
PRESS RELEASE: Launch of campaign "Used in Europe" ahead of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day



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Campaign "Used in Europe" exposes human trafficking and labour exploitation on the continent

'Construction workers suffer for Olympics in Russia', 'Exploitation on mushroom farms in The Netherlands', 'Abuse in Czech asparagus field', 'Inhumane conditions in Italian tomato fields', 'Strawberry pickers in Greece shot at'... This has happened right here in Europe.

La Strada International, a European NGO network against human trafficking, together with 30 European partner organisations, launches 'Used in Europe', a campaign to raise awareness on the issue of labour exploitation and human trafficking - on the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day, 18 October 2014. The campaign Used in Europe provides a unique online overview of major human trafficking cases from the last decade in Europe, highlighted by NGOs, researchers and the media and gives insight into the situation for each country in Europe.

Human trafficking for labour exploitation is not a new development, but until recently the issue has received little attention in Europe. Moreover, identification, investigation and prosecution figures related to this crime are low. Accordingly, many Europeans believe that severe labour exploitation and human trafficking is confined to the global South.

However, European NGOs regularly come across cases of human trafficking and labour exploitation. In 2013 a total of 1823 trafficked persons were directly assisted by the eight member organisations of La Strada International. Thousands more exploited workers were assisted by campaign partners in different parts of Europe. In 2012, the International Labour Organisation estimated that 880,000 people are in a situation of forced labour in the EU alone.

'It is time to recognise that human trafficking and labour exploitation does not only occur in the sex industry, nor does it only happen in developing countries. It is directly linked to products or services that come from inside Europe', says Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator of La Strada International. 'Human trafficking occurs across a wide variety of sectors, such as agriculture, construction, hospitality and care work. Not coincidentally, these sectors are largely dependent on migrant workers, who have less access to legal protection and also lack local support of friends and family.'

With 'Used in Europe', La Strada International and partners:

- Urge European governments to enforce international regulations to prevent, punish and redress human trafficking practices in Europe.
- Ask businesses to increase their vigilance and control of supply chains.
- Encourage consumers to choose products and services from Europe with care.

Interested to know more? See usedineurope.com



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