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Reply by Sweden
to the Questionnaire
for the evaluation of the implementation
of the Council of Europe Convention on Action
against Trafficking in Human Beings

Fourth evaluation round

Thematic focus: Addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings

Reply submitted on 20 May 2026



Government Offices of Sweden

20 May 2026

Answer from the Swedish Government on the Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties (fourth evaluation round, with the thematic focus of addressing vulnerabilities to THB (GRETA (2023)11_SWE))

Summary of the Swedish administrative model

Sweden's administrative system is organised across three main levels: national, regional and local.

At the national level, the Riksdag (Parliament) enacts legislation and determines political objectives and the state budget. The Government implements these decisions, proposes new laws and directs central government administration. The Government is supported by the Government Offices and oversees a number of government agencies. All government business is decided jointly at weekly government meetings, which requires extensive interministerial coordination. As a result, a government decision is often preceded by several months of preparation. All ministries are also involved in the work of the European Union (EU), with officials from each ministry representing Sweden and preparing issues ahead of EU meetings.

Government agencies are independent in matters concerning individual administrative decisions. While the Government sets overall objectives and allocates resources for the agencies, it may not intervene in how an agency applies the law or decides in individual cases. The government agencies report on their activities and results to the respective ministries, providing information on policy implementation and the use of allocated funds.

At the regional level, Sweden is divided into state regional authorities (county administrative boards) and self-governing regional bodies (regions), the latter primarily responsible for healthcare and public transport. At the local level, municipalities enjoy significant autonomy and are responsible for a wide range of public services, including education, social services and elderly care.

Overall, the Swedish administrative model combines strong democratic governance with decentralisation, agency independence in decision making and a clear division of responsibilities across levels of government. The independence of both government agencies in decision-making and local self-government is enshrined in the Swedish Constitution (Chapter 12, Section 2, and Chapter 1, Section 1, respectively).

An introduction - Organisation of Anti-Trafficking- Measures in Sweden

Efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in Sweden are organised on a multilevel, multi-agency basis and grounded in a human rights and victim centred approach. Measures encompass prevention, identification and protection of victims, investigation and prosecution of offences, and international cooperation, in accordance with Sweden's obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The strategic direction of Sweden's anti-trafficking work is set through Government strategies and action plans. The Government Offices hold overall responsibility for governance, coordination and international reporting, ensuring coherence across national, regional and local actors.

National Coordination and the National Rapporteur

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency plays a central role in coordinating national efforts to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings¹. Through the National Coordination Against Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings (NSPM)², the Agency promotes cooperation between authorities, civil society, and international actors, while also providing methodological support and capacity development. The NSPM also holds responsibility for the Swedish National Referral Mechanism (in Sweden referred to as The Manual). The NSPM's annual report for 2025 is scheduled for publication at the end of May 2026.

As part of this work, the National Task Force against Prostitution and Human Trafficking brings together relevant government agencies and serves as both a strategic and operational resource. Its overarching aim is to prevent trafficking and prostitution, strengthen victim protection, and increase the prosecution of perpetrators. The agency provides a national support structure for authorities, coordinates the work of the regional coordinators against THB, operates a helpline for professionals, and organises the return programme in cooperation with IOM.

The Swedish National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings is placed within the Swedish Police Authority.

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Response

The Swedish Police Authority has primary operational responsibility for preventing, detecting and investigating offences related to trafficking in human beings. This work is conducted in cooperation with national authorities, international partners and civil society, and focuses primarily on sexual and labour exploitation, often linked to organized crime. Specialised units and designated officers handle

¹ [Jämställdhetsmyndighetens årsredovisning 2025](#)

² [Nationella samordningen mot prostitution och människohandel | NSPM](#)

these cases, often in close cooperation with other authorities, to ensure effective investigations and a victim-sensitive approach.

Operational activities include intelligence-led policing and targeted interventions in high-risk environments, such as locations where sexual services are purchased and digital platforms. As an increasing share of exploitation occurs online, the Police Authority continues to develop methods for digital investigations. Efforts also target criminal networks in which human trafficking constitutes part of the broader illicit economy.

Effective cooperation is essential and includes collaboration with other authorities such as the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish Prosecution Authority, as well as participation in international cooperation through Europol and Interpol.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority plays a central role in combating trafficking in human beings by leading investigations and bringing prosecutions. It ensures that cases are handled effectively and that evidence meets the requirements for successful legal proceedings, working in close cooperation with the Swedish Police Authority and other relevant actors. Cases regarding trafficking in human beings are handled by a dedicated unit with specialised expertise within the Authority. The Authority also develops internal legal guidance to ensure a correct and uniform application of the law.

Other agencies

The Swedish Migration Agency plays an important role in combating trafficking in human beings by identifying potential victims within the asylum and migration process. This includes detecting indicators of possible exploitation during asylum assessments; residence permit procedures and return cases. The Agency works in close cooperation with other relevant actors to refer potential victims to appropriate support and protection. It also contributes to prevention by raising awareness, strengthening staff competence, and improving procedures for early identification. Overall, the Migration Agency's role focuses on identification, protection, and coordination within migration-related contexts.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority contributes to combating trafficking in human beings primarily by addressing labour exploitation. The Authority collaborates closely with other agencies, including the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Migration Agency, particularly within joint efforts to counter labour market crime. When suspected cases of trafficking or serious exploitation are identified, they are referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Since 2018, several Swedish authorities have worked together under a government mandate to combat labour market crime, with the Swedish Work Environment Authority serving as the coordinating body. The aim is to jointly detect, prevent, and address violations and criminal activities in the labour market, including labour exploitation and trafficking in human beings. The work is carried out through joint inspections, method development, and information initiatives. Dedicated centres against labour market crime, established across the country during 2022-2023, serve as hubs for planning and implementing these efforts.

Identification, protection and assistance of victims

Sweden does not have a separate administrative procedure for the formal identification of victims outside the legal process. As a result, the identification of victims of trafficking is not formally assigned to any specific authority; instead, all relevant actors may identify presumed victims.

Municipal social services bear the primary responsibility for providing assistance and protection to victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. This includes emergency accommodation, financial assistance, psychosocial support, and longer-term recovery and reintegration measures. Support is provided on the basis of individual needs and in accordance with applicable social legislation.

In cases involving children, social services have an enhanced responsibility, guided by the principle of the best interests of the child, as enshrined in Swedish legislation and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child victims are to be recognized as victims of serious crime and afforded specialised protection, care and support.

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) plays a supportive and knowledge-based role in Sweden's efforts to combat human trafficking. It provides guidance, training, and methodological support to social services and the healthcare system, helping professionals in municipal and regional services identify and assist victims of exploitation. The Agency also contributes to national coordination by developing knowledge resources and strengthening evidence-based practices, particularly in areas such as child protection and support for vulnerable groups. While the Board does not carry out operational interventions itself, it is a key actor in ensuring that local and regional authorities have the tools and competence needed to offer effective protection and support to victims.

Regional health authorities are responsible for ensuring access to healthcare for victims, including somatic care, mental health services and trauma-informed treatment.

Role of Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations are key partners in Sweden's anti-trafficking efforts. They contribute in particular through outreach activities, victim identification, counselling, provision of safe accommodation and practical support. These organisations often possess specialised expertise and have established trust with vulnerable groups, making their work an important complement the responsibilities of public authorities. Cooperation between public actors and civil society organisations is encouraged and supported at both national and local levels.

The National Support Programme is run by the Swedish Civil Society Platform against Human Trafficking, a coalition of several civil society organisations. NSP provides support to individuals in Sweden who have been subjected to prostitution or human trafficking, complementing public services provided by the state. The programme offers, among other things, assistance with urgent basic needs, safe accommodation, counselling, information, legal advice, and support in contacts with public authorities.³ The Swedish Gender Equality Agency is tasked with allocating funds to the National

³ [Nationella stödprogrammet - Plattformen Civila Sverige mot Människohandel](#)

Support Programme (NSP) and to the voluntary Return Programme for Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution (ÅMP).

The Trade Union Center for the Undocumented is a non-profit organization with the purpose of helping and supporting undocumented workers in the Swedish labour market⁴.

Cooperation and international engagement

Effective action against trafficking in human beings in Sweden is based on structured cooperation between authorities at national, regional and local levels, as well as sustained international engagement. Sweden participates actively in cooperation within the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations and engages in cross-border law enforcement and information exchange. Important regional cooperation structures also include the working groups on trafficking in human beings within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

The position of Special Envoy for Combatting Human Trafficking and Exploitation was reinstated in March 2025. The mandate of the Envoy, placed within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is to work internationally and broadly in dialogue and cooperation with international organisations and national governments, as well as with Swedish authorities and civil society. From May 2026, an Acting Envoy carries out the duties, pending the appointment of a new Ambassador in the fall of 2026.

Sweden is subject to regular monitoring by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and attaches great importance to implementing GRETA's recommendations as part of its continuous efforts to strengthen victim protection and the effectiveness of anti-trafficking measures.

⁴ [Trade Union Center for the Undocumented](#)

Part I – Addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings

I. PREVENTION (Articles 5, 6 and 7)

1. **Do you have specific data/research/analysis of what makes people vulnerable to trafficking in human beings (THB) in your country? Please provide information on the categories/groups of people identified as being at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, and how they are addressed in the national anti-trafficking strategy and/or action plan. Have you identified geographical regions or economic sectors in your country as particularly vulnerable to THB, and how do you address them in your strategy or policy?**

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency notes in a 2021 study that migrants without regular or secure residence status are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in human beings⁵. In relation to sexual exploitation, the majority of individuals subjected to prostitution in Sweden are women. Transgender persons and individuals who do not identify as heterosexual are also overrepresented among those subjected to prostitution. Some organisations and service providers further report that persons with intellectual disabilities or neurodiverse conditions, such as autism or ADHD, are overrepresented among their target groups.

Individuals with vulnerabilities – such as young age, trauma-related experiences, socioeconomic hardship, or displacement due to war and unstable regimes – are generally at increased risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings (THB). These vulnerabilities are taken into account in Sweden both operationally, within law enforcement, and strategically, in the development of policies and methods to prevent and combat trafficking.

Labour exploitation is most prevalent in the construction, cleaning, restaurant, transport, beauty, and green industry sectors. Regions with seasonal work in the green industries are strengthening preparedness ahead of the season. The Regional Centres against Work-Related Crime (AKC) have identified companies in the forestry and berry-picking sectors employing foreign workers with temporary residence permits⁶. Efforts have also been directed towards the police and relevant municipal actors, including social services, crime prevention officers, and environmental and health authorities. By disseminating information on sector-specific risks, indicators of exploitation, and available support and protection mechanisms, local preparedness is being enhanced. As an example, the Swedish Migration Agency granted significantly fewer work permits for berry picking in 2024–2025 compared to previous years⁷.

The Thai massage sector remains the most commonly identified setting for sexual exploitation, although such exploitation also occurs in less visible environments. In recent years, reported cases of labour exploitation have increased, largely due to strengthened enforcement efforts by Swedish authorities⁸. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has established a task force capacity to address

⁵ [Report 2021:23 Prostitution and human trafficking](#)

⁶ [Report Redovisning av uppdraget att inrätta regionala center mot arbetslivskriminalitet och om varaktig myndighetssamverkan](#)

⁷ [Prövningen av ansökningar från bärplockare är klar – majoriteten avslås](#)

⁸ [Report "Varför tog ni just oss? Alla håller ju på med det!"](#)

emerging trends. As an example, in 2025, the task force focused on the Thai massage sector, while in 2024 the focus was on youth criminality.

A recent court case has shown that victims arriving from Thailand often assume a family provider role upon coming to Sweden, a circumstance that traffickers exploit⁹. The multi-agency task force cooperates closely with civil society organisations to raise awareness, facilitate outreach to these victims, and prevent trafficking. Civil society organisations also support initiatives aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship within the Thai community.

2. What specific measures are taken to reduce children's vulnerability to THB by creating a protective environment for children? Please provide information in the following areas:

a. protecting children's rights from attitudes, customs, behaviour and practices that can have an adverse effect (including child, early and forced marriage, and illegal adoption);

In March 2026, the Government submitted a bill proposing strengthened legislation against honour-based violence and oppression. The bill includes, among other measures, an expansion of the scope of criminal liability for the criminal offenses of forced marriage and deception for the purpose of marriage abroad, as well as the introduction of a separate criminal offence covering travel undertaken for the purpose of marriage when the victim is under 18 years of age. It also proposed stricter penalties for forced marriage and child marriage, and the possibility to use secret coercive measures in investigations of these crimes. Furthermore, the bill proposes removing the exception to the prohibition on recognising certain foreign marriages, including child marriages and forced marriages. Such marriages would never be valid in Sweden. A parliamentary vote on the bill is scheduled for May 2026¹⁰.

New legislation, introducing an extended travel ban, entered into force on the 1st of July 2024. Prior to this reform, the travel ban applied only to travel undertaken for the purpose of child marriage or female genital mutilation. The legislation has now been broadened to cover situations in which children for example are at risk of: a) being subjected to so-called disciplinary travel or to corporal punishment and abuse abroad, a form of travel that often increases during school holidays; b) being taken out of the country with the risk of exploitation or exposure to a harmful environment, for instance to establish connections with a criminal organisation or network or c) being taken abroad in order to avoid interventions by municipal social services¹¹.

In cooperation with schools, social services, and airports, the Swedish Police Authority has launched a project to prevent girls and boys from being taken abroad for child marriage, female genital mutilation, or so-called disciplinary travel. The police have increased their presence and conduct targeted inspections near border crossings, particularly at airports, to identify high-risk travel. The initiatives are considered to have been successful due to the dissemination of information and the visibility they have generated¹².

⁹ B1221-25 issued by Göta Hovrätt, Court of Appeal, on the 8th of May 2025

¹⁰ [Stärkt lagstiftning mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck - Regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se/press/2025/03/starkt-lagstiftning-mot-hedersrelaterat-vald-och-fortryck)

¹¹ [Regeringens proposition 2023/24:72 Ett utvidgat utreseförbud för barn](https://www.regeringen.se/press/2024/07/regeringens-proposition-2023-24-72-ett-utvidgat-utreseforbud-for-barn)

¹² [Polisinsats förhindrade att barn förs utomlands | Polismyndigheten](https://www.polismyndigheten.se/polisinsats-forhindrade-att-barn-fors-utomlands)

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has mapped and analysed the prevalence in Sweden of child marriage, forced marriage and polygamy, as well as adjacent issues such as arranged marriage, bride price, difficulties in obtaining a religious divorce and temporary marriages for the purchase of sex. The assignment is part of the work of combatting honour-related violence and oppression and is intended to identify any knowledge gaps and, if possible, develop new knowledge within the field. The assignment was published in the report “A Life Shaped by Violence”¹³. The analysis was shared with around 300 professionals at conferences and webinars during 2025. During the same year, the Gender Equality Agency systematically integrated a child perspective into the recurring questionnaire used ahead of meetings of the National Coordination Against Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings (NSPM), helping ensure that children’s perspectives are continuously incorporated into the work.

Also see answer to Q 31.

b. developing children’s life skills (including media literacy and online safety skills), knowledge and participation;

The Swedish Agency for the Media is tasked by the Government with strengthening children and young persons as conscious media users and protecting them from harmful media influence¹⁴.

Since January 2024, the Agency has held a permanent mandate to coordinate work on media and information literacy (MIL) in Sweden. As part of this role, it operates the MIL Sweden network, which brings together 26 actors involved in various aspects of media and information literacy. The network provides a platform for developing targeted educational materials and for broad outreach to the general public¹⁵.

In March 2024, the Government tasked the Swedish Agency for the Media with implementing a comprehensive and long-term national initiative on media and information literacy.¹⁶ The initiative aimed at the entire population, resulted in the development of a digital training course officially launched on 5 November 2024. Its objective was to strengthen individuals’ ability to understand and critically assess different types of information, as well as to build trust in reliable sources. It also aims to raise public awareness of how artificial intelligence can be used in the information environment, thereby contributing to greater societal resilience to disinformation and malicious information influence. In 2025, the mandate was reinforced to further develop components relating to knowledge about artificial intelligence, and the Government has decided that the initiative will continue during the period 2026–2028.

To strengthen safety in preschools and schools and to prevent serious crimes against children and students, the Government has tasked the Swedish National Agency for Education with developing new support materials. By 1 April 2026, in accordance with the government assignment, the Agency had published materials outlining how education providers, preschools, and schools can prevent sexual offences and other serious crimes¹⁷.

¹³ [Report A life shaped by violence](#)

¹⁴ [Swedish Agency for the Media](#)

¹⁵ [6. Education and Training](#)

¹⁶ [Uppdrag till Mediemyndigheten att genomföra en nationell satsning för stärkt medie- och informationskunnighet i en tid av artificiell intelligens och desinformation](#)

¹⁷ [Nytt stöd för att motverka sexualbrott - Skolverket](#)

c. putting in place a system for monitoring and reporting cases of abuse;

Reporting concerns about children believed to be at risk is a key part of Sweden's child protection system. Under the Social Services Act¹⁸, certain authorities, employees and professionals must immediately notify the municipal social welfare committee if they become aware of, or suspect, that a child is being harmed. This obligation applies to authorities whose work involves children and young people, as well as to health care providers, forensic psychiatric services, social services, activities under the Persons with Certain Functional Impairments Act¹⁹, the Prison and Probation Service, the Police Authority and the Security Service, along with employees and professionals working in corresponding private services.

On 15 January 2026, new rules entered into force under the bill Strengthened protection for children at risk of harm²⁰. The bill expands the mandatory reporting obligation to include, among others, security guards, the Public Employment Service, the Social Insurance Agency, the Enforcement Authority, the Coast Guard, the County Administrative Boards, the Tax Agency and the Customs Service, as well as their employees. It also clarifies that the Economic Crime Authority, the Migration Agency, the Prosecution Authority, professionals under the Education Act, dental care professionals and mediators under the Children and Parents Code are already subject to this obligation.

The Swedish Agency for the Media coordinate Sweden's Safer Internet Centre²¹ together with the organisations Bris (Children's Rights in Society)²² and ECPAT Sweden²³. The Centre is co-financed by the European Union until 30 June 2026. This consortium has been operating continuously since 2023, with the Swedish Agency for the Media serving as the awareness centre, Bris as the helpline, and ECPAT Sweden as the hotline. Children who contact ECPAT's support service can receive assistance in having online material removed through collaboration between counsellors and hotline analysts. ECPAT Sweden also holds the status of a trusted flagger under the Digital Services Act (DSA), meaning that its reports are prioritised by digital platforms, enabling faster removal of suspected abusive material.

d. providing training to child care professionals, legal guardians, education professionals;

As noted in section 2 c, reports of concern play a crucial role in helping social services identify which children in need of support, including children who are victims of trafficking in human beings (THB). Chapter 19, Section 1 of the Social Services Act (2025:400)²⁴ stipulates that authorities within specified areas, employees of such authorities, and certain other professionals are required to immediately report to the social services committee if, in the course of their work, they become aware of or suspect that a child is being harmed.

The National Board of Institutional Care has been tasked with strengthening and adapting care for children and young people who have been subjected to domestic violence, honour related violence and oppression, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation, including sexual abuse for pornographic

¹⁸ [Socialtjänstlag \(2025:400\)](#)

¹⁹ [Lag \(1993:387\) om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)

²⁰ [Proposition \(2025/26:12\) Stärkt skydd för barn som riskerar att fara illa](#)

²¹ [Safer Internet Centre - Mediemyndigheten](#)

²² [För vuxna om barn | Bris](#)

²³ [Hotline - ECPAT Sverige](#)

²⁴ [Socialtjänstlag \(2025:400\)](#)

purposes. The assignment includes analysing risks and preventing children and young people from being subjected to sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or prostitution and human trafficking for any purpose²⁵.

In April 2026 the Government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to map, update, and develop knowledge support materials for professionals working in services responsible for children and young people placed in care. The purpose of the assignment is to strengthen professional competence, including with regard to sexual violence and human trafficking, in order to ensure that affected children receive appropriate protection, support, and care. The assignment is to be reported to the Government Offices no later than 30 September 2028²⁶.

The Government has also assigned the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) to carry out a systematic review of knowledge on internet-based outreach work. This outreach aims to identify individuals exploited in prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, those sexually exploited for pornographic purposes, as well as children subjected to sexual exploitation in various forms. SBU is tasked with compiling scientific knowledge on outreach work, with a particular focus on online activities. For adults, the purpose of outreach work is to provide information about available support services. For children, the primary purpose is to provide support where possible, and secondarily to offer information and refer the child to appropriate support services. The assignment is to be reported to the Government Offices no later than 15 December 2028²⁷.

The National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Gender Equality Agency have developed educational packages and online training courses addressing child sexual exploitation, prostitution, and human trafficking. These resources are designated for professionals who may encounter children or adults in vulnerable situations, as well as those engaged in efforts to prevent and combat such crimes²⁸.

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, together with the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish Police Authority, have completed a three-year government assignment to prevent unaccompanied children from going missing.²⁹ The assignment focused on increasing knowledge and developing national guidelines to support relevant actors in preventing disappearances and in determining how they should act if a disappearance occurs³⁰.

The Government has also commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to strengthen awareness and knowledge within social services and municipal social welfare boards regarding human trafficking and human exploitation. The aim is to ensure that social services are better equipped to

²⁵ [Regleringsbrev 2026 Myndighet Statens institutionsstyrelse](#)

²⁶ [Uppdrag till Socialstyrelsen om barn och unga i samhällets vård som har utsatts för bland annat sexuellt våld](#)

²⁷ [Uppdrag till Statens beredning för medicinsk och social utvärdering att genomföra en kunskapssammanställning om uppsökande arbete](#)

²⁸ [Webbutbildningar | NSPM](#)

²⁹ [Uppdrag om att stärka arbetet med att motverka att ensamkommande barn försvinner](#)

³⁰ [Nationell vägledning – motverka att ensamkommande barn försvinner - Kunskapsguiden](#)

identify victims and to make use of the possibility to apply for reflection periods for presumed victims. The Board reported the results to the Government Offices by March 2026.³¹

e. access to education and health care for vulnerable children, including from minority groups, unaccompanied migrant children, and children of migrant workers;

All asylum seekers, including children, arriving in Sweden are offered a free health assessment. Migrant children residing in Sweden have the same entitlement to general healthcare as children born in Sweden. Children residing in Sweden without the support of an official decision or statutory provision are also entitled to healthcare services to the same extent as those provided to persons resident within the region, provided that their stay in Sweden is not intended to be only temporary.

f. birth registration for all children born in the country;

Registration of children at birth in Sweden is governed by the Population Registration Act³², which stipulates that children born in Sweden shall be entered in the population register if certain residence-conditions are fulfilled.

3. What measures are taken in your country to address vulnerabilities related to the gender dimension of human trafficking?

By 9 April 2026, the Swedish Government has presented a new 10-year national strategy (2026-2035) for combating men's violence against women, domestic violence, exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking, and honour-based violence and oppression. In parallel, the Government decided on two assignments tasking several government agencies with participating in a national collaboration structure and monitoring progress in relation to the gender equality sub-goals. The aim of the strategy is to contribute to effective, sustainable and coordinated measures to combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking, and honour-based violence and oppression³³.

Within the ten-year national strategy, national action plans are to be adopted for shorter time spans to implement the strategy through concrete actions and measures. Together, the strategy and the national action plans aim to enhance continuity, oversight, coordination, and long-term planning, while also ensuring continuous evaluation, learning and the ability to adapt to emerging needs and priorities.

In 2024, the Government presented an action programme to prevent and combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for the period 2024-2026. The programme contained more than 130 initiatives and measures to be implemented at national, regional and local levels. It also announced that efforts would be strengthened in four specially prioritised areas for development³⁴.

³¹ "Information and capacity-building support for municipal social welfare boards on human trafficking and human exploitation – final report (S2024/02156 (delvis))" National Board of Health and Welfare, March 2026.

³² [Folkbokföringslag 1991:481](#)

³³ [New National Strategy for a society free from violence, oppression and exploitation](#)

³⁴ [Action programme against men's violence against women, domestic violence and honour-based violence and oppression](#)

As announced in the above-mentioned action programme, the Government is currently developing a new national Action Plan specifically against prostitution and trafficking in human beings (see further information under question 41).

The National Coordination against Prostitution and Trafficking in human beings (NSPM)³⁵ has been located within the Swedish Gender Equality Agency since its establishment in 2018. The Agency's work is guided by the gender equality subgoals of the strategy referenced above, and all materials and training it produces are informed by gender equality principles.

The criminal provision prohibiting the purchase of sexual acts is itself a response to vulnerabilities linked to gender dynamics, as it is founded on the principle that prostitution and sexual exploitation constitute forms of men's violence against women³⁶. As of 2026, the Work Environment Agency has been given a government assignment to map the needs of victims of labour exploitation and propose relevant measures³⁷. Since more men than women are affected by labour exploitation, this work is expected to improve the support available to them.

The Government has tasked the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the county administrative boards, and the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) (A2025/00637) with preparing regional and national support to enable municipalities and regions to offer: exit programmes for persons who have been subjected to prostitution, trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes, or abuse in the production or distribution of pornography; and programmes for children who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes or other forms of sexual exploitation, including being depicted in images or videos that are disseminated. In March 2026, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency published an interim report concerning the first part of the assignment. In this phase, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare, and the county administrative boards are to develop a comprehensive proposal on the support that national authorities and county administrative boards should provide to municipalities and regions to enable these programmes to be offered.³⁸ The final proposal, to be submitted no later than 26 February 2027, shall describe: the forms of cooperation that need to be established to enable coordinated support to be implemented; the actors that need to be reached by the support; the need for additional support for implementation; and the need for knowledge support³⁹.

4. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to trafficking of persons from disadvantaged minorities? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. research;

No such specific measures taken.

³⁵ [The Swedish Gender Equality Agency plays a major role in coordinating the national work against prostitution and trafficking in human beings.](#)

³⁶ [11.4 Purchase of sexual services](#)

³⁷ [Regleringsbrev 2026 Myndighet Arbetsmiljöverket - Statskontoret](#)

³⁸ [Rapport Att utveckla ett samordnat stöd vid sexuell exploatering](#)

³⁹ [Uppdrag att förbereda för stöd till utsatta för prostitution och närliggande målgrupper](#)

b. information, awareness-raising and education campaigns;

In 2025, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, together with the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Prosecution Authority, offered training on human trafficking and human exploitation to all government representatives in the regional cooperation groups within the inter-agency cooperation against work-related crime. The purpose of the training was to strengthen the authorities' ability to work effectively against human trafficking and human exploitation. The training was delivered on two occasions in November, one session in Gothenburg and one in Stockholm⁴⁰.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) has been tasked with developing and disseminating information initiatives and knowledge support aimed at preventing young people from being exploited for sexual or pornographic purposes, or being subjected to sexual violence, abuse or violations, both online and offline. The knowledge support and information initiatives target professionals and volunteers who work with young people, with a particular focus on reaching those at heightened risk of sexual exploitation, such as young LGBTIQ individuals, young people with disabilities, and children and young people in state care. The support may address both the risk of being subjected to abuse and the risk of perpetrating abuse against others⁴¹.

Also see answer to Q 16.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority is one of nine agencies participating in Sweden's joint inter-agency collaboration to combat work-related crime⁴². In its 2025 annual report on the government assignment to establish regional centres against work-related crime and on ongoing inter-agency cooperation, the Authority noted that enhanced and more proactive communication initiatives within the framework of joint efforts against labour market crime have increased public awareness of such crime⁴³. These initiatives have also helped vulnerable workers to become more aware of their rights, thereby strengthening their position in the Swedish labour market.

c. socio-economic initiatives targeting underlying and structural causes;

No specific initiatives targeting THB.

d. education, vocational training and job placement programmes.

The Swedish Public Employment Service is one of nine authorities involved in Sweden's inter-agency collaboration against work-related crime. To prevent irregularities and criminal activities, the Agency carries out checks before, during, and after decisions are made, for example when assessing an employer's eligibility for wage subsidies. Cooperation with other authorities also aims to prevent and combat organised crime, which may form part of work-related crime. In cases where there is suspicion of subsidy fraud or other forms of deception, the Agency reports the matter to the Police Authority⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ [Årsredovisning 2025](#)

⁴¹ [Ändringsbeslut 2024-06-20 Myndighet Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor](#)

⁴² [Arbetslivskriminalitet](#)

⁴³ [Årsrapport om arbetslivskriminalitet 2025](#)

⁴⁴ [Så här arbetar Arbetsförmedlingen mot arbetslivskriminalitet](#)

5. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to THB of persons with disabilities? Please provide information in the following areas:

On 23 September 2021, the Swedish Government adopted a strategy for systematic monitoring of disability policy of the period 2021-2031. The strategy stipulates that disability policy must be monitored by 29 designated government agencies, with the Agency for Participation responsible for supporting them in this work. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure continuous follow-up of disability policy based on the national goal.

Under the strategy, the designated government agencies are tasked with monitoring disability policy from 2021 to 2031 in relation to the national goal. Each government agency must submit the results of this monitoring in an annual report to the Government Offices. As a guideline for this monitoring, agencies are to report how the four areas for the implementation of disability policy have been considered in their work, where applicable. These four areas are: the principle of universal design, accessibility shortcomings, individual support and solutions for individual independence, and preventing and countering discrimination. Agencies must also report on measures taken to contribute to the national goal of promoting gender equality and to ensure that a children's rights perspective is taken into account⁴⁵.

a. deinstitutionalisation, including community and family-based services for children and support for independent living;

The Act Concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments⁴⁶ (the LSS) entered into force in 1994. The LSS is a rights-based law for persons with considerable and permanent functional impairments. It entitles individuals to the special support and services they may need in addition to what can be provided under other legislation. The Act contains ten specific measures, including residential arrangements with special services and personal assistance. Municipalities are responsible for the majority of the support and services provided to persons with disabilities, either under the Social Services Act⁴⁷ or under the LSS Act. Such support may include various forms of accommodation as well as assistance to support independent living. This includes personal assistance, placement in family homes or in homes with special services for children and young persons, residential arrangements with special services for adults, and other specially adapted housing.

Persons receiving support under the LSS Act may be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into criminal networks. For this reason, the Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with mapping the extent of such recruitment within LSS-related services, including the accommodation types listed above. The results show that individuals receiving LSS interventions are indeed recruited to carry out criminal acts, although it is not possible to determine how common this is. People with LSS interventions are suspected of crimes to a slightly higher extent than the general population but are convicted to a lesser extent. They are also exposed to crime to a greater extent than the rest of the population⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ [Disability Policy in Sweden – An overview](#)

⁴⁶ [Lag \(1993:387\) om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)

⁴⁷ [Socialtjänstlag \(2025:400\)](#)

⁴⁸ [Rekrytering av personer med LSS-insatser till kriminella nätverk, Socialstyrelsen 2026](#)

b. monitoring institutions and foster families accommodating persons with disabilities;

The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) is a government agency responsible for supervising health care, social services and activities under the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS). The Government has adopted the bill “Skarpare verktyg till Inspektionen för vård och omsorg”⁴⁹. The bill contains proposals aimed at strengthening IVO’s monitoring and improving compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

c. procedure for the selection and appointment of legal guardians and monitoring of their work;

If a person is unable to take care of themselves, a court may appoint an administrator (förvaltare) for them. A precondition for appointing an administrator is that the individual, due to for example illness, mental impairment or a similar condition, is unable to manage their personal affairs or property. However, an administrator may not be appointed if it would be sufficient to appoint a special representative (god man) or if the individual could receive adequate support in a less intrusive manner from a relative⁵⁰.

Before appointing an administrator, the court must obtain a medical certificate or an equivalent assessment of the individual’s health. The views of, amongst others, the closest relatives and the social welfare committee should also be obtained. The scope of the administration may be adjusted if circumstances change, and the arrangement should be brought to an end if an administrator is no longer needed. As noted, an alternative to appointing an administrator is to appoint a special representative. In such cases, the general rule is that the individual retains the right to make decisions about their own affairs. Both administrators and special representatives must be suitable for the assignment. If the individual proposes a particular person for either role, that person must be appointed if they are suitable and willing to undertake the assignment. Administrators and special representatives are subject to the supervision of the chief guardian (överförmyndaren).

d. access to adequate accommodation, education and work;

The Government has adopted the bill “Improved Support in Schools”⁵¹. The bill contains proposals aimed at identifying pupils’ support needs at an earlier stage, ensuring that support measures are provided promptly, and ensuring that special support is more consistently tailored to the individual pupil’s needs. Taken together, these proposals are intended to ensure that pupils who require support due to disabilities or other needs are identified earlier and receive appropriate support measures in a timely manner, thereby improving their ability to achieve the educational objectives.

e. access to information and reporting/complaints mechanisms which are accessible to persons with disabilities.

According to Ordinance 2001:526⁵², all government agencies must design and conduct their activities with regard to the national disability policy objectives. The agencies must work to ensure that persons with disabilities are afforded full participation in society and equality in living conditions. In particular,

⁴⁹ [Skarpare verktyg till Inspektionen för vård och omsorg](#)

⁵⁰ [Föräldrabalk \(1949:381\)](#)

⁵¹ [Proposition \(2025/26:195\) Förbättrat stöd i skolan](#)

⁵² [Förordning \(2001:526\) om de statliga myndigheternas ansvar för genomförande av funktionshinderspolitiken](#)

authorities must ensure that their premises, activities and information are accessible to persons with disabilities. In this work, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities serves as an important guiding framework. See also Ordinance (2014:135)⁵³.

6. How do you ensure in practice that an assessment of the vulnerability and special needs of asylum seekers is carried out at an early stage? What procedures are followed when vulnerability to THB is detected? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. provision of comprehensive and accessible information, in a range of relevant languages, on the rights of asylum seekers, indicators of THB, rights of victims of THB, and contacts of relevant organisations;

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) has developed procedures for identifying potential victims of trafficking in human beings within the asylum process. These include guidelines adapted to the initial stages of the process to ensure early identification, as well as guidelines for assessing asylum applications in cases where trafficking is suspected.

All asylum seekers receive an information folder upon arrival containing details about the protection process, the Dublin Regulation, return procedures, accommodation, financial assistance, health care, and medical fees. There are also specific folders tailored for children in families and also for unaccompanied children, as well as targeted information for children who have been subjected to child marriage. The information is available in the 15 most common languages used among the applicants within the Swedish asylum process, and the information can also be provided orally by a caseworker during the initial interview. The information provided is not specifically targeted at victims of trafficking but applies to all asylum seekers. However, it includes information on the rights of particularly vulnerable persons, for example with regard to accommodation. Since the differences between the rights afforded to asylum seekers in general and those who are victims of trafficking is relatively limited, it has been assessed that there is no need for separate written materials specifically for potential victims of trafficking.

Upon identification of a potential victim, verbal information is provided about the regional coordinators under the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. Where the individual consents, the SMA facilitates contact between the person and a regional coordinator. In some cases, written information about the coordinators is also provided. This information is available via a link on the SMA's internal website, and caseworkers may print and share it where appropriate. The SMA also informs individuals that the Agency may report suspected trafficking offences to the Police Authority. In addition to the general information provided, the SMA may conduct "social investigations" with individuals identified as potential victims. During these interviews, more detailed information is provided regarding available health-care providers and other forms of support.

b. access to legal assistance and representation;

The right to public counsel for asylum seekers is regulated in Chapter 18, Section 1 of the Aliens Act⁵⁴. A public counsel is appointed by the state to provide legal assistance and to safeguard the individual's rights. This means that the counsel offers support, legal advice, and acts as the individual's

⁵³ [Förordning \(2001:526\) om de statliga myndigheternas ansvar för genomförande av funktionshinderspolitiken](#)

⁵⁴ [Utlänningslag \(2005:716\)](#)

representative. As public counsel may be an appointed attorney, an associate at a law firm, or another person who holds a law degree. Only a person who, on the basis of their knowledge and experience, as well as in other respects, is particularly suitable for the assignment may be appointed. If the individual has proposed an eligible person, that person shall be appointed unless there are special reasons against it (see Section 5 of the Public Counsel Act [1996:1620] ⁵⁵). If public counsel is appointed, the state bears the costs for the counsel as well as for any investigation that is reasonably necessary to protect the client's rights, provided that the investigation cannot be obtained through the court or authority handling the case or matter (Section 4).

As mentioned in the report to the Council of Europe in December 2025, a large share of the funds allocated to the National Support Programme (NSP) 2024, by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, was directed to the Safe Havens Trafficking Center, run by the Swedish Salvation Army.⁵⁶ The centre provides free legal assistance and social support to presumed victims of trafficking or exploitation. Since 2020, there has been an increase in individuals seeking legal support for labour exploitation. Free legal assistance to presumed victims of trafficking is currently offered only by NGOs and trade unions.

c. access to decent accommodation, health (including psychological) care, work and education.

With regard to healthcare, education, and social services, individuals holding residence permits in Sweden have access to services that are largely equivalent to those available to Swedish citizens.

Also see answer to Q 7c.

7. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to THB of migrant workers (including seasonal workers, seconded/posted workers, domestic workers, diplomatic household employees)? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. provision of comprehensive and accessible information, in a range of relevant languages, on migration and labour laws, worker protection and contacts of relevant organisations;

The Swedish Work Environment Authority is the contact authority for posting to Sweden. The Agency provides guidance on the laws that apply in Sweden to posted workers, information about collective agreements and also contact information to employer and employee representatives⁵⁷.

On its website, the Authority publish information brochures in English, such as Information about posting of employees⁵⁸ and also Information for foreign berry pickers⁵⁹. The Authority also provides information on the Swedish Domestic Work Act (1970:943)⁶⁰.

The Swedish Migration Agency is actively working to ensure that residence permits are not granted to employers who break the rules. However, this type of employment still occurs, and the Agency is

⁵⁵ [Lag \(1996:1620\) om offentligt biträde](#)

⁵⁶ [Safe Havens traffickingcenter i Stockholm, Göteborg, Umeå och Helsingborg | Frälsningsarmén](#)

⁵⁷ [Posting - Arbetsmiljöverket](#)

⁵⁸ [Information about posting of employees \(ADI 712 Eng\), brochure - Arbetsmiljöverket](#)

⁵⁹ [Information for foreign berry pickers \(ADI 653 Eng\), brochure - Arbetsmiljöverket](#)

⁶⁰ [The Domestic Work Act - Arbetsmiljöverket](#)

currently working on producing information material for its external website. At present, information is available on the external website with specific information on how applicants can avoid falling victim to various types of fraudulent employment.⁶¹ Forthcoming information will focus on how individuals can obtain support and assistance.

Some embassies also have preventive information on fraudulent employment published on their website, as is the case of the Swedish Embassy in Thailand⁶².

b. provision of clear employment contracts;

According to Chapter 6, Section 2 of the Aliens Act, an alien must have an employment contract with an employer in Sweden in order to be granted a work permit. The same requirement applies when applying for an EU Blue Card or a permit for seasonal work. When handling an application on any of these grounds, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) verifies that an employment contract, signed by both the employer and the employee, has been submitted.

Swedish law does not explicitly regulate which terms of employment must be included in an employment contract. However, according to Section 6c of the Employment Protection Act (1982:80), an employer must provide written information to an employee about all conditions that are of material importance to the employment relationship. However, an employment contract does not need to contain all the information set out in the above-mentioned provision in order to fulfil the requirements for a work permit. The SMA assesses whether the employment conditions meet the requirements of the Aliens Act. The information needed to make this assessment is generally found in the employment contract but may also be provided through other supporting documents.

It is worth noting that the SMA does not verify whether the employer has provided the employee with the information mentioned above, nor is there any explicit legal requirement that the employment contract must be written in a language that the employee understands. However, according to the SMA's internal guidelines, an employment contract written in a language that the employee does not understand may be an indication that further investigation is required. In individual cases, the SMA may also conduct further investigations to determine whether the applicant has received correct information regarding their employment. If an applicant is found to have limited knowledge of the terms of their employment, this should be seen as a sign that the applicant may be at risk of exploitation.

c. access to decent work and housing, health care, social services and education;

With regard to healthcare, education, and social services, individuals holding residence permits in Sweden have access to services that are largely equivalent to those available to Swedish citizens.

For persons holding a residence permit and a work permit who are staying here for less than one year, access is limited to restricted healthcare and dental care. A requirement for health insurance for these individuals will therefore be introduced in Chapter 6, Section 2 of the Aliens Act as of 1 June this year⁶³.

⁶¹ [Avoid being scammed by fake job offers – Swedish Migration Agency](#)

⁶² [Beware of Misleading Advertisements on TikTok - Sweden Abroad](#)

⁶³ [Proposition \(2025/26:87\) Nya regler för arbetskraftsinvandring](#)

The standard assessment of work permit applications does not include any specific evaluation of the employee's accommodation. However, for seasonal workers, the living environment is assessed as part of the employer's capacity to organise the work. Poor living conditions are regularly identified as an indicator of human trafficking or labour exploitation in efforts to combat labour market crime, and the Swedish Migration Agency takes this factor into account when assessing the employer's reliability.

d. possibility to change employers;

According to Chapter 6, Section 2a of the Aliens Act⁶⁴, a work permit shall be linked to a specific employer and a specific type of work. However, after two years, the permit is limited only in respect of the type of work. During the first two years, a migrant worker who holds a work permit must apply for a new permit if he or she wishes to change employers. If the permit is limited only in terms of the type of work the holder may perform, he or she is free to change employers without applying for a new permit (provided that the employee does not change occupation).

It is worth noting that, following the future incorporation of the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) into Swedish law, it will be possible for employees to change employers by notifying the SMA. Work permits will no longer be limited to a specific employer or occupation in the same way as they are today.

e. access to confidential complaints mechanisms;

In 2025, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) launched an online form through which individuals can submit information, including anonymously. Information submitted in this way is forwarded to the responsible unit. For example, if the SMA receives a tip regarding a specific employer, it is forwarded to all units or case officers responsible for handling applications connected to that employer. If there are no pending applications linked to the employer, the information is instead passed on to one of the regional control units. These units then process the information and determine whether any further action is required. One such action may be to inform the police if the SMA suspects human trafficking or exploitation.

f. right to join trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining;

The right to join a trade union is protected by the right to freedom of association (Chapter 2, Section 1 of the Instrument of Government)⁶⁵. Chapter 2, section 25 stipulates that the freedom of association of foreign nationals may be restricted through law. As of today, there are no such restrictions in effect with regards to participation in labour unions.

g. legal avenues for regularising their stay in the country.

The general rule when applying for a residence permit is that the application must be submitted and approved before the applicant enters Sweden. An individual residing in Sweden without a permit will, in most cases, have to leave the country before a permit can be granted and their stay thereby regularised. While there is no specific exception to this rule for victims of human trafficking, a number of exceptions may, in certain cases, be applicable. For example, individuals whose stay has been

⁶⁴ [Utlänningslag \(2005:716\)](#)

⁶⁵ [Kungörelse \(1974:152\) om beslutad ny regeringsform](#)

regulated under the provisions governing the reflection period are entitled to apply for a work permit from within the country.

8. Do labour inspectorates and other authorities checking workplace conditions possess a comprehensive mandate, and adequate human, financial and technical resources, to conduct regular, proactive workplace inspections in all economic sectors, with a particular emphasis on high-risk sectors prone to exploitation? How do labour inspectors co-operate with other authorities and trade unions? Is there a separation between labour inspection and immigration control functions?

The Swedish Work Environment Agency only inspects work environment. Therefore, within the framework of the Swedish joint inter-agency collaboration to combat work-related crime, the labour inspectors collaborate with other agencies in working with high-risk sectors. The role of the Swedish Work Environment Agency is explained in the introduction of this document.

There are currently no legal grounds for the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) to carry out or participate in on sight inspections. However, the SMA participates indirectly through the joint work of the authorities against work-related crime. In this capacity the SMA can offer support before, during and after inspections regarding migrations issues. In order to check the terms of employment, the SMA may order the employer to provide written information about the terms and conditions that apply to the permit holder's employment. This is stated in Chapter 9, Section 17 of the Aliens Act. The employer must provide the information in writing to the Swedish Migration Agency. This is stated in Chapter 6, Section 6 b of the Aliens Ordinance. If the employer does not respond to the request, the Swedish Migration Agency may order the employer again, this time combining the order with a fine.

9. How are employment and recruitment agencies regulated and monitored? Are all stages of the recruitment process, including advertisements, selection, transport, and placement, subject to regulation? Are recruitment fees and related costs prohibited from being borne by workers or jobseekers?

Sweden regulates private employment agencies primarily through The Act (1993:440) on Private Employment Placement Services⁶⁶. The law does not explicitly regulate each step of the recruitment process, but recruitment fees are strictly prohibited. Recruitment fees are prohibited from being charged to workers or jobseekers. Violations can result in fines or up to six months imprisonment.

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) does not have the mandate to monitor the employment and recruitment agencies but remains vigilant in situations where the applicant has paid large sums of money to an agency in connection with their application for a work permit. Such payments may indicate that the applicant is subject to some form of exploitation. During oral investigations, caseworkers usually ask questions about how much has been paid during the application process.

⁶⁶ [Lag \(1993:440\) om privat arbetsförmedling](#)

10. How do you prevent and sanction abuses of legal constructions such as self-employment, letter-box companies, sub-contracting, and posting of workers, which may be used to commit THB?

The authorities involved in inter-agency cooperation against work-related crime have continued to develop working methods at the regional centres and to strengthen national and regional approaches to better address complex crime, including trafficking in human beings. The number of joint inspections increased in 2025⁶⁷.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority acts as the liaison office for the posting of workers, supervises compliance with notification obligations, and maintains the Posting Register. Employers must notify postings, and non-compliance may result in administrative fines. The Posting Register provides information that can support other authorities in areas such as investigations, residence and work permits, population registration, and social security. In February 2026, the Authority was assigned by the Government with assessing the current situation and proposing measures to improve the quality and accessibility of the Posting Register, with the aim of preventing violations and reducing workers' vulnerability⁶⁸.

11. How do your country's migration legislation and policies seek to prevent THB by enabling lawful migration and legal employment opportunities accompanied by decent work conditions?

In June 2026, new provisions will enter into force to address abuses of labour migration regulations and the exploitation of labour migrants. Among other measures, two new offences will be introduced: exploitation of foreign labour and trading in work permits. A clarifying provision will also be introduced, allowing work permits to be refused where an employer has been subject to certain sanctions or is suspected of, or has been convicted of, specific offences, including trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, the penalty for employers who employ an alien who is not authorised to stay or work in Sweden will be doubled. It may also be noted that the Government submitted a bill in April proposing stricter penalties for employers who employ an alien without the right to stay or work in Sweden. A vote on the bill in Parliament is scheduled for June 2026.

12. How do your country's law and policies to discourage demand that leads to THB address particular vulnerabilities and groups at risk of THB?

The criminalisation of the purchase of sexual acts⁶⁹ is a central measure for reducing the demand and preventing trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes. The key purpose of the provisions in the Swedish Criminal Code concerning the purchase of a sexual act (Chapter 6, Section 11), exploitation of a child through the purchase of a sexual act (Chapter 6, Section 9) and procuring (Chapter 6, Section 12) is to protect women and children from sexual exploitation. In July 2025, several amendments to the Criminal Code entered into force with the aim of further strengthening criminal protection against sexual violations. The provision on the purchase of a sexual act was expanded to cover sexual acts carried out without physical contact, including those performed online. This broader scope applies, for example, to situations in which a person pays someone to perform sexual acts on demand via

⁶⁷ [Årsrapport om arbetslivskriminalitet 2025](#)

⁶⁸ [Uppdrag till Arbetsmiljöverket om förbättring av utstationeringsregistrets kvalitet och tillgänglighet - Regeringen.se](#)

⁶⁹ [Lag om ändring i brottsbalken \(2025:586\)](#)

webcam or other digital formats. Corresponding amendments were made to the provision on procuring.

In February 2025, the Government appointed an inquiry to analyse how the Amended EU Anti-Trafficking Directive should be transposed into Swedish law. The inquiry presented its proposals in December 2025, including a proposal to introduce a specific criminal offense for the knowing use of services provided by a victim of human trafficking or human exploitation. The inquiry's proposals are currently being processed within the Swedish Government Offices.

In a 2024 report, "Decoding the Most Threatening Criminal Networks"⁷⁰, Europol noted that networks primarily dedicated to trafficking in human beings do not target the Nordic countries to the same extent as other European countries with more open markets. Compared with neighbouring countries that have not criminalised the purchase of sexual services, there is also a notable difference in the size of the market, as reflected in the number of advertisements.

Some municipalities offer support through specialised social services units, known as KAST⁷¹. These units provide counselling and support to individuals who purchase sexual services, with the aim of helping them cease their behaviour. Counselling is available via telephone, email, and in-person visits. Services are free of charge, and individuals may remain anonymous.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency is tasked with, when relevant, to contribute with knowledge on human trafficking, including how young people are recruited, involved and exploited for criminal activities, based on its mandate as a national coordination and the knowledge on prostitution and human trafficking. This is to be carried out in cooperation with actors within the so-called BoB-structure (Ju2023/02529⁷² and Ju2025/00846⁷³) and with other relevant stakeholders. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency shall also contribute with knowledge, based on its nationally coordinating and knowledge-developing assignments to prevent men's violence against women, domestic violence and so-called honour-related violence and oppression, for example regarding links between exposure to violence in childhood and subsequent involvement in criminality⁷⁴.

Also see answer to Q 11 and Q 16.

13. How do your country's legislation and practice ensure that there is an individual assessment of protection needs at the borders prior to any refusals of entry or expulsions?

The Swedish Police Authority is responsible for maintaining the national border and exercising control over aliens entering the country. Before carrying out expulsions, the Police must assess vulnerabilities and consider any exposure to human trafficking or other crimes, in accordance with Section 2 of the Police Act (PL § 2)⁷⁵ and Article 10:2 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

⁷⁰ [Europol report on Decoding the EU-s most threatening criminal networks.pdf](#)

⁷¹ [KAST-mottagning](#)

⁷² [Uppdrag att inrätta en samverkansstruktur för ett sammanhållet arbete med barn och unga som riskerar att begå eller begår grova brott](#)

⁷³ [Uppdrag att fortsätta utveckla stödet till arbetet med barn och unga som riskerar att begå eller begår grova brott med koppling till organiserad brottslighet](#)

⁷⁴ [2026 Jämställdhetsmyndigheten](#)

⁷⁵ [Polislag \(1984:387\)](#)

14. What measures are taken to prevent THB in sports? What sectors and categories/groups of people have been identified as being at risk?

Combating and preventing organised crime is a top priority for the Swedish Government. These efforts also encompass the presence and influence of organised criminality within the sports sector, including serious offences such as trafficking in human beings and human exploitation. In this context, the Swedish Police Authority has been tasked by the Government with submitting a comprehensive situational analysis of the impact of organised crime on the sports sector, as well as a detailed account of the measures undertaken to prevent and combat such influence⁷⁶.

The report shall, inter alia, include information on efforts to address criminal activities within sports agent operations and the misuse of non-profit sports associations by organised criminal networks for illicit purposes. It shall also describe relevant cooperation with stakeholders within the sports sector aimed at combating these forms of criminality.

15. Have you identified online practices that may increase the risk of becoming a victim of THB for different forms of exploitation? What mechanisms have been developed to prevent the misuse of information and communication technology for THB purposes? What is the practical effect of their implementation?

The Swedish Police Authority has observed that gaming platforms and applications such as Telegram, WeChat, Signal, Snapchat, TikTok, Session, Wire, OnlyFans, and Bodycontact are being used for recruitment into forced criminality and sexual exploitation. Since 1 July 2025, the purchase of a sexual act carried out without physical contact, such as those performed online, has been criminalised (also see Q 12). The Swedish Police Authority is currently developing screening tools to facilitate the identification of exploitation and indicators of trafficking on such platforms and services.

The Swedish Crime Victim Authority has been assigned by the Government to conduct a feasibility study on how an operation can be organized to help adults remove offensive material, especially sexual material, from digital platforms. The assignment focuses on developing more effective methods of removal of such material⁷⁷.

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) has published a number of studies highlighting children as a particularly vulnerable group in relation to recruitment into criminal networks and involvement in criminal activities. The report "Girls and Women in Criminal Networks"⁷⁸ shows that girls are rarely involved on the same terms as boys. While boys often begin their involvement as low-level operatives in the lower tiers of criminal networks, girls are more commonly drawn in laterally through close relationships with older partners active in such networks. The girls included in the study are also frequently victims of crime. The report indicates that they operate in environments characterised by multiple risks, including violence, economic exploitation, and expectations of sexual availability.

⁷⁶ [Regleringsbrev 2026 Myndighet Polismyndigheten - Statskontoret](#)

⁷⁷ [Ändringsbeslut 2025-11-27 Myndighet Brottsoffermyndigheten - Statskontoret](#)

⁷⁸ [Girls and women in criminal networks | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

Another report from Brå, “Children and Youth in Criminal Networks”⁷⁹, examines the involvement of children and young people in criminal networks. The study shows that children aged 12–15 are often recruited into criminal networks by slightly older youths, typically aged 15–20. Recruitment can occur rapidly, sometimes in less than a day. For criminal networks, recruitment serves as a means of expanding local drug distribution. According to the study, it is difficult for a child to leave a criminal network. However, opportunities to exit may arise when the recruiter leaves the country or is imprisoned, thereby losing the ability to monitor and control the child in the same way.

A third report from Brå, “Children under 15 who commit serious offences”⁸⁰, shows that the number of registered offences linked to suspects under the age of 15 has doubled over the past decade. The increase is mainly explained by a doubling of the number of cases involving assault, theft, unlawful threats or (non-sexual) molestation. The study further shows that the children subject to investigation are themselves at high risk of having been victims of crime.

In October 2026, Brå will also publish a study examining how criminal networks recruit children and young people on social media and in other digital environments⁸¹. Brå has additionally established the pilot programme “Promising Practices”, which during 2026 will conduct a pilot project focusing specifically on the recruitment of children into criminal networks⁸².

Brå has also produced support materials for practitioners, outlining measures to prevent children and young people from committing crimes and to counter the recruitment of minors to criminal networks,⁸³ as well as guidance for local inter-agency crime prevention cooperation⁸⁴.

In February 2026, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency published the report “Det gränslösa våldet”⁸⁵. The report compiles the current state of knowledge and measures undertaken across the public sector, civil society, and the private sector concerning the digital dimensions of violence. It addresses men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and human trafficking. It also covers the online sexual solicitation of children and the digital dimensions of criminal activities for pornographic purposes. The Agency notes that children and young people are recruited and groomed for sexual exploitation and criminal activities via social media. So-called “sugar dating” may pose a particular risk of sexual exploitation. These platforms, introduced in Sweden in the 2010s, present themselves as a form of dating based on a mutual exchange of companionship and intimacy for money or gifts. However, professionals report that such arrangements often involve “glamorised sex purchases”, with minors frequently forming part of the target group. Children and young people are also subjected to sexual abuse that is recorded and disseminated.

According to the report “Unga, sex och Internet”⁸⁶, one in ten respondents who had experienced sexual abuse stated that the abuse was filmed or photographed. Of these, 26 per cent reported that

⁷⁹ [Children and youth in criminal networks | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸⁰ [Children under 15 who commit serious offences | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸¹ [Nytt uppdrag om kriminellas rekrytering av barn och unga online | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸² [Åtgärder mot rekrytering av barn till kriminella nätverk | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸³ [Rekrytering av barn och unga till kriminella nätverk | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸⁴ [Sociala insatsgrupper \(SIG\) och SSPF | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

⁸⁵ [Rapport Det gränslösa våldet](#)

⁸⁶ [Nationell studie om sexuella övergrepp - Unga, sex och internet efter #metoo - Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset](#)

the material was subsequently disseminated online. The online exploitation of children also includes live-streamed sexual abuse, often involving perpetrators in Western countries paying adults in economically vulnerable regions to carry out abuse against children in their proximity.

16. What measures are taken to raise awareness of the risks of technology-facilitated THB, including among children, parents, teachers, child care professionals and social workers? What technology-based initiatives exist in your country to disseminate information to groups/communities at risk of THB?

In the 2026 budget bill, the Government announced its intention to develop a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children. The strategy will cover all forms of violence against children, including technology-facilitated THB and other forms of grooming for sexual or other exploitative purposes.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish National Agency for Education have been tasked with updating support materials for teaching on sexuality, consent and relationships. The assignment includes strengthening knowledge on online sexual vulnerability, digital violence and sexual exploitation in digital environments, and the assignment shall be reported no later than 1 March 2027⁸⁷.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) has been tasked with developing and disseminating information initiatives and knowledge support aimed at preventing young people from being exploited for sexual or pornographic purposes, or being subjected to sexual violence, abuse or violations, both online and offline. The knowledge support and information initiatives target professionals and volunteers who work with young people, with a particular focus on reaching those with an increased risk of sexual exploitation, such as young LGBTIQ individuals, young people with disabilities, and children and young people in institutional state care. The support may address both vulnerabilities to abuse and the risk of perpetrating abuse against others. In the fall of 2025, MUCF launched a web-based training package and a series of films with reflection questions designed to support conversations with young people about sexual vulnerability. Two of the films specifically address technology-facilitated violence and were co-produced by MUCF, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women (NCK), and the Agency for Participation. The material forms part of the educational package "Right to Know"⁸⁸.

17. How do you cooperate with ICT companies and Internet service providers, including content hosts and social media, in preventing THB?

The Swedish Minister for Gender Equality, together with other ministers, has on several occasions invited representatives of the gaming industry and social media platforms to roundtable discussions, along with children's rights organisations, to discuss measures to prevent the sexual exploitation of children⁸⁹.

⁸⁷ [Uppdrag till Folkhälsomyndigheten och Statens skolverk att uppdatera stödmaterial för undervisning inom kunskapsområdet sexualitet, samtycke och relationer](#)

⁸⁸ [Rätt att veta! | MUCF](#)

⁸⁹ [Möte med sociala medieplattformar om åtgärder för att stoppa grooming och sexuell exploatering av barn - Regeringen.se](#)

The Swedish Police Authority has worked systematically to strengthen its collaboration with major technology companies. Bilateral meetings have been held to improve mutual understanding of each party's operations and to highlight various areas of criminal activity. This cooperation has contributed to enabling major social media platforms to better understand these challenges and, consequently, to improve the moderation of their platforms.

In February 2026, the Government instructed the Swedish Police Authority to prioritize and intensify its efforts to combat sexual offences in digital environments (for more information, see answer to question 2).

18. How are policies and practices aimed at preventing THB informed by the experiences of victims and at-risk individuals?

The inquiry on an Exit Programme for Victims of Prostitution (SOU 2023:97) and the inquiry on protection, support and care for victims of abuse in the production or distribution of pornography (SOU 2023:98) both reported in 2023⁹⁰. Their proposals form the basis for a current government assignment to several agencies to prepare regional and national support, enabling municipalities and regions to offer exit programmes and programmes for children exposed to sexual exploitation. Both inquiries consulted survivors of sexual exploitation and organisations representing them before presenting their proposals. In March 2026, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency submitted an interim report on its assignment to prepare support for individuals exposed to prostitution and related target groups. The interim report included an estimate of the temporary increase in costs for municipalities and regions associated with introducing of exit programmes for persons subjected to prostitution, trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes, or abuse in the production or distribution of pornography, as well as programmes for children who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes or other forms of sexual exploitation.

**I. IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS AND PROTECTION OF THEIR RIGHTS
(Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16)**

19. Among the victims of THB identified, were any subjected to exploitation on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBTI+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex), especially teenagers and young adults? If yes, did any of them report on police misconduct?

In its annual report, the National Rapporteur against THB described that during 2024 the Swedish Police Authority reported three cases involving exploitation within this group. No instances of police misconduct were reported in connection with these cases.

20. What specific measures are taken to ensure that trafficked persons who are migrant workers, including in an irregular situation, are identified as victims of THB and have access to the rights provided for in the Convention? Is there cooperation with specialised

[Regeringen i viktigt samtal om våld i ungas relationer, sexuellt våld och digitala dimensioner av våld - Regeringen.se](#)

⁹⁰ [Ut ur utsatthet - Regeringen.se](#)

[Sexuellt utnyttjande i pornografiska syften - Regeringen.se](#)

NGOs, trade unions, and employers to enhance the identification and protection of potential victims within these at-risk groups?

Sweden does not have a separate administrative procedure for the formal identification of victims outside the legal process. Therefore, the identification of victims of trafficking is not formally assigned to any specific authority; instead, all relevant actors with appropriate expertise may identify presumed victims of trafficking.

In recent years, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) has strengthened its work to address fraud and criminality within migration processes. A dedicated control structure has been established to improve the detection of fraudulent applications, including cases potentially linked to trafficking in human beings (THB). The Agency's anti-trafficking network is integrated into this structure and supports the identification of potential victims. The system includes structured handling of intelligence, with case-specific registrations used in situations involving suspected non-compliant employers. This facilitates risk assessment across cases and supports early identification of exploitation. The SMA has also initiated data-driven analyses to detect fraud. A first analysis in March 2026 identified indications of forged bank statements in student residence permit applications, particularly from Bangladesh. While not specifically targeting THB, this analysis highlights vulnerabilities related to insufficient means of subsistence. Swedish authorities regularly identify individuals from Bangladesh who are working illegally or otherwise exploited after arrival. Analytical tools are therefore important for identifying potential THB cases. Where exploitation is suspected, individuals are informed about available support, including regional coordinators, and may access assisted voluntary return through IOM.

21. What measures are in place to encourage victims of THB to report their situation to the authorities and/or civil society organisations?

The overall aim of the Swedish Crime Victim Authority is to safeguard the rights of all victims of crime and to raise public awareness of their needs and interests. The Government has tasked the Authority with analysing what measures may be necessary to ensure that victims of human trafficking and human exploitation receive adequate support in seeking compensation for damages, thereby enabling them in practice to exercise this right. The assignment also includes developing and proposing measures, both within the Authority's own operations and in relation to the responsibilities of other actors⁹¹.

See also the introduction to this document for more information on the role of public authorities and civil society, as well as the various forms of support and protection available to presumed victims of THB.

Also see answer to Q 7e.

22. What specific measures are taken in your country to detect/identify and refer to assistance possible victims of THB at the borders? What measures are taken in your country to identify victims of THB during the examination of asylum applications and prior to the return of persons whose applications are rejected?

The Swedish Police Authority use indicators based on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) developed by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (GEA) to identify trafficking. In accordance with

⁹¹ [Regleringsbrev 2026 Myndighet Brottsoffermyndigheten - Statskontoret](#)

the manual (NRM), contact is subsequently established with the regional coordinator to assess the need to initiate the support process. In addition, the Swedish Police Authority provides training at regional and local levels to raise awareness and ensure the appropriate handling of such cases.

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) have written procedures and guidelines to be applied throughout the process, with a particular focus on assessing asylum applications in cases where THB is suspected or indicated. In the event of return, victims are offered the opportunity to participate in IOM's return programme for victims of trafficking.

23. What measures are taken in your country to identify victims of THB in immigration detention centres and prisons?

When a person is placed in detention, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) screens the case for indicators of human trafficking and exploitation. The screening is based on the Agency's expertise on trafficking in human beings (THB) and uses nine indicators. Among other things, staff look for signs such as luggage that may indicate involvement in prostitution or illegal work, and they remain attentive to signs of physical or mental ill health during the detention period. If the screening indicates possible trafficking, a specific interview is conducted with the detainee. The interview is based on a structured template and accompanying guidelines, with the aim of identifying potential victims of trafficking. Where there is suspicion, the Agency's general guidelines are followed, including contacting regional coordinators and the Swedish Police Authority. The identification procedure within detention centres applies to all cases, regardless of which authority is responsible for the underlying immigration matter. As the majority of detention cases are handled by the Swedish Police Authority, the SMA may identify suspected trafficking cases even when it is not responsible for the immigration case, since all detainees are held in the same facilities irrespective of the responsible authority.

If the Swedish Prison and Probation Service becomes aware that a person in custody or prison is a victim of human trafficking, it will notify the police.

24. What services are available in your country to provide specific assistance to particularly vulnerable victims, such as:

- a. persons with disabilities;**
- b. LGBTIQ persons;**
- c. victims with children;**
- d. victims with severe mental and physical trauma;**
- e. homeless persons;**
- f. other.**

In Sweden, social services provide a range of targeted support services for particularly vulnerable individuals including persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ persons, victims with children, individuals with severe mental or physical trauma, and homeless persons. The overall purpose is to support and protect individuals in vulnerable situations and to promote equality and good living conditions across society.

25. How do you support the (re)integration of victims of THB? What processes are in place in your country to provide assistance to victims of THB exploited abroad after their return?

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency continues to allocate funding to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (ÅMP), implemented in cooperation with IOM Finland. Where the matter concerns Swedish citizens who have been exploited abroad and subsequently reintegrate in Sweden, responsibility for support and assistance rests with the social services⁹².

26. If there is a provision in your country's law that provides for the possibility of issuing a residence permit owing to the victim's personal situation, how is this interpreted in practice? Please provide examples.

Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Aliens Act states: "If a residence permit cannot be awarded on other grounds, a permit may be granted to an alien if on an overall assessment of the alien's situation there are found to be such exceptionally distressing circumstances that he or she should be allowed to stay in Sweden. In making this assessment, particular attention shall be paid to the alien's state of health, his or her adaptation to Sweden and his or her situation in the country of origin. Children may be granted residence permits under this Section even if the circumstances that come to light do not have the same seriousness and weight that is required for a permit to be granted to adults."⁹³

The provision cannot be applied when the applicant is already subject to a legally binding deportation decision. There is no specific regulation applicable to victims of human trafficking; however, the provision on exceptionally distressing circumstances is intended for situations not covered by the main grounds for international protection. In some cases, this may include situations where the applicant has been subjected to trafficking.

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) has published a legal position paper on the interpretation of this provision. The paper states that the provision should be applied/interpreted restrictively. The preparatory works clarify that it is not possible to exhaustively list all the circumstances that may be considered when assessing what constitutes particularly compassionate circumstances. When assessing the foreign national's situation in their country of origin, factors such as social exclusion, trauma resulting from torture or similar difficult experiences, or trauma resulting from human trafficking, may be taken into account in an overall assessment as grounds for granting a residence permit on the basis of particularly compassionate circumstances.

27. What measures are in place to ensure that the identity, or details allowing the identification, of a child victim of trafficking are not made publicly known?

Confidentiality within the social services means that staff are bound by a duty of confidentiality and, as a general rule, may not disclose information about an individual's personal circumstances, either to the public or to other authorities.

Criminal investigations are subject to confidentiality rules during the preparatory stages leading up to court proceedings. The identities of the injured parties are also protected both during and after these proceedings.

The identity of the victim may be subject to confidentiality at the Public Prosecutor's Office and in court (Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, Chapter 35, Sections 1, 7 and 12). These

⁹² [Ett tryggt återvändande | NSPM](#)

⁹³ [Utlänningslag \(2005:716\)](#)

provisions also allow the court to decide that proceedings shall be held in camera, meaning that the public is not permitted to attend the hearing (Code of Judicial Procedure, Chapter 5, Section 1).

28. What measures are in place aimed at encouraging the media to protect the private life and identity of victims?

The Media Ombudsman (MO) is an independent self-regulatory body that handles complaints from individuals regarding the editorial content of newspapers, magazines, broadcast media, as well as their websites and social media platforms⁹⁴. Individuals who are personally affected and identified (e.g. by name, photograph or other identifiable information) in connection with offensive or otherwise harmful information about their personal affairs may file a complaint with the MO. If the Media Ombudsman finds that a publication warrants criticism, the case is referred to the Media Council for review and decision. Should the Media Council conclude that the publication has breached media ethical standards, the remedy for the complainant is that the media outlet must publish the Council's decision in the same channels as the original publication. The outlet is also required to pay an administrative fee. This system incentivises the media actors to protect the privacy and identity of victims.

29. Have there been cases of diplomatic households (of your country's diplomats abroad and of foreign diplomats in your country) employing domestic staff in conditions which could be forced labour or human trafficking? If yes, how was the issue of diplomatic immunity addressed? How were the victims identified, assisted and protected?

All persons enjoying diplomatic immunity in Sweden are, according to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, obliged to respect Swedish law. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Protocol Department) follows up on cases that criminal investigative authorities have closed due to immunity. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has routines in place with regards to domestic staff.

30. What specific steps are taken in your country to identify victims of THB amongst persons recruited and exploited by terrorist/armed groups?

The new organisation for strengthened control within the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) is responsible for the national coordination of efforts to combat human trafficking, workplace crime, organised crime and irregular payments, as well as coordination relating to war crimes and national security. These areas are therefore addressed in an integrated manner. The case management guidance on identifying victims of human trafficking specifically addresses forced recruitment into armed groups and states that such situations should be reported as suspected human trafficking. The national coordination body responsible for national security within the SMA works closely with the Prosecution Authority and the Police Authority, including by assisting them in identifying core crimes under international criminal law.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority participates in a network for investigations into genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It has, for the first time in Sweden, brought charges for crimes against humanity. The indictment also constitutes the first case in Sweden to examine the Islamic State's attack on the Yazidi minority. In February 2025, the Stockholm District Court found in its

⁹⁴ [The System of Media Ethics in Sweden | Medieombudsmannen](#)

judgment that the injured parties — nine women and children from the Yazidi religious group — had been taken captive during IS attacks on Yazidi villages. They were subsequently enslaved, imprisoned by IS, and transported between different holding sites in Iraq and Syria. The convicted woman subjected the victims to various forms of abuse, including keeping them imprisoned, continuing to hold them in slavery, and assisting in the transfer of the children to other IS members. The court convicted the defendant of genocide, crimes against humanity, and gross war crimes, sentencing her to 12 years imprisonment. The injured parties were also awarded damages. In November 2025, the Svea Court of Appeal upheld the district court's judgment.

In investigations into core international crimes, Swedish law enforcement seeks to fully reflect the nature and scope of offences committed in the context of armed conflict. In such investigations, victims are often recognised not only as victims of core international crimes but also of domestic offences, including rape, human trafficking and forced marriage—offences over which Sweden may, in certain circumstances, exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction. Children have, in a number of cases, been identified as victims of human trafficking, for example in relation to recruitment into armed groups or sexual exploitation within such groups. One example is the case referred to above. In these investigations, victims are appointed legal counsel, and cases are handled by specially trained investigators within the police war crimes unit.

31. Are there requirements in your country's legal framework for the detection and removal of THB-related Internet content, and what are the sanctions for non-compliance? Is there a code of conduct for providers? If a person is detected as a presumed victim of THB in the process, how is this person referred to assistance?

The Government has proposed a draft bill “New Opportunities to Combat Online Recruitment”, containing proposals that would enable a competent authority to issue orders requiring the removal or disabling of access to online content intended to recruit individuals to commit crimes. A removal order would be directed at the provider of the platform (hosting service) where the content is located. The content must be removed or disabled as soon as possible and, in any event, within one hour of receipt of the order. The purpose is to disrupt online recruitment into serious criminal activity, particularly targeting children and young people. The Government has assessed that a positive effect of the proposed legislation would be a reduced risk of children and young people being exposed to crime in the context of such recruitment, including human trafficking in the form of the exploitation of children in criminal activities. The new Act and the proposed legislative amendments are intended to enter into force on 15 July 2026⁹⁵.

The Swedish Government has instructed the Swedish Police Authority to intensify its efforts to combat sexual offences in digital environments. The assignment specifically requires the Police Authority to strengthen its cooperation with internet service providers in order to block access to child sexual abuse material and other content that promotes, facilitates, or otherwise forms part of criminal sexual activities in digital settings. The assignment is to be reported in June 2027⁹⁶.

II. INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, SANCTIONS AND MEASURES (Articles 4, 18, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 30)

⁹⁵ [Nya möjligheter att bekämpa onlinerekrytering - Regeringen.se](#)

⁹⁶ [Uppdrag till Polismyndigheten att prioritera och intensifiera arbetet mot sexualbrott i digitala miljöer](#)

32. Is the abuse of a position of vulnerability part of the human trafficking offence in your country's law? How are the concepts of "vulnerability" and "abuse of a position of vulnerability" defined in law? Have they been subject to judicial interpretation? If yes, please provide relevant case-law.

Exploitation of another person's vulnerable situation that severely restricts that person's alternatives is part of the provisions of trafficking in human beings under Chapter 4, Section 1a of the Swedish Criminal Code⁹⁷. Exploitation of a person's vulnerable situation refers to circumstances in which the perpetrator takes advantage of the victim's position of dependence on him or her, for example as a result of financial debt, an employment relationship, or another relationship of subordination. Other examples include situations where the perpetrator exploits the victim's difficult financial circumstances, refugee status, helplessness, mental disability, illness or drug dependency. The expression "that severely restricts that person's alternatives" means that, when assessed as a whole, the circumstances must have been such that the victim had no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the trafficking act⁹⁸.

Examples of cases in which the courts have examined the concept of exploitation of a person's vulnerable situation include:

- Göta Court of Appeal, judgment of 9 March 2021, case no. B 4287-20: A man and a woman were convicted of trafficking in human beings. The victim, a Bulgarian woman, had travelled to Sweden and was subsequently exploited for begging. The perpetrators provided accommodation and transportation to the begging location and appropriated the money she collected. The woman was in poor physical condition, spoke only Bulgarian, had no ties to Swedish society, and had been deprived of her identity documents. She had no personal belongings and no access to a mobile phone. The Court found that she had been in a vulnerable situation that severely restricted her alternatives and that the perpetrators had exploited this situation.
- Göta Court of Appeal, judgment of 25 April 2019, case no. B 47-19: Several individuals were convicted of trafficking in human beings, including for recruiting and transporting a man and a woman from Bulgaria to Sweden for the purpose of begging. The Court found that the victims lived in poverty in Bulgaria, neither had employment, and the woman was a single mother of two children. Furthermore, the man was illiterate. These circumstances were decisive in their decision to agree to be recruited and transported to Sweden for begging, and the Court concluded that the perpetrators had exploited their vulnerable situation.

Also see answer to Q 40 c.

33. Is the special vulnerability of the victim considered as an aggravating factor for the offender's sentence?

The provision on trafficking in human beings does not specify any aggravating circumstances specific to the offence. However, Chapter 29, Section 2 of the Swedish Criminal Code sets out aggravating

⁹⁷ [Brottsbalk \(1962:700\)](#)

⁹⁸ [Regeringens proposition \(2017/18:123\) Det straffrättsliga skyddet mot människohandel och människoexploatering](#)

circumstances to be taken into account when determining the severity of the penalty, regardless of the offence. In particular, consideration should be given to whether the offender exploited another person's defenceless position or their difficulty in defending themselves, and whether the offender abused a position of authority or otherwise took advantage of a special relationship of trust.

34. According to national case-law, what forms of vulnerability are mostly abused by offenders in human trafficking cases? Please provide specific examples that show how the concept of “abuse of a position of vulnerability” is used in practice. What are the challenges in its application? Is it sufficient to prove the existence of a position of vulnerability of the victim, or must it also be proven that the defendant knew or should have known of the victim’s vulnerability, and intentionally manipulated the victim on this basis?

See the case summaries in Q 32 and Q 40 c for examples of how the concept is applied in practice.

The Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance (Rättslig vägledning 2025:1)⁹⁹ identifies a range of risk factors and indicators at a general level that operational prosecutors should consider when assessing potential trafficking cases. In Sweden, identified cases primarily concern trafficking for sexual exploitation and labour exploitation, including situations involving multiple forms of exploitation. A recurring vulnerability factor is the victims' precarious socio-economic situation in the country of origin compared with conditions in Sweden. Offenders frequently exploit this relative poverty by offering wages that, although lower than those of Swedish workers, still exceed what the victim could earn at home. This may create an appearance of mutual benefit, making it more difficult for victims to recognise themselves as victims of crime and potentially influencing how courts assess such circumstances. This is particularly relevant as the Swedish offence of trafficking, unlike legislation in some other jurisdictions, does not explicitly incorporate the concept of human dignity. Moreover, in the absence of a statutory minimum wage, courts assess whether conditions are “manifestly unreasonable” by reference to collective agreements and employment conditions established through collective bargaining between the social partners.

Under Swedish criminal law, intent is required both regarding the victim's vulnerability and its exploitation for the purpose of subjecting the victim to exploitation. In practice, prosecutors and police consider this requirement challenging, particularly when there is a time lapse between the perpetrator's initial actions and the subsequent exploitation. As a result, there is a risk that conduct which should properly be classified as trafficking is instead prosecuted under other offences or not prosecuted at all.

35. Is the concept of “abuse of a position of vulnerability” addressed in criminal justice training? Is there any specific guidance on applying this concept? Please provide copies of guidance and/or training materials that shed light on how this concept should be applied in practice.

The Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance (Rättslig vägledning 2025:1)¹⁰⁰ provides guidance on the application of the concept of “abuse of a position of vulnerability.” This guidance is based on the preparatory works to the legislation and is used by prosecutors as a practical tool when assessing

⁹⁹ [The Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance \(Rättslig vägledning 2025:1\)](#)

¹⁰⁰ [The Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance \(Rättslig vägledning 2025:1\)](#)

potential trafficking cases. The concept of “abuse of a position of vulnerability” is also addressed in several workshops and lectures organised within the Swedish Prosecution Authority.

The Judicial Academy, which provides training for judges, does not offer any criminal law courses that specifically address these issues. However, it offers a course entitled “Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence”, which examines behavioural patterns of victims and perpetrators in such crimes. The purpose of this course is to strengthen judges’ ability to assess evidence more effectively, including understanding how vulnerability may manifest in victim behaviour.

The Swedish Police Authority provides national training on trafficking in human beings (THB) for investigators. One part of the training involves examining vulnerabilities and underlying causes of human trafficking, so-called push factors, and how these are exploited by traffickers in various ways, so-called pull factors. This training aims to enhance investigators’ ability to recognize indicators of trafficking and understand how offenders manipulated victims’ circumstances.

36. What procedures and measures exist in your country to take into account the specific needs of vulnerable victims at the different stages of criminal proceedings?

To determine the victim’s need for special protective measures during the preliminary investigation and trial, the police shall, as soon as possible, conduct an individual protection assessment. In this assessment, particular consideration shall be given to the seriousness of the offence and the personal circumstances of the victim. A victim under 18 years of age shall always be considered to be in special need of protection (Section 13 f of the Ordinance on Preliminary Investigations [1947:948])¹⁰¹. If the offence is of such nature that the appointment of a victim’s counsel or the issuing of a restraining order may be relevant, or if the victim is in need of special protective measures pursuant to Section 13 f, the victim shall, as soon as possible, be informed of the rules governing the appointment of a victim’s counsel and the issuing of restraining orders, as well as of the available protective measures and the possibility of alternative accommodation (Section 13 a).

The victim shall, as soon as possible, be informed of:

- the provisions on support persons set out in Chapter 20, Section 15, and Chapter 23, Section 10 of the Code of Judicial Procedure,
- the possibilities of obtaining legal aid and legal advice under the Legal Aid Act (1996:1619),
- the possibility of requesting that a European Protection Order be issued and transmitted to another Member State of the European Union pursuant to the Act (2015:642) on the European Protection Order,
- the possibility and conditions for mediation under the Act (2002:445) on Mediation in Criminal Cases,
- the authorities, organisations and others that can provide support, assistance and care,
- the possibility of protecting oneself from the negative consequences of offences involving misuse of personal data, and the possibility of receiving advice on this,
- the contact details necessary to obtain information about his or her own case,
- the continued handling of the case and the role he or she will have in it,
- the right to interpretation and translation,

¹⁰¹ [Förundersökningskungörelse \(1947:948\)](#)

- the right to compensation for costs incurred when attending interviews or court hearings,
- where to turn with complaints regarding the handling of the case, and
- that, upon request, he or she may receive information on the progress of the case from the police, the public prosecutor or the court, provided that such disclosure can be made without detriment to the investigation (Section 13 a).

In cases involving this type of offence, a victim's counsel is typically appointed. This is a government-funded legal representative for the injured party. The victim's counsel shall safeguard the interests of the injured party throughout the proceedings and provide support and assistance. The victim's counsel shall also assist the injured party in pursuing civil claims arising from the offence, unless the public prosecutor undertakes this task (Act [1988:609] on Victim's Counsel¹⁰², Sections 1 and 3–5). A victim who is heard in connection with the prosecutor's action may be accompanied during the trial by an appropriate person providing personal support (a support person). A support person known to the court shall, where possible, be notified of the hearing (Code of Judicial Procedure, Chapter 20, Section 15¹⁰³). In addition to the victim's counsel, a support person is also entitled to be present during interviews conducted in the preliminary investigation, provided that his or her presence does not impede the investigation (Chapter 23, Section 10). If there is reason to do so, the court may decide that the victim may participate via video link, ensuring that the victim and the defendant do not need to be in the courtroom at the same time. When assessing whether there are such reasons, the Court shall give particular consideration to the victim's fear of being present in the courtroom and the risk of undue influence (Code of Judicial Procedure, Chapter 5, Section 10¹⁰⁴). If the victim does not have sufficient command of the Swedish language, the court shall engage an interpreter (Code of Judicial Procedure, Chapter 5, Section 6¹⁰⁵).

If there is a risk of a person committing a crime against a person, stalking, conducting undue surveillance of or otherwise seriously harassing another person, a restraining order may be issued by a prosecutor. A restraining order may also be issued if there is a risk that a person may attempt to influence another individual in order to prevent them from providing information to a court or law enforcement agency (The Restraining Orders Act, Section 1.)¹⁰⁶ A restraining order may be issued at any time, irrespective of whether a criminal procedure is ongoing.

37. If you have criminalised the use of services of a victim of THB, how is this provision applied in practice? Please provide any relevant case-law.

There is currently no specific provision criminalising the use of services provided by a victim of trafficking in human beings (THB). However, a public inquiry has proposed introducing such a criminal offence (see the answer to Question 12). As noted there, several existing provisions address the purchase of sexual acts.

Since 2023, the most common sanction for the offence of purchasing a sexual act has been a conditional sentence. The distribution of sanctions in recent years is as follows: In 2022, 485 convictions resulted in day-fines, 72 in conditional sentences, and 2 in imprisonment. In 2023, 96

¹⁰² [Lag \(1988:609\) om målsägandebitråde](#)

¹⁰³ [The Swedish code of judicial procedure](#)

¹⁰⁴ [The Swedish code of judicial procedure](#)

¹⁰⁵ [The Swedish code of judicial procedure](#)

¹⁰⁶ [Lag \(1988:688\) om kontaktförbud | Sveriges riksdag](#)

convictions resulted in day-fines, 374 in conditional sentences, and 3 in imprisonment. In 2024, 30 convictions resulted in day-fines, 497 in conditional sentences, and 6 in imprisonment.

38. What technology-based tools and initiatives exist in your country to support investigations and enhance prosecution of THB cases? What training is provided to law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges on THB facilitated by information and communication technology?

The Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance (Rättslig vägledning 2025:1¹⁰⁷) compiles investigative tools and best practices aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of preliminary investigations. Key considerations include:

- Immediate investigative measures include financial investigations and forensic analysis as well as the seizure and examination of mobile phones and other electronic devices (including remote data searches).
- Early use of coercive measures to complement testimony. Provisions on covert telephone interception, covert data access, and covert camera surveillance apply in investigations of trafficking in human beings (THB) and aggravated exploitation. These measures are often essential, as victims may be reluctant to cooperate fully with law enforcement.
- Early identification of victims and the provision of appropriate support, including the appointment of legal counsel.
- Provision of a reflection period, allowing victims to remain in the country during the investigation. Interviews must be carefully planned, taking into account the victim's circumstances and the need for interpretation. Victim's testimony is often central to the case.
- Early development of a structured investigation strategy as soon as there is a suspicion of human trafficking.
- Assessment of the need for international cooperation and cooperation with other Swedish authorities such as the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the Migration Agency, and the Tax Agency for information-sharing purposes.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority offers several training programmes relevant to the investigation of human trafficking and exploitation. These include courses and seminars on the use of covert coercive measures. The IT Crime Course is also relevant, providing training on gathering evidence in digital environments, handling cryptocurrency, applying covert coercive measures, and using proactive investigative techniques in IT-related settings. In addition, there is training on analysing financial flows via digital payment systems, which are frequently used in connection with trafficking and exploitation offences.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has also organised seminars and training sessions specifically aimed at increasing knowledge of human trafficking and exploitation, where the importance of covert coercive measures and financial investigations is a recurrent theme.

Judges in Sweden do not conduct investigations or prosecutions.

¹⁰⁷ [Rättslig vägledning](#)

39. In what ways, if any, does your country utilise provisions from the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention (Budapest Convention) to fight THB? If not, why is that the case?

The provisions of the Budapest Convention primarily used in Sweden are Articles 24 and 26, which concern the spontaneous exchange of investigative information with other States Parties, and Article 32(b), which allows the obtaining of account-related information based on the consent of the account holder. These provisions have been applied by prosecutors in investigations relating to online child sexual abuse. However, the Swedish Prosecution Authority assesses that there is room for prosecutors to make more systematic and consistent use of these provisions than is currently the case, in line with EU legal frameworks and established best practices.

Part II – Country-specific follow-up questions

40. Please provide information on measures taken in your country in respect to the following recommendations made in GRETA's previous reports:

- **ensure that the formal identification of victims of THB is not made conditional on their co-operation in the investigation and criminal proceedings or the initiation of criminal proceedings;**

The formal status as victims of trafficking is obtained when the crime has been detected by a prosecutor or police, regardless of the co-operation of the victim, since the offence falls within the domain of public prosecution.

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.

- **ensure that possible victims of THB among foreign workers are not subjected to deportation until a proper identification procedure has been conducted and that they are provided with all assistance measures to which they are entitled under the Convention;**

A new protocol has been developed for handling suspected trafficking in human beings (THB) cases within the fieldwork of border and patrol police. This protocol has already been implemented in the southern police region of Sweden and will soon be introduced in additional regions. Its purpose is to ensure that potential victims are identified early and that appropriate procedures are followed before any decision on removal or deportation is taken.

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) actively works to identify all forms of exploitation, at every stage of the migration process involving a third-country national. While the Agency is rarely able to complete the identification process, as its mandate does not include criminal investigations, it reports suspicions to the Swedish Police Authority so that further investigative steps can be taken. It is often more difficult to identify potential victims of crime within the work permit process, as the Agency primarily assesses employment conditions and does not always have the opportunity to ask questions related to criminal offences when these are not directly relevant to the migration case.

- **ensure that human trafficking offences are classified as such every time the circumstances of a case allow it, and that cases of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation are not qualified as “human exploitation”;**

In Sweden, effective efforts to combat trafficking in human beings (THB) rely on addressing the broader criminal environment in which trafficking occurs. This includes tackling underlying factors such as prostitution, procuring, and work-related criminality, including human exploitation, fraud, money laundering, drug and arms offences, offences under the Aliens Act, and the involvement of children in crime. The overarching approach is to target organised crime holistically, focusing on the underlying problem, and recognizing that networks or individuals involved in THB often engage in a

wide range of criminal activities. Authorities are able to use investigative tools such as covert surveillance and wiretapping when investigating suspected crimes of human trafficking.

For the Swedish Prosecution Authority, it is a priority to identify all potential crimes related to human trafficking to the greatest extent possible. To reinforce that priority and strengthen prosecutors' knowledge of THB, the Authority published a legal guidance on human trafficking and human exploitation in February 2025 (2025:1). The legal guidance focuses both on the importance of identifying offences and on indicators of possible offences. It also describes mechanisms that may explain why individuals become victims to these crimes. The guidance functions as a practical manual for prosecutors handling these investigations and is widely disseminated within the Prosecution Authority as well as to external parties, including the Swedish Police Authority. It is also available on the Prosecution Authority's website.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority and the Swedish Police Authority work closely together to develop methods for identifying trafficking offences and victims. The Swedish Prosecution Authority has arranged several workshops and lectures in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 to increase awareness and ensure effective measures on human trafficking.

In a recent judgment from Malmö District Court (2026-03-03, case nr B 2029-25¹⁰⁸), a 35-year-old man was convicted of both trafficking in human beings and human exploitation. This is the first judgment in Sweden in which an individual has been convicted for both offences within the same case. The case concerned three men from Poland who were recruited and transported to Sweden through deception to perform construction work and domestic labour for the perpetrator. Regarding one of the victims, who was homeless in Poland and had no income, the Court found that the perpetrator had taken advantage of the victim's vulnerable situation, which severely limited his alternatives. The purpose was to exploit the victim for labour in circumstances that would place him in a state of distress, which indeed occurred. The victim was effectively isolated on the perpetrator's property, receiving no wages, and had such limited access to food that he at times ate apples from the garden and dog food. He was also deprived of his identification documents. The Court therefore convicted the defendant of trafficking in human beings in relation to this victim.

Regarding the other two victims, the Court found that they had worked under very difficult conditions and that their living situation was extremely substandard. They received a remarkably low wage, and the work involved significant safety risks. However, the Court found that they were not in a state of distress, in part because they retained access to their own mobile phones and were not subject to surveillance at work. The Court therefore concluded that the two men were not subjected to trafficking in human beings. Instead, it found that the defendant, through deception and exploitation of the victims' difficult circumstances, had compelled them to work under manifestly unreasonable conditions. and the defendant was accordingly convicted of human exploitation in relation to these two victims.

- **take further steps to ensure full compliance with Article 26 of the Convention, including by ensuring that all negative consequences faced by victims of THB are lifted for presumed victims of THB;**

¹⁰⁸ [Dom i mål rörande människohandel \(B 2029-25\)](#)

Under Chapter 20, Section 7 of the Swedish Code of Judicial Procedure¹⁰⁹, a prosecutor may decide to refrain from prosecuting an offence (waiver of prosecution), provided that no significant public or private interest is thereby disregarded-A waiver may be issued:

1. if it may be assumed that the offence would not result in any sanction other than a fine,
2. if it may be assumed that the sanction would be a conditional sentence and there are special reasons for refraining from prosecution,
3. if the suspect has committed another offence and, in addition to the sanction for that offence, no further sanction is required in respect of the present offence, or
4. if psychiatric care or measures under the Act (1993:387) concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments are to be implemented.

Prosecution may also be waived in cases other situations if, for special reasons, it is evident that no sanction is required to prevent further criminality and that, given the circumstances, there is no other reason requiring prosecution. The Swedish Prosecution Authority's Legal Guidance on human trafficking and human exploitation, issued in February 2025 (RÄV 2025:1), contains information about article 26 of the Convention.

- **ensure that victims of THB have effective access to free legal assistance by a lawyer in proceedings for state compensation as well as in enforcement proceedings.**

The mandate of a victim's counsel ends when the judgment in the criminal case can no longer be appealed, unless the claim for damages has been separated and is handled as a civil matter (Act [1988:609] on Victim's Counsel, Sections 1a and 3¹¹⁰). However, the duties of a *special representative for children* include safeguarding the child's rights in matters concerning the enforcement of damages and applications for state criminal injuries compensation. A special representative for children shall be appointed when a preliminary investigation has been initiated or reopened regarding an offence that may lead to imprisonment and that has been committed against a person under 18 years of age, if (1) a guardian is suspected of the offence, or (2) it is feared that a guardian, due to his or her relationship with the suspect, will not safeguard the child's rights, unless such an appointment is unnecessary with regards to the child or there are other special reasons against it (Act [1999:997] on Special Representatives for Children, Sections 1 and 3¹¹¹)."

Applications for state criminal injuries compensation are submitted to the Swedish Crime Victim Authority. The application procedure is designed so that victims should generally be able to apply without legal assistance. However, the Swedish Crime Victim Authority may, under certain conditions and taking into account the applicant's financial and other circumstances, grant compensation from public funds to cover the cost of legal assistance. The Swedish Crime Victim Authority may also grant an advance on such compensation.

In March 2026, the Government submitted a bill containing proposals that aim to strengthen the position of victims of crime. Among other measures, the bill proposes that the process to obtain state criminal injuries compensation is simplified and shortened, and that the possibilities of attachment

¹⁰⁹ [The Swedish code of judicial procedure](#)

¹¹⁰ [Lag \(1988:609\) om målsägandebiträde](#)

¹¹¹ [Lag \(1999:997\) om särskild företrädare för barn](#)

(seizure of property for payment of a debt) to the benefit of victims of crime are expanded. A vote about the bill in the Parliament is scheduled for June.¹¹²

41. Please provide information on developments in your country since GRETA's third evaluation report concerning:

Sweden refers to the responses submitted on 15 December 2025 to the recommendations addressed to Sweden by the Council of Europe's Committee of the Parties. Those submissions contain detailed information on the measures taken and developments since GRETA's third evaluation report.

➤ **emerging trends of trafficking in human beings;**

The Swedish Police Authority has observed an increase in trafficking and exploitation occurring in digital environments over the past year. While earlier developments primarily reflected a shift from physical to digital spaces in terms of access and demand, it is now evident that all stages of the trafficking process, from recruitment, advertisement, communication, and payment, are increasingly taking place online. Many victims, particularly from South America, Ukraine, and Southeast Asia, are subjected to call centre-based trafficking. In recent years, there has also been an increase in the online exploitation of adults, in the form of online prostitution.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency reports that sexual exploitation is increasingly taking place in hidden environments, such as apartment brothels, massage parlors, and digital platforms. The Thai massage industry has been identified as a priority area for inspections. Debt-based exploitation continues to be central to maintaining control over vulnerable workers. Labour exploitation is increasing significantly, especially in sectors with many temporary or seasonal jobs, such as green industries, forestry, construction, transport and domestic services. A growing phenomenon is "Rolling exploitation", in which workers are moved between regions to avoid detection by authorities. Digital exploitation is also increasing, with images, films and online communication channels being used for recruitment, blackmail and dissemination. Particularly vulnerable groups include children, young people, and persons with disabilities. Some groups fall entirely outside formal systems, such as individuals without residence permits, those working illegally, or workers moved between workplaces by temporary employment agencies. Weak oversight of work permits, and employer responsibilities makes these cases especially difficult to detect and follow up.

➤ **the legislation and regulations relevant to action against THB;**

In July 2025, several amendments were made to the criminal provision on the purchase of sexual services. The designation was changed to purchase of a sexual act, and its scope was expanded to cover sexual acts carried out without physical contact, such as those performed online. The broader scope now covers situations where a person pays someone to perform sexual acts on demand via webcam or other digital formats. Corresponding amendments were made to the provision on procuring.

In February 2025, the Government appointed an inquiry to analyse how the Amended EU Anti-Trafficking Directive should be transposed into Swedish law. The inquiry presented its proposals in December 2025, including several proposals regarding the THB legislation. Among these was a

¹¹² [Regeringen vill ge brottsoffer snabbare upprättelse - Regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se/press/2025/02/regeringen-vill-ge-brottsoffer-snabbare-upprattelse)

proposal to criminalise the knowing use of services produced by victims of human trafficking and human exploitation.

In June 2026, new provisions will enter into force to end abuse of labour immigration regulations and exploitation of labour immigrants. Among other things, two new offences will be introduced: exploitation of foreign labour and trading in work permits. A clarifying provision will also be introduced whereby work permits may be refused where the employer has been issued certain sanctions or is suspected or convicted of certain offences, including trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, the charge imposed on employers who employ an alien who is not entitled to stay or work in Sweden will be doubled¹¹³.

- **the institutional and policy framework for action against THB (co-ordinating bodies, specialised entities, national rapporteur or equivalent mechanism, involvement of civil society, public-private partnerships);**

In February 2025, the Government appointed an inquiry to analyse how the Amended EU Anti-Trafficking Directive should be transposed into Swedish law. The inquiry presented its proposals in December 2025, including several proposals concerning Sweden's institutional and policy framework for combatting THB. Among the key proposals was that the Swedish Gender Equality Agency should be designated as the national anti-trafficking coordinator, with formal responsibility for Sweden's national referral mechanism (NRM).

- **the current national strategy and/or action plan for combating trafficking in human beings (objectives, main activities, budget, bodies responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of results);**

Please refer to the answer to Q 3 regarding the new national strategy governing this field, as well as the overall National Action Programme to prevent and combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for the period 2024–2026.

In addition, the Government is currently developing a new national Action Plan against Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings. The aim of the Action Plan is to prevent and combat exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking for all purposes, and to strengthen the protection and support available to vulnerable persons. The plan will include a clear timeframe and contain proposals for systematic follow-up.

Also see the introduction at the beginning of the document.

¹¹³ [Nya regler för arbetskraftsinvandring \(prop. 2025/26:87\)](#)

Part III - Statistics on THB

42. Please provide the following statistics, per year starting with 2019, where available disaggregated as indicated below:

- **Number of presumed victims and identified victims of THB in the sense of having been recognised by a state institution or mandated NGO as bearers of rights to services provided for by the Convention (with breakdown by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, internal or transnational trafficking, and body which identified them).**

Number of presumed victims and identified victims of THB - statistics from regional coordinators ¹¹⁴							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total number of presumed victims	404	322	490	375	414	430	481
Category							
Presumed victims of human exploitation	105			101	177	216	319
Presumed victims of human trafficking	299			274	237	214	162
Gender and age – both categories							
Gender							
Women	235	207	321	223	247	270	220
Men	78	109	163	139	160	159	260
Other or unknown sex	91	6	6	13	7	1	1
Age							
0-17 years	65	49	54	54	35	22	17
18+ years	339	271	436	276	374	370	440
Unknown age		2		45	5	38	24
Presumed victims of human trafficking							
Gender							
Women				195	187	189	113
Men				66	45	24	49
Other or unknown sex				13	5	1	0
Age							
0-17 years				53	31	15	13
18+ years				189	201	185	139
Unknown age				32	5	14	10
Form of exploitation							

¹¹⁴ [Regionkoordinatorer | NSPM](#)

Labour exploitation				52	28	31	50
Other					1		1
Domestic servitude				4		4	2
Multiple exploitation				7	1	1	6
Sexual exploitation				162	178	160	77
Begging				8	7		3
Unknown exploitation				17	1	10	6
Illegal adoption							2
Criminal acts				16	13	3	5
Forced marriage				8	8	4	10
Organ trafficking						1	
Actor of identification							
The public					1	9	1
Related person							0
Other actor					3	5	1
Regional coordinators					36	49	34
Civil society					19	23	15
Swedish Migration Agency					63	66	59
Swedish Police Authority					61	38	33
The person itself					10	4	4
Social Services					25	16	8
Healthcare					4	4	4
MIKA or Evon house					8		3
Unknown actor					5		
Religious community					2		

- **Number of victims of THB identified as part of the asylum procedure (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).**

Statistics cannot currently be generated or presented based on these variables. However, given some time, tools to produce parts of the requested data may be developed using the systems and registers available, possibly by autumn 2026.”

- **Number of victims of THB who received assistance (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, internal or transnational trafficking).**

See answer above on number of presumed victims.

- **Number of child victims of THB who were appointed legal guardians.**

Statistics cannot currently be generated or presented based on these variables. Also see answer to Q 5c.

➤ **Number of victims of THB granted a recovery and reflection period (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).**

	Application done by social service		Total social service	Application done by lead investigator		Total lead investigator	Total
	Women	Men		Women	Men		
2022	x	x	5	x	x	15	20
2023	10	0	10	x	x	12	22
2024 ¹¹⁵	14 (9)	8	22 (17)	16	7	23	45
2025	12	26	38	10	5	15	53

As earlier reported, on 1 August 2022, an amendment to the Aliens Act entered into force, enabling social welfare committees to apply for a temporary residence permit granting a recovery and reflection period when there are grounds to suspect that a person has been subjected to human trafficking or human exploitation. The purpose of the recovery and reflection period is to allow the victim time to consider whether to participate in the legal process. Applications are examined by the Swedish Migration Agency, and an approved application results in a 30 day temporary residence permit.

Statistics on applications submitted by social services for temporary residence permits granting a reflection period between 1 August 2022 and 31 December 2025 show a gradual increase.¹¹⁶ However, despite more than three and a half years having passed since the introduction of this provision, the number of applications remains low in relation to the number of individuals annually suspected of being subjected to human trafficking or human exploitation. This indicates a need for increased knowledge and improved implementation within the social services sector. Information aimed for municipal social service is available at the website of the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare¹¹⁷.

➤ **Number of victims of THB granted a residence permit, with an indication of the type of the permit (for the purpose of co-operation in the investigation/proceedings, on personal grounds, other) and its duration (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).**

Data on residence permits and exposure to trafficking in human beings are not recorded in the manner requested, which makes it difficult to generate the requested statistics at present.

➤ **Number of persons given refugee status or subsidiary/complementary protection on the grounds of being victims of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).**

¹¹⁵ During 2024 social services applied for 22 recovery and reflection periods, only 17 were granted by the Swedish Migration Agency. "Information and capacity-building support for municipal social welfare boards on human trafficking and human exploitation – final report (S2024/02156 (delvis))" National Board of Health and Welfare, March 2026.

¹¹⁶ "Information and capacity-building support for municipal social welfare boards on human trafficking and human exploitation – final report (S2024/02156 (delvis))" National Board of Health and Welfare, March 2026.

¹¹⁷ [Möjlighet för socialtjänsten att ansöka om uppehållstillstånd för betänketid - Kunskapsguiden](#)

Data is not recorded in the manner requested, which makes it difficult to generate the statistics at present.

- **Number of victims of THB who claimed compensation, who were granted compensation and who effectively received compensation (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, with an indication of whether the compensation was provided by the perpetrator or the State, and the amount awarded).**

Below is a summary table of criminal injuries compensation that has been granted by the state (from the Swedish Crime Victim Authority).

	Women	Men	Total
2019	4	2	6
2020	4	4	8
2021	3	3	6
2022	1	0	1
2023	3	1	4
2024	0	0	0
2025	7	22	29

Number of victims of THB who received another form of financial support from the State, with the indication of the amount received. In Sweden, victims of crime may be entitled to three types of financial compensation: damages from the offender, insurance compensation, and criminal injuries compensation from the State. If the offender is unable to pay damages and the victim does not have insurance that fully covers the injuries, the victim may, in certain cases, receive compensation from the State (see answer to Question 40 above). In such cases, the victim must submit an application for criminal injuries compensation to the Swedish Crime Victim Authority.

- **Number of victims of THB who received free legal aid.**

See answer to Q 6b.

- **Number of victims of THB who were returned or repatriated to/from your country (disaggregated by sex, age, country of destination, form of exploitation).**

In 2025, a total of 65 new individuals were granted access to the IOM return program- of which 27 were women, 29 men, six girls, and three boys. Nine were exploited sexually, 40 within labour exploitation, one within household work, five were exploited for multiple purposes, one as a partner, and nine were children of victims of trafficking. The four most common countries of origin were: The Philippines (14), Thailand (11), Turkey (7), and Greece (7)¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁸ [Återvändandeprogrammet | NSPM](#)

➤ **Number of investigations into THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims concerned).**

Official Swedish crime statistics on investigations refer to the number of investigated offences (see table below) and do not include the number of victims involved¹¹⁹.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Sexual purposes	71	89	74	62	92	62	71
Forced labour	40	28	31	21	41	63	26
Begging	13	15	12	7	2	2	1
Organ trading	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
War services	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Other purposes	63	56	28	50	50	45	34

➤ **Number of prosecutions in THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims and defendants concerned).**

Official Swedish crime statistics on prosecutions refer to the number of investigated offences for which prosecution has been initiated (see table below) and do not include the number of victims and defendants involved¹²⁰.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Sexual purposes	3	4	4	0	1	0	1
Forced labour	0	0	5	0	11	9	2
Begging	0	4	0	0	0	0	1
Organ trading	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
War services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other purposes	2	2	1	5	1	0	1

➤ **Number of convicted perpetrators of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).**

¹¹⁹ Official Swedish Crime Statistics from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [Statistik | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

¹²⁰ Official Swedish Crime Statistics from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [Statistik | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

The data on convicted perpetrators is available disaggregated by sex and age. The data concerns county court conviction decisions¹²¹.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Male	2	4	0	0	0	0	3
Female	0	3	1	0	0	0	0

	15-17	18-20	21-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-
2025	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2020	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	0
2019	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

- **Number of convictions for THB, with an indication of the form of exploitation, whether the victim was adult or child, the type and duration of the penalties, and whether they were effectively enforced or suspended.**

Number of conviction decisions (District court, statistics regarding Court of Appeal and Supreme Court is not available), by principal offence (trafficking in human being) and by principal sanction. Data is not available according to age of victim nor whether the convictions were enforced or suspended¹²².

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Imprisonment	2	6	1	0	0	0	3
Average duration, months	37	37	45	0	0	0	21
Conditional sentence	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

- **Number of judgments in THB cases resulting in the confiscation of assets.**

No information available.

- **Number of convictions of legal entities for THB.**

No information available.

¹²¹ Official Swedish Crime Statistics from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [Statistik | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

¹²² Official Swedish Crime Statistics from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [Statistik | Brå - Brottsförebyggande rådet](#)

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