

Strasbourg, 26 February 2026

THB-CP(2025)RAP37

COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

37th meeting of the Committee of the Parties

Strasbourg, 18 December 2025
Palais de l'Europe, room 11, and online

Opening at 09:30

MEETING REPORT

Contents

Agenda item 1:	Opening of the meeting	3
Agenda item 2:	Adoption of the draft agenda	3
Agenda item 3:	State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	3
Agenda item 4:	Exchange of views with the President of GRETA.....	3
Agenda item 5:	Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania (fourth evaluation round) and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties	4
Agenda item 6:	Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations ..	7
Agenda item 7:	Discussion on the revision of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA (Resolution CM/Res(2013)28) in relation to the language requirements	10
Agenda item 8:	Information on activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations	11
Agenda item 9:	Information on the anti-trafficking activities of other Council of Europe bodies and international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties.....	11
Agenda item 10:	Dates of future meetings	12
Agenda item 11:	Other business	12
Agenda item 12:	Adoption of the list of decisions taken	12
Appendix I		13
Appendix II		14
Appendix III		20
Appendix IV		22
Appendix V		24
Appendix VI		26
Appendix VII		28
Appendix VIII		30
Appendix IX		33
Appendix X		34
Appendix XI		36
Appendix XII		37
Appendix XIII		39
Appendix XIV		41
Appendix XV		44
Appendix XVI		46

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to respectively as “the Committee” and “the Convention”) held its 37th meeting on 18 December 2025 in Strasbourg. The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with some members participating online via Zoom.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the draft agenda

2. The Chair invited the Committee to adopt the draft agenda of the meeting.

3. The agenda, as adopted by the Committee, is set out in Appendix I. The list of participants is set out in Appendix II.

Agenda item 3: State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

4. The Chair noted that no new signatures and/or ratifications had been submitted since the last meeting of the Committee (20 June 2025) and consequently the number of Parties to the Convention continued to stand at 48. She recalled that the Committee of Ministers had prolonged until 7 February 2026 the invitation issued to Tunisia in February 2018 to accede to the Convention. With a view to stimulating the process of accession, the CoE Office in Tunis and the Secretariat of the Convention had organised a meeting on 2 December 2025 with relevant Tunisian officials.

Agenda item 4: Exchange of views with the President of GRETA

5. The Chair invited Ms Conny Rijken, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), to take the floor for the periodic exchange of views with the Committee.

6. GRETA's President provided an overview of GRETA's activities during 2025, which had included 12 country evaluation visits as part of the 4th evaluation round of the Convention. Further, in June GRETA had received the Belarusian authorities' reply to the questionnaire for the 3rd evaluation round. Given the impossibility to carry out a visit to Belarus, GRETA was in the process of collecting additional information from independent sources in order to supplement the information provided by the authorities in their reply to the questionnaire and during online meetings. Further, GRETA had set up an ad hoc working group to prepare a draft guidance note on residence permits (Article 14 of the Convention). GRETA was also working on a new compendium of good (promising) practices in the area of combating human trafficking, on the basis of GRETA's country reports.

7. Ms Rijken also informed the Committee of the results of the annual meeting of national anti-trafficking coordinators and rapporteurs, hosted by the Council of Europe on 11-12 September in Strasbourg. The meeting, which was co-organised with the OSCE for the eighth consecutive year, brought together representatives of 54 countries across the Council of Europe and OSCE regions. Participants discussed how to strengthen engagement with the private sector in combating human trafficking, how to deal with crisis situations and introduce crisis-related provisions in National Action Plans for combating trafficking in human beings, and the links between human trafficking and drugs/forced criminality.

8. Referring to the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention (which took place on 16 May 2005 in Warsaw), Ms Rijken underlined its relevance for protecting human dignity, equality and justice, and in doing so, strengthening democracy, as called for by the New Democratic Pact for Europe. The full text of Ms Rijken's statement is set out in Appendix III.

9. The Chair thanked Ms Rijken for her observations and opened the floor for questions or comments concerning GRETA's work.

10. Ambassador Agnese Vilde (Latvia), Vice-Chair of the Committee, asked GRETA's President if GRETA had information about the extent to which forcibly deported children of Ukraine are victims of human trafficking. Ms Rijken replied that GRETA was in the process of collecting additional information and evidence concerning deported Ukrainian children and whether the violations committed against them could be considered as trafficking in human beings.

11. The Chair of the Committee asked GRETA's President how action against trafficking in human beings could contribute to the New Democratic Pact for Europe. Ms Rijken referred to the recent meeting between the Council of Europe Secretary General and Presidents of Council of Europe monitoring bodies, which had underscored the role of monitoring bodies as early warning systems, providing states with facts and independent expertise, enhancing transparency and accountability of national authorities, and reinforcing democratic values. By giving voices to persons belonging to under-represented groups, such as victims of human trafficking and other groups in a situation of vulnerability, GRETA plays a crucial role in promoting social justice and thus contributing to democratic stability and security. Ms Rijken noted that the meeting had highlighted the synergies between Council of Europe monitoring bodies and the need for further collaboration between them.

12. The representative of Belgium asked GRETA's President about the gender dimension of perpetrators of human trafficking. Ms Rijken referred to data presented in the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, according to which the number of women perpetrators of human trafficking was high in some countries and regions; however, she noted that GRETA did not collect disaggregated data on perpetrators.

Agenda item 5: Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania (fourth evaluation round) and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties

13. The Chair recalled that since the previous Committee meeting, GRETA had adopted and published five final reports under the fourth evaluation round, concerning Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania. The five draft recommendations based on these GRETA reports had been made available to the Committee on 20 November 2025 and members of the Committee had been invited to send any proposals for amendments by 12 December 2025. The Chair noted that the Secretariat had received proposals for amendments to the draft recommendations concerning Denmark and Georgia, which were circulated to the members of the Committee on 15 December 2025, and would be discussed under the relevant agenda items.

14. The Chair recalled that the draft recommendations were based on GRETA's findings and conclusions, consisting of a preamble, a part highlighting positive developments, and a recommendation based on the issues for urgent action identified in the respective GRETA's reports. Paragraph "B" drew attention to the recommendations that have been made repeatedly under the preceding rounds and should therefore be implemented as a matter of priority. The draft recommendations asked the national authorities to report back to the Committee on the measures taken to implement the recommendations within two years of their adoption.

Fourth evaluation round

5.1. Bulgaria

15. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Bulgaria.

16. Ms Daniela Saveklieva, Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of Bulgaria, welcomed the constructive dialogue with GRETA during the fourth evaluation round of the Convention, the report which recognised the progress achieved by Bulgaria and the comprehensive recommendations. She highlighted some of the measures taken by the Bulgarian authorities since the publication of the report, including a new information campaign for third-country national seeking

employment in Bulgaria, preparation of legislative amendments and discussions on the establishment of an independent national rapporteur. Further, a round-table would be held in 2026 to discuss ways of improving victims' access to compensation. The full text of Ms Saveklieva's statement is set out in Appendix IV.

17. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Bulgaria and decided to request the Government of Bulgaria to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 18 December 2027.

5.2. Denmark

18. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Denmark and asked the representative of Denmark to present the authorities' proposals for amending this draft recommendation.

19. Mr Johannes Holm, from the Danish Ministry of Justice, expressed thanks to GRETA for the fourth evaluation report, which was seen by the Danish authorities as a valuable tool for strengthening efforts against human trafficking. At the same time, he made some suggestions for improving the evaluation process, in particular avoiding repetitive requests for information and taking due account of information already provided by the national authorities. Mr Holm then proceeded to present Denmark's proposals for amending the draft recommendation on Denmark, the full text of which is available in document THB-CP(2025)02. As regards the first proposal, which concerned deleting the last bullet point of recommendation No. 7 ("make full use of the legislation on the freezing and forfeiture of assets to secure compensation to victims of human trafficking"), he noted that pursuant to Danish law, victims being awarded compensation are ensured that the amount will be paid in full by the Danish state, which will then seek to recover the amount paid to the victim from the perpetrator, and therefore the recommendation will not affect the protection of victims of trafficking in Denmark. Regarding the proposals for amendments to recommendations No. 6 and No. 9, he noted that the Immigration Service and Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) of Denmark already carry out a comprehensive and adequate risk assessment in all asylum cases and therefore the recommendations should be reformulated. The full text of Mr Holm's statement is set out in Appendix V.

20. The Chair gave the floor to GRETA's President to explain GRETA's position on the proposed amendments. As regards the first proposal for amendment, Ms Rijken noted that the information provided by Mr Holm had not been raised by the Danish authorities during the different stages of preparation of GRETA's report on Denmark, and it was not clear whether this new information related to state compensation or the possibility to seek compensation from the perpetrators. The representative of Denmark explained that the Danish Compensation to Victims of Crimes Act ensures that a victim of a crime will always be awarded the full compensation, they are entitled to. The Danish State will initially pay the awarded sum to the victim and subsequently seek to recover the awarded sum from the perpetrator. GRETA's President acknowledged that in the light of this explanation, the recommendation regarding freezing and confiscation of assets would not affect the protection of victims in Denmark. As regards the amendment proposal to recommendation No. 6, GRETA's President referred to paragraph 171 of GRETA's report, according to which victims of trafficking cannot be granted asylum solely on the basis of their trafficking experience. She further referred to paragraph 59 of GRETA's report, which raised concerns about the RAB's assessment of key elements in asylum claims, including failure to consider the risk of persecution and re-trafficking upon return.

21. Mr Jan Austad, Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Norway (online), expressed the view that the Committee of the Parties should avoid discussing amendment proposals which contest GRETA's findings. Ms Marjatta Hiekka, Legal Counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, seconded this view and stressed the importance of respecting the independence of GRETA. Ambassador Gabriel Revel, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe, supported the previous two speakers.

22. The Chair asked the representative of Denmark if he wanted to withdraw the proposal for amending the draft recommendation due to the lack of support and doubts expressed. As Mr Holm did not want that,

the Chair invited members of the Committee to take a vote on the amendment proposals made by Denmark. The Committee rejected the amendment proposals and adopted the recommendation in respect of Denmark in its initial formulation. The Committee decided to request the Government of Denmark to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 18 December 2027.

5.3.Georgia

23. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Georgia and asked the representative of Georgia to present the authorities' proposals for amending this draft recommendation.

24. Ms Ketevan Sarajishvili, Head of the International Relations and Legal Cooperation Department of the Georgian Ministry of Justice, expressed appreciation for GRETA's professional and constructive work throughout the fourth evaluation round. She noted that the recommendations provided a clear, practical and forward-looking roadmap for strengthening the national response to human trafficking. Further, she highlighted recent developments, including changes to the procedures for victim compensation, an increase in the number of labour inspectors, as well as increased identification of victims by the Permanent Group. Finally, she explained that the amendment proposed by Georgia to the draft recommendation was of a technical nature and concerned the number of specialised shelters for victims in trafficking in Georgia, which was three rather than two. The full text of Ms Sarajishvili's statement is set out in Appendix VI.

25. The Chair gave the floor to GRETA's President, who explained that GRETA's report referred to the opening of a second state-run shelter for victims of trafficking in Tbilisi in 2023, but there was also one shelter in Batumi, so the total number of specialised shelters was indeed three, and therefore the technical amendment should be accepted.

26. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Georgia with the technical amendment proposed and decided to request the Government of Georgia to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 18 December 2027.

5.4.Montenegro

27. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Montenegro.

28. Ms Ivana Masanovic, Deputy Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the Council of Europe, expressed gratitude to GRETA for the excellent co-operation and professional work throughout the fourth evaluation round. She noted that GRETA's report acknowledged the progress made by Montenegro in many areas and identified challenges, such as the worrying proportion of child victims and the heightened vulnerability of Roma and Egyptian communities, migrant workers and asylum seekers. Ms Masanovic underlined the three priorities on which Montenegro planned to focus: victim protection, social inclusion of vulnerable groups, and improved institutional capacities and digital dimension. The full text of Ms Masanovic's statement is set out in Appendix VII.

29. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Montenegro and decided to request the Government of Montenegro to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 18 December 2027.

5.5.Romania

30. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Romania.

31. Ms Ana-Maria Tamaş Ilinca, from the Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, presented an overview of Romania's progress in preventing and combating human trafficking. Noting the challenges faced by her country both as a country of origin and of destination of victims, she highlighted the strengthened co-operation with third countries, enhancement of the Victim Monitoring Information System

(SIMEV), legislative improvements to the provisions for victim compensation, and increased resources of child protection services. Moreover, a legislative amendment introducing a licensing mechanism for recruitment agencies had been proposed and a new monitoring mechanism in residential care facilities had been introduced. The full text of Ms Tamaş Ilinca's statement is set out in Appendix VIII.

32. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Romania and decided to request the Government of Romania to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 18 December 2027.

Agenda item 6: Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations

33. The Chair of the Committee noted that since the previous meeting of the Committee, reports concerning the steps taken to implement previous Committee of the Parties' recommendations had been submitted by the Governments of the Czech Republic and Türkiye in the context of the second evaluation round of the Convention, and by the Governments of Iceland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden in the context of the third evaluation round. The authorities of the Netherlands had asked for an extension of the deadline for submitting their report, which was 15 December 2025. The Chair invited the representatives of the countries concerned to take the floor.

Second evaluation round

6.1. Czech Republic

34. Ms Olga Šimáčková, from the Office of the Director General for International and European Co-operation of the Czech Ministry of Justice, highlighted some of the steps taken by the Czech Republic to implement the Committee's recommendation, including a draft legislative amendment to strengthen measures against human trafficking, changes to the procedures for licencing employment agencies, new awareness-raising campaigns and new training programmes. The full text of Ms Šimáčková's statement is set out in Appendix IX.

35. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Czech authorities' report. Ms Rijken noted that the report submitted by the Czech authorities addressed all the urgent recommendations contained in GRETA's second evaluation report as well as other important aspects of the Convention's implementation. Progress had been achieved in a number of areas. Efforts to prevent and combat trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation had intensified through targeted training, awareness-raising, inspections of temporary work agencies and new legislation concerning illegal employment. A major child trafficking project had been completed, resulting in a methodology and training programme for identifying child victims and an awareness campaign. Training had been provided to relevant professionals on victim identification, and since 2023, regional roundtables had been organised to improve victim detection. Despite these improvements, several issues did not appear to have been sufficiently addressed. The data collection system remained fragmented and foreign victims of trafficking who were exploited abroad but identified in the Czech Republic continued to lack access to the specialised assistance programme for victims of trafficking. Insufficient information had been provided on steps taken to guarantee access to compensation for victims and to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking.

6.2. Türkiye

36. Mr Emrullah Okur, Migration Expert from the Turkish Presidency of Migration Management, provided a brief overview of work carried out or ongoing in relation to the recommendations. This included the adoption of a new National Action Plan in January 2025, improvement of victim identification, expansion of training and awareness raising, strengthened victim support services, and improvements in judicial processes and legislation. Further, he noted that close co-operation with civil society organisations was prioritised in the area of victims protection. The full text of Mr Okur's statement is set out in Appendix X.

37. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Turkish authorities' report. Ms Rijken noted that the report submitted by Türkiye addressed all the urgent recommendations contained in GRETA's second evaluation report. The adoption of a new National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as the increase in the number and capacity of the shelters for victims of human trafficking, were welcome developments. Efforts had been made to combat child trafficking, in particular through the work of Children in Safety Teams which identify and refer children at risk on the streets to appropriate assistance services. Despite these improvements, several issues of concern remained. Discrepancies remained between the definition of human trafficking in the Turkish Criminal Code and in the Convention, and there was still no state compensation scheme accessible to victims of trafficking. No progress had been made with regard to strengthening the mandate of labour inspectors so that they can be actively involved in the prevention of human trafficking.

Third evaluation round

6.3. Iceland

38. No representative of Iceland was present at the meeting. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Icelandic authorities' report. Ms Rijken noted that the report submitted by Iceland addressed all the recommendations from GRETA's third evaluation report. Steps had been taken to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking, including through employing additional staff in the specialised police and setting up a Training Committee on Human Trafficking under the Centre for Police Training. A large-scale case of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation in the restaurant sector was detected in March 2024 and the investigation was ongoing. At the beginning of 2025, new legislation entered into force to combat criminal activity in the labour market. Furthermore, the government had funded a full-time position at the Family Justice Centre to co-ordinate initial responses and the provision of services to victims of human trafficking. However, the report did not indicate any progress with regard to the provision of safe and suitable accommodation for victims of trafficking. No concrete steps had been taken to establish a formalised National Referral Mechanism for the identification and referral of trafficking victims to assistance.

6.4. Netherlands

39. Mr Eros Puggioni, Policy Officer at the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands, noted that due to changes within the government, there had been a delay in finalising the report on the implementation of the recommendation, but it was expected to be submitted in January 2026. The full text of Mr Puggioni's statement is set out in Appendix XI.

6.5. Serbia

40. No representative of Serbia was present at the meeting. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Serbian authorities' report. Ms Rijken noted that the report submitted by the Serbian authorities addressed all urgent issues raised in GRETA's third evaluation report. It referred to a significant number of training activities, including on digital investigation and victim-focused interviewing techniques. Further, in addition to the already existing focal points in prosecutor's offices, judges had been appointed as focal points responsible for dealing with presumed victims of THB in misdemeanour proceedings. The authorities had conducted information to raise public awareness of the existing free legal aid mechanisms. A new rulebook on the identification of victims of human trafficking had been adopted and the number of identified victims of trafficking among foreign nationals had increased. Training had been organised for labour inspectors and five labour inspectors had been designated as focal points on human trafficking. However, there was still no shelter for male victims of trafficking and no information had been provided as to whether adequate state funding was allocated to specialised NGOs offering accommodation and support to victims of THB. Regarding state compensation, while there was still no scheme for state compensation of victims of violent crimes, the new draft Law on Preventing and

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings included a provision on the right of victims of THB to a one-time financial compensation.

6.6. Slovenia

41. Mr Grega Pajnkihar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the Council of Europe, conveyed the apologies of the National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator of Slovenia, who could not participate in the meeting due to the fact that Slovenia was presently hosting GRETA's 4th evaluation visit. He highlighted some of the key developments in Slovenia with regard to the implementation of the recommendation issued under the 3rd evaluation round, in particular efforts to prevent labour exploitation through awareness raising and support to foreign workers, as well as strengthening labour inspections in sectors at risk. Further, he noted that steps had been taken to improve the identification and protection of victims, including through EU fundings for a victim reintegration programme. A research project launched in 2024 had analysed trends in convictions and judicial practice. The full text of Mr Pajnkihar's statement is set out in Appendix XII.

42. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Slovenian authorities' report. Ms Rijken stated that the report submitted by the Slovenian authorities addressed all urgent issues raised in GRETA's third evaluation report as well as the other recommendations contained in it. Changes had been made to the Crime Victim Compensation Act, removing the requirement for applicants to be Slovenian citizens. A proposal for amending the human trafficking provision in the Criminal Code had been made with a view to including other forms of labour exploitation in addition to forced labour. Concerning combating trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, the report provided information on training of labour inspectors, the setting up of a new division within the Labour Inspectorate and increased coordination of relevant agencies and international co-operation. However, no changes had been made regarding the non-punishment provision, the recovery and reflection period and the conditions for providing assistance to victims of trafficking.

6.7. Spain

43. Ambassador Rosa Velázquez Álvarez, Permanent Representative of Spain to the Council of Europe, stated that the Intelligence Centre against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO) had strengthened operational co-ordination of the procedures for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking. The process of preparing a new comprehensive law against human trafficking and exploitation was ongoing. Strengthened measures had been taken to prevent and combat trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, which was on the rise, through intensified workplace inspections and increased human resources of the Labour Inspectorate. Moreover, new legislation adopted in 2025 provided for additional protective measures in respect of child victims of sexual violence. In the area of capacity building, the HELP course was being used to train judges. The full text of Ambassador Velázquez Álvarez's statement is set out in Appendix XIII.

44. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Spanish authorities' report. Ms Rijken noted that the report submitted by the Spanish authorities addressed all the recommendations made in GRETA's third report. The adoption of a comprehensive law against human trafficking and exploitation, which had been announced in the last GRETA report, was still pending, and as a result, a number of the recommendations remained to be implemented as they were linked to legislative changes that would be made by this law. The statistics provided in the report showed an increase in the number of cases for trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. Some legislative changes had been made, such as for the improvement of the labour conditions of domestic workers. The Public Prosecutor's Office had launched a process of improving the coordination of cases of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

6.8.Sweden

45. Dr Anna-Carin Svensson, Ambassador of Combating Trafficking in Persons, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, highlighted some of the steps taken by Sweden to implement the recommendations made in the context of the third evaluation round. In the area of law enforcement, the Swedish Prosecution Authority had decided to assign senior prosecutors to the investigation of all crimes related to human trafficking. A legal guidance on human trafficking and human exploitation had been published in February 2025, and a comprehensive reform of legislation on confiscations came into force in November 2024. Furthermore, training and inter-agency co-operation had been intensified. In the area of victim protection, a new Social Service Act had entered into force in July 2025. An inquiry had examined compensation rules and made proposals for strengthening the position of victims of crime. Finally, the upcoming plan against prostitution and human trafficking was supported by increased funding and had a special focus on children and young people. The full text of Dr Svensson's statement is set out in Appendix XIV.

46. The Chair invited the President of GRETA to take the floor and share GRETA's assessment of the Swedish authorities' report. Ms Rijken stated that the report submitted by the Swedish authorities was very detailed and addressed all the recommendations made in GRETA's third report. The measures taken to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking had included the assigning of senior prosecutors to human trafficking cases and the issuing of legal guidance. The Swedish Migration Agency had identified a significant number of potential victims of trafficking who were held in detention prior to deportation, which raised concerns about the identification of victims. The number of presumed victims of trafficking had increased for the third consecutive year, and the majority of them were subjected to labour exploitation. However, no steps had been taken to ensure that the formal identification of victims of trafficking was not made conditional on their co-operation in the investigation and criminal proceedings. Concerning child trafficking, the Swedish Ombudsman for Children had been assigned the task to investigate how criminal networks are exploiting children for sexual exploitation. Further, an inquiry into state childcare had been initiated by the Government in 2024. The authorities reported that the number of disappearances from state accommodation centres had decreased drastically due to increased staff supervision.

Agenda item 7: Discussion on the revision of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA (Resolution CM/Res(2013)28) in relation to the language requirements

47. The Chair recalled that at the 36th Committee of the Parties' meeting held on 20 June 2025, it had been proposed to hold informal consultations on a possible revision of Resolution CM/Res(20013)28 on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in relation to the language requirements. The Chair recalled that any amendment to this Committee of Ministers' resolution would require the unanimous consent of all States Parties to the Convention and would subsequently have to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers.

48. The Chair noted that a first round of informal consultations on this issue had taken place on 28 May 2025, followed by a second round of informal consultations on 16 October 2025, which had been attended by some 30 State Parties. A number of them had spoken in favour of a revision of the language criteria requirements, while others expressed the view that the current criteria were sufficient and there should be no additional language requirements for the election of GRETA members.

49. The Chair noted that the Swiss authorities had submitted a written proposal for amending the Rules of the election procedure of GRETA members in relation to the language criteria requirements, which was circulated to the members of the Committee of the Parties on 24 November 2025. The Chair invited the representative of Switzerland to present the draft proposal.

50. Ambassador Muriel Berset Kohen, Chargée d'affaires ad interim at the Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe, explained that the proposal was to add to Rule 4 of Resolution CM/Res(2013)28 the following sentence: "A passive knowledge of the other language is desirable". Noting that the same text was already part of the rules for the election procedure of GREVIO members, she

underlined that it would reflect the fact that the Council of Europe is a bilingual organisation and that both English and French should be treated in an equal manner. She noted that the proposed text did not introduce an obligatory criteria for the election of GRETA members and that the determining criteria should remain the professional expertise of candidates and the gender balance of the composition of GRETA. The full text of Ambassador Berset Kohen's statement is set out in Appendix XV.

51. The Chair opened the floor for a discussion of the proposal. The majority of the Committee members spoke in favour of the proposal. Several countries (Croatia, Hungary, Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia) expressed reservations and concerns that the new criteria might prevent them from finding suitable candidates, but decided not to block the adoption of the proposal. The Committee agreed to accept the proposal for revising Rule 4 of the Rules on the election procedure of members of GRETA and to submit the proposal to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.

Agenda item 8: Information on activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations

52. The Chair gave the floor to the Executive Secretary to update the Committee on activities organised to strengthen the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations.

53. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that since its last meeting in June 2025, round-table meetings had been organised in the Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland and Hungary to discuss progress in the implementation of the third-round recommendations. The meetings in Iceland and Sweden had been followed by high-level meetings co-organised by GRETA and the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings with representatives of the national authorities. Further, a meeting of the network and specialised lawyers and NGOs providing legal assistance to victims of trafficking had been held on 3-4 November 2025 in Strasbourg.

54. Ms Monica Petrovici-Ronecker, Project Manager in the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Division, made a presentation on the co-operation projects implemented by the Division and the different funding options for such projects. She highlighted the key achievements of the projects, which had included the development of new legislation, policy documents, guidance and training in different countries, as well as improved victim identification procedures and services for victims. Ms Petrovici-Ronecker's presentation is set out in Appendix XVI.

Agenda item 9: Information on the anti-trafficking activities of other Council of Europe bodies and international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties

55. The Chair gave the floor to the Executive Secretary who informed the Committee of the holding of the 41st meeting of the CoE-OSCE Coordination Group in Vienna on 24 October 2025, followed by a side-event "Addressing Human Trafficking Together: Joint Approaches, Evolving Challenges and Strategic Cooperation". The side-event was co-organised by the OSCE Finnish Chairpersonship and the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe with the aim of providing OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation with an overview of human trafficking trends, recent progress in countering it, and the challenges that lie ahead. It showcased the complementary roles of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, highlighting opportunities for joint action, and offering a platform for dialogue on how to strengthen impact through reinforced partnerships

56. The representative of Belgium intervened on behalf of the Belgian Chair of the Committee of the Parties to the Santiago de Compostela Convention, who called for increased co-operation between the monitoring systems of the two Council of Europe Conventions (on human trafficking and on trafficking in organs).

57. The Chair suggested that the Secretariat of the Convention prepare a short document outlining the roles of different Council of Europe bodies in the areas of combating trafficking in human beings.

Agenda item 10: Dates of future meetings

58. The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on either 19 June or 3 July 2026.

59. The Committee agreed to include in the agenda of its next meeting a thematic discussion on new trends in trafficking in human beings which pose particular challenges to State Parties and on innovative solutions to address them. The Chair invited members interested in presenting their experiences to contact the Secretariat with suggestions of speakers and topics for this thematic discussion.

Agenda item 11: Other business

Agenda item 12: Adoption of the list of decisions taken

60. The Committee approved the decisions taken at the meeting, namely:

- adoption of recommendations in respect of Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania;
- approval of the draft revised rules on the election procedure of members of GRETA and agreement to submit them to the Committee of Ministers for adoption;
- postponing to the 38th meeting the examination of the report submitted in reply to the Committee of the Parties' recommendations by the Netherlands.

Appendix I

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the draft agenda
3. State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
4. Exchange of views with the President of GRETA
5. Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania (fourth evaluation round) and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties

Fourth evaluation round

- 5.1. Bulgaria
 - 5.2. Denmark
 - 5.3. Georgia
 - 5.4. Montenegro
 - 5.5. Romania
6. Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations

Second evaluation round

- 6.1. Czech Republic
- 6.2. Türkiye

Third evaluation round

- 6.3. Iceland
 - 6.4. Netherlands
 - 6.5. Serbia
 - 6.6. Slovenia
 - 6.7. Spain
 - 6.8. Sweden
7. Discussion on the revision of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA (Resolution CM/Res(2013)28) in relation to the language requirements
 8. Information on activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations
 9. Information on the anti-trafficking activities of other Council of Europe bodies and international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties
 10. Dates of future meetings
 11. Other business
 12. Adoption of the list of decisions taken

Appendix II

List of participants

Members of the Committee of the Parties Membres du Comité des Parties

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

ANDORRA / ANDORRE

M. Andreu Jordi
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Olimpia Torres Barros
Représentante Permanente Adjointe
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Marta Villagrasa Noguera (*online / en ligne*)
Lawyer
Section des Relations Internationales et Coopération
juridique
Département de la Justice et de l'intérieur

ARMENIA / ARMÉNIE

Mr Aramayis Grigoryan
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

Mr Andreas Lins
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Mr Fakhraddin Ismayilov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Sanan Aliyev
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Samir Garayev (*online / en ligne*)
Police Colonel
Head of Division
Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human
Beings
Ministry of Internal Affairs

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

Mr Jonathan Piepers
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Louise Wydemans
Trainee
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Mr Atanas Mladenov
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Daniela Saveklieva
Secretary of the National Commission for Combating
Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB)

Ms Ernesta Rousseva (*online / en ligne*)
Chief Expert
National Commission for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings

Mr Paulo Goranov
Senior Expert
Secretariat of the National Commission
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

CROATIA / CROATIE

Mr Toma Galli
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe
Mr Ivan Bušić
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Alen Tahiri (*online / en ligne*)
Director of the Governments Office on Human Rights
and the Rights of National Minorities
National Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings

CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Mr John Hunter
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Ms Olga Šimáčková
Office of the Director General for International and
European Cooperation
Ministry of Justice

DENMARK / DANEMARK

Mr Johannes Holm
Head of section
Ministry of Justice

ESTONIA / ESTONIE

Ms Merit Kaasik
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

FINLAND / FINLANDE

Ms Sini Paukkunen-Mykkänen (*Chair / Présidente*)
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Marjatta Hiekka
Legal Counsellor
Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

FRANCE

M. Robin Caballero
Adjoint au Représentant Permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

GEORGIA / GÉORGIE

Ms Ketevan Sarajishvili
Head of International Relations and Legal Cooperation
Department
Ministry of Justice

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Ms Yola Kretschmann
Division 302
Combating Trafficking of Human Beings and Prostitute
Protection Act
Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior
Citizens, Women and Youth

GREECE / GRECE

Mr Ioannis Brachos (*online / en ligne*)
Head of Office of the National Rapporteur for Fighting
against Trafficking in Human Beings
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms Ekaterini Theofanaki (*online / en ligne*)
Office of the National Rapporteur for Fighting against
Trafficking in Human Beings
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

HUNGARY / HONGRIE

Mr Zoltán Turai
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Dr Kisné dr. Szabó Adrienn (*online / en ligne*)
Head of Department
Department for European Home Affairs Cooperation
Ministry of Interior

ICELAND / ISLANDE

IRELAND / IRLANDE

Ms Rebecca Clarke
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

ISRAEL / ISRAËL

Ms Ayelet Dahan
Deputy to the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator
Ministry of Justice

ITALY / ITALIE

LATVIA / LETTONIE

Ms Agnese Vilde (*Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente*)
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

LIECHTENSTEIN

Ms Anna-Lena Marxer
Intern
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

Ms Julia Walch (*online / en ligne*)
Diplomatic Officer
Office for Foreign Affairs

LITHUANIA / LITUANIE

LUXEMBOURG

Ms Justine Vizier
Legal attaché
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

MALTA / MALTE

Ms Louise Chetcuti
Policy Officer
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA /
REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA

Ms Tatiana Buga
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Tatiana Pârvu (*online / en ligne*)
Ambassador at Large
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MONACO

M. Gabriel Revel
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Margaux Girardin
Adjointe au Représentant Permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO

Ms Ivana Masanovic
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Dragana Babic (*online / en ligne*)
Advisor
Department for Combating Trafficking in Human
Beings
Ministry of the Interior

NETHERLANDS / PAYS BAS

Mr Eros Puggioni
Policy Officer
Ministry of Justice and Security
Directorate General for Justice and Law Enforcement
Department of Organised Crime

NORTH MACEDONIA / MACÉDOINE DU NORD

Ms Svetlana Geleva
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

NORWAY / NORVÈGE

Mr Jan Austad (*online / en ligne*)
Senior Adviser
Ministry of Justice and Public Security

POLAND / POLOGNE

Mr Rafał Czarski (*online / en ligne*)
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Aleksandra Chołuj (*online / en ligne*)
Head of the Division for Counteracting Trafficking in
Human Beings, Hate Crimes and Action Support Crimes
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration

PORTUGAL

Ms Alice Gomes
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

Mr Manuel Albano (*online / en ligne*)
National Rapporteur – Trafficking in Human Beings
Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Mr Nuno Gradim (*online / en ligne*)
Policy Officer
Northern Delegation
Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

Ms Bianca Mina
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Ana-Maria Tamaş Ilinca
Specialist officer/sociologist
National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

Mr Vlad Udrescu (*online / en ligne*)
Expert within the Romanian Police

SAN MARINO / SAINT-MARIN

Ms Michela Bovi
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Filippo Panzavolta
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

SERBIA / SERBIE

SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE

Ms Alena Longauerova
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Miroslava Fialová (*online / en ligne*)
Crime Prevention Department
Information Centre for Combating THB and for Crime
Prevention
Ministry of the Interior

SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE

Mr Grega Pajnkihar
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Gregor Hudrič (*online / en ligne*)
Head of the Service for Preventing and Combating
Human Trafficking
National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator
Ministry of the Interior

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

Ms Rosa Velázquez Álvarez
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Carlos Lucini Baquerizo
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

SWEDEN / SUÈDE

Dr Anna-Carin Svensson
Ambassador for Combating Trafficking in Persons
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ms Maria von Bredow
Research Officer
Gender Equality Division

Ministry of Employment

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

Mme Muriel Berset Kohen
Ambassadrice
Chargée d'affaires a.i.
Représentation permanente
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Elisa Liermier
Représentation permanente
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Sophie Heegaard-Schroeter (*online / en ligne*)
Adjointe au Représentant permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

M. Boris Mesarić (*online / en ligne*)
Responsable du Service de lutte contre la traite d'êtres
humains et le trafic de migrants
Département fédéral de Justice et Police (DFJP)
Office fédéral de la Police (fedpol)

TÜRKİYE

Ms Vedia Sirmen
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Emrullah Okur (*online / en ligne*)
Migration Expert
Presidency of Migration Management
Department of Protection of Victims of Human
Trafficking

UKRAINE

Mr Iaroslav Zhydenko
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Nataliia Bohdanova (*online / en ligne*)
Head of the Expert Group on Combating Human
Trafficking, Domestic Violence and Gender Equality
Directorate for Digital Development and Social Services
Ministry of Social Policy

UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI

Ms Tara Allegra Biles
International Policy Lead
Modern Slavery Unit
Home Office

Participants of the Committee of the Parties Participants du Comité des Parties

COUNCIL OF EUROPE BODIES /
ORGANES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr Michael O' Flaherty
(*apologised/excused*)

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mr Dimitrios Mantzos (*online / en ligne*)
Chairperson
Subcommittee on Smuggling and Trafficking
PACE Committee on Migration
Refugees and Displaced Persons and its Sub-
Committee on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in
Human Beings

Observers of the Committee of the Parties Observateurs du Comité des Parties

Others / Autres

GROUP OF EXPERTS ON ACTION AGAINST
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS /
GROUPE D'EXPERTS SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LA
TRAITE DES ÊTRES HUMAINS (GRETA)

Ms Conny Rijken
President of GRETA

Secretariat / Secrétariat

*Directorate General of Democracy and Human, Dignity /
Direction générale de la démocratie et de la dignité humaine*

Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA and Committee of the Parties) /
Secrétariat de la Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains (GRETA et Comité des Parties)

Ms Petya Nestorova
Executive Secretary

Mr Elvin Aliyev
Administrator

Mr Mesut Bedirhanoglu
Administrator

Ms Parvine Ghadami
Administrator

Ms Jenna Logeais
Administrator

Ms Monica Petrovici-Ronecker
Project Manager

Ms Saida Théophile
Principal Administrative Assistant

Ms Jackie Renaudin-Siddall
Administrative Assistant

Ms Khrystyna Chornii
Administrative Assistant

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Marie Martin
Co-ordinator of the Subcommittee on Smuggling and Trafficking
PACE Committee on Migration
Refugees and Displaced Persons and its Sub-Committee on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings

Interpreters / Interprètes

Mr Nicolas Guittonneau
Ms Christine Trapp
Ms Clarissa Worsdale

Appendix III

Statement by Ms Conny Rijken, President of GRETA

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are approaching the end of 2025, I would like to give you an overview of GRETA's activities during the year. The composition of GRETA was partially changed, with four new members joining in March. Also in March, I was elected as GRETA's new President, for a two-year term. I have made it my goal to ensure that GRETA maintains an open dialogue with States Parties and adjusts its priorities and working methods in a constantly changing and challenging environment. Rising numbers of people fleeing conflict, climate disasters and violence are at risk of trafficking and exploitation. Restrictive immigration policies which limit legal migration pathways and barriers to employment for asylum seekers heighten these risks. Digital platforms, encrypted communications and anonymous transactions enable traffickers to expand their activities while complicating detection and prosecution. As criminal networks continue to exploit crises, inequalities and individual vulnerabilities, only comprehensive strategies - rooted in prevention, protection and access to justice - can turn the tide. GRETA's aim is to ensure that the prevention of trafficking, the protection of victims and the punishment of perpetrators are at the centre of states' efforts to combat human trafficking.

In 2025, GRETA carried out 12 country evaluation visits, all under the 4th evaluation round of the Convention. This evaluation round was launched in the mid-2023 and more than half of the State Parties of the Convention have already received a visit as part of it. Next year GRETA will start reflecting on the focus and design of the next evaluation round of the Convention.

GRETA's first visit to Israel has continued being postponed and is now included in the schedule of visits for 2026.

In June GRETA received the Belarusian authorities' reply to the questionnaire for the 3rd evaluation round. Pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee of the Parties in 2023 to restrict the participation of Belarus in the Committee's work, Belarus is expected to continue providing information and explanations regarding compliance with the obligations under the Convention. Given the impossibility to carry out a visit to Belarus, GRETA is now in the process of collecting additional information – in particular from independent sources, such as civil society organisations in exile – in order to supplement the information provided by the authorities in their reply to the questionnaire and to prepare a draft report on Belarus.

In July, GRETA decided to establish an ad hoc working group to prepare a draft guidance note on residence permits (Article 14 of the Convention). At its plenary meeting in March next year, GRETA will discuss the draft prepared by the working group and it is expected to have a final result by June.

GRETA is also working on a new compendium of good (promising) practices, drawn up from GRETA's reports issued in the last six years, which is expected to be published in the first half of next year.

In September, we hosted the annual meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs, which is co-organised with the OSCE on a rotating basis. Representatives from 54 countries across the Council of Europe and OSCE regions discussed current challenges and how to better implement international legal standards and political commitments. Participants discussed the links between human trafficking and drugs and forced criminality, engagement with the private sector in combating human trafficking, and crisis-related provisions in National Action Plans for combating human trafficking to enhance preparedness of the national counter-trafficking mechanisms.

GRETA has continued developing synergies with other Council of Europe bodies, including GREVIO, the Lanzarote Committee, the Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Since the last meeting of the Committee of the Parties on 20 June 2025, GRETA has held two plenary meetings, in July and November. At the meeting in July, GRETA adopted five final reports, concerning Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Montenegro and Romania, which are the subject of draft recommendations that are on the agenda of today's meeting. Further, during its meeting in November, GRETA adopted final reports on Latvia, Malta and the United Kingdom, which have recently been sent to the national authorities for final comments and will be published early next year. At its last meeting, GRETA also discussed draft reports concerning Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Norway and Portugal, which were sent to the national authorities for comments and will be the subject of further discussion and final adoption during GRETA's plenary meeting in March next year.

The focus of the 4th evaluation round of the Convention on vulnerabilities to human trafficking and measures to prevent them, to identify and assist vulnerable victims, and to punish the offenders. Bearing in mind the complexity and intersectionality of vulnerabilities to trafficking, GRETA examines, in particular, the measures taken in respect of children, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged minorities, migrant workers, asylum seekers, and LGBTI+ persons. GRETA's reports also examine the vulnerabilities related to the gender dimension of human trafficking and of persons engaged in prostitution. While it is too early to take stock of GRETA's findings from the 4th evaluation round of the Convention, it is clear that there is need for more research and evidence-based interventions. It is also clear that meaningful prevention needs to go beyond awareness raising campaigns and the provision of information, and involve social and economic measures, strengthened legislation and advanced training.

Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen,

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which took place on 16 May 2005 in Warsaw. Fourteen countries signed on day one. Today, all Council of Europe member States have ratified the Convention, making it a powerful and united front against one of the most serious human rights violations of our time. In these difficult times of changing geopolitical landscape and growing challenges to multilateralism and human rights, it is even more important to make sure that the provisions that the Council of Europe member states agreed upon are complied with in practice.

Human trafficking exploits the most vulnerable, including children, disadvantaged minorities and migrants. Where people are bought and exploited as commodities, the very foundations of our democratic societies are undermined. Trafficking in human beings is not only a violation of individual rights - it is an assault on the shared values that unite us: human dignity, equality, and justice. Strengthening democracy – as called for by the New Democratic Pact for Europe – also means strengthening our collective ability to resist exploitation, restore trust and protect every human being.

The success of GRETA's monitoring work depend on the support of the Committee of the Parties and continued engagement with States Parties. It is important that the two pillars of the Convention's mechanism continue to speak with one voice. It is also of crucial importance that the Council of Europe continues assisting member States in implementing the recommendations made by GRETA and the Committee of the Parties through targeted co-operation activities.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Appendix IV

Statement by Ms Daniela Saveklieva,
Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on behalf
of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria

Madame Chair, Distinguished Members of the Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this 37th Meeting of the Committee of the Parties on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria. Allow me first to express our sincere appreciation for the comprehensive recommendations and standards set by the Convention and reaffirmed through this evaluation cycle. They continue to guide and support all Parties, including Bulgaria, in strengthening our anti-trafficking systems and policies.

We welcome the constructive and expert dialogue with GRETA during the fourth evaluation round and appreciate the Committee's recognition of the progress achieved by Bulgaria. At the same time, we fully acknowledge the areas requiring additional and focused effort and we remain committed to addressing them with determination and transparency.

Bulgaria is working to further expand its prevention and early identification efforts, particularly among third-country nationals seeking legal employment in our country. This includes a new coordinated prevention initiative with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relying on targeted offline materials and additionally supported by video materials developed by ICMPD within the Network of Anti-trafficking Coordinators of South-Eastern Europe. This joint campaign represents an important step toward ensuring that newly arriving workers are informed, empowered, and protected from risks of exploitation.

We are also actively engaged in the process of legislative amendments aimed at aligning our national legal framework with the new EU Anti-trafficking Directive. In this context, we are preparing improvements that will enhance the effectiveness of both proactive and formal identification. In this process, we attach particular importance to the Committee's recommendation regarding the recovery and reflection period. Bulgaria will fully take this recommendation into account in the ongoing legislative work. The recovery and reflection period is already provided for in both the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act and the National Referral Mechanism; however, we recognise the need to further clarify and reinforce these safeguards to ensure full alignment with the standards of the Convention.

An important priority for Bulgaria is the establishment of a more independent and functionally robust national rapporteur structure. To advance this process, in January, we will partner in the organisation of a Policy Lab bringing together national rapporteurs from other member states, experts, institutional and civil society stakeholders. Their insights and good practices will support the development of a policy paper outlining feasible national solutions and guiding future reforms.

We will also continue to reinforce targeted prevention among vulnerable communities, with a special focus on empowering individuals with practical, accessible information that enables them to recognise risks and protect themselves. Strengthening the capacity of professionals remains a national priority. These efforts are essential to ensuring a comprehensive, victim-centred response across all levels of the system.

Bulgaria will continue efforts to guarantee sustainable funding for specialised services for victims and to expand support across the country. We are equally committed to enhancing efforts to train authorities on investigating trafficking crimes, particularly in cases of labour exploitation, as well as prosecutors and judges, ensuring that sanctions are effective and dissuasive. We are also working on solutions to improve victims' access to compensation, which will be a main topic of round-table discussion in the coming year.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Colleagues,

We view the Committee's Recommendation as a roadmap for sustained progress, and the Convention as a living instrument that continues to provide invaluable guidance to all Parties. Bulgaria remains fully committed to advancing its implementation and to maintaining an open, constructive dialogue with GRETA, the Committee of the Parties, and our international partners.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to deepening our joint efforts to protect the rights and dignity of all victims of trafficking in human beings.

Thank you.

Appendix V

Statement by Mr Johannes Holm, Ministry of Justice, Denmark

- First and foremost, allow me to thank the evaluation team on this report, and thank them for their visit to Denmark in 2024. Denmark appreciates that the periodic evaluation of our implementation of the Convention [on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings] is a valuable tool in order for the Danish Government and relevant authorities to continuously consider how we can further strengthen our efforts against trafficking in human beings.
- In particular, we find that the extensive and specialized knowledge of the evaluation team provided some interesting and new perspectives on our efforts.
- At the same time, based on this evaluation process, we have some proposals to further improve future evaluation processes.
- It is our observation that the evaluation visit and subsequent process has been more time consuming than necessary.
- We fully understand the importance of the work and that it is necessary to involve a wide range of experts in order to give the evaluation team the best possible foundation for the evaluation. However, our experts have found themselves spending time providing data and information that is considered either irrelevant for evaluating Denmark's efforts or that has already been provided. These are the same experts responsible for combatting trafficking in human beings in Denmark.
- Denmark encourages GRETA to consider a more prioritized approach to the evaluation efforts in order to make sure that further evaluations are conducted as efficiently as possible, and in order ensure that the report fully can fulfil its purpose.
- Furthermore, we have found that the adopted report contained several factual errors and misunderstandings of the Danish effort against human trafficking that were pointed out to GRETA in the drafting process.
- Therefore, process leading to the adoption of this report has caused some concern in Denmark.
- However, we would also like to acknowledge the fact that GRETA in the revision of the final report has taken several of Denmark's concerns into account, and that most of these errors have been corrected. This effort has been highly appreciated by Denmark and we find that this approach strengthens the credibility of the report.

Regarding proposals for amendments

- As stated previously, Denmark greatly respects the extensive and specialized knowledge of the experts in the evaluation team. Therefore, I want to thank you for the recommendations given to Denmark.
- We've generally found them useful, while we have not found them all to be implementable in a Danish context. As for the specific recommendations, I only have a few remarks for you today.
- As you may be aware, Denmark has circulated two proposals for amendments to the draft recommendations.

- Regarding the proposal for amendment to recommendation no. 7, Denmark notes that the recommendation [to freeze and confiscate assets] will not affect the protection of victims of human trafficking in Denmark.
- In Denmark, victims being awarded compensation are already ensured that the amount will be paid in full by the Danish state. This follows directly from Danish law.
- The Danish state will then seek to recover the amount paid to the victim from the perpetrator. Therefore, the recommendation will only affect the possibility of the Danish state to recover the amount paid from the perpetrator. Conversely, the victim's compensation will not be affected.
- [Denmark acknowledges that this point was not raised in the last evaluation report or during the drafting of the present report in the fourth evaluation round.]
- [However,] Denmark finds that it will not be possible to implement the recommendation and that it consequently should be removed from the list.
- Regarding the proposal for amendment to recommendation no. 6 and 9, Denmark notes that the Immigration Service in the first instance and the Refugee Appeals Board in the final instance already carry out a comprehensive and adequate risk assessment in all asylum cases, hereunder cases regarding trafficking in persons.
- If an asylum seeker meets the requirements for being granted international protection due to trafficking, the person will be granted a residence permit pursuant to Danish law. Furthermore, in order to fully comply with the principle of non-refoulement, all asylum seekers are already permitted to stay in Denmark during the processing of the asylum case.
- Therefore – in our opinion – Denmark already complies with the recommendations.

Appendix VI

Statement by Ms Ketevan Sarajishvili, Head of International Relations and Legal Cooperation Department, Ministry of Justice of Georgia

Thank you Madame Chair!

Madame President, Madame Executive Secretary, dear colleagues!

Let me congratulate the commission of the 37th meeting of the Committee of the Parties of GRETA.

I would like to extend Georgia's deep appreciation to GRETA experts and the Secretariat for their thorough, professional, and constructive work throughout the fourth evaluation round of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Georgia welcomes the balanced, on point and evidence-based assessment carried out by GRETA, which recognizes progress achieved while also identifying areas where additional efforts are required.

The recommendations provide a clear, practical, and forward-looking roadmap for further strengthening our national response to trafficking in human beings.

The Government of Georgia remains fully committed to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings in all its forms.

This commitment is reflected in our policies, legislative framework, institutional arrangements, and practical application of 4 pillars counter trafficking policy.

Having this opportunity let me update you and inform that Georgia has already begun implementation of GRETA's recommendations.

Concrete steps have been initiated to address the identified gaps and to further enhance our policies and practices.

Allow me to draw your attention to some of the recent developments:

- ✓ Georgia adopted the Governmental Strategy on Protection of Children in Street Situations from any kind of violence, including Human Trafficking. The Strategy covers the years of 2025-2030 and focuses on prevention as well as protection and reintegration of such children into society.
- ✓ The relevant mechanism and instructions have been established in the Prosecutor's office to initiate civil litigation for providing the compensation to the victim from the offender. Before, the prosecutor only claimed the reimbursement of the damages from the offender through criminal proceedings. The prosecutor has 10 years for civil litigation after the conviction of the human trafficker.
- ✓ The number of labour inspectors has been increased from 109 to 128; the supervisory body for Forced Labour and Labour Exploitation upgraded and increased the number of inspectors.
- ✓ In 2025 the Permanent Group consisted of IOs and NGOs and responsible for identification of THB victims became more active. Just to compare the numbers, only this year the Group held 7 meetings and granted the victim status to 4 persons, while in 2021-2024 there was only 1 case.

Having this opportunity, let me ask this composition of the meeting to support the amendment of Georgia to the report, which is more technical and not heavily substantive one. We propose to indicate three shelters instead of two.

Dear Colleagues, trafficking in human beings continues to pose serious challenges across the region and beyond, particularly in light of global developments that increase vulnerability to exploitation.

In this context, the role of the Council of Europe, GRETA, and the Committee of the Parties is more important than ever.

Georgia remains committed and reliable partner in our collective efforts to uphold human dignity, protect victims, and bring perpetrators to justice.

Appendix VII

Statement by Ms Ivana Masanovic
Deputy Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the Council of Europe

Madam President,

Dear President of GRETA,

Esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Montenegrin authorities I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude to the GRETA expert group for their excellent cooperation and for their thorough and professional work throughout the fourth evaluation round.

The GRETA report has been reviewed in detail at the national level and serves as an important reference for future work. Also, I would like to reiterate that we consider GRETA's recommendations as guidelines and a valuable tool in strengthening Montenegrin system of prevention, victim protection, and prosecution of perpetrators. Montenegro remains fully committed to the implementation of the Convention and the Council of Europe standards in this area.

Montenegro acknowledges with appreciation the progress identified in the report, including:

- further development of the non-punishment principle,
- improved access to free legal aid,
- strengthened multidisciplinary cooperation,
- opening of a state shelter for child victims of trafficking,
- an increased number of investigations and prosecutions,
- the possibility of identifying victims independently of criminal proceedings,
- efforts to promote online safety and enhance capacities to detect technology-facilitated trafficking.

These are important steps, but only part of a broader, long-term process that requires continuity and dedicated work.

At the same time, Montenegro fully recognizes all challenges highlighted by GRETA as objective and justified.

The worrying proportion of child victims—and the heightened vulnerability of Roma and Egyptian communities, migrant workers, asylum seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness—represents a serious alarm for Montenegro. It obliges us to further strengthen early risk detection, protect children from forced begging, early and forced marriages, and other forms of exploitation, and respond more effectively to poverty and social exclusion.

In the coming period Montenegro will focus on three priorities:

1. Victim protection – improving staffing, ensuring adequate accommodation and support services for all victims, including men, and enhancing licensing and supervision of shelters managed by civil society organisations, with strict adherence to the Convention standards.
2. Vulnerable groups and social inclusion – continuing targeted programmes for Roma and Egyptians, and measures focused on asylum seekers, refugees, and migrant workers, with strong fieldwork and cooperation with civil society.

3. Institutional capacities and the digital dimension – strengthening police, prosecutorial, and judicial capacities for proactive investigations, including ICT-facilitated trafficking, and improving training and intersectoral cooperation.

Montenegro will continue activities to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable groups, prevent trafficking, and build capacities among all institutional actors who may come into contact with victims or offenders.

We are aware that some recommendations have been repeated from earlier rounds—particularly those related to access to compensation, application of the recovery and reflection period, and proactive investigations. This signals the need for faster implementation and more visible results. We are confident that, through the joint efforts of national institutions, civil society, and international partners, Montenegro will demonstrate even more concrete results in the upcoming reporting period.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Montenegro sees GRETA as an ally in the fight against trafficking in human beings. We remain open to dialogue, expert support, and joint projects. Once again, thank you for the report, your time, and your constructive recommendations. We look forward to your comments and to further cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix VIII

Statement by Ms Ana-Maria **Tamaş** Ilinca, Police Officer,
Representative of the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, Romania

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It's a privilege to present a short overview of Romania's progress in preventing and combating human trafficking for the duration of the last year, highlighting the progress in tackling some of the recommendations addressed to Romania. Our country continues to face significant challenges as a country of origin and as a country of exploitation for Romanian citizens, but we are also witnessing a shift toward becoming a destination and transit country for victims from non-EU states.

Trafficking status-quo in Romania

We recognize the vulnerability factors that affect victims such as poverty, lack of education, limited access to information, exposure to abusive or neglectful environments, institutional care backgrounds, disabilities, indiscriminate use of digital tools, and migration for work. These challenges require a coordinated and sustained institutional effort.

Cooperation with Third Countries

Our cooperation with third countries has strengthened. Last week, for example, we held the fourth annual meeting with diplomats from embassies of third-countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Philippines and other Asian countries that provide workers for the domestic labour market, with the purpose to improve shared mechanisms for prevention, early identification, and protection of foreign workers.

Upgrading Victim Monitoring and Identification

A major advancement in the field of data collection has been the enhancement for the Victim Monitoring Information System—SIMEV. This system now fully reflects the updated MNIR and enables monitoring each victim's path and progress from detection, notification, identification, referral, voluntary assisted return, and protection during criminal proceedings. In 2024, 610 victims were registered, 96% of them are Romanian citizens, with an increase of the digital footprint use in almost all the trafficking cases.

Guidance and Capacity-Building for unitary application of NRM

The revised MNIR clarifies the distinction between detection and identification, promoting the role in early detection of different professionals like medical staff, educators, clergy, community actors, migration officers, labour inspectors, while reserving formal identification to specialized anti-trafficking institutions. Trainings and guidelines for frontline specialists with the purpose to increase *pro-active* detection of THB and identification of victims were intensively organized and prepared to ensuring the unitary application of MNIR.

New National Strategy (2024–2028) and Action Plan (2024–2026)

In 2024 Romania adopted the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2024–2028 and the National Action Plan 2024–2026 through a Government Decree. The strategy focuses on reducing vulnerabilities, strengthening criminal justice responses, improving victim assistance, standardizing data collection, and enhancing cooperation. An integrated governmental funding mechanism is planned to support victim services. The implementation of the Strategy is coordinated by the Prime-minister through a state counsellor. At the end of 2024, the Prime-minister's Chancellery decided to establish thematic working groups aimed at

increasing the efficiency of the national anti-trafficking response through enhanced cooperation among public and private stakeholders and through targeted allocation of resources to priority areas.

Victim Compensation – Legislative Advances

Important legislative improvements have also been made. Law 272/2024 removes previous procedural barriers for victims seeking compensation and extends the deadline for claims from one year to three.

The prior requirement for victims to file a complaint within 60 days to be eligible for free legal assistance or financial compensation has been abolished. This change acknowledges the psychological and practical barriers victims face, particularly in trafficking cases, where fear and trauma often prevent timely reporting and is also in line with the national legislation regarding the reflection and recovery period provided to victims of human trafficking (*which in Romania is up to 90 days*).

The period for submitting a compensation request was extended from 1 year to 3 years after the offense, allowing victims additional time to recover and assert their rights.

Increasing the resources for child protection services

The US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) made the final decision this year to award a 5-year Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership with the Government of Romania to combat child trafficking. For this partnership, there was committed up to \$12 million dollars in U.S. foreign assistance, through grants to civil society implementing partners (International Justice Mission and World Vision). Key goals include prevention efforts to reduce the influence of risk factors and vulnerabilities to child trafficking; providing accessible protection services to child trafficking victims and survivors; ensuring justice sector actors effectively investigate cases in order to prosecute and convict perpetrators of child trafficking; and promoting coordination across relevant agencies, civil society, and local communities; as well as to provide technical assistance to establish two national centres focused on digital child safety and combating online sexual exploitation of children.

In relation with further steps to prevent trafficking for labour exploitation in particular by establishing a licensing mechanism for the recruitment agencies which act as mediator for migrant workers seeking employment in Romania and to monitor fraudulent online job advertisements.

In addition, a legislative draft is to be submitted for public consultation, introducing specific measures concerning the admission of third-country nationals to the Romanian labour market. These measures include the licensing of recruitment and placement agencies for foreign workers, the establishment of a registry of employers from third-country, the implementation of the “Employer Pays” policy, the creation of the electronic platform “workinromania.gov.ro”, as well as the introduction of an amnesty in the field of migration for workers that are already residing in our country.

Strengthen their efforts to improve the protection of persons with disabilities from human trafficking, in particular by: ensuring regular, effective and independent monitoring of public and private residential centers for persons with disabilities, especially by facilitating specialized NGOs’ access to these facilities.

A new monitoring mechanism primarily aimed at ensuring respect for the fundamental rights of beneficiaries and the dignity of persons residing in residential care facilities has been established within the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity. The mechanism provides for an independent evaluation designed to ensure compliance with human rights standards and does not constitute an inspection or supervisory control of social services. Within this framework, an order was published in the

Official Journal in October 2025, setting out the procedure for the selection of non-governmental organizations authorized to conduct monitoring visits to residential social care facilities.

International Cooperation – EUROPOL, EMPACT and FRONTEX

The Romanian law enforcement agencies participates actively within EUROPOL's EMPACT framework, under the priority area of combating trafficking in human beings. Romania fulfils its role as co-driver, consistently pursuing assigned performance indicators and European-level objectives. In 2024, two major regional exercises, which involved Border Police, Immigration Services, THB specialized units and ANITP, were carried out with the support of FRONTEX in the main airports of Romania (Bucharest and Iasi) with the purpose to pro-actively detect THB cases and better secure EU exterior border.

Emerging Challenges

Looking ahead, Romania has to be focused on new digital tools to proactively identify online recruitment and exploitation. This remains a critical area for development. There is an increasing need to develop digital infrastructure capable of proactively identifying potential victims of sexual exploitation online, as well as recruitment, accommodation or transportation activities carried out by suspected traffickers. Such systems should be able to monitor online platforms, flag potential trafficking indicators and notify the competent authorities promptly.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued partnership in strengthening the fight against human trafficking.

Appendix IX

Statement by Ms Olga **Šimáčková**
Office of the Director General for International and European Cooperation
Ministry of Justice, Czech Republic

On behalf of the Czech Republic, we would like to express our appreciation both to the members of GRETA and the Committee of States Parties for their diligent work.

We have addressed all the recommendations we received and are actively implementing them. We recognize that there are still areas for improvement and are committed to working on those as well.

Currently, a draft amendment to the law is in the legislative process, to strengthen measures against human trafficking. The proposal introduces

- more precise definition of trafficking by specifying forms of exploitation,
- criminalizes the knowing use of services provided by trafficking victims,
- and incorporates the non-punishment principle into law.

It also adds new coercive means, such as abuse of the victim's defencelessness and misuse of the offender's position and establishes an aggravating circumstance for using coercion against a child. The amendment is expected to take effect on 1 July 2026.

To address the issue of disguised employment agencies, we have introduced changes to the procedures for granting and revoking licenses for such agencies, as well as clarifying their obligations. In addition, a draft government regulation is under discussion to prevent newly established agencies from assigning foreign workers.

A campaign entitled "Work in Chains," organized by the Ministry of the Interior offers practical multilingual materials, videos, and contacts for organizations providing support.

Our cooperation with NGOs remains strong. For example, La Strada has implemented a project called *Truth in crayon* for secondary school students, focusing on the topic of human trafficking. The aim of these projects is to raise awareness, help identify victims and provide assistance.

The Czech Republic also supports a new NGO initiative by IOM, in cooperation with Austria, entitled TRUST – Trauma-Informed Justice. This project focuses on improving approaches to victims during investigations and aims to achieve a lasting systemic change in the way victims are treated.

In 2025, we completed the project *Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention and Suppression of Child Trafficking*. It delivered a research study, a methodology for victim identification, a training program, and a preventive initiative. The research showed that every child can be at risk and that child trafficking is increasingly shifting to the online environment. An awareness campaign was launched along with a dedicated website.

Thank you

Appendix X

Statement by Mr Emrullah Okur,
Migration Expert, presidency of Migration Management, Department of Protection of
Victims of Human Trafficking, Türkiye

Dear participants, I greet you all with respect.

In Turkey's combating human trafficking, the Directorate of Migration Management is responsible for national coordination. Within the scope of national coordination, we work in close cooperation with all relevant institutions and organizations, civil society organizations, and international organizations.

We would also like to thank the GRETA expert group for closely following our work and sharing their assessments.

We recently completed our work on the Recommendations concerning the implementation by Turkey of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Persons. We have also shared this work with you. In fact, you can see all the details of this work in the document we shared with you.

We would be pleased to provide a brief overview of both our ongoing work in combating human trafficking and the recommendations we have adopted.

First and foremost, as the Directorate of Migration Management, we are conducting multilateral efforts in the national coordination process in combating human trafficking. During the preparation of our National Action Plan, we held meetings and workshops with all relevant institutions and organizations. With the approval of all institutions, we published our National Action Plan in 2025. Our National Action Plan will be implemented for five years, and periodic monitoring and evaluation studies will be conducted.

Below, we would like to present the main headings of the work we carried out in 2025:

- Implementation of the Action Plan
- Improvement of Victim Identification and Description Processes
- Expansion of Training and Awareness-Raising Activities
- Increased and Strengthened Victim Support Services
- Increased Relations and Coordination with Civil Society
- Improvements in Judicial Processes and Legislation

As part of all our efforts, various activities have been carried out in the coordination process, particularly with judges and prosecutors, law enforcement units, labor inspectors, social service professionals, and civil society organizations.

It is worth providing a general overview of our main activities for 2025:

Our National Action Plan, which was launched in January, is based on three main objectives. The first main objective is to strengthen prevention activities. Under this objective, the aim is to create general awareness throughout the country and to provide detailed training to the personnel of public institutions.

The second main objective is to strengthen protection activities. This objective includes strengthening mechanisms for identifying and appraising victims of human trafficking, strengthening the national referral mechanism, and improving the quality of services in specialized shelters.

The third main objective is to strengthen investigation and prosecution processes and to carry out work related to the provision of judicial support services. Under this objective, the aim is to strengthen effective judicial procedures in combating human trafficking and to conduct studies aimed at improving legislation.

Our main focus is on establishing close cooperation with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in victim protection processes related to our core areas of activity. In this context, we collaborate with the Turkish Red Crescent, a strong CSO organization, in the operation of shelters. As part of this collaboration, psychologists, social workers, and support staff are employed by the Turkish Red Crescent to provide support services in the shelters. Additionally, the number of our shelters has been increased from 2 to 4, and their capacity has been increased from 32 to 100 people. Furthermore, our Mardin Shelter has been planned to serve male victims.

Strengthening the national referral mechanism is of great importance within our main areas of activity. In this context, we organize trainings for the personnel of the institutions with which we work closely. It is crucial that this personnel, acting as provincial contact units, identify potential victims and involve them in the referral process. Our training programmes in this area are particularly focused on law enforcement agencies, healthcare workers, judges, prosecutors, labor inspectors, social security auditors, social workers, and teachers.

Thank you very much for listening, and I hope you have a productive meeting.

Appendix XI

Statement by Mr Eros Puggioni, Policy Officer, Ministry of Justice and Security, Directorate General for Justice and Law Enforcement, Department of Organised Crime, Netherlands

The Netherlands received the third GRETA-evaluation report on 9 November 2023. Within this context, GRETA visited the Netherlands last July for a fruitful discussion with the different stakeholders involved in the fight against human trafficking. We are grateful for the very valuable and extensive research done by GRETA and we want to take the opportunity again to share our sincere gratitude and thanking GRETA.

The Netherlands has since then been busy with providing the official reaction on the GRETA-report which we should have presented today. We have waited two years since the publication of the GRETA-report to provide an official reaction because the follow-up of many of the recommendations will be done through the National Action Plan and the revised EU-directive, which were still not officially determined. Due to changes within our government and staff, we are unfortunately not able to present the official reaction today. We will deliver the official reaction in January 2026.

We offer our sincere apologies to GRETA and want to thank them for their understanding.

Appendix XII

Statement by Mr Grega Pajnikihar Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the Council of Europe

Madam Chair,
Distinguished members of the Committee of the Parties,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, please allow me to convey the apologies of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, who is unfortunately unable to attend today's meeting in person. His absence is due to the fact that this very week Slovenia is hosting the GRETA visit within the framework of the 4th round of evaluation. We greatly appreciate GRETA's engagement and consider this visit an important opportunity to further strengthen our national efforts in combating trafficking in human beings.

Allow me now to briefly highlight some of the key developments in Slovenia with regard to the implementation of the recommendations issued in the 3rd evaluation round.

Significant efforts have been made in the area of prevention and awareness-raising, especially in the field of preventing labour exploitation. In early 2025 the Information Point for Foreigners was established. This initiative provides comprehensive support to foreign workers who are employed or intend to work in Slovenia, as well as to employers hiring foreign workers and other individuals seeking advice and administrative assistance related to the employment of foreigners.

In addition, a Priority Response Sector was established within the Labour Inspectorate in October 2024 which enables faster, more targeted and effective inspections in cases where the rights of a large number of workers or the public interest are at stake.

Last month the Government adopted a decision to include the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia as a full member of the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, thus further strengthening interinstitutional cooperation and a preventive approach to labour exploitation.

Slovenia has also taken steps to improve the identification and protection of victims of trafficking. I would like to highlight that additional EU-funded resources have been allocated to victim reintegration programme as well as to PATS programme, which is designed to inform applicants for international and temporary protection about the risks and dangers of human trafficking.

Funding has also been increased in the area of international and regional cooperation, where Slovenia continues its activities in the informal network of national anti-trafficking coordinators of the South-East Europe, which will be financed under the EU4FAST project until mid-2027. In this context, a new regional strategy for 2025-2029 has been prepared and was presented at the meeting of interior ministers within the Brdo Process in March 2025.

In 2024, a targeted research project on trafficking in human beings was launched by the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, financed by the Slovenian Government. The project analysed recent trends in convictions and judicial practice related to trafficking in human beings and has now been completed. Its findings are particularly important, as they provide concrete recommendations for improving the effectiveness of criminal prosecution and for legislative amendments of the Criminal Code planned for 2026.

In conclusion, the Republic of Slovenia remains fully committed to the effective implementation of the Convention and to addressing the recommendations stemming from the 3rd evaluation round. Moreover, we view the ongoing 4th round evaluation as a valuable opportunity for reflection and further improvement.

We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with all partners in our shared efforts to eradicate trafficking in human beings.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix XIII

Statement by Ms Rosa Velázquez Álvarez
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Spain to the Council of Europe

Thank you Chair,

The Third Evaluation round focuses on a key element for this organization: the access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings.

I would like to stress the engagement of the Spanish authorities with this exercise of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third Evaluation Round.

The Intelligence Centre against Terrorism and Organized Crime (CITCO), as the focal point of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, has strengthened operational coordination through the implementation of Instruction 6/2016. This has been done through structured monitoring, including assessment work and regular technical exchanges between State Security Forces and specialized civil society actors assisting victims.

Spain is now in the process of passing revised new legislation regarding human trafficking. We are working on a Preliminary Draft of the Comprehensive Organic Law against Human Trafficking and Exploitation, which is currently in the legislative process. It reinforces the right to information and ensures that victims receive information in plain language. It also includes support via interpreters or cultural mediators and specialized guidance services.

Regarding labour exploitation, the Spanish authorities activity has intensified and both preventive and reactive action have scaled up. There has been a substantial increase in reports, detainees and victims for both labour trafficking and labour exploitation, as well as a strong growth in workplace inspections and numbers of workers identified. In addition, the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate, the relevant administrative departments, have increased their staff in 2024. A new agreement, signed on 28 April 2023 between the State Secretariat for Security and the Inspectorate, has formalized preexisting cooperation between both entities. Complementing this, prosecutorial coordination has been reinforced in order to strengthen proactive investigation in labour-exploitation cases.

Regarding the special focus on children victims of human trafficking, new Organic Law 1/2025 provides for additional specialised sections on violence against children and adolescents in Courts of First Instance, with criminal jurisdiction that includes trafficking cases involving at least one minor victim. In addition, procedural safeguards for minors are reinforced through mandatory pre-trial evidence arrangements. In this regard, the Barnahus model is currently being developed. Placing the child victim of sexual violence at the centre of the intervention. 56 comprehensive 24-hour assistance centres for victims of sexual violence are already operational. They are also accessible to teenagers.

Regarding compensation, the Draft Comprehensive Organic Law approach combines recognition of entitlement (including access to minimum living income and compensation by traffickers/exploiters) with an asset-management mechanism to transfer compensation amounts to the court once determined.

I would like to stress the high level of cooperation Spain maintains with the Council of Europe in the field of capacity building. Spain has put in place some initiatives to improve the access to information for victims and the formation of judges in the field of compensation in a number of common activities through the HELP program.

I would also like to thank GRETA members and the Secretariat for their work and wish you a 2026 full of good news for all GRETA member states and for the multilateral instruments which embodied our wish for peace.

I thank you, Chair.

Appendix XIV

Statement by Dr Anna-Carin Svensson, Ambassador of Combating Trafficking in Persons, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

In the third round of evaluations GRETA visited Sweden in 2023. The recommendations highlighted the need to ensure prosecution of trafficking offences and proportionate sanctions, the application of the non-punishment principle, identifications of victims etc.

Even though combatting trafficking is high on the political agenda, we see a trend where more victims are identified. In 2024 we had 430 presumed victims of trafficking, for the second year running a majority were victims of labour exploitation.

We welcome the recommendations from GRETA and have sent in a comprehensive answer. I want to highlight a few things here today:

Law enforcement

- The Swedish Prosecution Authority has decided that from April 2024 – all crimes related to human trafficking shall be investigated by senior public prosecutors with accurate competence and experience. All crimes related to human trafficking is handled by The National Unit Against Organised Crime, to ensure effective measures by specialized prosecutors.
- The Government has requested the Swedish Prosecution Authority to specify its work against human trafficking throughout the organization and present the results in its Annual Report of 2025.
- To improve and increase the knowledge of THB among prosecutors, a legal guidance on human trafficking and human exploitation was published in February 2025. The legal guidance functions as a manual in these investigations. The legal guidance is widely spread throughout the organization but also to other parties, for example the Swedish Police Authority, and it is available on the Swedish Prosecution Authority's website.
- The Swedish Police Authority's work with financial investigations includes the seizure of assets liable to confiscation. A comprehensive reform of the Swedish legislation on confiscation came into force in November 2024. Where someone is convicted of THB, extended confiscation can be ordered. In addition, the 2024 reform introduced a comprehensive NCBC-measure (independent confiscation), which can be applied even if there is no conviction for a crime, provided that the court is satisfied that certain property is derived from criminal conduct (e.g. THB). Property can be seized to secure the execution of confiscation orders.
- The Swedish Police Authority continuously provides training to all investigative units, as well as the Border police and patrolling units, in order to strengthen competence in combating THB. In addition, an online training module, accessible to all police units, has been developed. *Specific training is also offered:* an annual three-week program available to all police officers designated to investigate THB.
- In June 2025 the Swedish Prosecution Authority and the Swedish Police Authority were given a government assignment to increase and extend the cooperation regarding human trafficking. The assignment is to be reported to the Ministry of Justice in April and October 2026.
- Co-operation between Police, prosecutors and seven other authorities takes place within the framework of work-related crime (*A-krim*). Since July 2024 there is a new law stating that these

nine authorities are obliged to exchange information within their joint authority controls on work-related crime. There is also a new law since April 2025 stating that certain authorities are obliged to submit information about crime to law enforcement authorities such as the Swedish Police Authority.

- In February 2025, the Swedish Government appointed an inquiry with the task of analysing how the revised EU Anti-Trafficking Directive should be implemented in Swedish Law. The inquiry looks at among other things the non-prosecution principle, ensuring that when it is an intentional act, the use of services provided by a victim of trafficking constitutes a criminal offence, but also the role of national rapporteur. The inquiry presented its proposals 17 December 2025. A formal referral round is ongoing until mid-March 2026.

Prevention and support to victims:

- A new Social Services Act, which entered into force 1st of July 2025, represents a paradigm shift as social services are now given better tools to identify needs early on. Social services must work preventively, and a preventive focus needs to be integrated into all social services activities in all of the country's municipalities.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked to disseminate information and provide competence support to municipal social welfare committees regarding human trafficking and exploitation. The Board is also tasked with monitoring the number of applications of residence permits for recovery and reflection, in cases where there is suspicion that an individual is a victim of human trafficking or exploitation. The Board is required to report on the assignment no later than 31 March 2026.
- Both the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Gender Equality Agency have developed educational packages and online training courses on child sexual exploitation, prostitution, and human trafficking. These resources are intended for professionals who may encounter children or adults in vulnerable situations or who are engaged in efforts to prevent and combat such crimes.
- It can also be mentioned that an inquiry appointed in 2023 to look at compensation rules has now presented its report containing a number of proposals that aim to strengthen the position of victims of crime. For instance that the process to receive criminal injuries compensation from the state is simplified and shortened, and that the possibilities of seizure of property for payment of a debt to the benefit of victims of crime are expanded.

Last but not least:

In the last year the Swedish government has raised the level of ambition when it comes to work against men's violence against women, violence in close relationships, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking.

In the budget bill for 2026, the government proposed more resources than ever for investments in gender equality policy. The government proposes that 100 million SEK be added in permanent funds to municipalities and regions, to be distributed by the County Administrative Boards to strengthen and develop regional and local work against certain forms of violence.

The government also proposed a permanent reinforcement of 20 million SEK to women's and girls' shelters and certain other organizations in the field of crime victims. The aim is to give the organizations stronger conditions to reach out with support to those affected by men's violence against women, violence in close

relationships, sexual violence, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.

A long-term strategy for coordinated work and governance against men's violence against women, violence in close relationships, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking is now being developed.

The Government proposed to strengthen the funding for the upcoming action plan against prostitution and human trafficking, which is also currently being prepared. SEK 14 million will be allocated per year for the years 2026–2028 for the action plan.

The initiative, which has a special focus on children and young people, aims to prevent and combat exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking and to strengthen support and protection for vulnerable people. The funds allocated in the budget bill relate to measures within the areas of gender equality policy, but the action plan will cover people who have been trafficked for all purposes.

Appendix XV

Ms Muriel Berset Kohen
Ambassador, Chargée d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Delegation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe

Madam Chair,

Members of the Secretariat,

National experts,

Dear Colleagues,

I should like to begin by reminding you of the content of this proposal by Switzerland, which is to revise the rules on the election of GRETA members and add the sentence, "*Passive knowledge of the other language is desirable*". The proposal was discussed already at two informal meetings held on 28 May and 16 October 2025.

It stems from a situation on the ground which has highlighted a need for change. During GRETA visits to certain French-speaking countries or countries with a preference for French, GRETA has been unable to deploy experts sufficiently capable of interacting in French and the national authorities have had to arrange interpretation.

Under its Statute, however, the Council of Europe is a bilingual organisation, of which French is an official language alongside English and must therefore be treated on an equal footing.

By way of comparison, would it be acceptable for English-speaking countries to have to provide interpretation into English during visits to them by experts?

On the other hand, this situation cannot be compared to that of countries that also have to arrange interpretation during visits because their authorities do not have sufficient command of English. Their national languages are not Council of Europe official languages.

This proposal to revise the election rules would also boost the effectiveness and quality of exchanges during country visits between GRETA experts, the authorities and the various stakeholders met.

It should be noted that GREVIO already applies the same rule to its election procedure as that proposed by Switzerland for GRETA, and that this constitutes a good practice. The rule enables GREVIO to have enough experts to cover visits to French-speaking countries effectively.

As GREVIO and GRETA are both committees of the same generation and both operate in the same way, there is no reason why GRETA's election rules should not be adapted accordingly.

As for the impact of our proposal, I would underline that the "passive knowledge of the other language" which we are proposing would not be a mandatory criterion but just a preference, which would not prevent the election of members who did not have such knowledge, as is the case at GREVIO. Professional expertise must remain the determining factor, with gender balance also remaining a key concern.

Lastly, I would stress that ensuring a degree of plurilingualism would certainly add value to the overall standard of GRETA's work, from the point of view of cultural diversity. Moreover, given that the Convention is open to non-member states of the Council of Europe, having more French-speaking experts would be a bonus in terms of encouraging accession by African countries.

In conclusion, given this context and the Statute of our bilingual organisation, the revision we are calling for without going any further and which is inspired by what works well at GREVIO would be a consistent and minimal improvement.

Thank you.

Appendix XVI

Presentation by Ms Monica Petrovici-Ronecker,
Project Manager, Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Division



**CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONVENTION ON ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING
IN HUMAN BEINGS**



STRATEGIC CO-OPERATION

Co-operation is the third element of the dynamic triangle developed by the Council of Europe which aims at promoting common standards, evaluating their implementation and organising co-operation activities to promote compliance and remedy shortcomings.



ANTI-TRAFFICKING CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

- Increase compliance with the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings through capacity building, awareness raising, supporting the adoption of new legislation and tools, building strategic partnerships;
- The Anti-Trafficking Division manages the projects, together with the staff of relevant Council of Europe local offices;
- **Target groups** : law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, labour inspectors, child protection, education and health professionals, border, migration and asylum authorities, civil society organisations, the private sector, including media.



International cooperation
(Art. 32)



Cooperation with civil society
(Art. 35)



CO-ORDINATING AND FUNDING CO-OPERATION

- The Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC), in close collaboration with the Directorate of Political Affairs and the operational directorates general, produces **Framework Co-operation Documents** (Action Plans, etc.)
- The projects defined in the co-operation documents receive **funding** from multiple sources, in particular from the Council of Europe ordinary budget and voluntary contributions, donor countries and international organisations.
- A large number of projects pertaining to the co-operation documents are implemented via **joint programmes** between the Council of Europe and the European Union.
- In **EU member States**, projects are implemented jointly by the Council of Europe and SG.REFORM (European Commission) to advance structural reforms in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy, while responding to the specific needs of member States.



Republic of Moldova



Ukraine

ONGOING PROJECTS



Austria

2025-2026 | Improving the support services for child victims of trafficking in Austria



Bosnia and Herzegovina

2025 | Strengthening access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina



North Macedonia

2023-2026 | Strengthening anti-trafficking in North Macedonia



Serbia

2023-2026 | Strengthening anti-trafficking action in Serbia



- **Austria** - Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) : support covers the entire reform process, **demand driven** and does not require co-financing from EU countries : [Technical Support Instrument 2026 call - Reform Support](#)
- **North Macedonia** and **Serbia** : European Union/Council of Europe “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye” (Horizontal Facility III)
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** – CoE Action plan

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Support for the development of legislation, policies, national anti-trafficking strategies and action plans:

- **Malta** - development of the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan, alongside with implementation tools (2022-2025).
- **North Macedonia** - adoption of the Law on State Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes (November 2022) and setting up of The Commission on State Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes (2024); development and adoption of protocols for detecting and investigating labour and child trafficking;
- **Serbia** : development of the Law on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of Victims in Serbia (2025); development and publication of the first report of the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking, issued by the Ombudsperson's Office in 2024;
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** : development of the Anti-Trafficking Strategy (2024–2027), ensuring the alignment with the urgent GRETA recommendations; preparation of harmonised anti-trafficking action plans; development of compensation mechanisms (ongoing).
- **Kosovo** : development of a database on victims of trafficking in human beings (November 2023), the first in the region ; revised the Regulation on the Operation and Labour of the State Shelter for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Victims of Human Trafficking (2020 – 2023).



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Support through capacity-building and the establishment of networks:

- **North Macedonia:** Child trafficking prevention: approximately 1,950 education officials trained on child trafficking and on interviewing child victims. Increased awareness among 599 children from vulnerable groups (including Roma children and children with disabilities), as well as among teachers, parents and the wider public. Simulation-based training delivered to strengthen practical skills and inter-institutional cooperation.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia:** Establishment of a national network of specialised legal aid providers and NGOs to support victims in legal proceedings, accompanied by a resource package and capacity-building for legal aid providers.

Services to victims of trafficking:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Empowerment of persons with lived experience of trafficking, strengthening their role in advocacy, peer support and policy dialogue. Shelter for child victims of trafficking.
- **Serbia:** Support to the Centre for Human Trafficking Victims' Protection to enhance the quality and consistency of assistance provided to victims.
- **North Macedonia:** Improved accommodation and access to services for victims of trafficking in human beings, including a comprehensive feasibility study with recommendations for establishing a dedicated shelter for victims of trafficking.





MORE INFORMATION ON CO-OPERATION

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/co-operation>

trafficking@coe.int

Thank you!

