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Common template for an EMN study on the international dimension of the EU policy to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and protect the victims of this crime

Version, June 2024

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

As shown in the reports on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings published by the European Commission,¹ every year, over 7 000 victims of trafficking in human beings are registered in the European Union (EU). On average, 45% of the victims are non-EU citizens.² However, the latest data show that over 10.000 victims of trafficking were identified in the EU in 2022 and that 63% of them were third-country nationals.³ This change in trends show even more the importance of the international dimension of trafficking in human beings.

In several EU Member States, most victims are third-country nationals, and victims and traffickers are often of the same nationality. Some third-country national victims of trafficking are smuggled to the EU for the purpose of being trafficked by organised crime groups or networks which operate across borders. The debts incurred to finance their travel to the EU make them particularly vulnerable. Others are trafficked along their journey towards the EU. Some victims reach the EU via regular migration pathways, sometimes pursuing apparently legitimate job offers, and then fall into the hands of traffickers once in the EU. This shows the link between trafficking in human beings and both legal and irregular migration. In addition to the registered victims,

¹ European Commission, [Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings - fourth report](#), 2019-2020.

² Statistics and trends in trafficking in human beings in EU in 2019-2020

³ European Commission, Newly released data show an increase of trafficking in human beings, [Newly released data show an increase of trafficking in human beings - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), last accessed on 13 June 2024.

many more remain undetected. This affects especially third-country nationals, as they face additional barriers to identification.⁴

The **EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings 2021-2025**⁵ highlights the need for a comprehensive response to tackle the trafficking phenomenon that combines legal, policy and operational initiatives. Its four main pillars concern: 1) prevention; 2) protection, assistance, and support to victims; 3) the law enforcement response (investigation, prosecution and conviction of traffickers); and 4) the international dimension of trafficking in human beings, which is the focus of this study. This last pillar highlights the importance of applying the first three priorities of the Strategy – breaking the criminal business model of traffickers, reducing demand, and protecting and empowering victims – to EU policies and measures addressing the international dimension of this crime.

Under this study, the **international dimension of trafficking in human beings** refers to EMN Member and Observer Countries' efforts to address trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards their countries:

- a) in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims);
- b) in their countries, where these efforts have an international component e.g. imply involvement/cooperation with international partners, cross-border activities, target specific third-country nationalities/victims from certain regions.⁶

In 2023, the Office of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator⁷ conducted two (non-publicly available) data collection exercises on: projects funded by the EU, in cooperation with other DG HOME Units, DG INTPA and DG NEAR; projects funded or managed by EU Member States through a consultation with the EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms. Data on trafficking in the EU is also available through i.e. Progress Reports,⁸ Eurostat data, information provided by Europol, and outcomes of EMPACT operational actions. There is also some available data on human trafficking at global level from international reports (e.g. UNODC Global Reports,⁹ GRETA Reports).¹⁰

⁴ European Commission, [Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings- fourth report](#), 2019-2020.

⁵ EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings 2021-2025, COM(2021) 171 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0171>.

⁶ These types of efforts may include (but not exhaustive) e.g. policies specifically targeting third-country nationals; awareness raising campaigns developed in cooperation with third countries or targeting specific third-country nationalities, diplomatic missions etc.; initiatives involving the diaspora to combat trafficking in human beings; the establishment of trans-national referral mechanisms; support for the voluntary return of third-country national victims; joint investigations/actions with third countries; secondment of law enforcement authorities from third countries.

⁷ EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/eu-anti-trafficking-coordinator_en#:~:text=Diane%20Schmitt%20took%20up%20the,of%20migration%2C%20security%20and%20justice, last accessed on 11 January 2024.

⁸ European Commission, Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings – Publications, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/publications_en, last accessed on 2 May 2024.

⁹ UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf, last accessed on 2 May 2024.

¹⁰ Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, [GRETA - Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(coe.int\)](#), last accessed on 2 May 2024.

However, the wide number of stakeholders involved in anti-trafficking actions – even within each country – makes it difficult to delineate a comprehensive overview of all EU and national efforts to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by gathering information from different national stakeholders (e.g. ministries of migration, foreign affairs, interior, where relevant security etc.) on policies and measures adopted to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings and existing cooperation with third countries and international organisations on this issue. It also aims to identify challenges and good practices and provide an overview of the main results achieved in this context.

2. STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study is to map and analyse policies and measures adopted by EMN Member and Observer Countries that contribute to addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings, focusing on the main priorities identified by the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025 (see above). More specifically, the study's main objectives are:

- To map EU and national policies and measures addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings (through prevention; prosecution and combating criminal business model; protection; and cooperation with international partners);
- To provide examples of good practices and identify challenges in addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings;
- To provide an overview of the main outcomes achieved in addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings; and
- To identify needs in current national responses to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings and potential ways to address those needs as identified by EMN Member and Observer Countries.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study covers **policies and measures** as well as **cooperation with international partners** aiming to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings. For the purpose of this study, policies and measures are defined as follows:

- '**Policies**' refer to targeted strategies and action plans specifically addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings, as well as broader policy instruments that have an explicit anti-trafficking strand (e.g. one or more objectives of the policy refer to the international dimension of trafficking in human beings). Policies with indirect impacts on anti-trafficking efforts are outside the scope of this study.
- '**Measures**' refer to initiatives, projects, programmes and operational actions funded or implemented by EMN Member and Observer Countries in their territories or in third countries of origin and transit of third-country national victims that specifically address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings i.e. have a clear international component. The concept of measures also covers broader initiatives (e.g. on border management, asylum, migrant smuggling and irregular migration, fundamental rights, gender equality, organised crime and its

online dimension) that have an explicit anti-trafficking strand (e.g. one or more objectives of the programme or a series of indicators referring to the international dimension of trafficking). Measures with indirect impacts on anti-trafficking efforts are outside the scope of this study.

Laws and legislative initiatives (including e.g. on residence permits granted to third-country national victims of trafficking) fall outside the scope of this study.

The **reporting period** for this study covers policies and measures that were **adopted or ongoing between 2021-2023**. In 2022, the EMN published a Study on 'Third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings: detection, identification and protection' that covered the period 2015-2020. To avoid duplication, when it comes to cooperation with third countries and international organisations as well as policies and measures specifically addressing the detection, identification and protection of third-country national victims, only updates when compared to the 2022 Study should be reported.

The geographical scope of the study covers:

- 1) EMN Member and Observer Countries: for what concerns policies and measures with an international component addressing trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards EMN Member and Observer Countries; and
- 2) Third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims): for policies and measures implemented in those countries to address trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries.

The study will also include an EU section reporting on projects and initiatives funded by the EU. This information will be provided by the European Commission and complemented with information received from EMN Member and Observer Countries that refers to EU-funded initiatives.

4. EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

Trafficking in human beings is prohibited pursuant to Article 5(3) of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights.¹¹ The EU's competences in relation to trafficking in human beings are set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU),¹² which recognises its nature as (i) a phenomenon with links to migration (Article 79 TFEU), (ii) and as a cross-border crime (Article 83 TFEU).

Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims (Anti-trafficking Directive)¹³ addresses trafficking in human beings in a comprehensive manner. It adopts a victim-centred 'human rights approach', providing for a definition of the criminal offence of trafficking, minimum rules on penalties, as well as rules for the protection, assistance and support to victims.

¹¹ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ C 36, p. 391, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>, last accessed on 11 January 2024.

¹² Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ C, p. 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12016ME%2FTXT>, last accessed on 11 January 2024.

¹³ 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, OJ L, p. 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0036>, last accessed on 11 January 2024.

In December 2022, the European Commission presented a proposal for a revision of the Anti-trafficking Directive to strengthen the rules that prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. Among other things, the proposal sought to provide stronger tools for law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute new forms of exploitation.¹⁴ In January 2024, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the revised Directive which was formally adopted by the Council on 27 May 2024.¹⁵

The EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, adopted in April 2021 provides for a comprehensive response to combatting trafficking in human beings, from prevention through protection of victims to prosecution and conviction of traffickers. It sets out four main priority areas: 1) reducing the demand that fosters trafficking; 2) breaking the criminal model to halt victims' exploitation; 3) protecting, supporting and empowering the victims, especially women and children; 4) addressing the international dimension through cooperation with the main third countries of origin and transit, and with international organisations.

5. PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

This EMN study seeks to address six primary research questions:

- What policies and measures are in place at EU and national level to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?
- To what extent are anti-trafficking components mainstreamed in other policy areas (border management, asylum, migrant smuggling and irregular migration, fundamental rights, gender equality, organised crime and its online dimension)?
- How do EMN Member and Observer Countries cooperate with third countries and international organisations to address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?
- Which are the main good practices and challenges identified by EMN Member and Observer Countries when addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?
- Which are the main outcomes achieved by EMN Member and Observer Countries when addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?
- Have EMN Member and Observer countries identified any needs in their responses to the international dimension of trafficking in human beings and if so, how are they planning to address these needs?

¹⁴ European Commission, Trafficking in human beings: Commission proposes stronger rules to fight the evolving crime, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7781, last accessed on 18 March 2024.

¹⁵ European Commission, The EU adopts stronger rules to fight trafficking in human beings, [The EU adopts stronger rules to fight trafficking in human beings - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1111), last accessed on 12 June 2024; Text adopted by the European Parliament: [Texts adopted - Amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims - Tuesday, 23 April 2024 \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/media/default.do?inf=press&lang=en), last accessed on 12 June 2024.

6. RELEVANT SOURCES AND LITERATURE

EMN STUDIES

- EMN (2021), 'Third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings: detection, identification, protection'.

OTHER STUDIES, REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- [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.
- [EU Strategy](#) on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025.
- [Common Anti-trafficking Plan](#) to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine – under the lead of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator.
- [Report](#) from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings (fourth report).
- [EU Anti-trafficking Website](#).
- A table with EU-funded anti-trafficking projects and initiatives. This table will be provided to each individual country by the European Commission. The European Commission will share the project information they already have for each respective country. However, as further specified below, countries are asked to complement the table with missing and additional information where needed. The table itself will not be published as a standalone annex in the final study.

7. AVAILABLE STATISTICS

Eurostat EU-wide data collection on trafficking indicators for the 2013-2022 period. Although there will be no statistical annex in the study as such, this information could be used by EMN Member Countries as reference/background information where useful.

8. DEFINITIONS

The following key terms are used in the common template. The definitions are taken from the EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary,¹⁶ unless specified otherwise in footnotes.

Detection of a victim of trafficking in human beings	The process of identifying a possible situation of trafficking in human beings.
Fundamental rights	Universal legal guarantees without which individuals and groups cannot secure their fundamental freedoms and human dignity and which apply equally to every human being regardless of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status as per the legal system of a country without any conditions.
Human rights	Agreed international standards that recognise and protect the dignity and integrity of every individual, without any distinction.

¹⁶ EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en, last accessed on 2 May 2024.

Identification of a victim of trafficking in human beings	The process of confirming and characterising a situation of trafficking in human beings for further implementation of support.
Identified victim of trafficking in human beings	A person who has been formally identified as a victim of trafficking in human beings according to the relevant formal authority in Member States.
International dimension of trafficking in human beings¹⁷	Under this study, the international dimension of trafficking in human beings refers to EMN Member and Observer Countries' efforts to address trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards their countries: a) in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims); b) in their countries, where these efforts have an international component e.g. imply involvement/cooperation with international partners, cross-border activities, target specific third-country nationalities/victims from certain regions.
Irregular migrant	In the global context, a person who, owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country.
Irregular migration	Movement of persons to a new place of residence or transit that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries.
National referral/cooperation mechanisms	Mechanism aimed at identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking in human beings, through referral, and involving relevant public authorities and civil society. ¹⁸
Organised crime	Large-scale and complex illicit activities carried out by an organised criminal group.
Organised criminal group	A structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting cooperatively with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences.
Palermo Protocol	A United Nations (UN) protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols.
Potential victim of trafficking in human beings	A person vulnerable to trafficking in human beings. ¹⁹
Presumed victim of trafficking in human beings	A person who has met the criteria of EU regulations and international Conventions but has not been formally identified by the relevant authorities (e.g. police) as a trafficking victim or has declined to be formally or legally identified as victim of trafficking.
Protection of (presumed/identified) victims of trafficking in human beings	The action of national authorities aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of (presumed) victims of trafficking in human beings. ²⁰

¹⁷ Definition prepared for the purpose of this EMN study based on the approach taken by the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025 when covering the international dimension of trafficking in human beings.

¹⁸ Article 11(4) of the Anti-trafficking Directive lays down an obligation on Member States to take the necessary measures to establish appropriate mechanisms aimed at the early identification of, assistance to and support for victims, in cooperation with relevant support organisations.

¹⁹ Definition inspired by IOM, <https://publications.iom.int/books/migrants-and-their-vulnerability-human-trafficking-modern-slavery-and-forced-labour>, .

²⁰ Definition inspired by the Anti-trafficking Directive, Article 11. A person shall be provided with assistance and support as soon as the competent authorities have a reasonable-ground indication for believing that the person might have been subjected to trafficking in human beings.

Reintegration	Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of their country of return.
Registered victim of trafficking in human beings	A person who is either an identified or a presumed victim of human trafficking and has been registered by authorities and/or other agencies and organisations. ²¹
Smuggling of migrants	The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the irregular entry of a person into a (UN) Member State of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.
Trafficking in human beings	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of 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. ²²
Voluntary Return	The assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee.
Vulnerable person	Minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of trafficking in human beings, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation.

²¹ Definition inspired by the European Commission, Data collection on trafficking in human beings in the EU, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/default/files/study_on_data_collection_on_trafficking_in_human_beings_in_the_eu.pdf, last accessed on 8 May 2021.

²² Definition established by the Anti-trafficking Directive, Article 2 par.1.

9. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- National reports will be primarily based on secondary sources. These may be supplemented with expert interviews where relevant.
- The European Commission will gather information related to EMPACT and other EU-led initiatives directly from its Services or EU Agencies. However, where appropriate and possible, EMN Member and Observer Countries are invited to provide additional information to complement that gathered by the European Commission, especially when their countries play a leading role in the initiatives, either through funding, coordination, the implementation of activities or other.
- The European Commission will also provide information on already mapped EU-funded national initiatives to each individual country (see also section 6 on sources). However, where needed, countries are requested to provide additional and complementary information to that already gathered by the European Commission.
- EMN Member and Observer Countries are invited to provide information on operational actions or other law enforcement matters only to the extent possible. Since the study will be public, no sensitive information will be reported, and due consideration will be given to data protection and confidentiality requirements. Only information that can be published shall be reported.
- The identification of 'good practices' should be made by an expert working in the field or based on studies or evaluations. Good practices are effective, sufficient, sustainable and/or transferable measures that reliably lead to a desired result.

10. ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group (AG) for this study is composed by: IE, BE, HU, LV, GE, FR, LT, CY, LU, EMN Service Provider, DG HOME (THB team, C4 and 01).

11. TIMETABLE

The following tentative timetable has been proposed for the Study going forward:

Date	Action	
Study specifications		
Preparatory work	In this phase, the AG lead(s) are encouraged to consult bilaterally with the EMN Service Provider (including the Odysseus network) and may also consider the opportunity to hold a kick-off meeting to brainstorm on the scope of the study with the Advisory Group.	AG Lead(s), EMN Service Provider
Week 0	Circulation of the first draft to the AG for written feedback (seven working day-deadline) <i>NOTE: the concept note should be circulated no later than 7 working days before the AG. Written comments should be provided no later than two working days before the AG meeting.</i>	AG Lead(s) (NCP/COM)

Date	Action	
Week 1 31/01/24 – 02/04/2024	First AG meeting and discussions on the written feedback. <i>NOTE: the EMN Service Provider can support the AG Lead in compiling comments and start addressing them together with the AG lead in order to facilitate discussions during the AG meeting.</i>	AG members Preparations of the meeting: AG lead and EMN Service Provider
Week 2 02/04/24 – 09/04/24	Circulation of the second draft to the AG (one-week deadline for review). <i>NOTE: based on the feedback received during the AG meeting, the AG lead and the EMN Service Provider further amend the draft concept note. Written comments should be provided no later than two working days before the AG meeting.</i>	AG lead and EMN Service Provider
Week 3 22/04/24	Second AG meeting and discussions on written comments. <i>NOTE: written comments should be provided no later than two working days before the AG meeting.</i>	AG members Preparations of the meeting: AG lead and EMN Service Provider
Week 4 06/05/24 – 08/05/24	Circulation of the third draft to the AG members for review (two days for review).	EMN Service Provider, AG lead
Week 5-6 14/05/24 – 28/05/24	Circulation of the final draft to NCPs (10 days for review).	
Week 6-7 29/05/24 – 14/06/24	Finalisation common template, final review by NCP lead and approval by COM	
Week 8 17/06/24	Launch of the study.	

National reports (12 weeks) (15 weeks taking into account summer holidays) 18/06- 07/10/2024

07/10/2024	Submission of national reports by EMN NCPs	
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Drafting of study

Week 1-4 08/10/24 – 31/10/24	Drafting of the first draft of the study.	EMN Service Provider
Week 5-6 04/11/24 – 15/11/24	Circulation of the first study draft to COM and AG members (10 working days-deadline for review).	COM, AG members
Week 6 18/11/24 – 22/11/24	Preparation of the second draft	EMN Service Provider

Date	Action	
Week 7 25/11/24 – 06/12/24	Circulation of the second draft to all NCPs (ten days-deadline for review).	EMN NCPs
Week 8-9 9/12/24 – 13/12/24	Preparation of the third draft	EMN Service Provider
Week 10-11 16/12/24 – 10/01/25	Circulation of the third draft to COM and all NCPs (ten days-deadline for review). Holiday period, granted more time	COM and NCPs
Week 12-13 13/01/24 – 17/01/25	Preparation of the final draft	EMN Service Provider
Week 14-15 20/01/24 – 28/01/25	Circulation of the final draft to COM and all NCPs (one week-deadline for review).	COM and all NCPs
Week 16-17 29/01/24 – 12/02/25	Finalisation of the report/inform and flash, proofreading and graphic layout	EMN Service Provider
Week 18 13/02/24 – 21/02/25	Final validation by COM	COM
Week 19 24/02/2025	Publication	EMN Service Provider

COMMON TEMPLATE OF A 2024 EMN STUDY

The international dimension of the EU policy to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and protect the victims of this crime

NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION FROM EMN MEMBER OR OBSERVER COUNTRY

Disclaimer: The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to this EMN study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' Country.

TOP-LINE FACTSHEET [MAX. 1 PAGE]

The top-line factsheet will serve as an overview of the **National Contribution** introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policy makers. The information included in the top-line factsheet needs to be concise so to enable a visual presentation.

Please provide a concise summary of the main findings of Sections 1-6:

Note: Observer Countries shall report as reception countries/countries of destination of victims of trafficking in human beings with the exception of reciprocal agreements with EU Member States where you can report from the perspective of a country of origin/transit.

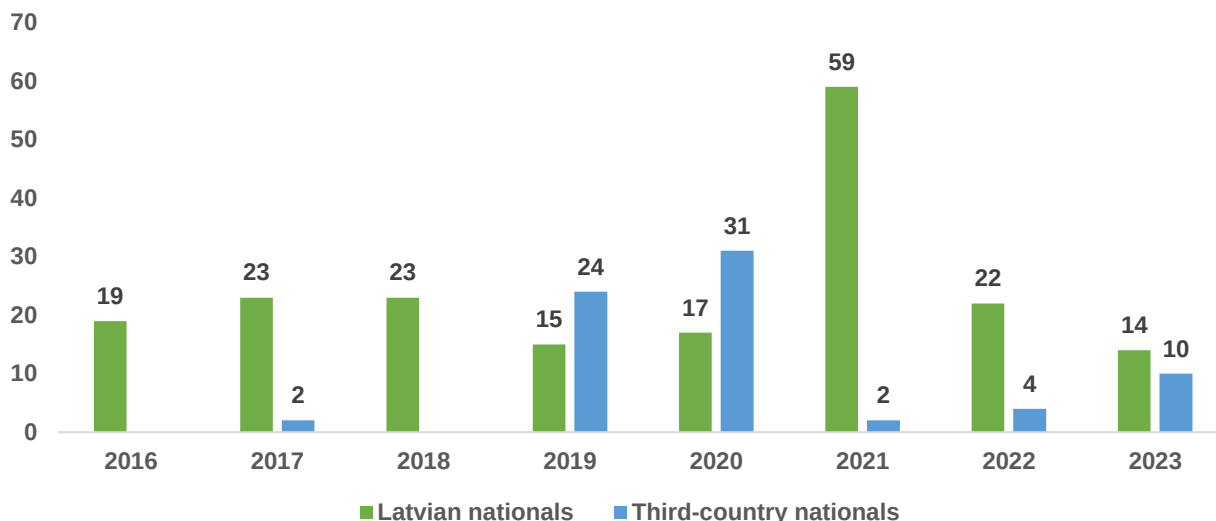
STATISTICS

The statistics on identified victims of trafficking in human beings include both persons who have been recognised by the State Police as victims in criminal proceedings and persons who have been recognised as victims by a commission of non-governmental organisations in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 344 of 16 July 2019 "Regulations Regarding the Procedures by Which the Victims of the Trafficking in Human Beings Receive Social Rehabilitation Service, and the Criteria for the Recognition of a Person as a Victim of the Trafficking in Human Beings"²³ (hereinafter – Cabinet Regulation No. 344). Non-governmental organisations commissions usually identify more victims, which can be explained by a number of factors, such as the person's unwillingness to engage in criminal proceedings or the fact that criminal proceedings have not yet been initiated but help is needed immediately. It should also be noted that individuals often have more trust in non-governmental organisations. For example, in 2023, out of 24 identified victims, the State Police recognised four persons as victims.

As shown in the figure below, the total number of identified victims and injured parties varies from year to year, but in the period from 2021 to 2023, 111 victims of trafficking in human beings were identified, of whom 95 were Latvian nationals and 16 were third-country nationals.

²³ Cabinet Regulation of 16 July 2019 No. 344. "[Regulations Regarding the Procedures by Which the Victims of the Trafficking in Human Beings Receive Social Rehabilitation Service, and the Criteria for the Recognition of a Person as a Victim of the Trafficking in Human Beings](#)". — Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 146, 19.07.2019. — [entered into force on 20.07.2019.]

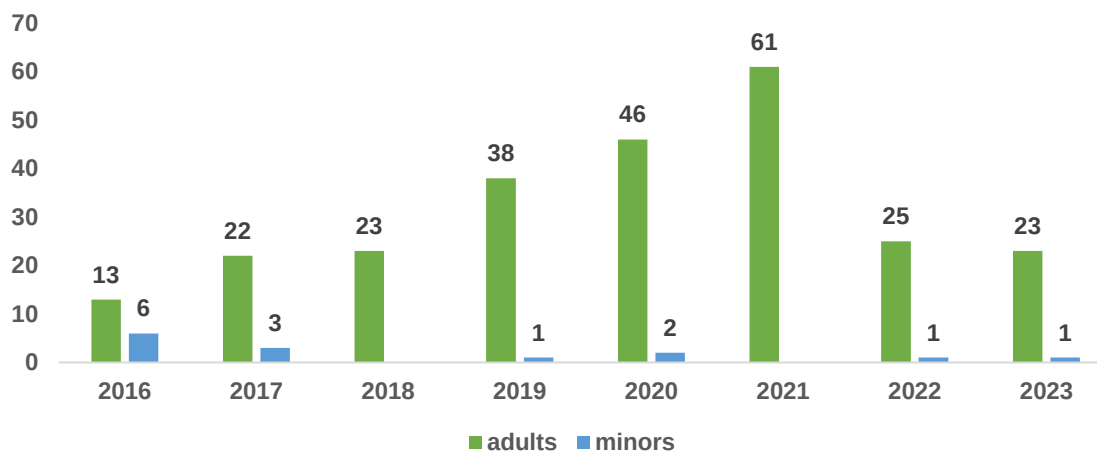
Number of identified victims and nationality of victims, 2016 -2023



Data source: State Police, "Centre MARTA", "Shelter "Safe House""

Most of the identified victims are adults and during the reporting period two minors (Latvian nationals) were recognised as victims of trafficking in human beings. In the longer term, for example, 14 minors were recognised as victims of trafficking in human beings between 2016 and 2023. The minor victims are mainly girls who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Identified adult and minor victims of trafficking in human beings²⁴

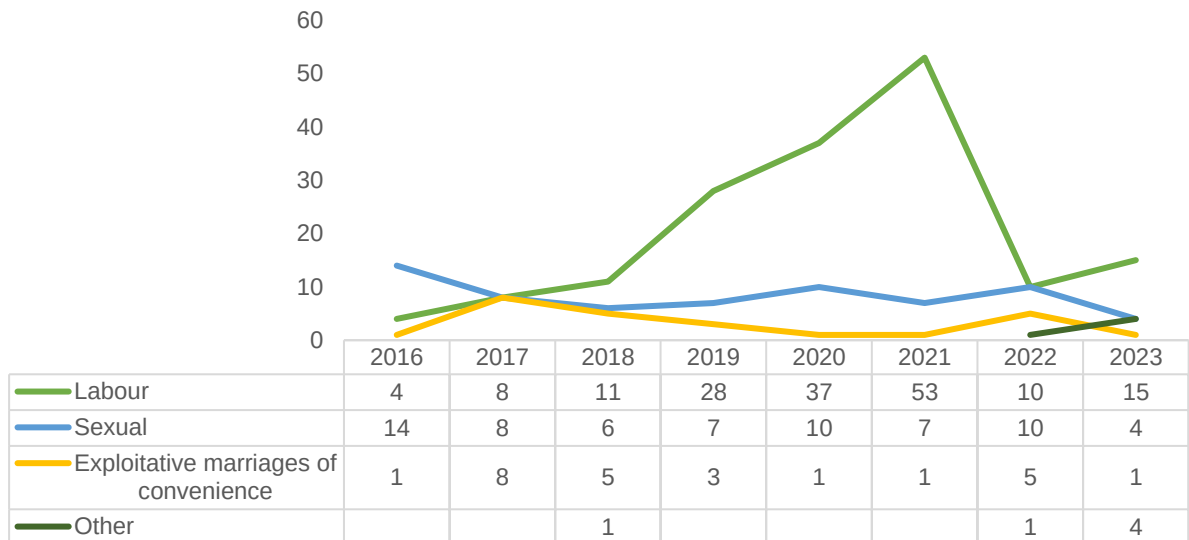


Source: State Police, "Centre MARTA", "Shelter "Safe House""

The most common forms of trafficking in human beings are labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and exploitative marriages of convenience. At the same time, other forms are also emerging, such as coercion to commit a crime or forced begging.

²⁴ The graph shows the total number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings, including Latvian nationals.

Number of victims by type of trafficking in 2014 – 2023²⁵



Source: State Police, "Centre MARTA", "Shelter "Safe House""

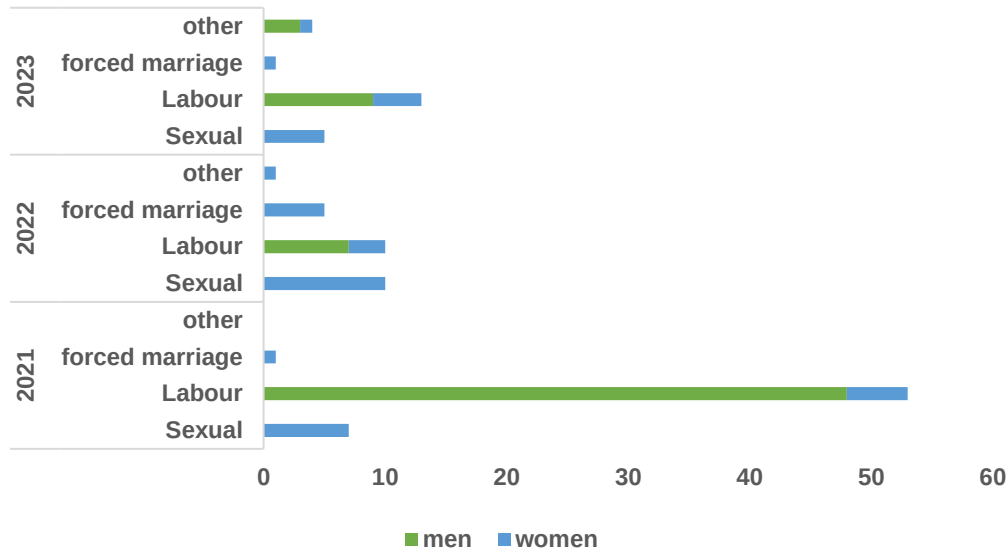
The most common risks of labour exploitation are found in sectors where low-skilled labour is needed and there is a high share of the informal economy at the same time. In Latvia, there are risks of human trafficking in construction, agriculture, logging, food production and catering. Latvian nationals are the most exposed to labour exploitation, but the risks of exploitation of third-country nationals are also increasing. The most common countries of origin for third-country nationals are Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.

Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation must be seen in the context of sexual exploitation and involvement in prostitution. Overall, there is a trend towards women from Ukraine, Russia and Moldova being involved in prostitution in Latvia. In addition, recruitment and organisation are also carried out by third-country nationals via the internet and various closed groups on social and messaging platforms. In this context, the role of the internet should also be taken into account, not only in recruitment, but also in the production and dissemination of materials and online activities.

There is also a gender dimension to trafficking in human beings, i.e., women and girls are predominantly subjected to sexual exploitation and forced marriages of convenience. However, labour exploitation is more male-dominated.

²⁵ The graph shows the total number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings, including Latvian nationals.

Identified victims of trafficking in human beings by sex from 2021 to 2023²⁶



Source: State Police, "Centre MARTA", "Shelter "Safe House""

At the same time, it can be pointed out that the majority of third-country nationals subjected to trafficking in human beings are identified in the area of labour, which means that it is third-country men who are more likely to be referred to service providers. Exploited third-country nationals are identified less frequently, while the subsection of third-country nationals to forced marriages of convenience is not identified at all.

1. Which are your country's thematic priorities when addressing the international dimension²⁷ of trafficking in human beings? (e.g. prevention, demand reduction, awareness raising; victim identification, referral, protection, support, assistance and reintegration; disrupting trafficking routes towards the EU, tackling the criminal business model of traffickers etc.).

The general priorities for the prevention of trafficking in human beings at national level are set out in policy documents. The Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Plan 2021 – 2023²⁸ identifies four priority areas or priorities:

- 1. Prevention** includes training and education programmes, awareness-raising campaigns, public and private sector action, protection measures for trafficked

²⁶ The graph shows the total number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings, including Latvian nationals.

²⁷ Under this study, the international dimension of trafficking in human beings refers to EMN Member and Observer Countries' efforts to address trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards their countries: a) in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims); b) in their countries, where these efforts have an international component e.g. imply involvement/cooperation with international partners, cross-border activities, target specific third-country nationalities/victims from certain regions.

²⁸ Cabinet Order No. 690 of 28 September 2021 "[On the Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Plan 2021-2023](#)". — Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 190, 01.10.2021. — [entered into force on 28.09.2021]

persons, and national programmes aimed at tackling the root causes of trafficking in human beings.

2. **Protection** includes the legal framework for the protection and rights of victims, the provision of social services and referral to services. This priority includes measures such as rapid and safe accommodation, medical and mental health services, legal services, training and education programmes, clothing and food, translation services, education, self-care and self-help skills, employment support, reintegration into society.
3. **Prosecuting perpetrators** involves obtaining and investigating information, prosecuting and holding accountable those involved in the crime of trafficking in human beings, strengthening legislation and institutional action to combat trafficking in human beings. This dimension can be strengthened by improving anti-trafficking procedures, ensuring regular training and education of the staff involved, and improving the anti-trafficking legislative framework.
4. **Partnership** involves effective communication between the private sector, non-governmental organisations, the state and local authorities to strengthen the fight against trafficking in human beings at different scales – internationally, nationally, and in specific areas individually.

The priorities are based on the 4P model - *prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership*. This particular model is generally the most commonly used approach in strategic planning to prevent trafficking in human beings and is applicable to activities at different scales, including internationally. Consequently, cooperation with third countries is also strategically pursued on the basis of these four guiding principles. For example, in the area of prevention, measures are being taken to prevent third-country nationals from being trafficked into Latvia. In the area of victim protection, third-country nationals are provided with both legal aid and social rehabilitation services. Bilateral cooperation with countries of origin is also taking place in the area of investigations. In addition, in the area of law enforcement cooperation, Europol's activities, including the various task forces set up to combat trafficking in human beings, including the enslavement of third-country nationals to trafficking in human beings, play an important role. Specific examples of the activities implemented are included in the following sections of this report.

It should be noted that the 4P model also includes other themes and concepts relevant to the prevention of trafficking in human beings, for example, the implementation of various prevention activities aimed at preventing people from being trafficked plays an important role in reducing supply. This may include general awareness-raising activities for the whole community, selective awareness-raising activities for at-risk groups, or targeted prevention activities for those who have already been trafficked to prevent re-exploitation. Supply reduction also applies to the regulatory framework that prevents situations where persons are subjected to trafficking in human beings, for example, migration policy and the set of rules governing the entry and stay of third-country nationals in Latvia.

Demand reduction refers to measures against human exploitation. For example, traffickers exploit people to maximise profits, so there is a demand for cheap labour.

Thus, demand reduction activities are implemented through a careful and thoughtful regulatory framework and a variety of checks and controls.

In the area of common priorities, it should also be noted that Latvia is both a country of origin and transit for victims of trafficking, as well as a country of destination and a country where its own population is exploited. This means that issues relating to the exploitation of Latvian nationals abroad, as well as issues to prevent the exploitation of third-country nationals in Latvia, need to be addressed strategically.

On the question of thematic priorities for cooperation with third countries, it is important to identify, at the outset, the trends related to Latvia as a destination and transit country. In assessing the activities implemented in 2021-2023, the following developments and trends can be noted which have had an impact on the overall priorities in the area of prevention of trafficking in human beings:

- With the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a significant number of **Ukrainian civilians** arrived in the EU and Latvia. The Temporary Protection Mechanism²⁹ was launched to support people fleeing the war. This system provides immediate and collective protection (i.e., no individual applications have to be examined) to displaced persons who cannot return to their country of origin. Although the support provided was not considered in the context of preventing trafficking in human beings, this experience has shown in practice that measures that reduce the economic and social vulnerability of individuals also reduce their risk of being trafficked. In Latvia, no cases of trafficking in human beings of Ukrainian civilians living in Latvia have been identified by the time of writing the report in 2024. This does not mean that there are no risks. The economic and social situation of the people living in Ukraine is significantly affected by the hostilities. This means that relatives living in the EU may be more likely to look for extra income, and those who remain in Ukraine may themselves travel abroad for work, which can also increase the risks of trafficking.
- The number of migrant workers from **Central Asian** countries, who are mostly employed in construction projects in Latvia, has also increased over the same period. In parallel, employment irregularities and cases of exploitation were also increasingly being detected.
- The number of migrant workers from **India** also increased during the period under review, mostly in the so-called platform business (e.g., *Wolt*, *Bolt* food delivery), as well as in the catering sector. During the reporting period, victims of trafficking in human beings identified in Latvia included Indian nationals who were employed in food production and catering.

2. Does your country target any specific third countries, geographic regions or third-country nationalities when addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?

☐ **Yes**

²⁹ The Mechanism has provided and continues to provide support for accommodation, access to the labour market and housing, medical and social assistance, and education for children in Latvia.

Country-specific targets are most often not set out in legislation or policy planning documents. In addition, based on information on the countries of origin of people exploited in Latvia, various offences and crimes against third-country nationals, the following countries at risk have been identified for the period from 2021:

- Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan);
- Ukraine;
- Moldova;
- India.

3. Does your country have any specific policies³⁰ aimed at:

a) Addressing trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims)?

☐ No

Although Latvia has not adopted a specific policy devoted exclusively to international cooperation to reduce the risks of trafficking in human beings in third countries, various measures are implemented within the framework of indirectly related areas of activity, such as employment policy, migration control and issuance of work visas, border controls, due diligence in employment, etc.

It is also important to note that cooperation with third countries is also implemented in the field of crime prevention, including through the lines of action and activities included in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (hereinafter - EMPACT THB), as well as through bilateral cooperation with third countries.

b) Addressing trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals in your country?

☐ Yes

There is no specific plan or policy dedicated to this objective, but general principles and measures are included in the Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Plan 2021-2023³¹. This is especially true for measures involving training, research, closer cooperation with various institutions, etc.

4. In your country, are there any interconnections³² between national policies addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings and other policy areas (e.g. border management, asylum, migrant smuggling and

³⁰ 'Policies' refer to targeted strategies and action plans specifically addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings, as well as broader policy instruments that have an explicit anti-trafficking strand (e.g. one or more objectives of the policy refer to the international dimension of trafficking in human beings). Policies with indirect impacts on anti-trafficking efforts are outside the scope of this study.

³¹ Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Plan 2021 – 2023. — Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326420-par-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-noversanas-planu-2021-2023-gadam>

³² Interconnections shall be understood as any cross-referencing in different policy areas e.g. border management or smuggling of migrants, for example where those include a work strand on trafficking in human beings or specific anti-trafficking objectives or indicators.

irregular migration, fundamental rights, gender equality, organised crime, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

The most directly relevant anti-trafficking measures concern migration control, asylum and border management, labour security, the work of municipal social services and the work of various non-governmental organisations providing assistance in various situations. These areas and the core activities of the authorities are the most likely to identify potential trafficking of third-country nationals.

Specific examples include the State Border Guard's migration control measures in companies employing third-country nationals. Such inspections are often carried out in conjunction with the State Labour Inspectorate, which carries out checks on workers' safety and working conditions.

In the area of organised crime, the prevention of trafficking in human beings is already one of the priorities in the framework of the core activities of the State Police. In particular, Unit 4 of the State Police Directorate for Combating Organised, Serial and Serious Crime specialises in combating human trafficking, pimping and sexual offences.

5. Has your country funded or implemented any measures³³ aimed at addressing trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims)?

☐ **No**

For projects in third countries that do not directly target trafficking prevention activities but reduce the risks associated with trafficking, please see question 9.

6. Has your country funded or implemented any specific measures (with an international component) aimed at addressing trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in your country?³⁴

These types of measures may include e.g. awareness raising campaigns developed in cooperation with third countries; targeting specific third country nationalities, diplomatic missions etc.; initiatives involving the diaspora to combat trafficking in human beings; the establishment of trans-national referral mechanisms; support for the voluntary

³³ 'Measures' refer to initiatives, projects, programmes and operational actions funded or implemented by EMN Member and Observer Countries in their territories or in third countries of origin and transit of third-country national victims that specifically address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings i.e. have a clear international component. The concept of measures also covers broader initiatives (e.g. on border management, asylum, migrant smuggling and irregular migration, fundamental rights, gender equality, organised crime and its online dimension) that have an explicit anti-trafficking strand (e.g. one or more objectives of the programme or a series of indicators refer to the international dimension of trafficking). Measures with indirect impacts on anti-trafficking efforts are outside the scope of this study.

³⁴ If your country has already provided information in the context of the EMN Study 'Third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings: detection, identification and protection' published in March 2022, please only report only on any developments after 2021.

return of third-country national victims; joint investigations/actions with third countries; secondment of law enforcement authorities from third countries.

☐ **Yes**

1. CAPE Project "Capacity Building, Assistance and Prosecution in Labour Exploitation Cases in the Baltic Sea Region"

Third country/ies of nationality targeted (if the measure does not target specific nationalities but third-country nationals in general, please specify):

All victims of trafficking in human beings, including third-country nationals, who can be and have been trafficked for labour exploitation in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

Implementation period: 1 September 2019 – 1 December 2022

Total funding and source(s) of funding: Project Support Facility of the Council of the Baltic Sea Region

Implementing partners: Latvia (Ministry of the Interior), Denmark (Department for Gender Equality, Ministry of the Environment and Food), Lithuania (Ministry of the Interior), Norway (Ministry of Justice and Public Security), Poland (Ministry of the Interior and Administration), Finland (Joutseno Reception Centre), Germany (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).

Beneficiaries:

The project's lead partner is the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia.

Objective(s):

The main objective of the project is to support cooperation partners and stakeholders in combating and disrupting trafficking for labour exploitation by analysing and strengthening information, improving victim assistance and strengthening the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases.

Main activities:

- research implemented in Denmark, Latvia, Norway, Poland and Germany. The authors of the study conducted in-depth research on trafficking for labour exploitation in their country and sought to explain why there are so few criminal proceedings and prosecutions for trafficking for labour exploitation.
- The project organised three international workshops (Norway, Germany, Finland) on detection, investigation, prosecution and support for victims of labour exploitation, including from third countries.
- In June 2021, the Baltic Sea countries endorsed a Joint Statement of Commitment to work against trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region. The Statement contains 12 steps to reduce labour exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region.
- In parallel to CAPE, an evaluation of the transnational Referral Mechanism of the Baltic Sea region was carried out at the end of the project. It provides insights into the challenges faced by institutions when referring victims of

1. CAPE Project "Capacity Building, Assistance and Prosecution in Labour Exploitation Cases in the Baltic Sea Region"

trafficking and what needs to be improved to facilitate safe referral between the Baltic Sea Region countries. Given that some of the persons to be referred from one country to another are third-country nationals, the conclusions and proposals also address the challenges and good practices of cross-border referral of third-country nationals.

State of implementation: The project is now closed.

Thematic area (please select all that apply):

☐ **Prevention, awareness raising and reduction of the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings**

☒ **Law enforcement and judicial cooperation to break the criminal model of traffickers**

☒ **Identifying, protecting, assisting, supporting and empowering victims**

Comments:

Within the project, interviews were conducted with third-country nationals who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings in Latvia. Based on these interviews, a report was produced which provides a detailed insight into the profile of victims, recruitment techniques and retention in trafficking.

All reports produced during the project are available here: <http://www.trafficking.lv/en/competence-building-assistance-provision-and-prosecution-of-labour-exploitation-cases-in-the-baltic-sea-region-cape>

2. "Effective implementation of the observation and forced return process (Phase 1)"

Third country/ies of nationality targeted (if the measure does not target specific nationalities but third-country nationals in general, please specify):

All third-country nationals who are subject to a removal procedure.

Implementation period:

2019 – 2021

Total funding and source(s) of funding:

European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The funding allocated for the project is EUR 106,063, with a contribution from the Fund of EUR 79,547 and a co-financing from the national budget of EUR 26,516.

Implementing partners:

Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia

Beneficiaries:

Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia

2. "Effective implementation of the observation and forced return process (Phase 1)"

Objective(s):

The overall objective of the project was to ensure that the procedures for monitoring forcibly returned persons comply with Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008. The project's immediate objective is to develop a mechanism for monitoring the forced return of foreigners in line with EU standards and requirements. One of the sub-objectives of the project was to improve the monitoring procedure to identify potential victims of trafficking in human beings.

Main activities:

- strengthening the knowledge of forced return observers and State Border Guard officials on the most up-to-date human rights standards in the field of forced removal of foreigners;
- improving procedures for identifying victims of trafficking in human beings during the return process;
- ensuring the rights of unaccompanied minors in return proceedings;
- Improvement of the Ombudsman's database.

State of implementation: The project is closed

Thematic area (please select all that apply):

☐ **Prevention, awareness raising and reduction of the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings**

☒ **Law enforcement and judicial cooperation to break the criminal model of traffickers**

☒ **Identifying, protecting, assisting, supporting and empowering victims**

Comments:

More information on the project, its results and the materials produced under the project is available here: <https://www.tiesibsargs.lv/par-mums/projekts-patveruma-migracijas-un-integracijas-fonds-2019-2021/>

3. Project "Enhanced Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training on Trafficking in Human Beings" (ELECT THB) (Internal Security Fund – Police No. 101021497)

Third country/ies of nationality targeted (if the measure does not target specific nationalities but third-country nationals in general, please specify):

All third countries whose nationals are trafficked in Latvia, Estonia and Finland. In the case of Latvia, the project is more relevant for citizens of Ukraine and Central Asia.

Implementation period:

3. Project "Enhanced Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training on Trafficking in Human Beings" (ELECT THB) (Internal Security Fund – Police No. 101021497)

September 2021 – August 2023

Total funding and source(s) of funding:

European Commission Internal Security Fund – Police.

Implementing partners:

Finland, Estonia, Latvia.

Beneficiaries:

HEUNI, Finland; University of Tartu, Estonia; Ministry of the Interior, Latvia.

Objective(s):

The ELECT THB project aims to improve the identification and investigation of trafficking in human beings for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation and to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other stakeholders to combat it.

Main activities:

- identifying best practices and lessons learned in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings;
- development of a comprehensive online investigation tool;
- development of a visualisation tool to unravel the trafficking chain;
- developing a virtual training programme based on the latest information on the modus operandi of trafficking in human beings;
- 4 national trainings;
- 2 international workshops;
- 2 study visits – one to Poland and one to Ukraine (did not take place and was moved to Lithuania).

State of implementation:

The project is now closed.

Thematic area (please select all that apply):

☐ **Prevention, awareness raising and reduction of the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings**

☐ **Law enforcement and judicial cooperation to break the criminal model of traffickers**

☒ **Identifying, protecting, assisting, supporting and empowering victims**

Comments:

3. Project "Enhanced Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training on Trafficking in Human Beings" (ELECT THB) (Internal Security Fund – Police No. 101021497)

The main objectives of the project were to identify the current situation of trafficking in human beings in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Finland and Ukraine, identify best practices, organise training seminars and promote networking and cooperation between law enforcement authorities across borders. It should be noted that the number of activities implemented in 2022 was low due to the impact of the war in Ukraine. The project activities intensified again in late 2022 and 2023, with study visits to Poland and Lithuania, four one-day trainings for Latvian specialists and an international seminar in Riga on trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Project website: https://heuni.fi/-/elect_thb

The issue of third-country nationals was mainly addressed in the framework of the research work, which showed the most frequent countries of origin of victims of trafficking and explained how third-country nationals are recruited and retained in trafficking. The information gathered was used to organise national trainings, as well as methodological material for the webinars produced by the project. It is also planned to use the knowledge gained to identify and define measures for the new anti-trafficking plan.

Materials published within the project:

- Operational models. Trends and patterns of trafficking in human beings in Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine;
- Operational models. Summary for policy makers on the latest trafficking trends and modus operandi;
- Trafficking in human beings. Psychological coercion and investigative interview.

Webinars:

- *Police Investigations and Changes In Norway*
- *Cultural Aspects & Interpretation in the Context of Criminal Investigations by J. Korkman*
- *Understanding psychological control and trauma in the context of criminal investigations*
- *Patterns of Exploitation: Understanding Human Trafficking Risks related to the war in Ukraine*
- *Modus operandi: Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation by Anniina Jokinen, HEUNI*
- *Modus operandi: Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation by Anniina Jokinen, HEUNI*
- *#HumanTrafficking in the criminal justice system: investigative interviews & psychological control*

All webinars are available on the HEUNI Institute channel: https://www.youtube.com/@HEUNI_institute

4. NET-WORKS to ensure the long-term integration of Third-Country Nationals Survivors of Trafficking (SOT) promoting job opportunities and work-life balance measures

Third country/ies of nationality targeted (if the measure does not target specific nationalities but third-country nationals in general, please specify):

For all victims of trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals.

Implementation period:

1 February 2022 - 31 January 2024

Total funding and source(s) of funding:

European Commission Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

Implementing partners:

The project partners are non-governmental organisations from Italy, Spain, Lithuania, Sweden, Germany and Latvia. Project duration is 24 months.

Beneficiaries:

In Latvia, the project was coordinated and implemented by the society "Shelter "Safe House"".

Objective(s):

The project aims to develop a holistic and sustainable integration pathway to guarantee work-life balance and economic independence for women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Main activities:

- Support the economic and social integration of at least 40 people in five EU countries.
- Establish an international network of organisations committed to the integration and empowerment of third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings;
- Promoting job matching and work-life balance measures.
- Disseminate best practices and promote capacity building between EU countries.
- Empowering host communities and relevant stakeholders for the effective integration of victims of trafficking in human beings to find sustainable solutions for victims at local, national and European level to prevent re-trafficking.

State of implementation:

Thematic area (please select all that apply):

☐ **Prevention, awareness raising and reduction of the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings**

4. NET-WORKS to ensure the long-term integration of Third-Country Nationals Survivors of Trafficking (SOT) promoting job opportunities and work-life balance measures

☐ **Law enforcement and judicial cooperation to break the criminal model of traffickers**

☒ **Identifying, protecting, assisting, supporting and empowering victims**

Comments:

More information on the project is available on the project website:
<https://networksproject.eu/index.php#partners>

5. "Legal and psycho-social assistance, and integration support to refugee-women in Latvia".

Third country/ies of nationality targeted (if the measure does not target specific nationalities but third-country nationals in general, please specify):

Women asylum seekers in Latvia.

Implementation period:

From 2023.

Total funding and source(s) of funding:

In cooperation with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Implementing partners:

Society "Shelter "Safe House""

Beneficiaries:

Society "Shelter "Safe House""

Objective(s):

Support for asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived in Latvia.

Main activities:

1. Regular meetings and legal counselling with women asylum seekers, including in the Asylum Seekers Accommodation Centre "Mucinieki" (ASAC "Mucenieki").
2. Psychological and social support is provided through two types of group sessions. Meetings of women asylum seekers are organised in ASAC "Mucenieki". The other type of group, the talent workshops, will involve creative work, promoting self-esteem and awareness of the strengths of refugees and asylum seekers.
3. The third direction is activities that create and develop links between newcomers and local communities. This includes events on important days for Latvia and for newcomers: Latvian Independence Day, Mother's Day, Summer Solstice and World Refugee Day.

5. "Legal and psycho-social assistance, and integration support to refugee-women in Latvia".

State of implementation:

Ongoing.

Thematic area (please select all that apply):

- ☐ Prevention, awareness raising and reduction of the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings
- ☐ Law enforcement and judicial cooperation to break the criminal model of traffickers
- ☒ Identifying, protecting, assisting, supporting and empowering victims

Comments:

Although the primary objective of the activities implemented is not to prevent trafficking in human beings, the activities implemented are closely related to building the capacity of organisations and improving institutional cooperation in identifying cases of trafficking in human beings and referring persons for support. The activities implemented are aimed at reducing the risk of trafficking in human beings among asylum seekers and refugees. This activity is therefore also considered relevant in the context of preventing trafficking in human beings.

Information about the project is here: <https://patverums-dm.lv/lv/sakam-jaunu-projektu-sieviesu-beglu-atbalstam/1570>

7. Has your country engaged in:

a) ***Structured (bilateral and/or multi-lateral) cooperation with third countries of origin and transit for preventing trafficking in human beings towards the EU; breaking the criminal model of traffickers; and/or protecting, assisting, supporting, and empowering third-country national victims of trafficking?***

☐ No

b) ***Structured cooperation with international organisations for preventing trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals towards the EU; breaking the criminal model of traffickers; and/or protecting, assisting, supporting, and empowering third-country national victims of trafficking?***

☐ No

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND MEASURES RELATED TO PREVENTING AND REDUCING THE DEMAND THAT FOSTERS TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

8. Has your country identified any challenges in relation to policies and measures aimed at:

a) Preventing trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims) (e.g. challenges in identifying/targeting victims/potential victims for awareness raising campaigns; challenges posed by existing social and cultural norms; challenges posed by restrictions derived from the Covid-19 pandemic, etc.)?

☐ Yes

The biggest challenges facing the implementation of anti-trafficking policies and measures in third countries are:

- In third countries, there are no permanent cooperation partners, either in the public administration or in the NGO sector, to plan and implement joint anti-trafficking measures. Currently, most activities are carried out through the consular departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; for example, by providing information on employment policies in Latvia or where to turn for help.
- Cultural differences are another aspect that can hinder the implementation of actions in third countries. For example, in some Central Asian countries, there is low trust in public sector institutions, so victims may not seek help or report violations in Latvia. There may also be situations where lower living standards or working conditions are considered the norm, even though this violates Latvian legislation.

b) Preventing and reducing the demand for trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals within your country (e.g. challenges in ensuring training for authorities or first line responders; challenges in identifying/targeting consumers/potential consumers of services derived from different forms of trafficking for awareness raising campaigns; challenges posed by restrictions derived from Covid-19 pandemic, etc.)?

☐ Yes

In general, prevention activities are actively promoted by the state administration, local authorities, including law enforcement and various monitoring bodies, as well as non-governmental organisations. Thus, no major challenges have been identified in this area.

However, one of the challenges is to involve employers or the private sector in prevention activities, especially in areas where there are complex supply chains with different companies and subcontractors. Employers are currently not interested in measures to reduce exploitation risks in supply chains. Every company involved in the supply chain wants to make a profit, which can lead to higher risks of employee exploitation in certain areas. For example, in construction, even smaller sites may have several supply chains and workers who are hired on a temporary basis only to carry out

certain jobs. In this case, the main contractor or client has no information about the working conditions of workers in all supply chains and exploitative situations can arise. In general, it would also be desirable for companies themselves, or the private sector, to be more responsible for the well-being of workers at all stages of the supply chain.

It should also be noted that there is generally a high demand for cheap products in society, but it is often impossible to determine whether products have been produced or shipped to Latvia using forced labour. In this context, it is important to raise public awareness about the origin of products in general, encouraging people to choose products from companies that guarantee that they have not been produced or supplied using forced labour.

9. Has your country identified any good practices in relation to policies and measures aimed at:

a) Preventing trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims) (e.g. awareness raising activities; educational programs; survivor inclusion, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

In this respect, good practice can be highlighted in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which awards funding for development cooperation projects in the EU's Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries through an annual grant competition.

For several years, funding has been provided to the MARTA Centre, which implements projects to reduce violence in Central Asian countries.

In 2020, funding was granted to the association MARTA Centre for the project "Pandemic of Violence in the Global Covid-19 Crisis. Risks, Prevention, Solutions" to support women in Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) to overcome the socio-economic challenges of the Covid-19 crisis.

Within the framework of the grant funding awarded in 2022 was held the project of the association MARTA Centre in Ukraine "Shelter for Women and Girl Victims of War Crimes" and another project "Support for Women's Activism in Belarus and Ukraine: Women, Peace and Security".

MARTA centre is also implementing the project "Capacity Building of Local NGOs in Public Services for Women and Other Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas. Support for the establishment of Women's Advisory Groups in 7 pilot centres."³⁵ The project is

³⁵ Project "Capacity building of local NGOs in providing public services to women and other vulnerable groups in rural areas. Support for the establishment of Women's Advisory Groups in 7 pilot centres". - Available at: <https://marta.lv/lv/marta-darbiba/projekti/projekts-vietejo-nvo-kapacitates-celsana-publisko-pakalpojumu-nodrosinasana-sievietem-un-citam-ievainojamam-grupam-lauku-apvidos-atbalsts-sieviesu-konsultativo-grupu-izveidei-7-pilotcentros/>

implemented in cooperation with the UN Development Programme of Uzbekistan, funded by the EU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.

Although none of the above-mentioned projects is directly targeted at anti-trafficking activities, all of them reduce the risks of women being recruited and subjected to trafficking, and strengthen Latvia's cooperation with the countries of origin of victims of trafficking, which is also important in the future when developing cooperation in the field of anti-trafficking with third countries.

b) Preventing and reducing the demand for trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals within your country (e.g. awareness raising activities and demand reduction initiatives in foreign languages or aimed at specific nationalities or regions; information campaigns involving/targeting the diaspora; cultural mediators, etc.)?

☐ Yes



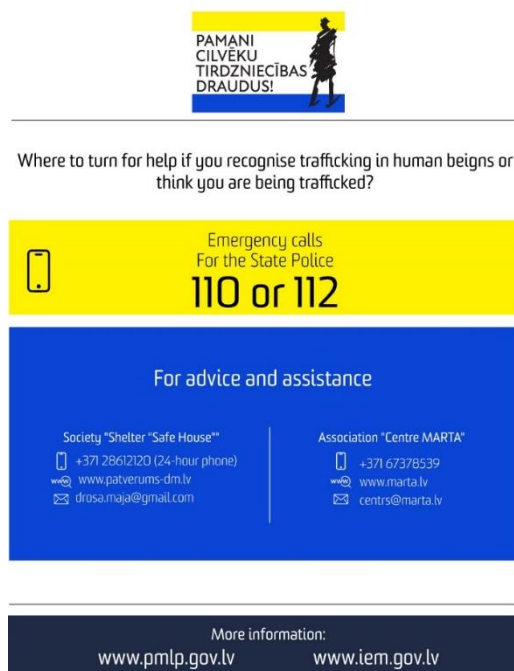
In the period 2021-2023, measures to reduce supply have been implemented by national and local authorities as well as non-governmental organisations.

In 2021 and also in 2024, the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the Latvian.

Embassies in India, Kazakhstan, China, Ukraine and Uzbekistan instructions on measures to prevent labour exploitation with information in seven languages from the society "Shelter "Safe House"". The information is posted in the consular reception areas of the embassies and is to be given to persons together with their passport and visa if the purpose of entry is employment or if there are any doubts about the person's awareness of employment issues in Latvia. The information sheet included important information on minimum and average wages in Latvia, the rules for starting and stopping work, and the institutions where you can turn for help. The information material was prepared in English, Uzbek, Tajik, Russian, Kazakh, Ukrainian and Vietnamese and sent to the embassies. In 2023, the Ministry of the Interior produced two information materials aimed at drawing attention to the signs of trafficking in human beings or "red flags". A business card-sized handout was also produced with information on where to turn for help if you suspect trafficking in human beings. The materials were prepared in four languages (Latvian, English, Russian and Ukrainian) and distributed to institutions working with third-country nationals (the Office of

Citizenship and Migration Affairs, the Integration and Inclusion Agency for Newcomers to Latvia), as well as to non-governmental organisations working with victims of trafficking in human beings (the MARTA Centre, Shelter "Safe House"). The materials were produced under a project supported by the European Commission's Internal Security Fund-Police "Enhancing Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training on Trafficking in Human Beings" (ELECT THB)³⁶ (Internal Security Fund-Police No 101021497).

In 2024, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, implemented a digital campaign "Spot the Threat of Human Trafficking!".



The aim of the communication campaign was to raise awareness among Ukrainian civilians living in Latvia about the possible risks of trafficking in human beings and preventive measures. The campaign was carried out exclusively digitally on social networks (*Instagram, Facebook, Telegram*), including four Ukrainian influencers living in Latvia. Several publicity materials were produced – videos, infographics, messages, etc. All materials were produced in three languages - Latvian, English and Ukrainian. The communication campaign "Spot the threat of human trafficking!"³⁷ has been created and financed within the framework of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2021-2027 Programme Project No. PMLP/PMIF/2023/2 "Support measures for reception and accommodation of persons in need of international protection in Latvia (1st phase)".

10. Please describe the main outcomes/outputs resulting from the implementation of policies and measures aimed at preventing, raising awareness and reducing the demand of trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals

Most of the activities implemented do not have an impact assessment or information on outputs, e.g., information material is known to have been distributed but no information is available on the impact or output.

³⁶ Strengthening law enforcement cooperation and training on trafficking in human beings" (ELECT THB). - Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-%E2%80%9Cstiprinata-tiesibsargajoso-iestazu-sadarbiba-un-pilnveidotas-apmacibas-par-cilveku-tirdzniecibu-elect-thb>

³⁷ All campaign materials are available here: <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/ka-pasargat-sevi-no-cilveku-tirdzniecibas> and <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/how-protect-yourself-human-trafficking>

Communication campaigns gather information on how many and which audiences have been reached. "Spot the Threat of Human Trafficking!" digital communication campaign results report shows that 159,339 unique people were reached and that the videos produced within the campaign had the largest audience - *reaching* 90,965 people. Overall, it should be noted how the campaign reached a much larger audience than planned. At the same time, there is no complete information on the extent to which outreach activities reached third-country nationals. The campaign video was shown on the screens of Riga International Airport on the World Day Against Trafficking in Human Beings on 30 July 2024, thus reaching an even larger audience.

SECTION 3: POLICIES AND MEASURES RELATED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL RESPONSE WITH A VIEW TO BREAKING THE CRIMINAL MODEL OF TRAFFICKERS

11. Has your country identified any challenges in relation to policies and measures aimed at enhancing the law enforcement and judicial response to trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries:

a) in third countries of origin and transit of victims (e.g. lack of awareness of existing cooperation and referral structures; challenges related to available data/exchange of data; administrative challenges; poor coordination/communication among relevant actors; different nature/mandate of actors involved; different definitions; challenges posed by restrictions derived from Covid-19 pandemic, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

Law enforcement cooperation is implemented when criminal activities are identified as possible or already detected. Cooperation with third countries can vary, depending on the structure of the law enforcement authorities in the cooperation country and the trafficking case itself. However, in general, some aspects that facilitate or hinder legal assistance and law enforcement cooperation between Latvia and third countries can be illustrated:

- Cooperation with geographically closer countries is successful, as close cooperation is more often needed not only in combating trafficking in human beings, but also in detecting and combating various other criminal offences.
- Bilateral legal assistance cooperation agreements between countries contribute to better law enforcement and judicial assistance. In the absence of such cooperation agreements, obtaining and exchanging information is cumbersome and time-consuming.
- Not only in third countries, but also within the European Union, approaches to classifying a case as trafficking in human beings can vary. For example, if a case in Latvia is classified as trafficking in human beings, which is the basis for further investigations, but the same case in a third country is not classified as trafficking in human beings, cooperation is hampered.
- Cooperation is also more successful with countries that have specialised units in their law enforcement agencies to deal with trafficking cases. In this case, there

is an opportunity for initial communication, consultation on specific cases and planning of further actions before formal cooperation.

b) within your country (e.g. challenges related to available data/exchange of data; administrative challenges; poor coordination/communication among relevant actors; different nature/mandate of actors involved; different definitions; challenges posed by restrictions derived from Covid-19 pandemic, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

Some institutions have formal and informal cooperation procedures, such as the State Labour Inspectorate and the State Border Guard, for joint inspections of workplaces. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs also regularly cooperates with the State Border Guard and provides information that can be useful for immigration checks. In addition, it is often pointed out in various expert meetings and seminars that information is fragmented, e.g., each institution works within its own competence and processes the information available on a case, but information is not always exchanged between institutions, or is exchanged late, which can hinder the timely detection of cases. Staff turnover is one of the most frequent obstacles, which can also lead to a breakdown in communication between institutions.

12. Has your country identified any good practices in relation to policies and measures aimed at enhancing the law enforcement and judicial response to address trafficking in human beings towards EMN Member and Observer Countries:

a) in third countries of origin and transit of victims (and potential victims) (e.g. capacity building and training of law enforcement and judicial authorities of third countries; cooperation through EU Agencies; early cooperation and coordination, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

One of the key drivers is Europol's anti-trafficking work, which has also established a number of operational task forces. In this regard, the establishment of the Cooperation Group on the Prevention of Trafficking in Ukrainian Civilians Fleeing the War, which allowed for coordinated and timely action, is also worth mentioning. Regular meetings and exchange of information, not only within the EU countries but also with the law enforcement authorities of Ukraine and Moldova, have enabled and continue to enable effective monitoring and response to potential threats.

b) within your country (e.g. through law enforcement and judicial cooperation with third countries; secondment of law enforcement authorities from third countries; cooperation with EU Agencies; use of cultural mediators in procedures involving third country national victims; early cooperation and coordination; specialised trafficking entities/units; specialised prosecutors, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**

The State Police actively participates in the European Union Policy Cycle on Combating Serious and Organised Crime 2022 – 2025 (EMPACT) priority "Trafficking in Human Beings" (THB) in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. During the pandemic, the number of activities decreased due to the restrictions imposed, but in 2023 the number of activities implemented was in line with the target.

The State Police continues to act as the national coordinating authority for the sector in the implementation of the measures contained in the Europol Operational Action Plan. For example, during the reporting period, the State Police in cooperation with other institutions, including the State Labour Inspectorate, Riga Municipal Police, State Border Guard, State Security Service, implemented several EMPACT THB Joint Action Days– against labour exploitation, against sexual exploitation of children and third-country nationals, against trafficking in human beings (agricultural workers).

13. Please describe the main outcomes/outputs resulting from the implementation of policies and measures aimed at enhancing the law enforcement and judicial response to trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals

The impact of the measures implemented is mainly assessed on the basis of the results achieved by law enforcement and supervisory authorities. The EMPACT THB actions have been implemented for several years. For example, Joint Action Days mobilise and improve cooperation between law enforcement and monitoring authorities and international partners, and new criminal proceedings are initiated each year following the implementation of the Joint Action Days. The results of the Joint Days of Action are more visible in Latvia, such as new criminal prosecutions, but other EMPACT THB activities also focus on results in third countries, such as Ukraine and Moldova.

SECTION 4: POLICIES AND MEASURES RELATED TO THE IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTION, SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

15. Has your country identified any challenges in relation to the implementation of specific policies and measures aimed at enhancing the identification, protection, support and empowerment of:

- a) *victims trafficked towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit (e.g. lack of training/specialised knowledge to identify victims; insufficient resources; administrative challenges; challenges with implementation of trans-national referral mechanisms; challenges to identify specific types of victims; challenges posed by restrictions derived from Covid-19 pandemic; challenges posed by the use of new technologies, etc.)?*

☐ **No**

With regard to the identification, protection and empowerment of third-country national victims in third countries, it should be noted that most third-country nationals have not become victims of trafficking in human beings upon arrival in Latvia. For example, most often all the necessary documents are in order for people who want to work in Latvia, which means that even if embassy staff suspect that a person may be in exploitative circumstances, there is often no reason to deny such a person a visa and entry to Latvia.

In addition, in 2024, a case of systematic recruitment of workers from Central Asian countries by an entrepreneur, misleading about working conditions and pay, was identified. Some workers have not turned for help, but have returned to their country of origin or moved to another EU country. Clearly, these persons have become more vulnerable to recruitment and trafficking in human beings. For example, they may have accumulated debts, have no money to send to their family, or have no money to get back to their home country. At the same time, reaching or finding people to provide possible support or motivation to take action against the employer is most often unsuccessful.

b) *third-country national victims of trafficking identified within your country (e.g. lack of training/specialised knowledge to identify victims; insufficient resources; administrative challenges; challenges with implementation of trans-national referral mechanisms; challenges to identify specific types of victims; challenges posed by restrictions derived from Covid-19 pandemic; challenges posed by the use of new technologies, etc.)?*

☐ **Yes**

If a third-country victim of trafficking in human beings is identified, the person can receive a social rehabilitation service in Latvia. If a person is recognised as a victim in criminal proceedings, he or she may also receive various legal aids in addition to the social rehabilitation service.

Another challenge is that if a person chooses to return to his or her country of origin, it is not really known what happens to the person and whether he or she will receive the necessary support in his or her home country. If a person does not receive the necessary psychological, social or legal support, he or she is likely to be recruited and trafficked again in another EU member state.

14. *Has your country identified any good practices in relation to the implementation of specific policies and measures aimed at enhancing identification, protection, support, and empowerment of:*

a) *victims trafficked towards EMN Member and Observer Countries in third countries of origin and transit? (e.g. cooperation with non-governmental organisations in third countries; support to reintegration of victims of trafficking; including with the aim of avoiding revictimization, etc.).*

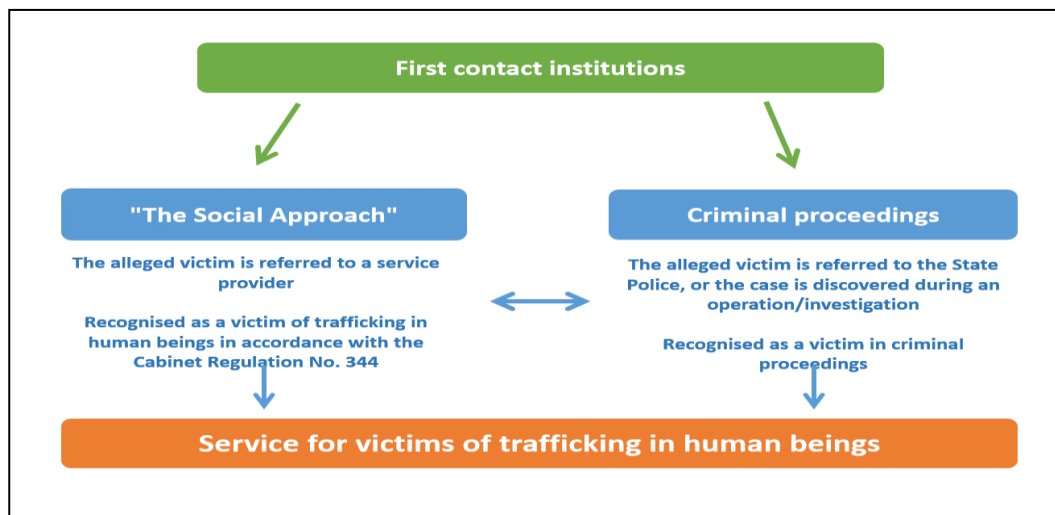
☐ No

b) *third-country national victims of trafficking identified within your country? (e.g. trans-national referrals; cooperation with the diaspora; voluntary return of victims of trafficking, etc.).*

☐ Yes

The service provider (Centre "MARTA", "Shelter "Safe House") may recognise a person as a victim of trafficking in human beings and provide services to victims of trafficking in human beings in accordance with the procedure established by the Cabinet Regulation No 344. This triggers the so-called "social path", where support is provided to a victim of trafficking regardless of whether the person has been recognised as a victim in criminal proceedings. In addition, the threshold for entering the support programme is lower than in the case of criminal proceedings. In the case of the social approach, the recognition of a person as a victim of trafficking is quick and can take only a few days. Initially, a report is drawn up on the basis of an interview with the person and then a committee of non-governmental organisations is convened, which, on the basis of the information received, decides on the recognition of the person as a victim of trafficking in human beings. The general routing is shown in the diagram below.

Ways in which a victim of trafficking is referred for social rehabilitation



This approach is also flexible and useful in cases where additional time is needed to initiate criminal proceedings and to recognise a person as a victim, but protection and support must be provided immediately. In such cases, the person is initially recognised as a victim of trafficking in human beings by a committee of non-governmental organisations in order to initiate the necessary support programme, but is later recognised as a victim in criminal proceedings.

At the same time, the provision of services to third-country nationals may be affected by their legal residence status. Third-country nationals working in Latvia are

tied to a specific employer. If the employment relationship is terminated, the person must leave the country, even if he or she has been recognised as a victim of trafficking by a commission of non-governmental organisations. The State Police can issue a waiting period of up to 30 days during which a decision to open criminal proceedings is taken, allowing the person to obtain a residence permit for a longer period of time for the purposes of the investigation. However, if a third-country national refuses to participate in criminal proceedings and has no legal right to stay in Latvia, the social rehabilitation service is terminated and the person must return to his or her home country.

In addition to the social approach, both public authorities and non-governmental organisations have implemented a number of projects aimed at identifying, protecting, supporting and empowering third-country nationals who have been trafficked.

NET-WORKS PROJECT

The society "Shelter "Safe House"" continued the implementation of the project *NET-WORKS to ensure the long-term integration of Third-Country Nationals Survivors of Trafficking (SOT) promoting job opportunities and work-life balance measures*".³⁸ The aim of the project is to support third-country nationals who have been victims of trafficking in human beings and to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market. The project analyses what support measures are provided to victims of trafficking in human beings and develops various interactive tools for professionals working with victims. The project partners are non-governmental organisations from Italy, Spain, Lithuania, Sweden, Germany and Latvia.

The project has produced the following information materials:

- Report on support available in Latvia for victims of trafficking in human beings;
- A summary of best practices implemented by the society "Shelter "Safe House"" in the field of support for victims of human trafficking.

COALESCE

"MARTA Centre participated in the COALESCE project, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and managed by the Cyprus Institute for Mediterranean Gender Studies, in cooperation with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, *Caritas* and the Cyprus Refugee Council, *Solwodi* in Germany, Klaipeda Centre in Lithuania and *Iroko Onlus* in Italy.³⁹

The project aims to support migrant women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation in Europe by providing gender-based psychosocial, legal and economic support and assistance; to develop synergies and complementarities by facilitating the identification of victims' needs, assistance and support; and to improve transnational cooperation between leading professionals and practitioners.

In the framework of the project, interviews were conducted with women victims of trafficking in human beings from third countries in 2021 and a report "Notice the

³⁸ The materials are available on the society's website: <https://patverums-dm.lv/lv/net-works>

³⁹ The materials produced within the project are available on the MARTA Centre website: <https://marta.lv/lv/marta-darbiba/projekti/coalesce-projekts-par-atbalstu-sieviem-migrantem-kas-cietus-no-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-seksualai-izmantosanai/>

Difference"⁴⁰ on the needs, support and integration of victims, based on the results of the interviews and analysis of information sources, and its conclusions and recommendations were published at the end of 2021.

16. Please describe your country's main outcomes/outputs resulting from the implementation of policies and measures aimed at improving the identification, protection, support and empowerment of third-country national victims of trafficking

The "social approach" has generally enabled more persons to receive social rehabilitation services than would have been the case if only persons recognised as victims by the State Police had been referred. For example, in 2023, out of 24 identified victims, the State Police recognised four persons as victims. The "social approach" also makes it possible to motivate individuals to engage in criminal proceedings even if victims are initially reluctant to do so.

The Net-works project has not only gathered information on the needs of third-country nationals and the most appropriate services, but has also provided concrete support in practice to a number of third-country nationals in Latvia.

SECTION 5: COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES AND WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

17. Has your country identified any good practices in the cooperation with third countries of origin and transit of victims to: prevent the trafficking of third-country nationals towards the EU; break the criminal model of traffickers; and/or protect, assist, support, and empower third-country national victims of trafficking?

☐ No

18. Has your country identified any good practices in the cooperation with international organisations to prevent the trafficking of third-country nationals towards the EU; break the criminal model of traffickers; and/or protect, assist, support, and empower third-country national victims of trafficking?

☐ Yes

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, some refugees crossed the border into Latvia to avoid the war zone and travelled through Russia to EU countries or western Ukraine. This has led to the need to establish a support point at several Latvian border crossing points on the Latvian/Russian border. The Riga Office of the International Organisation for Migration was also involved in providing support.

19. Has your country identified any challenges in relation to the cooperation described in questions 17 and 18?

⁴⁰ "Spot the difference". - Available at:
https://marta.lv/files/research/COALESCE_Zinojums_pamani_atiskribu_MARTA_LV.pdf
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The biggest challenges for cooperation with third countries relate to the implementation of preventive measures in third countries. In countries where better cooperation has been established and cooperation partners have already been identified, such as Ukraine and Moldova, communication, joint preventive measures, law enforcement cooperation to combat trafficking in human beings are much more successful. However, there is no such permanent cooperation with other countries, such as Central Asia and India, which means that there is less scope for preventive measures or for the safe return of third-country victims of trafficking to their home country. If each country had a focal point or reference centre, there would also be more scope for implementing different support measures.

SECTION 6: NEEDS AND FUTURE NATIONAL MEASURES AND POLICIES

20. Has your country identified any particular needs in addressing the international dimension of trafficking in human beings? (e.g. any thematic areas not sufficiently covered; any nationalities that were not sufficiently targeted; needs in cooperation with some third countries/regions, etc.)

☐ **Yes**

Currently, it is important for Latvia to promote cooperation with Ukraine, Moldova, Central Asian countries, as well as India, which are the most frequent countries of origin of victims of trafficking for exploitation in Latvia.⁴¹

21. [Optional] Are there any ongoing discussions at national level on how future national and EU actions/policies could address identified needs and build on existing good practices?

☐ **No**

If yes, please describe and specify whether any follow-up actions were taken (e.g., changes in policies/measures; proposal for new policies/measures; negotiations of new cooperation agreements with third countries, etc.).

22. Is your country planning to develop any new policies or measures that address the international dimension of trafficking in human beings?

☐ **No**

No specific national strategic documents or actions are planned, except for the approval of a new Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Plan, which will include measures

⁴¹Sources:

- Reports on the situation of trafficking in human beings in Latvia: <https://www.iem.gov.lv/lv/parskats-par-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-noversanu-un-apkarosanu-latvija>
- Operational models. Trends and patterns of human trafficking in Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine: <https://heuni.fi/-/report-series-103-patterns-of-exploitation-elect-thb>
- Operational models. Summary for policy makers on the latest trends and modus operandi in human trafficking: <https://heuni.fi/-/patterns-of-exploitation-summary>
- Studies carried out within the CAPE project "Capacity Building, Assistance and Prosecution in Labour Exploitation Cases in the Baltic Sea Region": <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-kompetencuveidosana-palidzibas-sniegsana-un-kriminalvajasana-darba-ekspluatacijas-gadijumos-baltijas-juras-regiona-cape>

to work with third-country nationals (prevention, detection and support). Activities are mostly planned within projects, targeting at-risk sectors or industries. For example, the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Ombudsman's Office and the Procurement Monitoring Bureau have developed guidelines for the prevention of human trafficking risks in public procurement. The Guidelines give concrete examples of how the contracting authority and the successful tenderer can mitigate the risks of labour exploitation. Overall, this approach also aims to increase the private sector's responsibility to reduce trafficking in human beings in supply chains.

LIST OF LITERATURE AND OTHER SOURCES

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Project "capacity building of local ngos in providing public services to women and other vulnerable groups in rural areas. Support for the establishment of women's advisory groups in 7 pilot centres". - available at: <https://marta.lv/lv/marta-darbiba/projekti/projekts-vietejo-nvo-kapacitates-celsana-publisko-pakalpojumu-nodrosinasana-sievietem-un-citam-ievainojamam-grupam-lauku-apvidos-atbalsts-sieviesu-konsultativo-grupu-izveidei-7-pilotcentros/>

Reports on the situation of trafficking in human beings in latvia: <https://www.iem.gov.lv/lv/parskats-par-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-noversanu-un-apkarosanu-latvija>

Strengthening law enforcement cooperation and training on trafficking in human beings" (elect thb). - available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-%e2%80%9cstiprinata-tiesibsargajoso-iestazu-sadarbiba-un-pilnveidotas-apmacibas-par-cilveku-tirdzniecibu-elect-thb>

Studies carried out within the cape project "capacity building, assistance and prosecution in labour exploitation cases in the baltic sea region": <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-kompetencu-veidosana-palidzibas-sniegsana-un-kriminalvajasana-darba-ekspluatacijas-gadijumos-baltijas-juras-regiona-cape>

The materials are available on the society's website: <https://patverums-dm.lv/lv/networks>

The materials produced within the project are available on the marta centre website: <https://marta.lv/lv/marta-darbiba/projekti/coalesce-projekts-par-atbalstu-sievietem-migrantem-kas-cietusas-no-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-seksualai-izmantosanai/>