

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

Recommendation 527 (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 Recommendation 165 (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) of the “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:

- 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;

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).

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 asks the Committee of Ministers to invite the respective national authorities of the member States of the Council of Europe to:

a. enhance vertical coordination by ensuring that national anti-trafficking actions and strategies are developed in consultation with local and regional authorities and their associations and by providing clear guidance on the implementation of new actions;

b. promote and support the collection and sharing of disaggregated data on confirmed and suspected cases of human trafficking, including for the purpose of labour exploitation, by actors and services involved at all levels in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the state of human trafficking and high-risk areas across the territory;

c. develop a coherent national approach to anti-trafficking efforts that clearly defines the duties and mandates of different authorities, prioritises human rights and victim protection, and encourages safe reporting, particularly for undocumented migrants, unaccompanied and separated children and other persons in precarious situations, ensuring that authorities at different levels of governance receive the means and support needed to carry out their responsibilities;

d. support the improvement of assistance to victims and potential victims by facilitating the creation of multidisciplinary networks and teams at local and regional levels, ensuring they have adequate funding and means to provide specialised support to victims and offer low-threshold outreach services to vulnerable populations.