

La Strada International

European NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings

Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine

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Abbreviations

AECT - Alliance Expert Coordination Team
CoE - Council of Europe
GRETA - Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
GAATW - Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
HRDN - Human Rights and Democracy Network
ICMPD - International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO - International Labour Organisation
IOM - International Organisation for Migration
LS - La Strada
LSI - La Strada International/The International La Strada Association
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE - Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PICUM - Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Summary

Human trafficking is a serious human rights violation, and combating this crime remains a priority in Europe today. Despite the difficulty to accurately determine the scale of the issue, it is evident that thousands of people are trafficked within, to and from Europe every year.

In total 1786 trafficked persons were registered and supported by the LSI member countries in 2014. A total of 18350 calls to national hotlines were reported in 2014 in all La Strada member countries, excluding the Netherlands¹, compared to 21816 hotline calls in 2013.

In 2014, the La Strada members continued to note that women and children constituted the majority of human trafficking cases for the purposes of sexual exploitation reported to them, while men were most often involved in cases of forced labour or labour exploitation. A trend in the last few years is an increase in the number of identified and referred trafficked men. In 2014 cases of trafficked men were also reported in situations of sexual exploitation and women were reported in situations of labour exploitation. Domestic work, construction and agriculture were highlighted along with forced begging as primary areas of labour exploitation in La Strada member countries. Many victims of human trafficking were reported to have low education and many came from rural areas.

The La Strada members cited a total of more than 40 destination countries where women, men and children were trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labour during 2014.

Several Central and Eastern European countries, in which La Strada operates, face political, social and economic instability, bureaucracy and corruption, which negatively affect the societies of these countries in general, as changes towards democracy are implemented only gradually. LSI members also frequently reported inadequate implementation of legislation on human trafficking.

In 2014 La Strada International followed with great concern the political developments in Ukraine. Despite the installation of a new interim government and the presidential elections in May 2014, the situation in Ukraine remained unstable, due to the protests in the eastern regions and the dispute with Russia regarding the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol into the Russian Federation, as well as an amassing of Russian troops near Ukraine's borders. The armed conflict and economic crisis resulted in an increase of labour migration, including risks of trafficking. Moreover the country currently has many internal displaced persons (IDPs) which became vulnerable for human trafficking and exploitation.

All the EU countries have transposed the [Directive 2011/36/EU on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#). This Directive was adopted by the Council in April 2011 and was supposed to be transposed by the Member States by 6 April 2013. The main gaps identified related to its implementation are bureaucratic challenges, lack of state funding, inadequate training of law enforcement and service providers and disproportionate responsibility on accessing resources and providing services to victims falling on national and international nongovernmental organisations.

The International Secretariat of LSI is responsible for representation of the network at the international level. It undertakes activities directed at international networking, advocacy and public relations, and is responsible for developing and maintaining relations with national and international government structures and other relevant stakeholders including international organisations, NGOs and civil society networks. The secretariat further works on data collection, registration and information provision and capacity building for the member organisations. The LSI Secretariat prepares Assembly and board meetings and coordinates and implements common strategy and action plans.

In 2014, priority issues for LSI, in line with its Strategic Plan for 2012 - 2015, were the monitoring of LSI standards, the development of LSI monitoring assessment tool, data collection and data

¹ In the Netherlands calls are not counted, but individual cases are reported/registered.

protection and the further extension of LSI's NGO platform. At the end of 2014, this platform comprised 27 members. LSI aims to monitor and evaluate current practices in human trafficking by collecting facts and figures, analysing data and undertaking research. More accurate facts and figures on the different aspects of trafficking are needed to better understand the phenomenon and could be of benefit in developing better counter-trafficking policies and services for trafficked persons and to enhance the focus of prevention campaigns.

Another important topic was the financial situation of the LSI secretariat and the LSI members. Strategies and measures to obtain more financial sustainability, including fundraising, were frequently discussed by the board, as well as with the General Assembly.

In 2014, the International Secretariat was involved in several international projects including the project NGOs & CO - NGO-Business Engagement in addressing human trafficking and datACT - data protection in anti-trafficking action and two research projects TRACE and DemandAT. LSI further contributed to several projects implemented by LSI members in Macedonia, Ukraine and Belarus. LSI also played a consultancy role for a project coordinated by the Council of Europe in Romania on the issue of compensation for trafficked persons.

La Strada International

The International La Strada Association (known as La Strada International/LSI) is a leading, value-driven European NGO Network that aims to achieve a world without trafficking in human beings by promoting the respect for human rights through policy, advocacy, information and research and coordinated action. LSI develops the capacity of the member organisations and other stakeholders to improve services to trafficked persons and at-risk groups and empowers them to have access to and exercise their rights.

The La Strada International network comprises eight independent, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Europe that work from a grass-roots level, providing direct support to trafficked persons. The 8 member organisations are based in Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine. The LSI member organisations are represented by one individual in the General Assembly, which functions as the governing body of the organisation and meets twice a year. The General Assembly elects the members of the LSI Board from among the assembly members. The board is responsible for monitoring the work of the International Secretariat and for setting up discussions around broader strategic and thematic issues.

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The International Secretariat also undertakes specific international project with members and partners. In 2014 these included the project NGOs & CO - NGO-Business Engagement in addressing human trafficking and dataACT - data protection in anti-trafficking action and two research projects TRACE and DemandAT. LSI further contributed to several projects implemented by LSI members in Macedonia, Ukraine and Belarus (La Strada Programme 2014 - 2015, supported by ICCO and the Programme against Human Trafficking in Eastern Europe - Prevention of human trafficking in Belarus: National trainers' network and National infoline 113 supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Further LSI played a consultancy role for a project coordinated by the Council of Europe in Romania on the issue of compensation. *See further Specific projects.*

Human Rights based approach

Since its establishment in 1995, LSI's work is based on the overall Human Rights principle defining human trafficking as a severe violation of human rights and promoting an approach that prioritises the needs expressed by trafficked persons to addressing this issue. According to this approach, violation of human rights is both a cause and a consequence of trafficking in human beings and therefore the prevention of trafficking and the protection of trafficked persons should be based on the protection of the rights of all human beings - with a focus on those vulnerable to human trafficking. Prominent vulnerable groups include regular and irregular migrant workers, domestic workers and sex workers.

The human rights based approach opposes anti-trafficking measures which adversely affect or infringe upon the human rights of trafficked persons or other affected groups. This approach maintains human rights at the core of any anti-trafficking strategy. It integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into legislation, policies, programs and processes. This approach is reflected in the mission statement and the Code of Conduct of the organisation

The organisation in 2014 & organisational priorities

In 2014, two General Assembly meetings took place in June, in Sofia, Bulgaria, combined with the NGO platform and in December in Prague, Czech Republic. The board held regular (monthly) board meetings through Skype throughout the year. At these meetings, the board and LSI International Coordinator prepared discussions and decision taking for assembly meetings and discussed daily (financial) management issues of the network.

In 2014 much attention was given to the monitoring and implementation of LSI's overall strategic plan (2012 - 2015) and separate action plan for 2014. Priority issues were the monitoring of LSI standards, the development of LSI monitoring assessment tool, data collection and data protection and the extension of the LSI NGO platform. Another important topic was the financial situation of the LSI secretariat and the LSI members. Strategies and measures to obtain more financial sustainability, including fundraising, were frequently discussed by the board, as well as with the General Assembly. Several new common projects, including a follow-up application for a second COMP.ACT programme, were also discussed with the Assembly, next to requests for common projects and cooperation with other stakeholders.

LSI NGO Platform - United against Human Trafficking in Europe

The La Strada International NGO Platform was initiated in 2005 to enable European anti-trafficking organisations to meet annually with the aim of strengthening and maintaining closer cooperation on advocacy, awareness and prevention, referral and direct support to trafficked persons. Moreover, with the NGO Platform LSI promotes the anti-trafficking debate among civil society, and encourages the exchange of best practices and lessons learnt. Previous NGO Platforms were organised in Warsaw, Poland (2005), Kiev, Ukraine (2006), Skopje, Macedonia (2007), Berlin, Germany (2009), Rome, Italy (2011), Tallinn, Estonia (2013).

On 19-20 June 2014, La Strada International organised the 7th NGO Platform in Sofia, Bulgaria, gathering more than 50 representatives of anti-trafficking NGOs and experts from across Europe. The Platform was hosted by Animus Association/La Strada Bulgaria, and implemented in the framework of the EU-funded project "NGOs & Co: NGO-Business Engagement in Addressing Human Trafficking". Accountability of the business sector and other stakeholders was discussed in relation to human trafficking and forced labour in Europe during the opening panel. Panellists reviewed legislation and measures, including the new ILO protocol on forced labour, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and different complaint mechanisms. CSR policies and the role of grassroots NGOs in addressing workers' rights violations were also discussed.

Eight workshops focused more on practical tools and measures including: campaigning and communication with the corporate world, how to research a company, promoting fair employment & recruitment standards, lodging complaints and non-judicial grievance mechanisms, and multi-stakeholder certification schemes. The NGO participants explored venues for action and practical pathways for influencing and establishing effective cooperation between European grassroots anti-trafficking NGOs and the private sector. Participants exchanged experiences and gained insights from experts active in the field of labour rights, including representatives of the ILO, IOM and ECPAT, as well as academics, to engage with companies in order to prevent human trafficking for labour exploitation in Europe. Platform participants underlined that civil society organisations still perceive partnering with businesses as a challenging decision; however, they acknowledged that anti-trafficking efforts cannot be sustainable without engaging the private sector. They further acknowledged that time and resources are needed for NGOs to work more with the private sector. On the basis of all input, LSI drafted guidelines for NGOs, and a toolkit to be published in 2015. Further, LSI launched a campaign on trafficking for labour exploitation on 18 October 2014, EU anti-trafficking day, *see Specific Projects - NGOs & CO.*

Human Trafficking in Europe

Human trafficking² is a serious human rights violation, and combating this crime remains a priority in Europe today. Despite the difficulty to accurately determine the scale of the issue, it is evident that thousands of people are being trafficked within, to and from Europe every year.

Global estimates and figures on human trafficking

According to the most recent estimates of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), published in 2012, around three out of every 1000 people worldwide are in situations of forced labour at any given point in time. The ILO estimates that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour globally; trapped in jobs which they were coerced or deceived into and which they cannot or are unable to leave. The majority of forced labourers, (68%) are exploited in economic activities, such as agriculture, construction, domestic work or manufacturing. About a quarter are victims of sexual exploitation. The remaining ten percent are in state-imposed forms of forced labour, for example in prisons, or in work imposed by the state military or by rebel armed forces.

In November 2014, the Walk Free Foundation presented the 2014 edition of its Global Slavery Index. The declared goal of the Index is to estimate the number of people in modern slavery in 167 countries. The 2014 index estimates that 35.8 million people in the world live in situations of modern slavery (human trafficking, forced labour, child labour and early/child marriage). This is an increase from the 29.8 million people, estimated in the 2013 Index, which is attributed to the new and improved methodology in 2014. According to the report, of all people living in slavery, 61% live in the five countries with the highest numbers - India, China, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Russia. According to Walk Free, the countries that are making the most efforts to combat slavery include The Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States.

Since its first edition in 2013, the Global Slavery Index has been endorsed by a number of politicians, businessmen, antislavery activists and academics and at the same time has been heavily criticised by academics and researchers. La Strada International has consistently advocated caution and critical awareness when using data to measure human trafficking, including using data to justify the development of measures and policies. Data collection on such a complex phenomenon as human trafficking has proven to be extremely difficult and inconsistent. Although many reports that present data do give out warnings not to consider this data as the 'absolute truth on human trafficking'. Ranking systems and indexes do not reflect a thorough impact assessment of governmental efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, but rather serve the political or financial interests of the those who publish the reports.

Further, in 2014, UNODC published its 2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. The report provides an overview of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at global, regional and national levels, based on trafficking cases detected between 2010 and 2012 (or more recently). The Country Profiles present a national level analysis for each of the 128 countries covered by this edition of the report. The report found that 49% of the registered victims of human trafficking were adult women and 33% were children. The majority of victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation (53%), while 40% were trafficked for forced labour. The detection of forced labour cases has increased steadily over the past few years. It is interesting to note that while in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, most people were trafficked for sexual exploitation, in the Americas they are equally trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation and mostly for labour exploitation in Asia.

² Article 3, paragraph (a) of the [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#) defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

EU statistics on trafficking in human beings

In 2014, the European Commission published its second statistical report on trafficking in human beings in the EU, compiled by Eurostat and DG Home Affairs. Similar to the first report, this second report includes statistics on the total number of identified and presumed victims disaggregated by gender, age and form of exploitation. It also contains statistics on victims' citizenship and type of assistance and protection received.

The second statistical report on victims and traffickers for the years 2010-2012 shows that during that period 30146 identified and presumed victims were registered. As in the previous years, the majority of victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, were female and were EU citizens. Sixteen percent of the registered victims were underage. Member States reported 8551 prosecutions related to human trafficking during the three years, with 3786 convictions.

Vulnerability to Human Trafficking

Human trafficking reflects the poor social and legal position of individuals in many countries, including La Strada member countries. It involves deceit, abuse, violence, debt-bondage, blackmail and deprivation of human rights. Human trafficking is not only a cause of human rights violations, but often also a consequence. The lack of protection for people who have been trafficked can even lead to further human rights infringements and re-trafficking. Human trafficking is not a static phenomenon; changes and new trends in trafficking practices are discernible over time. There is an increasing recognition throughout the world that it is not only women and children who fall victim to traffickers. Trafficking of adult men seems to be primarily for the purpose of labour and thus links closely with another trend already noticeable in the last years; the LSI members have identified an increase of trafficked persons exploited in industries other than the sex industry. Such industries known to be vulnerable for human trafficking, forced labour and exploitation are domestic work, sweatshops, catering and restaurants, construction, agricultural work, entertainment industry and the commercial marriage market.³

Most human trafficking for forced labour affects people working at the margins of the formal economy, with irregular employment or migration status. Next to the increase in identified and referred persons trafficked for labour exploitation, other trends and shifts can be detected from the information received and collected by LSI and its member organisations.

People seem to be trafficked at a younger age and an increase has been reported in internal trafficking, both in Western and Eastern Europe. At the same time, human trafficking routes originate further away. Although the majority of trafficked people from countries where La Strada is represented are still trafficked to Western Europe, the Middle East and Asia, are increasingly destination areas for Europeans.

³ Human trafficking also affects other mainstream economic sectors, including food processing, healthcare and contract cleaning, mainly in private but also in public sector employment, such as the provision of healthcare services. A problem, however, is that these are often dealt with by the authorities as 'merely' constituting *labour law* violations, rather than *human rights* violations under anti-trafficking or human rights legislation. It is generally acknowledged that sectors with weak labour protection are more vulnerable to human trafficking.

La Strada figures & findings 2014

In total 1786 trafficked persons were registered by the LSI member countries, which have been referred to other stakeholders, including other NGOs or have received direct assistance and support. During 2014, reporting La Strada member countries continued to note that women and children constituted the majority of human trafficking cases for the purposes of sexual exploitation, while men were most often involved in cases of forced labour or labour exploitation. A trend in the last few years is an increase in the number of identified and referred trafficked men, as reported by the LSI member organisations. Men were also reported in situations of sexual exploitation and women were reported in situations of labour exploitation. A significant number of victims reported were minors.

In the Netherlands, approximately 25 percent of victims of human trafficking registered by CoMensha were minors.

Countries of origin, transfer and destination reported by LSI members

The majority of countries of origin for La Strada member countries were located in Eastern Europe. A significant proportion of countries of origin were also located throughout Africa, including Northern, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Additional countries of origin were reported within Central Europe, Central Asia, South Asia and Asia Pacific regions, representing significant geographical dispersal and human trafficking movement around the globe. The primary purpose of trafficking to reporting La Strada member countries was both trafficking for sexual exploitation and for labour exploitation. Countries of destination reported, are mainly European countries, including countries where LSI members are based, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, the Netherlands and Ukraine, further Germany, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. Further Middle Eastern countries including Israel, as well as countries in Central Asia, Asia and North Africa were occasionally reported.

Social, political and economic situation in the LSI member countries

Several Central and Eastern European countries, in which La Strada operates face political, social and economic instability, bureaucracy and corruption, which negatively affect the societies of these countries in general, as changes towards democracy and openness are implemented only gradually. Economic crisis and armed conflict results in an increase of labour migration, including the risks of being trafficked. La Strada countries generally also face high levels of unemployment. With the globalisation of production and consumption and the facilitation of travel opportunities over the last few decades, migration flows have increased and labour has become internationally mobile. Pull factors - such as demand for flexible labour in certain economic sectors and the need to cut down production costs to remain competitive or to increase profits - facilitate the demand for cheap labour which is often met by (irregular) migrant workers. These factors can also encourage exploitation of migrant workers, as migrants often enjoy less legal protection regarding labour conditions and enjoy few basic social rights.

Political instability, in particular due to frequent changes in government, has a negative impact on the adoption and implementation of anti-trafficking measures. In 2014, in particular, LS Macedonia, Bulgaria and Ukraine reported political instability.

Conflict in Ukraine

In 2014, La Strada International followed with great concern the political developments in Ukraine. Despite the installation of a new interim government and the presidential elections in May 2014, the situation in Ukraine remained unstable, due to the protests in the eastern regions and the dispute with Russia regarding the annexation of Crimea into the Russian Federation, as well as an amassing of Russian troops near Ukraine's borders. In 2014, La Strada Ukraine was actively involved in monitoring the situation. The organisation issued several statements, together with other women's rights organisations, initially to refuse further cooperation with the former (Yanukovich) government and then to start negotiations with the newly appointed interim government, including new persons at relevant ministries. LS Ukraine has stressed publicly that they would like to continue to monitor the country's efforts on protecting human rights and preventing human trafficking.

The armed conflict and economic crisis resulted in an increase of labour migration, including the risks of being trafficked. Moreover the country currently has many internal displaced persons (IDPs) who are vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation.

In 2014, La Strada Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy and the OSCE Mission in Ukraine developed a briefing paper for the citizens of Donetsk and Luhansk regions as part of an informational campaign about human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The paper informs about personal safety rules to take into account due to the circumstances of the ongoing conflict. It has been disseminated in those cities and towns where the Ukrainian government regained control. Information was also disseminated via social networks and the website of the Ukrainian Ministry.

Since the beginning of the conflict, La Strada Ukraine's hotline with the Ukrainian toll-free number has received numerous calls from people from the Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, with inquiries around obtaining social services, possibilities for moving and finding a temporary place to live and cases of sexual assault on women. The consultants of the hotline provide the callers with psychological assistance, legal consultations and refer them to other organisations and structures, which provide internally displaced persons with different kinds of support.

Changes in legislation

To date, all LS member countries have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings CETS No 197, except the Czech Republic, which is also the only LS country that not yet ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It is unclear when the Czech Republic will ratify the UN Palermo Protocol.

Further, all the EU countries transposed the Directive 2011/36/EU on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings⁴. The 36/2011/EU Directive on trafficking in human beings was adopted by the Council in April 2011 and was supposed to be transposed by the Member States by 6 April 2013. In 2015 an evaluation of the implementation of the Directive by Member States is foreseen.

In the LSI member countries, national laws have been amended in recent years in line with the above mentioned international legislation. However, while La Strada member countries adopted important legislation guaranteeing improved access to services for victims of human trafficking in 2014, implementation of such legislation remained challenging. All LSI members reported inadequate implementation of legislation on human trafficking. The main gaps identified in implementation of such legislation were bureaucratic challenges, lack of state funding, inadequate training of law enforcement and service providers and disproportionate responsibility on accessing resources and providing services to victims falling on national and international nongovernmental organisations. Overall, several La Strada member countries report continued challenges related to ongoing economic crises, citing exploitative conditions for citizens who migrated abroad for work and for foreign nationals who migrated to La Strada countries to fill workforce gaps. Other ongoing challenges regarding political changes and instability have led to increasingly vulnerable populations but also impact decision taking and commitment of state bodies, implementation of legislation and actions and affects cooperation with other stakeholders.

The national approach to human trafficking

In general, La Strada member countries reported concerns but also positive news about their country's national approach to human trafficking, including the adoption and implementation of

⁴ DIRECTIVE 2011/36/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA in 2013.

Action Plans and measures in 2014. All LSI member countries have some type of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in place. The Netherlands is currently developing an official NRM.

Four LSI member countries have a National Rapporteur or a body responsible for reporting on trafficking in human beings. There are no national Rapporteurs in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland and the Czech Republic. LS Macedonia, Ukraine, Netherlands and Moldova reported that their countries have a National Coordinator on the issue of human trafficking in place. There is no National Coordinator in Bulgaria, Poland, Belarus and the Czech Republic.

La Strada members were in general positive about their cooperation with the state bodies responsible for development of national strategies and Action Plans and felt they could satisfactorily contribute to their development. Several LSI members however raised concern about the fact that new strategies and policies lack sufficient resources to ensure good implementation.

Monitoring

LSI aims to monitor and evaluate current practises in human trafficking by collecting facts and figures, analysing data and undertaking research. In 2013, LSI joined two academic consortiums to conduct further research on human trafficking; these researches focus on the issue of demand for human trafficking and on the profile of trafficker and the criminal framework in which they operate. *See further research and Specific projects.*

In 2014 GRETA published its first report on Macedonia and a first report on The Netherlands. GRETA expressed its satisfaction with the positive steps that Macedonian and Dutch authorities have taken. However the report on Macedonia notes that further steps are necessary to ensure that all victims of trafficking are properly identified, by strengthening multi-agency involvement and paying more attention to the identification of victims of trafficking among irregular migrants, asylum seekers and unaccompanied foreign minors. The report also urges the authorities to improve prevention through social and economic empowerment measures for groups vulnerable to trafficking and to ensure that assistance measures are implemented in practice and that victims of trafficking can obtain compensation, including by setting up a State compensation scheme. For the Netherlands, GRETA highlighted the need to further strengthen efforts to tackle trafficking for labour exploitation, including limiting the dependency of workers on their employers when recruited through employment agencies. Further, GRETA asked the authorities to strengthen multi-agency involvement in the identification of victims of trafficking, in particular by formalising the role of NGOs and other professionals in this process. The report recommended that authorities should also develop a proactive approach to identification of and assistance to child victims of trafficking.

Networking, cooperation and representation

La Strada International acknowledges that activities and interventions cannot be performed in isolation; partnerships and networks are essential to exchanging information to ensure that the activities of involved organisations complement each other in order to reach effective and salient results. For this purpose, LSI maintains contacts with a large network of actors in the anti-trafficking and related fields. Further, LSI follows policy developments on the European level and regularly issues comments and statements with relevant international actors. For its lobby and advocacy work, LSI is a member of, and closely cooperates with the following networks:

- **Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN)** - Brussels: The LSI Secretariat closely cooperated with the members of this network working on the issue of human trafficking. Together with them LSI followed policy developments on the European level and issued comments and statements.
- **Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)** - Brussels: LSI attended PICUM's annual meeting and several workshops in 2014. LSI is member of PICUM's Working Group on Labour Rights.
- **Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)** - LSI cooperated frequently in 2014 with the International Secretariat of GAATW and its European members, mainly on lobbying and advocacy, in particular on UN-related issues. LSI attended the 20th anniversary meeting of GAATW in September 2014 and contributed to several sessions, among others on monitoring and on monitoring of the private sectors engagement to prevent human trafficking.
- **Alliance Expert Coordination Team (AECT)** (Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Being of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe -OSCE) - LSI attended two meetings of the AECT and one conference in 2014 and closely cooperated with the Special Representative and her office.

From 23 to 26 of September 2014, the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) celebrated its 20th anniversary with an International Members Congress (IMC) in Bangkok, Thailand. The Conference brought together over 100 member organisations and friends from all over the world, including La Strada International, La Strada Ukraine and La Strada Macedonia.

While reflecting back on the last 20 years, the IMC focused on three themes - Women, Migration and Work - challenges and opportunities in the coming years, Funding for Anti-Trafficking Work, and Doing Better. The latter focusses on identifying theoretical and practical knowledge and skills needed to make monitoring of state anti-trafficking initiatives part of our everyday work. At the meeting GAATW also presented the initial findings and reflections on GAATW's accountability research "The Unmet Needs of Overlooked Trafficking Survivors". At a public press conference, GAATW launched the latest issue of the Anti-Trafficking Review, entitled 'Following the Money: Spending on Anti-Trafficking', to which LSI also contributed.

At the Members day, after the International Conference, members from all regions discussed strategies and plans for the coming years. GAATW and its members will continue to work from a feminist approach to women's rights and fight for the rights of unprotected workers such as domestic workers and sex workers. They will challenge the flaws in the anti-trafficking framework and look for connections with other movements on labour rights and environment. Monitoring the accountability of both States on their implementation of the protection of the rights of trafficked persons and affected groups, and from civil society by assessing the impact of our own work will be important in the work of GAATW in the coming years.

LSI Advocacy & Public Affairs

The lobby and advocacy work of LSI is planned according to LSI's strategic plan and annual Action Plan and its separate lobby plan, but also involves ad hoc work such as reacting to new European developments, actions and campaigns, or supporting the LSI members with reacting to relevant national developments.

Obtaining or improving access to State resources for victims of human trafficking was prioritised in lobbying activities in La Strada member countries in 2014. Additional lobbying activities were conducted regarding more effective implementation of legislation, accessibility of assistance to both citizens and foreign national victims of human trafficking and adoption and/or implementation of an NRM. Among the main challenges the LSI members mentioned were the following: victim identification, assistance and compensation, identifying factors of vulnerability and vulnerable groups, coordination between service providers and law enforcement, streamlining the NRM and timely implementation of legislation.

LSI statement for International Women's Day

On 8 March 2014, International Women's Day, La Strada international issued a statement calling for full empowerment and integration of women in all levels of economic, social and cultural activities. LSI called upon governments and the international community to seize the opportunity to reform the traditional structures that triggered the economic crisis and to make fundamental changes in power imbalances between countries, between employers and employees and between men and women. Equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all are not only to be achieved out of solidarity, but because without equality there is no prospect for sustainable global prosperity. Economic recovery or sustainable development necessitates the full empowerment and integration of women.

In 2014, LSI intensively lobbied the EU, Council of Europe, and to a lesser extent also addressed the OSCE and the UN, providing specific recommendations to improve the protection and observance of the rights of trafficked persons, migrants and other groups vulnerable to human trafficking.

European Union

LSI closely followed the actions around and implementation of the EU strategy on trafficking in human beings, as well as the implementation of the new Directive 2011/36 (see above). Several developments and actions are worth mentioning:

Post Stockholm agenda

The Stockholm Programme, which framed Home Affairs policies, which started in 2010, ended in 2014. Therefore, the Directorate-General of the European Commission in charge of Home Affairs policies (DG Home) launched a public consultation entitled “An Open and Safe Europe - What Next?” The consultation aimed to gather input for the considerations on future challenges and priorities to be addressed by these policies in the coming years. States, NGOs and various entities, including La Strada International, PICUM and others, sent in contributions. The European Commission held a high-level conference on 29 and 30 January 2014 to discuss the future of Home Affairs policies together with other EU institutions, civil society organisations, member states and researchers.

Seasonal workers directive

On 5 February 2014 the European Parliament voted on the Directive on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of seasonal employment in EU Member States, the so-called “seasonal workers directive”. The new rules give non-EU seasonal workers the same labour rights on minimum pay, dismissal, working hours, holidays, and health and safety requirements as EU nationals. The legislation requires all applications for entering the EU as a seasonal workers to include a work contract or a binding job offer specifying payments, working hours, as well as evidence that the worker will have appropriate accommodation. Employers in breach of their obligations will face penalties and will have to compensate the affected seasonal worker(s). Member States will retain the right to decide how many seasonal workers are allowed into each country annually, and to establish a maximum length of stay of between five and nine months per year for each worker.

Civil society organisations working with migrant workers and undocumented migrants have, together with La Strada International, welcomed and strongly supported measures agreed upon by the European Parliament and the Council that aim at creating better working and living conditions for third-country seasonal workers across the EU. However, LSI regrets that some of the proposed recommendations regarding social rights and equal treatment of workers were not taken into account. This has the potential to jeopardise the effectiveness of the Directive by insufficiently addressing exploitation risks.

Resolution on the “Swedish Model” adopted in EU Parliament

On 26 February 2014 the European Parliament adopted a non-binding resolution with a majority of vote, calling on EU Member States to reduce the demand for prostitution by criminalising the act of buying sexual services, in line with the so-called ‘Nordic’ or ‘Swedish’ Model. The resolution stresses that prostitution violates human dignity and human rights, whether it is forced or voluntary, and calls on Member States to find exit strategies and alternative sources of income for women who want to leave prostitution or are faced with a lack of other options. An alternative resolution presented by Members of Parliament of a range of political groups, calling for the differentiation between voluntary and forced prostitution was rejected. The Resolution was based on the report on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality by Social Democrat MEP Mary Honeyball (UK).

The report was much contested in a statement by a large coalition of over 560 civil society organisations working on sex workers and women’s rights, LGBT rights, human trafficking, health and HIV, development etc., including La Strada International. Also a large group of 94 academics and researchers protested in a letter to MEPs and issued a counter report analysing the lack and misrepresentation of evidence in Mary Honeyball’s report. In addition, La Strada International issued a statement on behalf of the LSI NGO Platform, warning that the conflation between prostitution and human trafficking leads to inadequate counter-trafficking policies and to counter-productive prostitution policies. Although the Resolution is non-binding, it will influence the already heated

debate in Europe on prostitution and trafficking in human beings. It will not force countries to change their policies, but it will pressure them to revisit those policies and will give pro-criminalisation groups much more leverage with politicians in their countries.

EP Resolution on Undocumented Migrant Women in the EU

Also in February 2014 the European Parliament passed a resolution on “Undocumented Migrant Women in the EU” underlining the need for equal access to justice and services for all women, regardless of their administrative/documented status. The motion for this resolution came from an own-initiative report by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), prepared by Rapporteur Norica Nicolai (ALDE, Romania). The resolution calls on national and European authorities to ensure that a woman’s immigration status does not prevent her from accessing decent housing, health care, education, and justice. The resolution recommends that Member States delink the prosecution of violence from immigration control, so that all victims can safely report crimes. To ensure undocumented women are not turned away in their time of need, shelters for violence against women are encouraged to waive requirements that women provide documentation. Finally, access to healthcare and education should be upheld and there should be no reporting of children of undocumented migrants. Although some recommendations made by NGOs, such as PICUM, did not pass the final vote, for example, a call for Member States to ratify the UN Convention on Migrant Workers, the need to increase legal and social assistance for undocumented women, as well as the notion that regarding all undocumented migrant women as victims is potentially disempowering, the resolution marks an important step regarding the need to protect undocumented women’s rights in Europe.

EU Anti-Trafficking Day

Ahead of the 8th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October, the European Commission presented several documents highlighting EU actions against human trafficking. Next to the second statistical report on victims, *see EU statistics on trafficking in human beings*, the Commission published a mid-term report on the activities undertaken as part of the 2012-2016 EU strategy against trafficking in human beings. These include, among others, the establishment of the EU Civil Society Platform and e-Platform against human trafficking, the publishing of Guidelines for identification of victims, and Guidelines on the rights of victims and a Handbook for assistance and protection of children as especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

In a separate communication, the Commission also reported on the application of Directive 2004/81 on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings. The figures show that the possibility of issuing temporary residence permits to non-EU victims is currently under-used. For example, in 2012 only 1124 first residence permits were granted in the EU to victims who cooperated with the authorities, whereas for that same year 23 Member States registered 2171 non-EU citizens as victims of trafficking.

OSCE

On 1 September Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova of Kazakhstan started her term as the new OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. She replaced Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, who left this position in March 2014, and who was later appointed the new UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in persons, especially women and children. LSI attended on high level conference of the OSCE in 2014 and two Alliance Expert team meetings.

Council of Europe

LSI continued to facilitate active NGO involvement in the monitoring of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and the work of its monitoring body, GRETA. LSI actively approached NGOs in the countries that were to be visited by GRETA to ensure NGO involvement during the country visits.

GRETA started second evaluation round

In 2014 GRETA delivered the final country reports in the context of the first evaluation round and started the second evaluation round. GRETA further discussed the working methods and the draft questionnaire for this second round in its March meeting. LSI together with Anti-Slavery International have been advocating for maximum civil society involvement in the monitoring process, amongst others, through the “Guidance for NGOs to respond to GRETA”. The two

organisations collected NGO feedback in 2014, on their experiences cooperating with GRETA, based on which recommendations were compiled for GRETA's focus points for the second evaluation round. The outcomes of the survey and recommendations were presented by LSI's International Coordinator at GRETA's meeting in May 2014, in Strasbourg, France.

In May 2014, the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) launched the second evaluation round of implementation of the Council of Europe Convention. Following the first round of monitoring (2010-2014), which provided an overview of the implementation of the Convention by each state party, GRETA decided that the second round would examine the impact of legislative, policy and practical measures on the prevention of trafficking, the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking, and the prosecution of traffickers. In addition, particular attention was paid to measures taken to address new trends in human trafficking and the vulnerability of children to trafficking.

United Nations

LSI followed the developments at the UN on the issue of human trafficking, in particular the work of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, as well as the Rapporteurs on migration, slavery and violence against women, and the work of the ILO.

At the 25th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) from 4 to 28 March, Mrs Urmila Bhoola from South Africa was appointed the new Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, succeeding Mrs Gulnara Shahinian. At its 26th session, the Council appointed Maria Grazia Giammarinaro as the new UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. LSI was very pleased with this decision and supported her candidacy and lobbied for her appointment.

LSI organised NGO side event at the UNTOC Conference

In October 2014, LSI together with GAATW, LEFÖ and Ban Ying, participated in the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols on Trafficking and Smuggling. At the Conference, the NGOs presented their statement, calling again for a multi-disciplinary review mechanism to the Palermo Protocol. Two years ago, at the COP in 2012, States were unable to agree terms for the process of the review mechanism as several countries showed great reluctance to include civil society. This year our message was clear: "15 years after the adoption of the Protocol it is time to review implementation; it is time to work together to support people who have been trafficked and share strategies to ensure that there are fewer such individuals in future. It is time to deliver the accountability that victims of organised crimes, including human trafficking, deserve from States, parties and the UN." On the last night of the COP, States adopted a resolution looking to renew the work towards a review mechanism with a view to bringing it to the next session of the COP for adoption (in 2016). The resolution still enables the possibility of civil society participation, but the process is proving to be extremely difficult and slow.

LSI and their partners also ran a side event at the COP. During this side event the NGO speakers, referring to the upcoming 15th anniversary of the UN Trafficking Protocol in 2015, called for a review on its implementation and highlighted in particular bottlenecks related to compensation and access to justice for trafficked persons.

ILO new protocol

On 11 June 2014, the delegates at the International Labour Conference (ILC) adopted a new legally binding Protocol designed to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labour. The new Protocol modernises the existing ILO Convention on Forced Labour, adopted in 1930, to address practices such as human trafficking. The accompanying Recommendation provides technical guidance on its implementation. "The Protocol and Recommendation mark a major step forward in the fight against forced labour and represent a firm commitment among governments, employer and worker organisations to eliminate contemporary forms of slavery," stated ILO Director-General Guy Ryder. The Protocol strengthens the international legal framework by creating new obligations to prevent forced labour, to protect victims and to provide access to remedies, such as compensation for

material and physical harm. It requires governments to take measures to better protect workers, in particular migrant labourers, from fraudulent and abusive recruitment practices and emphasises the centrality of the role of employers and workers in the fight against forced labour.

Before the ILC, where the Protocol was adopted, a number of organisations and human rights bodies urged the state representatives at the meeting to adopt such a protocol. Several human rights organisations, including GAATW, Anti-Slavery International and Amnesty International, which whom LSI cooperated, started a petition calling on governments to make the new Protocol legally binding.

National advocacy

All LSI members undertake lobby and advocacy activities to influence their national policy makers, media, and the general public. To achieve these aims, LSI members distributed information to specific target groups, established media contacts, issued press releases, and gave interviews. In addition, seminars and workshops were organised, and recommendations and opinion articles were provided on particular issues. These issues include proposals for new legislation or amendments to existing legislation, or issues relating to particular events in the respective LS member country. While LSI secretariat focuses on monitoring of international policies and supports the members with collecting and promoting monitoring tools (i.e. desk research was undertaken in 2014, to collect different monitoring tools in 2014), the LSI members concurrently work on national monitoring of governmental policies and strategies.

Specific Projects in 2014

La Strada International is active on the European level by partnering in the implementation of several European projects. In 2014 LSI was in particular involved in the following projects:

datACT - Data protection for trafficked persons

In November 2012, the German Network KOK (the German nationwide activist coordination group combating trafficking in women and violence against women in the process of migration) started a project on data protection for trafficked persons, together with LSI, called *datACT - Data protection in anti-trafficking action*. The project aimed to promote the rights of trafficked persons to privacy and autonomy and to protect the use of their personal data, in order to empower exploited and abused persons to take action against irregular storing and sharing of their personal data. The project raised awareness among NGO counselling centres in selected European countries to stress confidentiality between the counsellor and trafficked persons and to assist service providers in providing safe information according to European data collection procedures. Additionally, it created alliances for data protection among the relevant stakeholders, including NGO counselling centres, National Rapporteur Mechanisms (or equivalent structures), IGOs and national data protection authorities. The project comprised a research, development of joint standards and consultations and trainings for service providers and the publication of a final manual. See further <http://www.dataact-project.org/startseite.html>

NGOs & Co - NGO-Business engagement in addressing human trafficking

From May 2013, LSI and its project partners are implementing the project “NGOs & Co - NGO-Business Engagement in Addressing Human Trafficking.” In cooperation with a broad group of NGOs throughout Europe, LSI worked on strengthening of the cooperation between grassroots organisations and the business sector in effectively preventing and addressing human trafficking. The project aims to increase the knowledge and capacity of grassroots anti-trafficking NGOs for establishing effective means of cooperation with the business sector on THB prevention and/or demand reduction; foster engagement with the business sector in preventing and addressing human trafficking by awareness-raising and building partnerships and to improve consumer awareness on human trafficking and its links to everyday products and services.

Businesses have a major responsibility and role to play in combatting human trafficking and must address both their supply (vendors, supply chain) and demand (workforce). LSI believes that the business sector should look towards anti-trafficking NGOs for expertise in addressing human trafficking. At the start of the project, a Europe-wide survey was carried out to assess existing practices by grassroots anti-trafficking NGOs in engaging with the private sector. The responses from the 27 participating NGOs were analysed and available online. The results of the assessment show that alliances between anti-trafficking NGOs and businesses have not yet reached their full potential. The surveyed European NGOs report limited examples of success, mostly following initiation of engagement by business counterparts already interested in the cause. Grassroots anti-trafficking NGOs are yet to make the leap from acknowledging the importance of involving the private sector to visualising possible pathways and models of engagement, creating linkages with relevant sectors and targeting appropriate boundary partners.

In the context of this project, LSI launched a campaign, called “Used in Europe” to raise awareness on the issue of human trafficking and labour exploitation in Europe in October 2014. Greater public awareness and increased knowledge of the facts are key to step up pressure on governments and businesses to prevent the suffering and human rights violations linked to everyday products and services in Europe.



Used in Europe - LSI campaign on human trafficking and labour exploitation in Europe

On 17 October La Strada International, together with 30 partner NGOs, launched the campaign “Used in Europe: human trafficking and labour exploitation on our continent”. The campaign reaches out to consumers, the private sector and states to address human trafficking, including forced and exploitative labour in Europe. The campaign website includes a map of Europe, where major cases of human trafficking and labour exploitation, reported by the media or by NGOs, are presented in an attempt to make human trafficking and severe forms of labour exploitation in Europe more visible. In a joint statement, LSI and partners called upon governments to take a clear stand against human trafficking and to end exploitative labour conditions for all workers, including migrant workers, in Europe. See further www.usedineurope.com

The NGOs & CO project will finish in 2015. In 2014 and 2015 a civil society toolkit on working with companies is being developed. This toolkit was firstly piloted with European anti-trafficking NGOs during the LSI NGO Platform in June in Sofia, Bulgaria. The toolkit will be published in 2015.

Global Human Trafficking Hotline Network launch

In April 2013, the Global Human Trafficking Hotline Network (GHTHN) was launched. The GHTHN is a new alliance of anti-trafficking hotlines that will build a broader safety net and develop a more coordinated global response for trafficked persons. The alliance will also create a data-driven approach that identifies human trafficking trends and informs eradication, prevention, and victim protection strategies.

Being one of the recipients of the Global Impact Award from Google, La Strada International joined Polaris Project and Liberty Asia in the new hotline network. Global Impact Awards support entrepreneurial non-profits using technology to change the world.

This project is making it possible for LSI and its member organisations to connect with diverse anti-trafficking organisations in other regions of the world, and to share data we collect and improve the knowledge and information on human trafficking collected by civil society. Moreover, the close cooperation of helplines globally will enable LSI to reach out to more vulnerable groups and can help to increase identification, referral and assistance of trafficked persons. In 2014, LSI supported the development of a toolkit for hotlines, as well as the launch of a [Global Modern Slavery Directory](#).

Making use of the search directory, trafficked persons can be connected to support networks globally.



Addressing Demand in Anti-Trafficking Efforts and Policies

In January 2014, the DemandAT “Addressing Demand in Anti-Trafficking Efforts and Policies”, a new EU project to conduct research on addressing demand for trafficking in human beings, started. This project is coordinated by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), based in Vienna, and partners with the universities of Bremen, Edinburgh, Lund, Durham, the European University Institute and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, as well as with La Strada Czech Republic and La Strada International.

While responses to trafficking have traditionally focused on combatting the criminal networks involved in trafficking or protecting the human rights of victims, European countries are increasingly exploring ways of influencing demand for the services or products of those trafficked within their own economies and societies - for example, through criminalising clients of sex workers, better control of recruitment agencies, and fair trade campaigns. This major interdisciplinary project examines the history, economics and politics of such measures, and explore how effective they have been in practice. Rather than restricting the analysis to narrow international legal definitions, it analyses efforts to address demand for a range of forced and exploitative scenarios of labour and production and draw on insights from related areas, such as addressing the demand for drugs, irregular domestic labour, and fair trade campaigns. The project will feed into EU and national policy-making to address human trafficking. In 2014, firstly a DemandAT website was developed.

The website is intended to provide a forum for discussion on the role of demand, and demand-side policies against trafficking more generally. The website's blog area thus invites researchers, policy-makers, activists, as well as the wider public to engage in a debate on different aspects of the notion of demand in trafficking and related policies.

LSI recruited interns in 2014, to help LSI with its part of the research, LSI is responsible for part of the research in particular for providing an overview of the current European debate on demand-side policies in different forms of human trafficking, in particular trafficking for the commercial sex industry and labour exploitation through a systematic review of relevant literature (desk study). Within the framework of the Project, two consortium meetings were attended in 2014.

EU funded project, TRACE, examines human trafficking as a criminal Enterprise

TRACE (Trafficking As a Criminal Enterprise), is an EU-funded project (7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration) that started in May 2014 and will run until the end of April 2016. TRACE consists of a multi-disciplinary team from across Europe, which will develop state-of-the-art knowledge on the business of human trafficking in an effort to support stakeholders in their fight against this crime. TRACE is coordinated by Trilateral Research & Consulting in London. La Strada International is one of the consortium partners, as well as the Vrije University Brussels, Tilburg University in The Netherlands, the Council of Baltic Sea States Secretariat, the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons in Romania, the Cyprus Police and the French Committee against Modern Slavery. A first launch meeting was held in May 2014 in London. TRACE will acquire cutting-edge knowledge of current and future criminal, social, economic, psychological and political processes that make the trafficking industry so profitable. The project will also focus on understanding the individuals involved in the business of human trafficking and the relationship between them, as to-date little is known about the profiles of traffickers, what influences their business and how trafficked persons become traffickers. Furthermore, TRACE aims to examine current and future trends in technology's potential role in human trafficking.

In 2014 the first deliverables were published. Firstly, a review of the media framing of human trafficking explores how human trafficking is framed within the European news media, using case study examples from Poland, Cyprus and the United Kingdom. Secondly, A review of the implementation of the EU strategy on human trafficking by EU Members aims to provide a state of the art report on human trafficking in the context of the European Union and to identify the main obstacles and challenges, based on desk research on the implementation of the Directive in five countries (UK, Poland, Cyprus, Romania and The Netherlands). The findings show that despite the attention at both the EU and national levels to address and combat human trafficking, a number of issues in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution remain problematic. Thirdly, a report on the macro and micro analysis of human trafficking offers an analysis of the processes associated with three types of trafficking in human beings: trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation; labour exploitation, forced begging and trafficking in the context of other types of crime. The micro analysis focuses on the different phases in the trafficking process: the recruitment, transport, housing, and other aspects facilitating human trafficking. This study is predominantly based on literature research and case studies from Romania, Sweden, Latvia, Cyprus and the Netherlands. The TRACE project will continue until 2016 and more deliverables will be presented in the course of next year.

Regional Programme against Human Trafficking in Eastern Europe - Belarus, Ukraine & Moldova

In 2014, La Strada Ukraine, La Strada Belarus (Gender Perspectives), La Strada Moldova and LSI joined IOM in a newly developed regional anti-trafficking programme, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by IOM in Kiev, Ukraine.

This two-year programme, which will run until 2016, is the third phase of the Programme against Human Trafficking in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, which was earlier supported by the Danish government. The new programme comprises various activities in the three countries to better address human trafficking, including activities related to monitoring, running helplines, establishing NRMs and more. A first launch meeting was held on 16 December 2014, in Minsk, Belarus. At this meeting the common programme was presented and discussed and all partners updated each other on prospects for the next six months. Additionally, a discussion was held on how awareness on victims of human trafficking in the region can be improved, along with a discussion on the risks and opportunities resulting from the crisis in Ukraine.

Research and publications

Next to research and publication published by LSI, the member organisations of LSI, published also several research studies. For example:

- In 2014, La Strada Czech Republic published the report, “**Developments in trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and forced labour**”. This publication is the result of a three-year project, Discovering Trafficking for the Purpose of Forced Labour and Labour Exploitation, which aimed to provide more trafficked persons with access to legal protection and services. The report offers a comparative analysis of legal regulation and case law in the area of trafficking for labour exploitation. For this analysis, data and case law were collected from nine European countries. The result of the research is not only the identification of legal differences in theory or application, but also the formulation of specific legal and executive actions, which should improve the efficiency of Czech legal and law-enforcement systems.
- In 2014, Animus Association has analysed how the rights of trafficked persons are respected and promoted in Bulgaria. Despite increasing awareness that trafficking and the exploitation of human beings through forced labour or in slavery-like conditions constitute severe human rights violations, states tend to focus on the prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators, while the protection of the rights of trafficked persons lags behind. Often victims are purely seen as an instrument for the prosecution with little regard for the far-reaching impact testifying against their exploiters may have on their current and future wellbeing and long-term safety. This report ***The Rights of Trafficked Persons in Bulgaria*** provides a legal analysis of the position of trafficked persons in criminal and other relevant proceedings in Bulgaria and their treatment by the judicial system, in particular their access to legal aid and the protection of their rights as victims and witnesses, including access to compensation. The report contains an analysis of the legal provisions pertaining to the position of victim/witness of trafficking and their implementation in practice, based on the experiences of service providers and interviews with victims.
- A new publication of La Strada Moldova in 2014, ***The impact of anti-trafficking policy on trafficked persons’ rights in Moldova***, reflects the role of civil society organisations in carrying out independent evaluations of state anti-trafficking policy. The report assesses the implementation of state obligations towards the protection of the rights of trafficked persons. It includes both trafficked persons’ experiences with the provided services, as well as opinions of specialists from various organisations interviewed during the research. The report provides general conclusions and recommendations to overcome identified challenges, which are directed specifically to the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons but also to the greater anti-trafficking community in Moldova. The proposed measures aim to strengthen rights-based approaches in the development and implementation of state anti-trafficking policy, ensure a positive impact of this policy on the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of victims of trafficking in human beings, and enhance the efficiency of the measures taken by all actors in the field. The recommendations, when implemented, can facilitate the coordination of state anti-trafficking and human rights policy and encourage sustainable development of government efforts in these areas.

Marketing and communication

LSI has identified the need to promote the cohesion and the shared vision of the network. One of the strategic goals of LSI for the period 2012 - 2015 is to increase the visibility of LSI and the LS NGO platform. The role of civil society is not fully recognised and supported in Europe, in particular in some European countries. The work of NGOs should be made more visible among a broader group and their best practices should be promoted, to ensure respect and a clear mandate for NGOs in the anti-trafficking field. For this reason, LSI employed a new freelance marketing manager in 2013, who continued to work for LSI in 2014.

LSI and (media) representation

The LSI Secretariat cooperated with the media on specific topics on multiple occasions. In general, the media requested contacts abroad and general information and statistics on human trafficking, the national situation in the LS countries and new legislation, and specific court cases or information on LS work. More attention was received from the national press in comparison to foreign press outlets, in particular from the national written press, followed by national television and radio. Social media were also an important source of information sharing.

LSI observed that again in 2014, the focus of the media was often placed on sensationalised victim stories and on trafficking in the sex industry. LSI welcomes increased attention to the issue of trafficking in the public arena. Nevertheless, unbalanced media coverage on trafficking can also create false perceptions and damage the interests of trafficked persons as opposed to supporting them. Therefore, LSI discourages sensationalised stories of human trafficking for the sex industry. Rather, LSI promotes the use of sound empirical research and facts derived from grassroots level experiences. In addition, LSI provides contacts and referrals between journalists and service providers. In 2014 LSI regularly updated the news section on its website. LSI receives its updates via the LSI members, mailing lists, newsletters and other information sources.

LSI Newsletter

Four newsletters were published in 2014 in March, July, September and December. The LSI newsletter contains information and opinions about new developments in the anti-trafficking and related fields from the La Strada member countries and Europe in general, new publications and resources and upcoming events. For its newsletters, LSI makes use of input of the members and information received and monitors the newsletters of other organisations.

LSI Services and assistance provided

In 2014 LSI extended its support to trafficked persons: 1786 people were provided with direct assistance and support, compared to 1823 in 2013.

Assistance and support to trafficked persons is among the core activities of the LSI member organisations. The type of support provided depends on the individual situation, the specific needs of the person concerned and on the available services and resources. The needs, views and concerns of the client form the basis of the assistance provided and underlie all other work.

Support services vary from crisis (emergency) intervention (e.g. referral to shelters, legal, medical and psycho-social care) to the implementation of long-term assistance programmes, such as

vocational training and employment support. Social assistance strongly links to La Strada's awareness raising activities.

Helplines

All LSI members run national helplines (also called hotlines), some of which are free of charge and open 24 hours a day. Helplines are not only a strong tool to prevent human trafficking, for some of the LSI members they are also the components of the state system of identification and referral of trafficked persons. The helplines are utilised by individuals who have been trafficked and are in need of advice or assistance and family members, friends, as well as people seeking options to migrate abroad. The helpline Consultants provide information on destination countries and useful telephone numbers, assist in restoring personal documents, make contacts with the family and conduct crisis intervention.

A total of 18350 calls to national hotlines were reported during 2014 in all La Strada member countries, excluding the Netherlands, compared to 21.816 calls in 2013; 10.603 calls in 2012 and 8.376 in 2011.

The majority of hotline inquiries concern study and employment opportunities abroad and related bureaucratic issues (e.g. necessary papers, verification of job opportunities), safety concerns and requests for contact addresses and phone numbers. Additionally, questions are received about (international) marriages, domestic violence, and children's rights protection, along with requests for investigation on mistreatment and abuse by employers and questions related to sex work.

- **La Strada Ukraine runs two National Toll-Free Hotlines**, focusing on child rights promotion and protection, prevention of violence, human trafficking and gender discrimination. The organisation also provides prevention and education activities, social and legal support to people who have experienced different types of violence. Recently, La Strada is observing an increasing number of internally displaced people from Crimea coming to other parts of Ukraine. People who were forced to leave their homes, schools, kindergartens and look for a different place to live. They face social, economic and other difficulties.
- **La Strada Moldova is operating the 116111 Child Helpline in Moldova** - On 1 June 2014, the Moldovan Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, contracted La Strada Moldova to operate the 24-hour national toll-free Child Helpline, 116111. The Helpline collaborates with similar services in the European Union and is coordinated by Child Helplines International. The helpline will provide psychological counselling to at-risk children, as well as to parents and child caretakers in difficult situations and requiring professional support and assistance. In addition to the new Child Helpline, La Strada Moldova also operates a hotline for safe migration and human trafficking, one for support to victims of domestic violence and a website for child safety online.
- **Google promotes La Strada hotlines** - In December 2014, Google launched its promotion of La Strada International's anti-trafficking hotlines in Bulgaria, Poland, Moldova and Ukraine. When searching Google in these countries for specific keywords related to human trafficking, including child trafficking, exploitation and abuse, users are presented with an information box, showing the La Strada hotline phone number, its business hours, supported languages, website and mobile services, if available.

Shelters

A number of the LSI members have reported challenges with sufficient and suitable shelters for trafficked persons. Due to lack of financial support of the LSI members, the assistance most difficult to provide to clients is financial support and basic necessities such as clothes, food and hygiene items. LSI members also report facing difficulties with providing long-term accommodation and difficulties related to persons' immigration and residence status.

Prevention & Awareness Raising

One of the core aims of LSI is the prevention of human trafficking and the empowerment of at-risk groups and trafficked persons. The prevention and awareness raising activities target professionals who work with trafficked persons or who might be in contact with them, namely social workers, health workers, psychologists, cultural mediators, interpreters, lawyers and members of law enforcement. This is done through several prevention and education activities, including but not limited to:

- Lectures / seminars / workshops on the subject of human trafficking, either for the target group or for professionals;
- Development and dissemination of prevention materials;
- Information provision through hotlines, websites and emails.

Empowering migrant women at risk of exploitation - In December 2014, La Strada Czech Republic, LEFÖ (Austria) and Ban Ying (Germany) started the project "Empowerment of Migrant Women at Risk of Exploitation, Trafficking or Enslavement". The project aims to empower migrant women who are victims of violence and other criminal abuses or who are at risk of becoming victims. The particular focus of the project is on women working in hidden or enclosed environments such as households, cleaning services within gated hotels, diplomatic complexes, etc. Because migrant women are isolated from common awareness raising measures, such as media, social networks etc, the project aims to find alternative ways of informing them about their rights and ways of resolving abusive situations, as well as to offer them assistance through specialised services.

La Strada Poland defending the rights of domestic workers - On 10 June La Strada Poland organised a protest in front of the Kuwait Embassy in Warsaw to express outrage and exert pressure on the Embassy after reports that a Kuwaiti diplomat in Poland had exploited two Filipino domestic workers for two years. Earning only a minimum wage, the domestic workers were starved, and forced to work more than 14 hours a day, with no opportunity to leave the home of their employer. One of the workers had managed to escape; the other was sent back home immediately to prevent her from filing a complaint. The unpaid wages to the two domestic workers totalled more than 30 000 dollars per person and the attaché who employed the workers was asked to pay the outstanding wages. Exploitation of domestic workers at diplomatic households is a global problem. The biggest obstacle is the lack of access to justice for the domestic workers due to the diplomatic immunity of their employers.

Staff/Organisation

Staff LSI International Secretariat

Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator
Marieke van Doorninck, Advisor Public Affairs
Sofia Skrypnyk - until October 2014
Borislav Gerasimov, Office manager
Eve Aronson - English language editor

Staff changes

In the beginning of 2014, La Strada Czech Republic appointed a new Director, Marketa Hronkova, who started her new position on 1 April 2014. She replaced Irena Konečná, who will continue to cooperate with La Strada Czech Republic, but has decided to step down as the Director. Irena Konečná will remain a member of the LSI board.

In November 2014, Sofia Skrypnyk, the project manager of NGOs & Co, left the organisation to pursue a career in supporting human rights defenders in Asia and the Caucasus.

In December 2014, Irina Alkhovka from Gender Perspectives/La Strada Belarus stepped down as a member of the LSI Board after three years and was succeeded by Marija Todorovska from Open Gate/La Strada Macedonia.

LSI Board members in 2014

Chair - Irina Alkhovka (Belarus) - in December replaced by Kateryna Levchenko
Treasurer - Irena Konečná (Czech Republic)
Secretary - Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine) - In December replaced by Marija Todorovska

General Assembly representatives 2014

Belarus - Elena Nestsjaruk
Bulgaria - Nadia Kozhouharova
Czech Republic - Lucie Otáhalová
Moldova - Daniela Misail-Nichitin
Macedonia - Jasmina Rajkovska
The Netherlands - Bas de Visser
Poland - Irena Dawid-Olczyk & Joanna Garnier
Ukraine - Lyudmyla Kovalchuk

International events attended by LSI staff

January - March 2014

27-28 January, Berlin Germany, DataACT meeting, organised by KOK
29 January, Brussels, Belgium, Meeting 'At the intersection of smuggling and trafficking: the European response to the vanishing of human beings', organised by the Greens at the European Parliament
3-4 February, Amsterdam The Netherlands, Concluding meeting of the project Tools for the validation and utilization of EU statistics on human trafficking, Amsterdam, The Netherlands organised by Tilburg University
13 February 2014 - Expert Meeting Commercial Sex and International Development Cooperation, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
17-18 February, Vienna Austria, OSCE meeting Not for Sale - Joining Forces Against Human Trafficking
20-21 February, Amsterdam, The Netherlands - Coordination and Advisory Board meeting for NGOs & Co - by La Strada International
10-21 March, New York USA, 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UN

April - June 2014

1-3 April, Minsk Belarus, LSI Board meeting
11 April - Global supply chains summit, London, UK
14-17 May, Warsaw Poland Annual Conference "Developing Victim Support Across Europe"
20-21 May, Brussels, Belgium, PICUM annual workshop and General Assembly meeting
16-20 June 2014 - LSI NGO platform in the framework of the project NGOs & CO - NGO-business engagement in addressing human trafficking, Sofia, Bulgaria

July - September 2014

1 July - OSCE Alliance Expert Coordination Team meeting, Vienna, Austria
1-5 September, Geneva Switzerland, 21st session of the Committee on Migrant Workers UN
8-12 September, Romania, Council of Europe compensation project trainings
9-10 September, Amsterdam The Netherlands - LSI Board meeting
15-18 September - Second coordination meeting of DemandAT project, Bremen, Germany
23 September, Brussels Belgium, PICUM working group on Access to Justice and Legal Strategies
25 September - Final conference project 'Safe Return for Victims of Trafficking and Victims of Domestic Violence Without or with an Uncertain Residence Permit' - The Hague, The Netherlands
23-26 September - GAATW 20th Anniversary and International members congress, Bangkok, Thailand
30 September, Brussels Belgium, RACE in Europe Project: Trafficking for Forced Criminality and Forced Begging

October - December 2014

6-12 October - Seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Vienna, Austria
9 October - Side event at the Conference of the Parties, "15 Years of Implementing the Trafficking in Persons Protocol - Successes and Challenges", Vienna, Austria
10 October - Joining Forces against Human Trafficking, The Austrian Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking, Vienna, Austria
4-5 November - 14th High-level OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference "Ethical issues in Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking", Vienna, Austria
27-28 November, Vienna, Austria, FRA expert group on labour exploitation
27-28 London, UK Project Briseis coordination meeting organised by APAV
1 December, Brussels Belgium, PICUM Working Group on Labour Rights
1-4 December - La Strada International 19th Assembly Meeting, Prague, Czech Republic
12 December - OSCE Alliance Expert Coordination Team Meeting, Vienna, Austria

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