



La Strada International De Wittenstraat 25 1052 AK Amsterdam T 00 31 (0)20 6881414 F 00 31 (0)20 6881013

With this quarterly newsletter, La Strada International wants to inform and update about developments in the field of trafficking in human beings and the activities of La Strada International and the La Strada member organisations. We welcome reactions and contributions. Please [mail us](mailto:us@lastrada-international.org) by 1 December 2009 if you have news, information about your organisation, a new report or documentary or an outspoken opinion on (inter)national developments.

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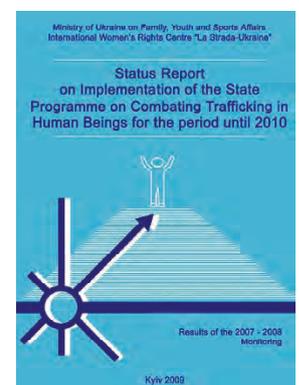
La Strada International has gone through some staff changes recently. After three years of working at the international secretariat in Amsterdam, Jille Belisario has left La Strada International to work as a Campaigns and Programme Coordinator for the Commission of Filipino Migrant Workers (CFMW). We wish Jille success in her new job and are looking forward to a continued cooperation in her new position. Borislav Gerasimov has joined the international La Strada team as a liaison officer. Bobby has worked for eight years for La Strada Bulgaria (Animus Association) and will now support the La Strada network from the international office.

Finally, La Strada's advisory board member, Jyothi Kanics, has left the Irish Refugee Council where she worked as a Separated Children's Officer to start a new position as Advocacy & Policy Specialist with UNICEF Geneva.

Monitoring Ukrainian governmental counter trafficking activities

[La Strada Ukraine](#) has published its results from monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan on trafficking in human beings for the period 2007-2008. Anti-trafficking activities in Ukraine have been affected by political instability, partly as result of the parliamentary crisis, early parliamentary elections and a halt in parliamentary proceedings from February to December 2007, which resulted in the rejection of a number of important laws, in particular in the sphere of gender equality and violence and children's rights. Changes in personnel and unfamiliarity with human rights issues at the governmental level have further aggravated the activities of NGOs and led to the postponement of already developed and scheduled programmes.

The report provides a detailed overview of the legal situation in Ukraine, the status of ratification of international conventions, and identifies gaps and needs, not only at the legal but also at the practical level, and is available in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#).



La Strada Ukraine joins programme on trafficking and migration in Baltic Sea region

La Strada Ukraine is partner in the EU-funded project “Programme of Cooperation in the Black Sea region in the Area of Migration between the Countries of Origin, Transit and Destination”. The overall objectives of the project, which is implemented in Georgia, Greece, and the Ukraine (under the auspices of the Georgian NGO ‘[People’s Harmonious Development Society](#)’), are to protect migrants’ rights, in particular with regard to exploitation and exclusion, to curtail undocumented migration and prevent trafficking in human beings.

The main project activities in Ukraine are cross border team meetings, trainings, research, hotline counselling, media and information campaigns as well as monitoring the government’s anti-trafficking policies. La Strada Ukraine considers this international project to be very important for future developments in the field of anti-trafficking actions in the region. Especially tailor-made training courses for social workers and law enforcement officers will support the development of Ukraine’s national referral mechanism.

La Strada International NGO platform meeting, November Berlin, Germany

On 9 and 10 November, La Strada International (LSI) will organise the 4th NGO platform meeting in Berlin, Germany, together with the German hosting organisation, [Ban Ying](#). The decision to organise this year’s NGO platform in Berlin rather than in a [La Strada member country](#) was taken to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. A public debate with invited guests will celebrate the special occasion and discuss the impact of the fall of the wall on migration and trafficking, under the title: “The fall of the Berlin Wall - where do we stand 20 years on?” At the NGO meeting, LSI wants to discuss, with its partners in the field, how non-governmental organisations and service providers cope with current realities in the anti-trafficking field and how to best serve the interests of trafficked persons within the system. LSI believes that we need to redefine where we stand and how to set standards for La Strada’s services, cooperation, its independence, advocacy and images, in order to remain successful in the anti trafficking work. Thus the main focus of this year’s NGO platform is put on standards and agreements, set services and to look critically at the La Strada’s position as a non-governmental organisation. LSI will invite up to 30 European anti-trafficking NGO representatives, next to La Strada member organisations, as well as LSI advisory council members and representatives of international anti-trafficking (and related) networks and organisations. To receive more information on the NGO platform, please contact Bobby Gerasimov at LSI, at bg@lastradainternational.org.

The La Strada International NGO platform was initiated in 2005 to enable La Strada member organisations to meet with partners in the anti-trafficking field in Europe, with the aim of strengthening and maintaining closer cooperation on issues such as advocacy, awareness-raising, prevention work and the referral of, and direct support to, trafficked persons. With the NGO platform, LSI wishes to stimulate debate on pressing issues in the anti-trafficking field, exchange best practices and make use of lessons learnt as well as encouraging exchange between partners. The first NGO platform was organised in September 2005 in Poland, the second in September 2006 in Kiev, Ukraine, and the third in October 2007 in Skopje, Macedonia. In 2008, the LSI Assembly decided to organise the NGO platform only every other year; 2009 is therefore the fourth time the platform meeting is taking place.

La Strada and Telecom company BTC create helpline for victims of violence in Bulgaria

Since August this year, La Strada Bulgaria ([Animus Association](#)) runs a new 24-hour helpline for victims of violence. The new free number (0800 18676) was created after La Strada’s negotiations with the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company BTC resulted in a contract: BTC has agreed to provide a toll-free number within the country, which is also accessible against a charge from outside Bulgaria. The helpline is one of La Strada’s most popular programmes as it is easily accessible for the clients whilst providing an important source of information, as well as emotional support.



Many of the clients who use the helpline eventually enter the therapeutic programmes of the La Strada centre. The old number (+3592) 981 76 86 will continue to function as a paid service. La Strada already noted a considerable increase of calls since the launch of the new helpline number. Several La Strada organisations currently cooperate with telecom companies in their countries now.

La Strada Poland runs Center for Intervention and Consultancy

In April 2009, La Strada Poland started running the “National Center for Intervention and Consultancy”, a new body established by the National Action Plan for 2009-2010 to ensure comprehensive care and protection for victims and witnesses of trafficking in human beings. 700.000 Polish zloty (175.000 EUR) was allocated from the state’s budget for protection mechanisms and La Strada was selected under an open tender to carry out a series of activities. These include running a 24-hour telephone helpline for trafficked persons and witnesses, supporting in the identification of trafficked persons, carrying out crisis intervention, providing consultation for other stakeholders, and providing trafficked persons with safe accommodation.



Bulgarian National Referral Mechanism

The development of a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in Bulgaria has reached its final phase. The creation of an NRM to provide protection and support measures for the (re)integration and social inclusion of trafficked persons is a project financed in the framework of the Dutch foreign ministry’s MATRA Social Transformation Programme for Central and Eastern Europe. After defining indicators to help relevant authorities and individuals identify potential trafficked persons, the national working group focused its efforts on determining the contents of the standard operational procedures (SOP). The SOPs lay down the first steps national state authorities involved in the NRM should take upon identification. Every stakeholder in the referral procedures has a clear responsibility with regard to the proper functioning of the mechanism as a whole. The process has been developed in consultation with, and is monitored by Ms Bärbel Heide Uhl, an external expert with long-standing experience in the anti-trafficking field. Ms Uhl is currently president of the EU Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings as well as being a member of La Strada’s Advisory Board. At the current stage of the project, the involved parties have to determine by consensus their roles and functions in the NRM programme. Particularly during this stage of the project’s implementation, it is important to ensure that the interests and human rights of trafficked persons themselves are at the core of the referral mechanisms. Human rights impact assessments of NRMs therefore remain vital to ensure a rights-based approach.

Polish study visit to the Netherlands

From 23 to 26 September 2009, a Polish delegation comprising three members of La Strada Poland and the president of the [Halina Niec Legal Aid Center](#) (an NGO based in Krakow that works closely with La Strada on trafficking cases) visited the Netherlands for a study visit. The visit was part of the project “Prevention of trafficking in Women from Central and Eastern Europe. Information-Prevention-Identification-Intervention”, which is co-financed by the European Commission.

The aim of the visit was to look at best practices and specific anti-trafficking activities and measures taken in the Netherlands to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings. The Polish team met with the Dutch [National Rapporteur](#), Mrs Corinne Dettmeijer and her team, as well as with representatives of a shelter in The Hague, the Dutch NGO Bonded Labour in the Netherlands ([BLinN](#)), as well as representatives of the law enforcement and judiciary involved in the provision of protection and assistance to trafficked persons. Information exchange also took place with La Strada colleagues in the Netherlands ([CoMensha](#)) and the international La Strada secretariat.

What's going on ?

EU Anti-Trafficking Day 2009

This year's EU Anti-Trafficking Day will be marked by a two day ministerial conference in Brussels, organised by the Swedish presidency. The day and conference are organised under the title "[Towards EU Global Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#)", giving priority to the EU's external dimension of cooperation, or rather, relations with countries of origin.

In preparation of the ministerial conference, the Swedish presidency organised two networking meetings at which a broader group of stakeholders, including LSI, were invited to participate. The NGOs present at these meetings welcomed the broader view on trafficking by including non-EU states in the search for solutions and the focus on root causes of trafficking. This is something that grassroots organisations have been doing for many years. La Strada International, however, is also aware of the fact the cooperation with third countries could lead to (migration) agreements that are not in the best interest of trafficking persons. For example, agreements on return programmes can minimise the possibilities of trafficked persons to apply for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. In the preparation process, NGOs stressed that internal cooperation in the EU is as important as external partnerships, given that internal trafficking within the EU is a serious problem that needs addressing. In a similar vein, they urged governments not to interpret the focus on the external dimension as a sign that anti-trafficking work in Europe is completed. Many EU policies, measures, and actions still need to be implemented at the national level.

The EU Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings delivered an Opinion ([No. 3/2009](#)) on the upcoming Anti-Trafficking Day and proposed its message to be: "Trafficking in persons concerns us all, don't stay indifferent". The rationale for this message being that trafficking affects everyone, and that people can influence the market for trafficking as consumers of goods and/or services produced by trafficked persons. The message should to address all citizens throughout the EU, the Expert Group said. Addressing the wider audience, as opposed to only the groups directly affected or endangered by trafficking, could lead to a considerable change in favour of anti-trafficking efforts.

On 18 October this year, La Strada International will, together with other NGOs, issue a statement taking these suggestions into account. Additionally La Strada members will organise events and/or actions in their own countries to mark the special day.

UN Principles and Guidelines revisited

The [Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking](#), written by the former High Commissioner on Human Rights (HCHR) Mary Robinson in 2002, is an important international standard setting document, which the Office of the HCHR ([OHCHR](#)) adopted as a framework and reference point for its own work as well as for States and intergovernmental organisations to make use of in their efforts to prevent trafficking and protect the rights of trafficked persons. Since 2002, there have been repeated calls for additional guidance on the Principles and Guidelines to be made available to intergovernmental organisations, governments, civil society organisations and others involved in anti-trafficking initiatives.



In 2008, the OHCHR responded by developing a detailed commentary to the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking. The purpose of the commentary is to provide a comprehensive legal and policy analysis of all aspects of the Principles and Guidelines, thereby assisting in their use as a tool for the development and application of responses to trafficking that are fully informed by international law and policy. The commentary utilises the work of the international human rights mechanisms as well as of States and intergovernmental agencies, in taking forward the human rights approach. At each step of every response, the human rights impact of that step and of the overall response must be considered and monitored.

The commentary has been designed in a way that will enable it to be used as a tool for analysing the performance of relevant actors with respect to their legal obligations to prevent and respond to trafficking and related exploitation. The commentary will be publicly available soon.

In the meantime, a resolution submitted by the Filipino and German delegations to the [Human Rights Council](#) in its June session (resolution 11/3 on Trafficking) requested the OHCHR to solicit views on the Recommended Principles and Guidelines and to gather experiences and emerging good practice in their application. The resolution also decided the result of this consultation would be presented at a seminar on rights-based approaches to trafficking in February 2010. LSI will closely follow the developments and plans to organise a side event at this seminar next year.

UN High Commissioner: migrants' rights violations lead to trafficking and exploitation

Addressing the 11th session of the UN Human Rights Council on 3 June 2009, Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in her [statement](#) that she will prioritise the protection of migrants over the coming year. Pillay criticised destination countries for their treatment of migrants, in particular those Member States and FRONTEX who intercept migrant vessels and return them to unsafe transit zones. "The collective interception and return of migrants at sea without due procedure may seriously harm their rights and well being," Pillay said. She promotes a human-rights based approach whereby "respect for the human rights of migrants is to be addressed in the context of all current international challenges, including the economic and financial crises; climate change; human trafficking; and counter-terrorism. The human rights of migrants must be protected in countries of origin, transit and destination." Further, she emphasised that the overall situation was more likely to drive migrants into the hands of "unscrupulous human traffickers" or "exploitative employers."



Navanethem Pillay
Source: www.ohchr.org

At the [12th Council session in September](#), Pillay criticised the criminalisation of irregular migration and its effects, namely, leading to unnecessary detention and human rights violations. "The association of irregular migration with criminality promotes the stigmatization of migrants and encourages a climate of xenophobia and hostility against them." She stressed that terms such as "illegal immigrants" should be avoided and replaced by the internationally accepted definitions of "irregular" or "undocumented" migrants, which more accurately describe the situation of not having, or having lost, the proper documents allowing them to reside in a given territory or to work there.

Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery report on debt bondage

The first [content report](#) of Gulnara Shahinian, United Nations special Rapporteur on Contemporary Slavery, focuses on debt bondage. The report identifies two types of debt bondage, one where the debtor's life becomes the collateral for the debt, and the other where their labour is used as payment for the debt, for example, many domestic workers repay agency fees for years. The Rapporteur considers the linkages and distinctions between forced labour, bonded labour and trafficking, noting that many states consider bonded labour in legislation in the context of trafficking in persons. However, she notes that: "Unlike someone in bonded labour, a person trafficked has a greater chance of eventually being free. This is because almost every country has introduced trafficking programmes and criminal sanctions on trafficking in national legislation. Internationally, more countries are aware of trafficking and are keen to enforce international and national laws."



Gulnara Shahinian
Source:
www.unmultimedia.org

The report remarks that there is an immense difference between the international attention and recognition for trafficking but very little for slavery-like practices: "Unlike the attention devoted to trafficking, the international efforts to sign, ratify, enforce and monitor the slavery conventions pale in comparison."

In her recommendations, Ms Shahinian calls for:

- the development of specific legislation and related policy measures to address bonded labour and not-limited to the context of bonded labour in trafficking situations,
- the development of regulations and monitoring mechanisms covering the practices of labour agents,
- programmes to be developed for the protection and restoration of the rights of people who have been subject to forced labour, and
- agreements between States and between States and labour agencies and trade unions specifically on migrant domestic workers.

The Special Rapporteur presented her report at the [12th session of the UN Human Rights Council](#) in September. [GAATW](#), [Anti-Slavery International](#) and the [Franciscans International](#) organised a side event on debt bondage at the meeting, at which Gulnara Shahinian and a representative of the International Labour organisation took part.

New UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women

Human rights and feminist groups have [welcomed the appointment](#) on 18 June 2009 of Rashida Manjoo as [Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences](#) by the [UN Human Rights Council](#). In her capacity as Special Rapporteur, Manjoo will investigate claims of violence against women, file reports on the status of women's human rights in nations around the world, and call attention to nations that do not comply with international standards on women's human rights. Rashida Manjoo is a South African legal practitioner and member of Women Living Under Muslim Laws. She has been working in different capacities in various countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, provided gender expertise to the International Criminal Court, served in the Working Group on Optional Protocol to CEDAW as well as having been involved in a range of civil society initiatives for gender justice. In South Africa, Manjoo was particularly active in the area of domestic violence.



Rashida Manjoo
Source: www.sidint.net

Trade union and forced labour update

The ITUC and Anti-Slavery International have started a new project entitled [Creating a European coalition of trade unions and NGOs to prevent violence and protect women and young people in the workplace, with a specific focus on trafficking](#). Amongst others, the project will result in a training package for cooperation of trade unions and NGOs in identification, prevention and assistance with regards to exploitation at the workplace as a result of trafficking, to assist and increase the role of European trade unions in tackling workplace victims of violence with a specific focus on trafficking. Next to trainings, outputs also include Memoranda of Understanding on identification and referral of trafficked persons between NGOs and trade unions, a model of cooperation of international and national trade unions with NGOs, as well as trade union and NGO cooperation on the EU Anti-Trafficking Day in 2010.

The Dutch umbrella trade union [FNV Bondgenoten](#) has published a brochure ([Your rights as a domestic worker](#)), containing a specimen contract and information on where to go for special protection, shelter, financial help and a lawyer in the event of serious exploitation and human trafficking in the domestic work sector. It addresses common concerns regarding wages, vacation, sickness, pregnancy and birth, safe working conditions and accidents, and overtime provides tips on how to improve one's work situation. The FNV has recently started working together with self-organised domestic workers, many of whom are undocumented, and offers them structures within the trade union.



GAATW advocacy action for a review mechanism

GAATW has been advocating for a monitoring mechanism to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols, including the Human Trafficking Protocol (UNTOC) since it was first raised at the 4th Conference of Parties to UNTOC last October 2008. At that meeting, GAATW and LSI had organised a special side event on the topic of the need for a review mechanism. Since then, an 'Open-Ended Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts' has been established, to look at "possible mechanisms to review implementation of UNTOC" (Working Group on a Review Mechanism). This group will have its first meeting at the end of September 2009 and discuss whether states believe a review mechanism is needed and if so, what methodology should be used.

The GAATW Advocacy Action [Stop, Look, Listen](#) focuses on raising awareness among government representatives about a review mechanism. As governments are typically reluctant to increase monitoring of their policy implementation, initial actions should be focussed on starting a public and governmental discussion. NGOs and individuals can support the Advocacy Action by discussing the need for a review mechanism to the Palermo Protocol with their governments and [signing a petition](#). For further information and to feedback progress into the campaign, please contact Caroline Hames, caroline@gaatw.org.

What's new ?

Court decisions on forced labour and human trafficking: a manual for practitioners

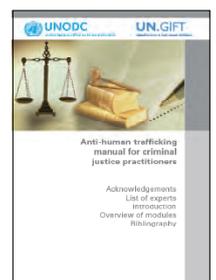
[Forced Labour and Human Trafficking. Casebook of Court Decisions. A training manual for judges, prosecutors and legal practitioners](#) is part of the ILO's broader efforts to address forced labour through promotional means and technical cooperation. The casebook covers a range of national experience, from judicial decisions on forced and bonded labour in a number of developing countries, through to the more recent decisions on forced labour and trafficking in industrialised countries. In particular, it seeks to illustrate how national court decisions have taken into account the provisions of the ILO's own Conventions on forced labour, and how this may provide useful guidance for future court decisions.



Anti-human trafficking manual for criminal justice practitioners

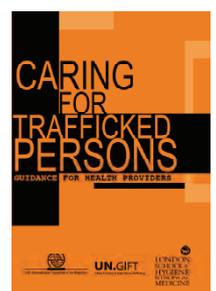
The [Anti-Human Trafficking Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners](#) is the result of a global cooperative process in which expert representatives from academia, NGOs, international organizations, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges from all over the world contributed their expertise and experiences.

In line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol supplementing the United Nations Organized Crime Convention, the purpose of the Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners is to support criminal justice practitioners in the prevention of human trafficking, the protection of its victims, the prosecution of its culprits and in the international cooperation needed to achieve these goals.



Guidance for practitioners providing health services to trafficked persons

Developed with the support of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), and led by IOM and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the handbook [Caring for Trafficked Persons. Guidance for Health Providers](#) provides practical, non-clinical advice to help a concerned health provider understand the phenomenon of human trafficking, recognise some of the associated health problems and consider safe and appropriate approaches to providing healthcare for trafficked persons. The book brings together the collective experience of a broad range of experts from international organisations, universities and civil society in addressing the consequences of human trafficking.



Supply chain exploitation of migrant workers

According to a new report [Vulnerable Migrant Workers: The Responsibility of Business - an overview and comparative analysis of food production, manufacture and retail companies](#), the flexible migrant workers in the United Kingdom and Ireland remain vulnerable to very low pay, excessively long hours, poor health and safety conditions, workplace discrimination and other forms of injustice. The report compares the policies and practices of nine food production, manufacturing and supermarket companies towards migrant workers, particularly in their supply chains. An important element is strengthening monitoring by increasing regularity and coverage and ensuring that migrant, temporary and agency workers are involved in audits, as well as trade unions and/or other groups that support migrant workers' rights.



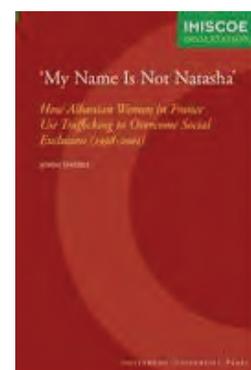
Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in the Agricultural Sector

[Summary of Challenges on Addressing Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in the Agricultural Sector in the OSCE Region](#) focuses on the second largest employment sector of the OSCE region. It is a thorough analysis of the current challenges within the agricultural sector, aiming to assist to identify the structural issues and deficits of this sector that cause or exacerbates a worker's vulnerability. This is the first paper of its kind to address human trafficking for labour exploitation in the agricultural sector throughout the OSCE region and sheds light on a sector in which workers are commonly exploited, but are often out of sight.



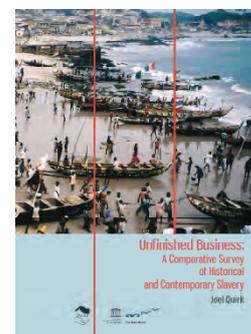
Challenging preconceptions about demand and trafficking

[My Name Is Not Natasha. How Albanian Women in France Use Trafficking to Overcome Social Exclusion](#), analyses and explains a trafficking crisis experienced by a group of Albanian women in Lyon, France, between 1998 and 2001. The book proposes new theoretical explanations for Albanian trafficking that considers women's experiences of social stigma and exclusion as becoming the main reason for Albanian women being involved in trafficking, after an initial period when young women were mainly deceived into abusive relationships that were then used to coerce them into forced labour. This book argues that the conceptualisation that considers trafficking as being best explained by the 'demand' of men for paid sex and the naivety of the trafficked women is inadequate for explaining many of the trafficking experiences reported by the Albanian women in Lyon.



A Comparative Survey of Historical and Contemporary Slavery

The UNESCO publication [Unfinished Business: A Comparative Survey of Historical and Contemporary Slavery](#), shows that slavery remained legal in parts of the globe well into the twentieth century, and in territories where slavery came to be legally abolished, human bondage and extreme exploitation regularly continued under other designations. Many governments would rush to declare that slavery was no longer a problem, but these declarations rarely matched events on the ground. In the immediate aftermath of legal abolition, this was chiefly a question of the widespread use of forced, bonded and indentured labour in many jurisdictions.



Avenues for Advocacy in the United Nations Human Rights Council

[Avenues for Advocacy in the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) by Pax Christi International details the different mechanisms available to NGOs wishing to do advocacy work in the UN Human Rights Council. While this information is accessible through UN websites, the packet brings the material together concisely and in a single document, offering human rights advocates a place to easily compare the many forums available for their work.

Online Resources

Gender and Migration Online

This is a specialised website of the [Multicultural Centre Prague](#) focusing on migration issues in Central and Eastern Europe. Articles and review in the thematic gender focus of this site demonstrate that motivations as well as routes of migrants are gender specific, their integration into host societies is shaped by varying mechanisms and their socially constructed gender identities undergo significant changes as a reaction to migration experiences. The site calls for contribution on the gendered character of migration taking into account intersections with other categories of difference such as ethnicity, class or age and nationality.



European Country of Origin Information Network

The [European Country of Origin Information Network](#) provides up-to-date country of origin information with a special focus on the needs of asylum lawyers, refugee counsels and persons deciding on claims for asylum and other forms of international protection. Access to information is facilitated by a comprehensive search tool and Topics & Issues files, offering thematically structured information on asylum-relevant topics and issues for a set of focus countries.

What's happening where ?

- **28 September - 9 October, Warsaw, Poland** [OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting](#), with anti-trafficking focus on 1 October.
- **19-20 October, Brussels, Belgium** EU Anti-Trafficking Day. [Ministerial Conference](#) in the framework of the Swedish presidency, on partnership between EU countries and countries of origin.
- **2-3 November, Athens, Greece** [Civil society days](#) under the theme "Integrating migration policies in development strategies for the benefit of all", (see [Programme](#)) parallel to the governmental [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#).
- **9-10 November, Berlin, Germany** La Strada International NGO platform.
- **11-14 November, Berlin, Germany** 10th La Strada International Assembly Meeting.



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