

To address the key challenges in the fight against trafficking in human beings, EU Member States need to fully and correctly implement the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive in order to increase the number of investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators, establish appropriate mechanisms for the early identification and protection of victims and enhance measures to prevent human trafficking.

Together with GAATW, La Strada International (LSI) NGO Platform submitted [input](#) for the report in 2015 highlighting main challenges and recommendations which was partly reflected in the report. By the end of 2016, the Commission is expected to publish two reports on compliance with the directive and the criminalisation of the knowing use of services of victims of trafficking, as well as the post-2016 Strategy on trafficking in human beings. Child protection along migration routes is a top priority and the Commission is also paying particular attention to unaccompanied minors in its reform of the Common European asylum system.

EC Study on the gender dimension of human trafficking and EP report on the implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive from a gender perspective

In April the European Commission published [a study](#) on the gender dimension of human trafficking, in order to better understand what it means to be 'taking into account the gender perspective, to strengthen the prevention of this crime and protection of the victims thereof', as required in Article 1 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. The study aimed to look at specifically the gender dimension of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as this is the most common form of exploitation identified in EU member states. The study uses reviews of relevant literature, in-depth case studies and high-level analysis in order to reach conclusions with regard to the gender dimensions of trafficking in human beings and make recommendations concerning law and policy implementation and improvement. An [Executive summary](#) contains the main findings and recommendations.

In May the European Parliament voted on a resolution based on a [Report on the implementation of the Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims from a gender perspective](#). The report makes an overview of actions taken by member states in the areas of prevention, identification and assistance to victims, from a gender perspective and makes recommendations for building on and improving this work.

La Strada International regrets that both the study and the report focus heavily on the trafficking of women and girls into the sex sector and recommend the 'Swedish model' and criminalising clients of sex workers as a way of reducing trafficking. While the majority of identified victims are indeed trafficked into the sex sector, this continued focus on and debate about prostitution means that other forms of trafficking receive less attention and many victims, including women and girls, remain unidentified. La Strada continues to call for distinct approaches to human trafficking and sex work that do not conflate the two and do not result in 'collateral damage' for either sex workers or victims of trafficking. Member States should rather take action to ensure that the rights of all persons are protected and that decent work is promoted in all sectors, and put more focus on monitoring the situation in both regular and irregular sectors. LSI further believes that alternative ways of reducing demand should be considered to ensure that all forms of human trafficking can be avoided in both regular and irregular sectors.

Amnesty International publishes policy on sex work



Amnesty International published its long-awaited ['Policy on State Obligations to Respect, Protect and Fulfil the Human Rights of Sex Workers'](#), developed after two years of extensive worldwide consultations, a considered review of substantive evidence and international human rights standards and first-hand research in four countries. The policy calls on governments to ensure protection of sex workers from harm, exploitation and coercion; the participation of sex workers

in the development of laws that affect their lives and safety; and an end to discrimination and access to education and employment options for all.

It recommends the decriminalisation of consensual sex work, including those laws that prohibit associated activities – such as bans on buying, solicitation and general organisation of sex work. This is based on evidence that these laws often make sex workers less safe and provide impunity for abusers with sex workers often too scared of being penalised to report crimes to the police. Laws on sex work should focus on protecting people from exploitation and abuse, rather than trying to ban all sex work and penalise sex workers. The policy is accompanied by a [Q&A](#), the researches conducted in [Norway](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Argentina](#) and [Papua New Guinea](#) and a [summary](#) of the four researches.

La Strada International welcomed Amnesty’s policy in a [statement](#) and reconfirmed our position that human trafficking can only be stopped if every person’s rights as a human being are recognised, respected and realised and this includes sex workers. We reiterated that trafficking occurs both in countries where sex work is legal and in countries where aspects of commercial sex are criminalised. We are convinced that focusing the debate on the abolishment or criminalisation of sex work will not lead to the protection of the human rights of the women concerned, neither will it effectively address trafficking in human beings.

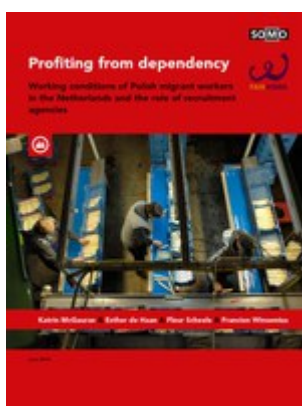
The new Amnesty policy was also welcomed by, among others, [the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women](#), [the Freedom Network](#), [the Global Network of Sex Work Projects](#) and [the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe](#).

What’s new ?

Polish migrant workers still frequently face abuse in the Netherlands

Polish migrant workers in the Netherlands still face long working days, unpaid overtime, sexual intimidation and threats, despite a series of measures taken by the Dutch government in 2011 to improve their situation. Because of their dependency on recruitment agencies, Polish migrant workers remain extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Yet, the Dutch government continues to allow the recruitment industry to regulate itself.

This is the most important conclusion of the latest research report by FairWork and SOMO called [Profiting from dependency](#). The researchers interviewed over one hundred Polish migrant workers from around the Netherlands with questions about wages, discrimination, exploitation and sexual intimidation, health and lack of insurance, social isolation and work pressure.



“The owner of the greenhouse where I was employed introduced a competition amongst workers. He put a list with the names of all workers on the wall. They were ranked in phases according to their productivity. When someone was in the orange phase for a couple of days he would be fired. The owner would call up the recruitment agency, tell them the name of the workers and the agency would call the workers to tell them there is no work for them anymore, says one of the interviewed workers.

Sandra Claassen, director of FairWork: “Every year, hundreds of Polish working migrants contact us because they have problems at work, ranging from being underpaid and long working days to exploitation and unjust fines. Despite the fact that they have the same rights as Dutch employees, they are often abused. Their stories are the backbone of

this report, and they show that a lot needs to be improved.” The researchers conclude that the Dutch government’s policy of allowing the sector to self-regulate facilitates the exploitation of migrant workers. Esther de Haan of SOMO: “Recruitment agencies should be better controlled: self-regulation of the industry is failing and Polish workers pay the price. Recruitment agencies and the government should take their responsibility to improve the working conditions for Polish migrant workers in the Netherlands.”

Stronger Together launches new toolkit and training to combat slavery in supply chains

Stronger Together launched new toolkit and training '[Tackling modern slavery in global supply chains](#)'. The good practice toolkit is based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights framework to support businesses in any country to implement a pragmatic approach to combat slavery in supply chains. The workshops are led by labour rights experts from the retail sector, who have implemented programmes and projects to tackle human rights issues across the globe.

Eurofound report on trafficking for labour exploitation

The right to free movement for workers within the European Union was enshrined in Article 48 of the EEC Treaty in 1957. Nowadays, private labour market intermediaries - such as temporary work agencies and employment placement agencies - contribute to facilitating this labour mobility in their role as mediator between individual workers and organisations in need of labour. However, due to loopholes in regulation, some workers and vulnerable groups run the risk of being exploited by fraudulent agencies. This report examines how public authorities are currently regulating labour market intermediaries across Member States, highlighting the effectiveness or otherwise of different registration or licensing schemes. It also examines activities by social partners aimed at preventing the trafficking of labour. The overall aim is to contribute to the development of a best practice guide for public authorities to encourage better monitoring and enforcement of regulations deterring trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. The report, an executive summary and national contributions are available [on the project website](#).

Anti-Trafficking Review Issue 6: 'Prosecuting Human Trafficking'

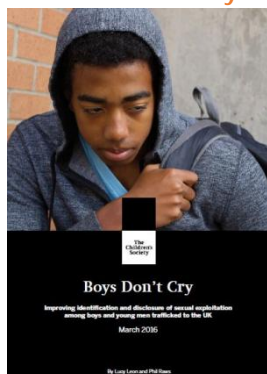
Prosecuting human trafficking is widely viewed as one of the main pillars of an effective national response to trafficking. But worldwide, the number of prosecutions for trafficking and related exploitation remains stubbornly low, especially when compared to the generally accepted size of the problem. Very few traffickers are ever brought to justice and the criminal justice system rarely operates to benefit those who have been trafficked.



[Issue 6 of the Anti-Trafficking Review](#) analyses human trafficking prosecutions in different regions of the world and from a range of different perspectives. With five themed articles focusing on Russia, the United States, the Balkans and Western Europe, the issue provides important insights into the practical and policy issues surrounding human trafficking prosecutions.

In the Debate Section nine authors take sides to defend or reject the proposition: 'Prosecuting trafficking deflects attention from much more important responses and is anyway a waste of time and money'. While there is considerable diversity in views among contributors, most authors argue around one of two central ideas: failure to prosecute trafficking effectively makes a mockery of criminalisation and ensures the cycle of exploitation will continue unchecked; and, prosecutions that ignore the rights and needs of victims are hollow victories that will never deliver true justice.

Children's Society research into male victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation



The UK-based organisation Children's Society launched a new [report](#) on boys and young men who have been trafficked into the UK and who experience sexual exploitation. It looks at the scale of exploitation and the barriers to it being identified for this particularly vulnerable group, detailing the views of professionals who have a frontline or strategic role in this area. The report findings will improve the understanding of this complex and often obscured issue and can inform the work of those who support trafficked boys and young men.

The Dutch NGOs FairWork, Humanitas and Jade Zorggroep also conducted a [study](#) on the problems and needs of male victims of sexual exploitation, with the aim of improving the services offered to this group, which is recognised more and more often among Dutch service providers. The study found that male victims,

like female victims, experience severe psychosocial problems, both as a result of the trafficking experience and previous events. There is a great taboo about victimhood and exploitation among men, which makes it difficult for them to seek help or express their feelings and needs. The interviewed men said that they weren't 'stronger' than women and needed the same kind of emotional support as women, after sexual exploitation. They also expressed feelings of social isolation and the need for informal support, for example, through 'buddy projects', church groups or LGBT organisations. At the same time, service providers noted that men usually ask more for practical help, such as help with accommodation, work or study, than for psychological help. This is perhaps due to the traditional view of gender roles, where men are expected to fulfil a stereotypically male role and be independent and self-sufficient. On the other hand, this may also be due to the fact that men try to resolve their psychological needs through practical matters, and service providers sometimes fail to recognise these needs. The study partners have prepared a [leaflet](#) with English-language quotes from the interviews conducted.

ICRSE Community Report on exploitation in the sex industry

To mark May Day 2016, International Workers' Day, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) published its Community Report on Exploitation: Unfair labour arrangements and precarious working conditions in the sex industry.

The [Community Report](#) was developed through consultation with sex workers and sex workers' organisations in the region and analyses the different forms of exploitation sex workers can face in the sex industry. It aims to engage in the discussion over exploitation in the sex industry, while simultaneously challenging the neo-abolitionist definition of sex work (or 'prostitution') as 'sexual exploitation'. It argues that this approach obscures the complex realities of sex workers' lives and work arrangements, and in consequence fails to address the diversity of exploitative working practices that do occur in the sex industry. Both sex work, as form of work and income-generating activity, and exploitation in the sex industry, that is, labour arrangements that enable one person to take unfair advantage of the work of another person, belong to the realm of work and should be viewed and analysed through the lens of labour. This is to say that only by focusing on sex workers' working conditions, employment practices and arrangements under which sexual services are sold and exchanged can we come to a better understanding of and challenge exploitation in sex industry.



WODC reviews 46 studies on links prostitution policy and occurrence of human trafficking

The Dutch Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) published a research entitled 'On the Boundaries of What We Can Measure: The methodological quality of international studies on the prevalence of prostitution-related human trafficking with emphasis on North-West Europe'. The study, conducted by the Universiteit voor Humanistiek Utrecht, reviewed 46 studies on the links between prostitution policy and the occurrence of human trafficking in the following countries: The Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. The research found that very few studies really elaborate on the relations between (changes in) prostitution policies and the prevalence of human trafficking. One of the reasons is the differences in definitions of what constitutes (illegal) prostitution, which makes comparisons between countries impossible. The research found that the analysed studies were not valid and reliable enough to provide dependable estimates of the effects of prostitution policies on the prevalence of human trafficking. In addition, for those countries that use some form of regulation the research did not find convincing evidence for the scale theory (i.e. the prevalence of human trafficking will increase), nor for the substitution theory (the prevalence of human trafficking will decline as a result of more lenient policies). In countries where prostitution is illegal/criminalised there was also no convincing evidence that this leads to a decline in demand for prostitution services, nor to a decline in the prevalence of human trafficking as a result of this criminalisation. The quality of data of the studies was simply not strong enough to make sound estimations of the prevalence of human trafficking, let alone to elaborate on the causal relation between prostitution politics and human trafficking.

The research is available in [full text in Dutch](#) and a [summary in English](#) and a [summary in Dutch](#).

Launch of Global Study on Child Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism

The [Global Study on Child Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism \(SECTT\)](#) was launched at high level events in Washington DC, Stellenbosch, Bangkok and New-York City on 12 and 13 May 2016. Partners from around the world and across sectors came together to create the largest repository of information ever collected on the issue. The Global Study reveals the extent of SECTT, what motivates it, the evolving trends and concrete recommendations for action. The global launch will be followed by a series of communication and advocacy events at national and regional levels. Presentation of the Global Study at UNWTO regional consultations started in April and will continue throughout 2016.

What's new on the web ?

Online discussion forum on labour migration programmes

A network of organisations in the US called the International Labor Recruitment Working Group (ILWRG) has launched a five-week [online discussion forum](#) on the website of the People's Global Action on Migration, Development, & Human Rights (PGA) on temporary labour migration programmes, to build momentum for this year's PGA discussions in Dhaka. The ILWRG has chosen to look at temporary migration programs, because they are proliferating around the world as a way that destination country governments and businesses can bring in labour, without having those workers migrate to the country on a more permanent basis. Temporary programs are usually for a specific time, have limits on worker mobility (for example a worker cannot change employers while on the programme) and limits on conduct, for example workers often cannot bring their families with them, marry or have children while on the program. You can find the page here:

Responsible Sourcing Tool Goes Live



On 16 and 17 May, Verité launched the [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#) with a series of meetings in the Washington, DC area attended by federal contractors, companies, government procurement officials, and representatives of civil society.

The Responsible Sourcing Tool is a new website created to help visualise and understand the risks of human trafficking in supply chains as well as the mechanisms to implement effective management systems to detect, prevent, and combat trafficking. The website contains a model compliance plan with downloadable templates and other tools based on Verité's deep experience helping leading companies combat trafficking in their global supply chains.

What's happening where ?

4 - 5 July, Vienna Austria, Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the Evaluation of Anti-Trafficking Responses by UNODC

18 July - Multi stakeholder hearing to prepare for high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants - see September

31 July - World Day against Trafficking in Persons

7 - 8 September - Prevention of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation in supply chains, by OSCE OSR Berlin, Germany

8 - 11 September - 13th AWID International forum, Bahia, Brazil

19 - 30 September - 26th session of the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation meeting in Warsaw, Poland

30 September - 30th anniversary celebration of CoMensha/La Strada Netherlands

What's on your mind ?

Reject dangerous migration response plan, more than 100 NGOs tell EU leaders

Prior to the EU summit in Brussels this week, a coalition of more than 100 NGOs, including LSI, called upon the European Union to reject the [European Commission's proposal on migration](#). Shifting towards a foreign policy that serves the single objective of curbing migration, the EU and its member states risk further undermining their credibility and authority in the defence of human rights, the organizations say. They call on European leaders to reject the Commission proposal that would cement this approach, making deterrence and return of people the main objective of the EU's relationship with third countries.

The plan proposes using aid, trade and other funds to encourage countries to reduce the number of migrants reaching EU shores. It was put forward by the Commission at the beginning of June and will be discussed by European heads of state and government at the EU summit in Brussels this week. It is inspired by the EU-Turkey deal which has left thousands of people stranded in Greece in inhumane and degrading conditions. Children are particularly affected, with many hundreds of unaccompanied children being held in closed detention facilities or forced to sleep in police cells.

According to the coalition of over 100 human rights, humanitarian, medical, migration and development agencies, Europe risks torpedoing its human rights foreign policy, and undermining the right to asylum internationally. There are no safeguards envisaged to ensure that human rights, rule of law standards and protection mechanisms are in place when the EU strikes deals with governments it deems useful for stopping migration to Europe. This leaves a very real risk of breach of international law which forbids pushbacks to places where people are at risk of rights violations. "Responsibility and liability for human rights violations do not end at Europe's borders," the statement reads.

Also, the proposal discussed ignores all the evidence that deterrence strategies aimed at stopping migration are ineffective. The EU's current approach will not only fail to 'break the business-model' of smugglers but will increase human suffering as people will be forced into taking more dangerous routes to reach Europe.

The NGO coalition is very concerned that the proposal will result in a wholesale reorientation of Europe's development aid towards stopping migration. "This is an unacceptable contradiction to the EU's commitment to use development cooperation with the aim of eradicating poverty," the statement reads.

The organisations warn that striking 'migration management' agreements with countries where grave human rights violations are committed will be counter-productive in the longer term. Such deals will be "undermining human rights around the globe and perpetuating the cycle of abuse and repression that causes people to flee," they say. The NGOs call on the European leaders to reject the Commission proposal on migration. Instead, European countries should develop a sustainable long-term strategy for migration management. "The EU, a project built on the rubble of a devastating war, is about to embark on a dark chapter of its history," the organizations warn in their joint statement.

To read the full joint statement and a view the list of all signatories click [HERE](#).



In 2016 La Strada International receives (project) funding from the European Commission, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ICCO/Church in Action and the Norwegian government. La Strada International members are supported by various other donors.

We greatly appreciate financial support from private donors for our work. For more information on how you can contribute to La Strada's work [see our website](#).