

**STATEMENT**

**10 December 2025**

# **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

**Every worker should have access to decent working conditions, fair pay, security, social protection, and essential services such as food, housing, and healthcare.**

## **La Strada International**

Millions of people across the world face severe forms of labour exploitation, including human trafficking and forced labour - and Europe is no exception. The continent often praised as the symbol of democracy and the rule of law, still allows systemic mistreatment of (migrant) workers, both denying them basic dignity and access to essential services.

In 2023 alone, 10,793 (presumed) victims were officially registered in Europe, including both detected and formally identified victims, yet it is estimated that **over 4 million people are being trafficked across the continent**. Victims are exploited across multiple labour sectors, some sectors being more vulnerable to misconduct than others.

According to the International Labour Organisation, **the hospitality industry is among those sectors at highest risk**, falling within the broader “services” category, which accounts for 32% of all forced labour cases globally. The hospitality sector includes services such as hotels, restaurants, bars, catering, cleaning, and tourism-related services, all of which rely heavily on migrant labour.

Employing over 10 million workers in the EU, accounting for 5,1% of all workers, the hospitality sector is characterised by an above-average prevalence of mobile and young workers, third-country nationals (TNCs), and workers from particularly vulnerable groups.

The hospitality sector is particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation and precarious work, due to **low wages, long working hours, short-term and part-time contracts, and a lack of job security**, especially for seasonal and temporary migrant and undocumented workers on which the sector largely depends.

**Malpractices in recruitment are inherently exploitative.** Workers are often deceived by the promise of stable jobs, fair wages, or legal documentation, only to arrive and find themselves trapped in debt, coerced into exploitative working conditions, or pressured to accept terms they never agreed to.

To address the growing challenge of exploitation in the hospitality sector, La Strada International, together with several partners, joined the EU-funded HOST project, which aims to prevent and combat sexual and labour exploitation of third-country national workers in the hospitality sector, particularly in highly touristic areas.

## Our Call to Action

On this Human Rights Day, **we call for bold and coordinated action to prevent and address exploitation** in the hospitality sector and ensure decent working conditions for this and for all labour sectors. Every worker should have access to decent working conditions, fair pay, security and social protection, and essential services such as food, housing, and healthcare.

**No matter the sector, working conditions must be respected.**

### 1. Inform Workers and Employers

- **Enhance access to information and awareness** to increase knowledge about workers' rights and obligations of employees. **Workers need guaranteed breaks, decent working hours, paid sick leave, and minimum wages that are properly secured and upheld.**

### 2. Safe Reporting & Victim Support Services

- Create safe reporting and complaint mechanisms, and ensure victims can safely claim justice, including compensation, regardless of their migration status.
- Guarantee **access to free legal aid, protection services, reintegration support, and specialised trauma-informed support** for victims, irrespective of their migration status.



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### 3. Capacity Building & Effective Law Enforcement

- Involve and provide **specialised training** to all relevant stakeholders that can detect, report, and refer presumed victims to national referral mechanisms for protection and support, including employers, law enforcement, social workers, legal professionals, and fiscal authorities.
- Ensure effective enforcement of labour and social security regulations and business's obligations through inter-institutional and cross-border cooperation, information sharing, and peer-learning initiatives.

### 4. Strengthen Labour Rights and Protections for ALL Workers

- Create national and sector-specific safeguards and rules to ensure **fair and minimum pay, paid sick leave, and fair working conditions**.

### 5. Create Legal Migration Pathways

- Create **legal, accessible, and safe pathways for workers outside the EU to access working visas** and residence status, particularly for low-skilled and medium-skilled jobs.





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## Partners



*Coordinator*  
**KMOP**  
Greece  
[www.kmop.gr](http://www.kmop.gr)

**CESIE ETS**  
Italy  
[cesie.org](http://cesie.org)

**FSA – FUNDACION SOLIDARIDAD AMARANTA**  
Spain  
[www.fundacionamaranta.org](http://www.fundacionamaranta.org)

**MoMA – YPOURGEIO METANASTEFSIS KAI ASYLOU**  
Greece  
[migration.gov.gr/en](http://migration.gov.gr/en)

**FAIRWORK – STICHTING FAIRWORK**  
the Netherlands  
[www.fairwork.nu/en](http://www.fairwork.nu/en)

**SUSS – SUS STEP UP STOP SLAVERY**  
Cyprus  
[www.stepupstopslavery.org](http://www.stepupstopslavery.org)

**LSI – THE INTERNATIONAL LA STRADA ASSOCIATION**  
the Netherlands  
[www.lastradainternational.org](http://www.lastradainternational.org)

**GFR – ELLINIKO FOROUM PROSFIGON**  
Greece  
[refugees.gr](http://refugees.gr)

**ANCI – ASSOCIAZIONE DEI COMUNI SICILIANI**  
Italy  
[www.anci.sicilia.it](http://www.anci.sicilia.it)

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