



**Committee of the Parties
to the Council of Europe Convention
on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**

**Recommendation CP/Rec(2025)03
on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention
on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
by Albania**

*adopted at the 36th meeting of the Committee of the Parties
on 20 June 2025*

The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to as "the Convention"), acting under the terms of Article 38(7) of the Convention;

Having regard to the purposes of the Convention to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, while guaranteeing gender equality, protect the human rights of victims of trafficking, design a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of victims and witnesses, ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of the offences related to trafficking in human beings, and promote international co-operation;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 36(1) of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in the implementation of the Convention;

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by Albania on 6 February 2007;

Having examined the fourth report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Albania, adopted by GRETA at its 53rd meeting (24-28 March 2025), as well as the comments of the Albanian Government received on 14 May 2025;

Bearing in mind the focus of the fourth evaluation round of the Convention on vulnerabilities to human trafficking and measures taken to prevent them, detect and support vulnerable victims, and punish the offenders, as well as the additional focus on the use of information and communication technology (ICT);

Considering the conclusions and proposals for action contained in Appendix 2 of GRETA's fourth report on Albania related to the thematic focus of the fourth evaluation round and the follow-up topics specific to Albania;

Welcoming the measures taken and the progress achieved by Albania in implementing the Convention, and in particular:

- the further development of the legislative framework related to combating trafficking in human beings, through the inclusion of relevant provisions in the new Law on Foreigners and Law on Asylum;
- the regular adoption of national anti-trafficking action plans, which comprise measures aimed to prevent trafficking of vulnerable groups;

- the increase in the state funding provided to the specialised shelters for victims of trafficking in 2024;
 - the provision of guidance and training to criminal justice professionals on the basis of the unifying decision of the Supreme Court clarifying the interpretation of the offence of human trafficking;
 - the efforts made to strengthen online safety, prevent risks of ICT-facilitated trafficking in human beings and develop the specialisation of investigations on cybercrimes;
- A. Recommends that the Government of Albania take measures to address the following issues for urgent action¹ identified in GRETA's report:
1. take further measures to prevent trafficking of unaccompanied or separated foreign children, and in particular to:
 - ensure that all unaccompanied or separated foreign children, including those who do not seek asylum in Albania, are referred to the child protection authorities and appointed a legal guardian;
 - provide safe and appropriate accommodation to all unaccompanied or separated foreign children, as well as access to education, health and other services necessary to their needs;
 - train professionals likely to be in contact with unaccompanied or separated foreign children (such as officers of the Border and Migration Police, staff of the Directorate for Asylum and Citizenship, and child protection officers) on detecting, interviewing, referring and supporting these children, as well as on detecting victims of trafficking among them;
 - ensure that age assessment is conducted in line with international standards, including the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation to Member States CM/Rec(2022)22 on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration (paragraph 44);
 2. increase the resources of the child protection services so that they can play an effective role in the prevention of trafficking of children and the management of cases of children at risk (paragraph 45);
 3. make additional efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings of members of the Roma and Egyptian minorities, including to:
 - strengthen awareness-raising and outreach work with Roma and Egyptians on risks of human trafficking;
 - ensure access to birth registration, by simplifying the necessary documents and raising awareness among the Roma and Egyptian minorities on the importance of birth registration and on the procedure to be followed;
 - take additional measures to improve the inclusion of Roma and Egyptians, including their access to education, employment, housing, health care and social services;
 - involve Roma and Egyptians organisations in the design and implementation of anti-trafficking policies and measures (paragraph 60);
 4. take appropriate measure to prevent human trafficking of asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants, in particular by:
 - ensuring that a proper vulnerability assessment is carried in respect of all foreigners apprehended at the borders or in the Albanian territory, as well as in the detention centre for foreigners, in order to identify their individual vulnerabilities and needs;
 - strengthening the training of professionals (notably officers of the Border and Migration Police, the Detention Centre for Foreigners, and staff of the Directorate of Asylum and Citizenship)

¹ The number of the paragraph setting out GRETA's proposals in the report is indicated in brackets.

and monitoring the implementation of the procedures, on the detection of vulnerable individuals and the referral of cases;

- further raising awareness of asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants on their rights and risks of human trafficking;
- improving the social and economic integration of asylum seekers and refugees, notably their access to education, employment and vocational training (paragraph 80);

5. take further steps to improve the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, including by:

- analysing gaps in the implementation of the National Referral Mechanism and the Standard Operating Procedures, notably with regard to the low number of formal identifications, and taking measures to address these gaps;
- ensuring that the formal identification of victims of trafficking is not dependent on their willingness to co-operate in the criminal proceedings;
- increasing the state funding provided to the mobile units of specialised NGOs and ensuring that it is sustainable;
- strengthening the guidance, training and resources of relevant professionals (including police officers, labour inspectors, child protection officers and social workers) on the identification of victims of trafficking;
- proactively identifying victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, notably by increasing unannounced inspections in high-risk sectors;
- proactively identifying victims of trafficking among migrant workers, asylum seekers, irregular migrants and unaccompanied or separated foreign children;
- ensuring that a prior assessment of the risks is carried out prior to any forced return or expulsion from Albania, taking full account of the risks of trafficking or re-trafficking on return, in compliance with the obligation of non-refoulement. In this context, full consideration to GRETA's Guidance note on the entitlement of victims of trafficking, and persons at risk of being trafficked, to international protection (paragraph 117);

6. take measures to strengthen the criminal justice response to trafficking in human beings, in particular by:

- making use of special investigation techniques in order to gather material, documentary, financial and digital evidence, and not having to rely exclusively on testimony by victims or witnesses;
- ensuring that human trafficking offences are prosecuted as such, rather than as other/lesser offences, every time the circumstances of the case allow this, and lead to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for those convicted;
- improving co-operation between the police, prosecutor's offices with general jurisdiction and the Special Prosecutor's Office on trafficking cases;
- strengthening the participation of the Special Structures against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK) in cases of human trafficking involving an organised crime element, notably by increasing its resources so that it can be actively involved in human trafficking cases;
- further developing the training of investigators, prosecutors and judges on the offence of trafficking in human beings, in particular the different constituent elements on this offence, its differences with other related offences and the non-punishment principle. Newly appointed investigators in the police anti-trafficking units should be trained prior to taking up their duty;

- ensuring that victims and witnesses of human trafficking, as well as their family members, are provided with effective and appropriate protection from potential retaliation or intimidation, including testimony through audio-visual means and avoiding direct confrontation with defendants;
- further developing training of professionals on child-friendly interviews. In this context, reference is made to the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice;
- encouraging the media to protect the identity and private life of victims of trafficking through training for media professionals (paragraph 151);

7. facilitate and guarantee access to compensation for victims of trafficking, including by:

- building the capacity of legal practitioners to support victims to claim compensation and including compensation into existing training programmes for lawyers, law enforcement officials and the judiciary;
- ensuring that victims can obtain a decision on compensation from the offender as part of the criminal proceedings within a reasonable time. The plea-bargaining agreement should not be in any way detrimental to the rights of the victims, in particular their effective access to compensation;
- ensuring that the collection of evidence about the harm the victim has suffered, including the financial gain from the exploitation of the victim, is part of the criminal investigations with a view to supporting compensation claims in court;
- making full use of the legislation on the freezing and forfeiture of assets to secure compensation to victims of trafficking;
- setting a state compensation scheme for victims of trafficking in human beings in case of the failure of the perpetrators to compensate the victims (paragraph 192);

B. Bearing in mind GRETA's conclusions that some recommendations made repeatedly in preceding evaluation rounds have not been implemented or have been only partially implemented, requests the Albanian authorities to take steps to implement the recommendations in points 5, 6 and 7 as a matter of priority;

C. Recommends that Albania take measures to implement the other proposals for action listed in Appendix 2 of GRETA's fourth evaluation report;

D. Requests the Albanian Government to report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to comply with this recommendation **by 20 June 2027**;

E. Invites the Albanian Government to continue the dialogue in progress with GRETA and to keep GRETA regularly informed of the measures taken in response to GRETA's conclusions.