

48e SESSION**Empowering cities and regions to combat human trafficking for labour exploitation**

Resolution 510 (2025)¹

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe refers to:
 - a. the explanatory memorandum “Empowering cities and regions to combat human trafficking for labour exploitation” (CG(2025)48-13);
 - b. Congress Resolution 196 (2005) “The fight against trafficking in human beings and their sexual exploitation: the role of cities and regions”, and the Declaration on the fight against trafficking in human beings, opened for signature during the 13th Plenary Session of the Congress in 2006;
 - c. the Council of Europe’s Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No.197);
 - d. the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (2023), which recalls the necessity of fighting trafficking in human beings;
 - e. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)21 of the Committee of Ministers on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and its explanatory memorandum asking member States to facilitate multi-agency and multi-disciplinary co-operation with regional and local authorities to combat trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation;
 - f. the work developed by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, notably the “Guidance note on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation” (GRETA(2020)12), and the “Compendium of good practices in addressing trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation” (GRETA(2020)08);
 - g. Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2536 (2024) “Precarious and irregular work situations of migrant seasonal and domestic workers”;
 - h. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, and its Target 8.7 to eradicate forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking.

2. The Congress notes with concern that:

¹ Debated and adopted by the Congress during the 48th Session on 26 March 2025 (see document [CG\(2025\)48-13](#), explanatory memorandum, co-rapporteurs Cecilia DALMAN EEK, Sweden (R, SOC/G/PD) and Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG).

a. trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation has been on the rise in many Council of Europe member States, particularly affecting vulnerable populations who are often exploited in sectors including agriculture, construction and domestic work;

b. children, especially unaccompanied and separated migrant children, are increasingly exposed to human trafficking, notably in a context of conflict, economic hardship, family disfunction and inadequate child protection measures;

c. human trafficking has a profoundly negative impact on local communities, undermining the enjoyment of human rights and social cohesion, perpetuating poverty and contributing to the normalisation of exploitative labour practices, not only harming the victims but also destabilising local and regional economies and straining public services;

d. human trafficking should be a key issue on local and regional authorities' agendas as it occurs within their jurisdictions, exploiting local infrastructures and regulations and affecting residents directly, and as they are the level of governance most likely to be able to identify and provide support to potential victims and vulnerable populations;

e. local and regional authorities, despite being the first point of contact for many victims of trafficking, frequently lack the necessary resources, training and coordination mechanisms to effectively prevent and combat human trafficking, including for the purpose of labour exploitation;

f. victims of human trafficking, including for the purpose of labour exploitation, face significant barriers to accessing legal, psychological and social support systems, especially in smaller municipalities and rural areas where such services may be scarce, impacting the likelihood of reporting and identification of victims;

g. the social and economic harm caused by human trafficking, including for the purpose of labour exploitation, necessitates a robust response at local and regional levels, including the involvement of local businesses, civil society and community members to combat these practices and support the reintegration of victims;

h. the complex and organised nature of human trafficking networks require a coordinated, multi-level approach that integrates local, regional and national efforts to dismantle these networks and provide support to victims.

3. The Congress calls on local and regional authorities in member States to:

a. place the fight against human trafficking high on the political agenda of local and regional councils, by adopting a comprehensive human-rights based strategy that puts victims at the centre of all efforts aimed at protecting, assisting and providing redress, and refraining from using rhetoric that criminalises victims of human trafficking;

b. enhance efforts to prevent human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation through the development and implementation of outreach programmes for at-risk populations, including effective protection measures for unaccompanied and separated children in a context of migration, as well as targeted information campaigns and training about the risks and signs of human trafficking for labour exploitation aimed at political representatives, public servants, employers and civil society organisations who are likely come in contact with potential victims;

c. make use of zoning and licensing regulations and other procedures to erect administrative and financial barriers that disrupt the logistical processes used by human traffickers and exploiters and prevent the establishment of trafficking practices;

d. implement and enforce ethical procurement policies that ensure the supply chains of cities and regions are free from labour exploitation, in collaboration with trade unions, NGOs, and other stakeholders, and monitor compliance and take action against violations, including in public contracting processes;

e. improve detection and referral systems through the establishment of low-threshold services and mobile outreach teams, using risk-profiling to identify at-risk sites or sectors, and ensure the existence of safe, multilingual reporting pathways that protect victims from retaliation or further exploitation;

f. strengthen assistance to victims and potential victims of human trafficking, including for the purpose of labour exploitation, by establishing regional contact points that can offer support to local services dealing with trafficking cases and by setting up intermunicipal collaboration structures to pool specialised services and to standardise practices with a view to ensuring consistent care to victims;

g. establish or strengthen local and regional anti-trafficking networks and multidisciplinary teams that facilitate the exchange of information, the organisation of joint inspections and the coordination of actions among various stakeholders and across different levels of government.

4. The Congress calls on national associations of local and regional authorities to:

a. support capacity-building amongst their members by developing training and resources for local and regional authorities on the prevention and detection of human trafficking, with a specific focus on human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation;

b. advocate for policy consistency by engaging with national governments to ensure that anti-trafficking policies, particularly those addressing labour exploitation, are coherent across all levels of government and that local and regional authorities are adequately supported and involved in national decision-making processes regarding the fight against human trafficking.