

Expert report confirms labour trafficking is on the increase in Ireland

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) welcomes the publication of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) report on Ireland's progress in tackling human trafficking

Released today (Wednesday 20th September 2017) the GRETA report:

- Confirms trafficking is on the increase in Ireland
- Notes the mismatch between demand for workers and legal migration options for those workers, which creates the conditions for trafficking
- Urges Ireland to ensure victims are not prosecuted for crimes they were forced to commit (e.g. those found in cannabis growhouses)

MRCI spokesperson Gráinne O'Toole said, "The report confirms what we have long stated: labour trafficking is increasing in Ireland due to the lack of legal migration routes for vital sectors like agriculture, fisheries, domestic work and restaurants. The demand for workers in these sectors is growing daily, but the State refuses to give work permits for these areas. The few legal routes that exist often tie workers to their employers, creating the conditions for exploitation and forced labour. Workers are often trapped in exploitation and forced to work in terrible conditions."

O'Toole continued, "Domestic work continues to be the bulk of labour trafficking cases that MRCI works on. Often domestic workers are rendered undocumented, exploited and abused by their employers, but are afraid to leave or to go to the authorities for fear of being left homeless and destitute. Another area of deep concern is the prosecution and jailing of potential trafficking victims found in cannabis growhouses for drug offences; this report calls on Ireland to ensure victims are not punished for crimes they were forced to commit."

O'Toole concluded, "This report details a number of issues MRCI and other expert organisations have identified over the past decade: no one who has experienced labour trafficking has received compensation from their employer; there have been no prosecutions for the crime of labour trafficking; official identification of trafficking victims is finally increasing, but not fast enough. Ireland needs a proper compensation mechanism, an effective identification system, and the resources to support both. These solutions are clear and very achievable, but independent oversight is needed to ensure these measures are put in place. As recommended by GRETA, an independent National Rapporteur should be introduced as a matter of urgency."

ENDS

Gráinne O'Toole is available for interview

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Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) is based in Dublin and has been providing expert support to victims of labour trafficking in Ireland since 2006.

The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties. GRETA's press release and the full Ireland report are available at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/-/publication-of-greta-s-second-report-on-ireland>