [Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour](#) in Morocco a milestone gathering that will unite governments, workers, employers, and partners to accelerate global efforts to end child labour.

- 16 December** - EU Civil Society Platform and National Coordinators and Rapporteurs meeting in Brussels. On invitation only.

- 18 December** - International Migrants' Day.

- 2 - 6 March 2026** - Short Course: Research Methods in the Refugee & Forced Migration Field, by the Refugee Law Initiative and the University of London, designed for PhD students, early-career researchers, humanitarian workers & civil society. Apply by sending your CV and short cover letter to [RLIMethods@ucl.ac.uk](#), and send questions to [michelle.dunne@ucl.ac.uk](#). Deadline: 6 February.

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

Donate Now

