

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



Recommendation CP/Rec(2026)07
on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention
on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
by Portugal

*adopted at the 38th meeting of the Committee of the Parties
on 3 July 2026*

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 Portugal on 27 February 2008;

Having examined the fourth report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Portugal, adopted by GRETA at its 56th meeting (2-6 March 2026), as well as the comments of the Portuguese Government received on 29 April 2026;

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 Portugal related to the thematic focus of the fourth evaluation round and follow-up topics specific to Portugal;

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

- the adoption of the fifth National Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2025-2027), following an external evaluation of the previous plan;
- the establishment of working groups of specialised prosecutors, on trafficking in sports and on child, early and forced marriages;

- the efforts made to prevent trafficking in children and young people, through education, awareness-raising campaigns and training, paying particular attention to the sports sector and the prevention of child and forced marriages;
- the increase in the number of residence permits granted to victims of trafficking in human beings;
- the adoption by the General Prosecutor's Office of a national strategy to combat human trafficking and related crimes and of Directive No. 1/2023, instructing prosecutors to pay particular attention to vulnerable victims and to seek compensation on their behalf;
- the efforts made to strengthen online safety and prevent trafficking in human beings facilitated by information and communication technology (ICT) through the development of educational tools and awareness-raising programmes.

A. Recommends that the Government of Portugal take measures to address the following issues for urgent action¹ identified in GRETA's report:

1. take measures to strengthen the prevention of human trafficking of asylum seekers and refugees, in particular by:
 - ensuring that a comprehensive vulnerability assessment, incorporating indicators of trafficking in human beings, is systematically carried out for all foreign nationals at border crossing points, within Portuguese territory and in immigration detention facilities;
 - strengthening the training and operational guidance provided to staff of the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum, the Public Security Police at airport entry points, the National Republican Guard and staff working at immigration detention facilities and reception centres for asylum seekers on identifying vulnerabilities, including signs of human trafficking, and on the procedures to be followed (paragraph 54);
2. take further steps to improve the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, in particular by:
 - ensuring that the formal identification of victims of trafficking does not depend in practice on their co-operation with law enforcement agencies and on the outcome of the criminal proceedings;
 - setting up procedures for the detection of victims of trafficking among applicants for international protection and their referral to assistance;
 - providing systematic training and guidance to staff working at immigration detention facilities and asylum seekers' accommodation centres on the identification of victims of trafficking and on the procedures to be followed (paragraph 97);
3. improve the identification of, and assistance to, child victims of trafficking, in particular by reviewing the legal provisions and establishing a system for the timely appointment of legal guardians (paragraph 123);
4. take steps to ensure that:
 - all victims of human trafficking, including third-country nationals, can effectively access legal assistance and legal aid, by reviewing the eligibility criteria, as well as by ensuring that the Social Security Institute decides on requests for legal aid in a timely manner and that residence permit requests are processed without undue delay;

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

- legal assistance is provided as soon as there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person is a victim of human trafficking and legal aid is provided to victims of trafficking before they make an official statement (paragraph 183);
5. step up their efforts to guarantee effective access to compensation for victims of trafficking, in line with Article 15 of the Convention, including by:
- enabling victims of trafficking to effectively exercise their right to obtain compensation from perpetrators, by making full use of the legislation, the freezing and confiscation of assets and international co-operation and by ensuring legal assistance for victims in proceedings to enforce compensation claims awarded;
 - enabling victims of trafficking to effectively exercise their right to state compensation, by reviewing the criterion of temporary or permanent work incapacity of at least 30 days, ensuring victims' access to legal aid when submitting applications to the Commission for the Protection of Victims of Violent Crimes and reducing the length of the procedure;
 - providing training programmes on THB and on victims' access to compensation for legal practitioners, prosecutors and the judiciary, and encouraging them to use all the possibilities the law offers to uphold compensation claims by victims of THB (paragraph 195);
6. ensure compliance with Article 26 of the Convention through the adoption of a specific provision on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they were compelled to do so, and/or the development of guidance and training for police officers and prosecutors on the non-punishment principle (paragraph 201).

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 Portuguese authorities to take steps to implement the recommendations in points 4, 5 and 6 as a matter of priority;

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

D. Requests the Portuguese Government to report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 3 July 2028;

E. Invites the Portuguese 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.