

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



CP(2025)07

Report submitted by the authorities of the
Czech Republic
on measures taken to comply with
Committee of the Parties Recommendation
CP/Rec(2024)10 on the implementation
of the Council of Europe Convention
on Action against Trafficking in Human
Beings

Second evaluation round

Received on 25 November 2025

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Overview of recommendations to the Czech Republic and information on their implementation:

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive and coherent data collection system on trafficking in human beings, by compiling reliable data on the number of presumed, identified and assisted victims, as well as on measures taken to protect and promote the rights of victims. Data regarding victims should be collected from all main actors and allow disaggregation concerning sex, age, type of exploitation, country of origin and/or exploitation. This should be accompanied by all the necessary measures to respect the right to protection of personal data, including when NGOs working with victims of trafficking are asked to provide to the national database.

The Czech Republic has been making sustained efforts to improve the collection and processing of crime-related data, including data on human trafficking. The aim is to develop a modern and unified statistical system that consolidates data from various institutions—such as the Police of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Justice, and other relevant entities. In 2023, a collaborative project was launched by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. A feasibility study conducted in 2024 revealed that data integration remains highly complex due to divergent data management methodologies. For example, the Police of the Czech Republic operate different systems at the central and regional levels, which complicates standardized data processing. To address these challenges, two working groups have been established: one focused on harmonizing methodologies and terminology, and the other on defining the requirements and specifications for the new system. As the efforts to improve the collection and processing of crime-related data will further continue, the recommendations from the international GRETA group, which monitors human trafficking, will further covered.

Differentiation by type of exploitation is currently technically challenging in some cases, although discussions are underway regarding the use of specific sections of the Criminal Code. The data are anonymized but include case numbers from courts and public prosecution service, which may be made available to authorized personnel. Starting in 2026, it should be possible to disaggregate victim data by sex and country of origin, although not yet by exact age—only by age categories (child, adult, senior). Data from the Ministry of Justice pertain only to the later stages of criminal proceedings, meaning that information about victims in the early phases (e.g., during preliminary investigations) is not available.

2. Intensify efforts to prevent human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, taking into account GRETA's Guidance Note on combating trafficking for labour exploitation and the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)21 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.

The Czech Republic is actively engaged in preventing human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the GRETA expert group. Several key institutions are involved in this effort.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs focuses on prevention primarily through training consular officers. Human trafficking is a mandatory topic in their preparatory program, with lectures delivered by experts from the Ministry of the Interior and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A psychologist specializing in communication with children has recently been added to the training team.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Visa Department is also developing an e-learning course for both newly appointed and currently serving staff at diplomatic missions. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs monitors consular reporting on this issue.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs conducts information campaigns aimed at protecting workers, particularly foreign nationals. It distributes leaflets and posters in 13 languages, featuring QR codes and links to support organizations. The goal is to inform workers about their rights and available means of protection. In cooperation with the EURES+3ZUp! project, the ministry also promotes safe migration and the prevention of exploitation.

The State Labour Inspection Office focuses on monitoring and penalizing illegal employment. In 2024, it imposed fines totalling CZK 163.9 million. Inspectors target the most frequent violations, such as non-payment of wages and breaches of working hours. Cooperation with Slovak labour inspectors is ongoing, alongside training sessions addressing the misuse of self-employment contracts and human trafficking. The State Labour Inspection Office also provides advisory services and operates a multilingual website with information on labour law and employment relations.

Until the start of the next Operational Programme Employment Plus and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund programming period in 2027, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and The State Labour Inspection Office will continue to support the pilot initiative between the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and State Labour Inspection Office (ended in 2025) include targeted assistance for foreign workers through the intercultural mediators. By relying on alternative financial sources, this approach seeks to ensure that nationwide implementation is successfully launched and sustainably maintained in accordance with labour market needs and the supervisory activities of the State Labour Inspection Office.

The Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office uses recommended materials (GRETA Guidelines and Committee of Ministers' Recommendations) in specialized seminars for public prosecutors. These multidisciplinary seminars are attended by representatives of the police, NGOs, and labour inspectors. Their aim is to improve the identification of labour exploitation cases and ensure their proper legal assessment. A new mandatory training program for judges will be introduced in 2026, requiring individual educational plans.

In 2021, as part of the TRIPS project mentioned in our previous report, a handbook on human trafficking was developed. This handbook provides comprehensive information on human trafficking, including guidance on identifying victims, training opportunities, relevant contacts for victim referral, and best practices for working with affected individuals. The handbook continues to be actively and widely used by NGOs across the Czech Republic. The handbook was created in collaboration with the NGO Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU), which primarily works with victims of labour exploitation, particularly in the Pilsen Region. Most of their clients are of Ukrainian origin. OPU mainly provides legal assistance, most frequently in cases involving unpaid wages, threats from covert employment agencies, and connections between these agencies and organized crime. OPU cooperates with the Czech Police and the State Labour Inspection Office, assisting victims in filing criminal complaints and participating in victim protection programs.

When the war in Ukraine began and the first wave of refugees from Ukraine arrived in the Czech Republic, the Czech authorities undertook comprehensive and coordinated measures to ensure that the refugees were properly informed about their options and received assistance in finding employment. Information centres and other official offices specifically designated for Ukrainian nationals were established, with interpreters actively involved. Dedicated websites, telephone hotlines, and information campaign including social media video were launched. The Ministry of the Interior played a key role in these efforts and continues to provide ongoing support. Currently, the Police of the Czech Republic is conducting an awareness campaign entitled "*Work in Chains*"¹, which aims to raise awareness about human trafficking and explain its nature. The campaign provides victims with information about their rights and contact details for assistance.

¹ [Práce v řetězech - Policie České republiky](#)

Overall, the Czech Republic is taking concrete and coordinated steps to prevent labour exploitation through training, inspections, public awareness, and collaboration between state institutions and the non-government sector.

This should include steps to:

- strengthen the supervision of temporary work and recruitment agencies, including disguised agencies.

Labour inspection authorities check the existence of all labour relations regardless of their duration. According to Section 3 of the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.), basic employment relationships include both employment relationships (which can be considered long-term) and relationships based on agreements on work performed outside an employment relationship (agreement on the performance of work, agreement on work activity).

When checking for illegal work, all the characteristics of dependent work are assessed, and if they are met, then an employment relationship must be concluded; without it, the work would be illegal.

Statistics on the number of inspections for illegal work (e.g., in 2024, 6,328 inspections focused on illegal employment were carried out) include inspections of all forms of employment relationships.

The area of agency employment in Czech Republic is regulated by the Employment Act and the Labour Code and based on ongoing evaluation and the results of inspections, these regulations are amended and revised. For example, in 2024, changes were made to the Employment Act concerning the process and conditions for granting a license to mediate employment to a legal or natural person, adjustments to the reasons for revoking a license to mediate employment, and the obligations that employment agencies, especially in the area of agency employment, must fulfil.

Agency employment is one of the main areas of control for labour inspection authorities. In 2024, 148 inspections were carried out directly targeting agency employment, and a further 523 inspections were carried out that were primarily focused on another area of control, with agency employment being a secondary subject of the inspection. In 2024, 151 fines totalling CZK 7,700,500 were imposed on employment agencies and users for offenses in the area of agency employment and job placement. At the same time, labour inspection authorities are focusing on the area of disguised job placement, and 263 entities were found to be engaged in disguised job placement in 2024. In 2024, 173 business entities were also found to have enabled disguised job placement and labour inspection authorities imposed a total of 255 fines totalling CZK 158,462,000 for the offense of disguised employment mediation and enabling it. Of these, 88 fines totalling CZK 69,394,000 were imposed for the offense of enabling disguised employment mediation.

- keep under review the legislative framework for any loopholes that may undermine the prevention of labour trafficking (e.g., involvement of “disguised employment agencies”; abuse in the subcontracting chain; requalification of labour trafficking under other offences) and address any gaps identified (paragraph 79).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs systematically analyses the labour market and legal regulations in relation to the identification of risks and problematic aspects of legislation.

Currently, a draft government regulation governing the issue of agency employment is in the legislative process, which aims to prevent newly established (unverified) employment agencies from assigning foreigners.²

At the same time, an amendment will come into effect on January 1, 2026, which will require employers to report all work performed by foreigners before they start work. From July 1, 2026, this obligation will be extended to all employees. The aim is to increase transparency, prevent illegal employment, and improve oversight of the labour market.

3. Take additional measures to prevent child trafficking, and in particular to:

- reduce the risks of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation of children, including for the production of sexual abuse material, as well as child trafficking facilitated by information and communication technology (ICT), notably by developing awareness-raising campaigns and other measures and addressing the root causes of such phenomenon.

During the previous monitoring period, GRETA recommended that research be supported to provide insights for combating human trafficking, particularly involving children. This recommendation has been implemented and continues to be developed further. In April 2025, the project *Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention and Suppression of Child Trafficking*, carried out by the ACCENDO³ consortium and Charles University, was completed. The project ran from 2022 and produced several key outputs: a research study offering a comprehensive overview of the situation regarding child trafficking in the Czech Republic; a methodology for identifying and assisting child victims of trafficking; a training program focused on the identification and support of child victims; and a preventive initiative. The research revealed that every child may be at risk and that child trafficking is increasingly shifting into the online environment. As part of the project, an awareness campaign was conducted, and the website www.obchodsdetmi.cz was launched, providing information for children, parents, and professionals.

The Governmental Commissioner for Human Rights highlights two important resources:

- The *ECHR Case Law Thematic Guide on Sexual Violence*⁴ and
- The Czech translation of *CEDAW General Recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*⁵.

The Ministry of Interior is currently in the process of evaluating a project titled *New Forms of Child Trafficking and Related Criminal Activities with a Focus on Sexual Abuse of Children from an International Perspective*. This initiative responds to emerging threats of serious and organized crime identified by EUROPOL⁶, which have also been observed in the Czech Republic. According to an analytical study conducted within the research project *Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention and Suppression of Child Trafficking*, child trafficking (CT) in the Czech Republic is a phenomenon with potentially high latency and is often intertwined with other forms of criminal activity. The project's findings also identified an increased risk among children in institutional care, particularly those who have run away from such

² [8117465-2025-08-01-duvodova-zprava-8117492.pdf](https://www.mvcr.cz/obchodovani-se-zenami-a-divkami-v-kontextu-globalni-migrace) – Proposal including the explanatory memorandum

³ The ACCENDO consortium is not a formal consortium in the sense of a business association, but rather a designation for the activities of ACCENDO – Centre for Science and Research, a registered public benefit institute operating as a non-profit scientific research organization. Information about the project is available on the website [Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention and Suppression of Child Trafficking | ACCENDO – Centre for Science and Research](https://www.accendo.cz/) and also here: [Prevention of Child Trafficking](https://www.obchodsdetmi.cz/).

⁴ available at <https://mezisoudy.cz/tematicke-prirucky/sexualni-nasili>

⁵ https://mezisoudy.cz/databaze-judikatury/detail-rozhodnuti/2a39cdd3-7cae-11ee-8ac4-ccd40779481_obecne-doporuceni-c-38-2020-o-obchodovani-se-zenami-a-divkami-v-kontextu-globalni-migrace.

⁶ Europol (2025). Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2025: The Changing DNA of Serious and Organised Crime. Europol, The Hague, 2025. Available at: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU-SOCTA-2025.pdf>

facilities, of becoming victims of CT. Additionally, there has been a rise in new forms of *modi operandi* involving the use of ICT, with online and physical environments frequently overlapping throughout different stages of the criminal process. The primary goal of the project is to develop and implement specific procedures for detecting new forms of child trafficking and related criminal activities, particularly in cyberspace (including live streaming). Another objective is to create preventive programs aimed at countering these forms of crime—both generally and specifically targeted at children placed in diagnostic and educational institutions, or children’s homes.

This initiative aligns with Directive 2024/1712/EU, which amends Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, as well as with one of the recommendations outlined in the Action Plan for the Czech Republic for 2024–2025.⁷ A key document in the area of child protection is the National Strategy for the Protection of Children’s Rights 2021–2029 (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). In the field of primary prevention in schools, the National Strategy for Primary Prevention of Risk Behaviour in Children and Youth for 2019–2027 (under the Ministry of Education) plays a fundamental role.

The Ministry of Health contributes to addressing the needs of children without family backgrounds and those at risk and supports the establishment of child centres based on interdisciplinary cooperation and active family involvement in childcare.

A central element across all related documents is the emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. The Czech Republic is among the EU countries making significant and agile progress toward becoming a fully digital society. The prevention of cybercrime, cyberviolence, and cyberaggression in virtual environments has become one of the strategic priorities for the coming period.

The goal of all entities involved in activities aimed at reducing cybercrime is to educate IT users to recognize signs of risky online communication and respond appropriately to suspicious behaviour—for example, by reporting it to the police and refraining from deleting the content from their devices (computer, mobile phone, etc.).

Preventive programs are implemented through the IPREV project, coordinated by the Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Human Trafficking. A handbook for educators is available online.⁸

In 2025, the NGO La Strada implemented a project for art schools—a competition for the most compelling visual interpretation of a comic story and poster on the theme of *human trafficking and child trafficking*. The aim of the comic is to equip children and young people with the ability to recognize themselves as potential victims of trafficking and to encourage them to seek help if they do become victims. The competition was carried out in cooperation with the Public Defender of Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Czech Republic and UNICEF.

Another project led by NGO La Strada is titled *Professionalization of Social Work in the Field of Human Trafficking*. One of its key outputs is the initiative *Preventing Human Trafficking through Collaboration between Students and Young People from Children’s Homes*—as research shows that children from institutional care are significantly more exposed to the risk of trafficking. In this project, students from social work programs supported children from children’s homes in their transition to the labour market.

The Ministry of Justice has adopted measures aimed at reducing the risk of child trafficking in the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code, which is currently undergoing legislative review. Among other provisions, the amendment reflects several recommendations from the evaluation report of the Council of

⁷ This document is part of the latest 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report on the state of human trafficking in the Czech Republic for the year 2023, published annually by the U.S. Department of State.

⁸ <https://obchodsdetmi.cz/>

Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). The amendment introduces stricter penalties for the crime of child trafficking, particularly when committed using coercive means. The list of such means corresponds to the legal elements applicable to trafficking in adults. While the use of coercive means is not a prerequisite for qualifying the offense of child trafficking—given the presumed vulnerability and immaturity of individuals under the age of eighteen—their use significantly increases the social harm of the act and justifies the imposition of a harsher sentence.

The amendment further proposes to explicitly include abuse of vulnerability among coercive means. According to Section 119a(2) of the Criminal Code, a child under the age of twelve is always considered vulnerable due to age. If the victim of trafficking is a child under twelve, the offense automatically meets the criteria for aggravating circumstances, resulting in an increased sentencing range (from 2–10 years to 5–12 years).

The amendment also expands the scope of Section 191a of the Criminal Code (misuse of identity for the production and distribution of pornography) to explicitly criminalize the creation and dissemination of pornography or other intimate content depicting a victim of trafficking. If such conduct is carried out via print, film, radio, television, publicly accessible computer networks, or other similarly effective means, it will be considered an aggravating circumstance warranting a higher penalty.

The proposed Section 168a of the Criminal Code introduces criminal liability for the use of services provided by victims of trafficking, which also contributes to reducing the risk of trafficking (both of children and adults). Under this provision, any person who knowingly uses services (including, but not limited to, sexual services) provided by trafficking victims will be held criminally liable. If the victim is a child, this will constitute an aggravating circumstance, with a proposed sentencing range of 2–8 years.

In connection with the legislative process surrounding this amendment, an increase in both public and expert debate is expected. Such discussions play a key role in raising awareness about human trafficking and can have a positive societal impact comparable to that of public awareness campaigns.

- ensure that all unaccompanied and separated children are registered and that all unaccompanied children are placed under the child protection system and provided with effective care;

The Czech Republic has long provided above standard and highly professional services to unaccompanied minors and addresses the issue of child trafficking victims. This topic is regularly discussed by the Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Human Trafficking. To improve the early identification of victims, seminars and workshops are organized for staff working in facilities for unaccompanied minors. These are led by professionals from both state and non-governmental organizations. In parallel, preventive workshops are held directly for the unaccompanied minors, focusing on prevention, risk awareness and early recognition of exploitation.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports ensures the availability of professional specialists in psychology, special education, and behavioural education within its affiliated organizations. These experts provide an individual care approach and respect for the specific needs of each child. The best interests of the child are enshrined in the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children and are applied in all proceedings involving child victims.

In institutions for institutional and protective education, all staff activities must comply with the Act on the Execution of Institutional and Protective Education and with the Quality Standards of Care for Children in Educational Facilities for Institutional and Protective Education and Preventive Educational Care. Specialized procedures for handling cases involving child victims are in place and based on cooperation among professionals from schools, NGOs, and state authorities. The high level of professional work and the respect for the rights and interests of the child are overseen by the Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman).

In any communication between a (potential) child victim of trafficking and the police, a professional from the child protection authority or a qualified educator must be present. This rule is based on the Police Methodology for the Identification of Victims of Crime. The police may also consult their intended actions with a child psychologist.

The registration and protection of children fall under the jurisdiction of the Social and Legal Protection of Children (OSPOD) authorities pursuant to Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on the social and legal protection of children. The competent authorities for the Legal and Social Protection of Children (OSPOD) registers children who are unaccompanied by a legal guardian, in a crisis, or at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation. In the case of separated children (migrants), the procedures follow the methodological guidelines of The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and are carried out in cooperation with the Office for International Legal Protection of Children. Data on children in social services are kept in the reports of social service providers but cannot be filtered by the status of "separated child" or "dependent child."

Social services in the Czech Republic are defined by Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services; providers must be authorized/registered and fulfil their obligations under this Act. Social Services Act defines target groups according to the type of adverse situation, not according to the legal or family status of the child. It is therefore not possible to find the required data. However, OSPOD officials are responsible for obtaining information on the social services a child is receiving and must conduct regulate supervision visits to the child's place of residence (home, school, or facility), and request information from schools, healthcare providers and service organizations.

Registration and identification of child trafficking into the Czech Republic

Persons fleeing the war in Ukraine are registered through the Regional Assistance Centre for Help to Ukraine (KACPU), which fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior. In cases where an unaccompanied minor is identified at KACPU, OSPOD is always called.

In case of separated children where there is suspicion of child trafficking, KACPU call OSPOD as well. In cases where an unaccompanied minor is identified in the field, the police and OSPOD are always called to cooperate.

Care and services provided to dependent children

All victims of child trafficking are viewed as children at risk and are provided with adequate support and assistance based on an assessment of their individual needs (such as accommodation, food, clothing, medical care, psychological, legal and social counselling); see the Register of social service providers⁹ where you can find all available social services in the Czech Republic, such as crisis assistance services, intervention centres, telephone crisis assistance, professional social counselling, etc. When it comes to an unaccompanied minor, it depends on the individual assessment of the situation of each child, they can be placed in the Facility for children of foreign nationals in Radlická (located in Prague 5), or in facilities for children requiring immediate assistance, all depending on the assessment of the current situation.

The website "Prevention of child trafficking" under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior, where detailed information can be found, is now available.¹⁰

⁹ <https://www.mpsv.cz/registr-poskytovatelu-sluzeb>

¹⁰ <https://obchodsdetmi.cz/>

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- take steps to prevent the disappearances of unaccompanied foreign children placed in institutional care, by providing suitable safe accommodation and adequately trained professionals.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports operates the Facility for Foreign Children, located at Radlická 30, Prague 5. This facility provides necessary assistance and care (educational, social, medical, legal, and more) to unaccompanied minor foreign children apprehended within the territory of the Czech Republic. These children are placed in institutional care by court order due to their dependency and absence of accompanying persons (such as family), or they are placed in Facility for children of foreign nationals based on a preliminary court measure. Facility for Foreign Children functions as an intake and diagnostic center that, after assessing the child's situation and needs, may transfer the child to other residential facilities (such as children's homes or educational institutions) that cooperate with Facility for Foreign Children and offer suitable conditions for foreign children, including trained staff specialized in caring for foreign nationals. Facility for Foreign Children also provides methodological support to these facilities, including in matters related to child trafficking. It cooperates with all relevant authorities and organizations and offers advisory support even to clients who contact the facility directly.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs focuses on developing the competencies of direct care workers in social services aimed at children under 18. Within the framework of Specific Objective E8 of the Strategic Employment Policy Framework until 2030 ("Social Services Focused on the Needs of Children and Families in Adverse Situations"), Ministry is implementing Measure E8.1, which aims to create a competency framework for social service workers. This framework will define the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for professionals working with at-risk children. The training also includes specialization in domestic violence prevention.

In connection with the care of endangered children, child victims of crime, or child witnesses, the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the Police of the Czech Republic, is implementing the project "*National Coordination Mechanism for Searching for Missing Children.*" This project was developed to enable the rapid and successful location of missing children and involves the general public in search efforts while also ensuring psychological support for the families of missing children. To this end, the Ministry of Interior also supports the operation of European assistance and crisis hotlines, especially the 116 000 hotlines for missing children. The Ministry also closely cooperates with the European platform for missing children, AMBER Alert Europe, and the non-governmental organization Aplikace ECHO, which developed a software application that alerts the public when a missing child search is announced.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs also provides publicly accessible information on its website about how to proceed when taking custody of children and how to help them.¹¹:

4. Take additional measures to improve the detection and identification of victims of trafficking, in particular by:
 - putting in place a formalised victim identification procedure which defines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders, promotes a multi-agency approach by involving specialised NGOs, labour inspectors, social workers, child protection specialists and health-care staff, and includes indicators and guidance for identifying victims of different forms of exploitation;

The task of establishing a formalized procedure for identifying victims is one of the priorities of the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic and is expected to remain a priority in the strategy for the upcoming period. In the previous monitoring cycle, we reported that in 2021, the Police of the Czech Republic issued a Methodology for the Identification of Victims of Criminal Offences. This methodology is a general document that serves as a guide for police officers. It addresses the process of victim identification in general and focuses on the specifics of particularly vulnerable victims, including

¹¹ [Zajištění péče o děti | MPSV](#)

victims of trafficking in human beings. As part of crime prevention strategies, police officers are trained in the use of this methodology, which is regularly applied in training sessions for victim coordinators from regional departments within the course "*Particularly Vulnerable Victim and Domestic Violence – Instructor-led Training*" (held four times a year). The methodology is also freely accessible to all police officers via the website of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service and forms the basis of the e-learning course "*Victims of Criminal Offences*," which is mandatory for all police officers. The methodology was updated in August 2025 to align with the planned amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code and the Victims Act, which are expected to come into force in early 2026.

In addition to the previously mentioned project "*Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking*" and the follow-up project "*New Forms of Child Trafficking and Related Criminal Activities with a Focus on Sexual Abuse of Children from an International Perspective*," it is important to highlight two successful training formats coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

1. Roundtables

Since 2023, a series of roundtables has been held at regional offices across the Czech Republic. Their main goal is to improve the identification of potential victims of trafficking and the subsequent steps taken, particularly at the regional and local levels, with the participation of representatives from regional authorities, the Police of the Czech Republic, the State Labour Inspection Office, and national and regional NGOs. Roundtables have already taken place in the Ústí nad Labem, Plzeň, South Moravian, South Bohemian, and Moravian-Silesian regions. All of them had a clearly positive impact on initiating or deepening communication and cooperation. In 2025, joint training sessions were held in the Olomouc and Zlín regions. In December, sessions will take place in the Pardubice and Hradec Králové regions, along with a separate roundtable for the Karlovy Vary region.

2. Training on Labour Exploitation of Foreign Nationals for Labour Office Employees

In May and June 2025, three pilot one-day interactive training sessions were held focusing on the labour exploitation of foreign nationals. The target group consisted of employees of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic who, in their practice, encounter foreign nationals and provide them with advice on employment and labour law matters. These training sessions were organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Trainers included delegated experts from the National Centre Against Organized Crime (NCOZ), the State Labour Inspection Office, La Strada, and in one case, OAMP of the Ministry of the Interior. The trainers' task was to familiarize participants with aspects of their work where foreign nationals are particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation. Participants learned about common forms of abuse experienced by foreigners (unpaid wages, excessive overtime, inadequate housing conditions, or systematic exploitation of their lack of legal knowledge and language barriers). The course also highlighted high-risk sectors where such practices are most prevalent. The aim of the training was to strengthen the ability of Labour Office employees to recognize and effectively respond to cases of labour exploitation, providing practical tools and clear procedures for addressing or referring such cases. The course also included case studies and model scenarios from real practice. Participants rated the training as extremely beneficial, highly relevant, and absolutely necessary given the increasing number of exploitation cases in the Czech labour market. The program significantly contributed to strengthening the professional capacity of trained Labour Office staff.

The Police of the Czech Republic, specifically the NCOZ, closely and regularly cooperates in the area of trafficking prevention with other relevant authorities and institutions primarily engaged in preventive measures. In its prevention efforts, the police mainly use materials developed by the Ministry of the Interior or the Police Presidium. Part of the prevention is also carried out in cooperation with non-

governmental organizations, including the use of their educational materials. Cooperation between entities takes place through the Interdepartmental Coordination Group on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, where regular meetings are held to agree on coordinated action against traffickers, exchange information on current trends, and identify the most effective forms of cooperation among stakeholders.

In the area of trafficking in human beings, NCOZ is involved in Europol's Joint Action Days focused on labour and sexual exploitation. The evaluation of these operations is carried out by Europol in cooperation with participating EU Member States.

In the context of healthcare provision, medical professionals record suspicions of unlawful treatment of patients in medical documentation. In the case of child patients, such suspicions are reported; in the case of adult patients, they are reported only with the patient's consent. In 2018, the Ministry of Health issued a manual for physicians on domestic and gender-based violence, published under the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic for the period 2016–2017, as part of the project "*Implementation and Evaluation of Measures for Effective Prevention and Control of Violence and Support for Victims in the Healthcare System*," aimed at achieving the goals set out in the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for 2015–2018. On the Ministry's website¹² and in Bulletin 10/2022, the Ministry of Health published a methodological guideline titled "Procedure for General Practitioners for Children and Adolescents in Cases of Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment (CAN Syndrome).

The Czech Republic supports the IOM Czechia-led project submitted under the currently open EU *call for proposals for action grants to support transnational projects in the fields of e-Justice, victims' rights and procedural rights (JUST-2025-JACC-EJUSTICE), Priority 2: Victims' rights and procedural rights*. The project will be implemented in cooperation with Czech state institutions—specifically the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs—as well as IOM Austria, La Strada Czech Republic, and LEFÖ-IBF Austria. Project TRUST addresses critical gaps in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons, including the retraumatization of victims during legal proceedings, lack of trauma-informed approaches, misinterpretation of victim behaviour, language barriers, fear of deportation, and cultural differences. Special attention is given to children and their specific needs. These shortcomings significantly reduce the effectiveness of investigations and hinder access to justice. The project will be carried out as a binational initiative between Czech Republic and Austria. Its core objective is to analyse current practices and develop national guidelines for trauma-informed justice, alongside a comprehensive training system focused on trauma-sensitive procedures and intercultural communication and mediation. The results will be shared at both national and EU levels.

Key outputs will include practical National Protocols for Trauma-Informed Justice and a complete training curriculum on trauma in criminal proceedings. Another major goal is to strengthen dialogue between victim support providers and judicial authorities. This will be achieved through regular meetings, exchange of good practices, and cross-border peer learning. The project also plans to expand existing awareness materials developed by partner NGOs (La Strada Czech Republic and LEFÖ-IBF Austria) and launch targeted outreach campaigns in cooperation with NGOs, diaspora organizations, and asylum facilities. These efforts aim to overcome language and cultural barriers and build victims' trust in the justice system. The Czech Republic recognizes trafficking in persons as a transnational crime and welcomes cooperation with Austria in this unique initiative, which brings together both state institutions and civil society actors. The project aspires to embed its outputs into the national systems of the Czech Republic and Austria and contribute to EU-level policy development. Ultimately, Project TRUST aims to drive lasting systemic change in how justice systems respond to victims of trafficking.

- disconnecting the identification of victims of human trafficking from the initiation of criminal proceedings for human trafficking and ensuring that all victims of trafficking detected in the Czech Republic, including foreign nationals trafficked outside of the country, can be identified as victims of trafficking. Victims of trafficking should be

¹² [Týrané, zneužívané a zanedbávané dítě – metodiky – Ministerstvo zdravotnictví](#)

identified as such, and their credibility not called into question, even if they do not state the facts of their trafficking upon their first contact with the authorities;

The Police of the Czech Republic confirms that the identification of a victim of trafficking in human beings is not linked to the initiation of criminal proceedings. Victims may enter the Support and Protection Programme for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings even during the phase when the police are conducting preliminary inquiries – that is, actions aimed at determining whether and how the act occurred. Criminal proceedings are initiated only after the facts reported by the victim have been verified. This procedure enables victims to receive support without the need for immediate involvement in the criminal justice process.

Rules for the inclusion of presumed victims in the Support and Protection Programme for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings are governed by the Methodological Guidelines for the Functioning of the Programme, applicable of Ministry of Interior to individuals who meet the entry criteria. Inclusion in the Programme is voluntary, and the victim has the right to a 60-day reflection period to decide whether to cooperate with the police. The police receives only basic identification data (name, surname, date of birth) for the purpose of ensuring safety, but they do not contact the victim until the victim has made a decision regarding cooperation. This approach respects the rights and needs of victims and is not conditional upon the initiation of criminal proceedings.

According to the Ministry of Justice, this requirement aims to improve the detection and identification of victims of trafficking in human beings in practice. From the perspective of the legal framework, it should be noted that, under Act No. 45/2013 Coll., on Victims of Crime, a person may be considered a victim without the initiation of criminal prosecution - a person becomes a victim upon the commission of the criminal offence.

Furthermore, under Section 2(4)(c) of the Victims of Crime Act, a victim of the offence of trafficking in human beings (Section 168 of the Criminal Code) is ex lege considered a particularly vulnerable victim, entitled to a broad range of additional rights beyond those granted to standard victims, including the right to free legal assistance. According to the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code, the victim of the newly introduced offence of use of services provided by trafficked person (Section 168a of the Criminal Code) should also be ex lege considered a particularly vulnerable victim. Among the fundamental principles of the Victims of Crime Act is the provision that victims are entitled to statutory rights regardless of their nationality or citizenship, unless otherwise provided (Section 3(3) of the Act). It is also important to highlight the rule that: *"Any person who perceives themselves to be a victim of a committed criminal offence shall be considered a victim, unless the contrary is proven or unless it is clearly a case of abuse of victim status under this Act. If there are doubts as to whether a victim is particularly vulnerable, they shall be considered as such. The status of a victim is not affected by the fact that the perpetrator has not been identified or convicted."* (Section 3(1) of the Act). In general, it can be stated that if the Criminal Code applies, even foreign nationals trafficked outside the territory of the Czech Republic are not only considered victims, but particularly vulnerable victims, with all rights arising from the Victims of Crime Act and, where applicable, the Code of Criminal Procedure. Any questioning of the victim's testimony in a manner that reflects insensitive treatment of even a potential victim of trafficking by law enforcement authorities may result in secondary victimization within the meaning of Section 2(5) of the Victims of Crime Act. Such conduct is clearly unacceptable and contrary to the fundamental principle of respectful and considerate treatment of victims (Section 3(2) of the Act).

- reconsidering the application of the Dublin Procedure to presumed victims of trafficking;

In relation to the conduct of Dublin procedures involving presumed victims of trafficking in human beings, the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior always primarily considers all individual circumstances of the given case. Based on these, it then evaluates the application of the so-called discretionary clause, which allows the Czech Republic to assume responsibility, terminate the Dublin

procedure, and continue the international protection procedure solely within the Czech Republic. This recommendation is therefore commonly implemented by the relevant Czech authorities.

- strengthening the proactive identification of victims of trafficking for different forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and exploitation of criminal activities, as well as amongst asylum seekers and persons placed in administrative detention pending removal from the Czech territory; - establishing safe reporting and effective complaint mechanisms for workers, to ensure that victims of abuses or exploitative situations can refer their case without fear of repercussions;

To fulfil this objective, it is essential for the Czech Republic to continue securing financial support from the state budget and EU funds. This support is particularly crucial for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs especially in areas such as training, field work, intercultural mediation within the framework of labour inspections, and complementary support activities.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is already implementing measures funded by both the state budget and EU resources. These measures focus on training frontline workers—particularly labour inspectors and staff at labour offices—to enhance their ability to identify signs of exploitation and respond appropriately. Field work and crisis interventions are carried out in cooperation with NGOs and other regional partners. A key component of these efforts is the introduction of safe reporting and effective complaint mechanisms for workers, ensuring that victims of abuse or exploitation can report their cases without fear of retaliation.

To improve the identification of illegal employment and violations of labour rights, the State Labour Inspection Office has established a reporting system that allows anonymous complaints to be submitted via online forms or other secure channels. This reduces barriers for workers and the public to report suspicions. The system also enables labour inspection authorities to monitor the status of complaints and, where possible, communicate with the complainant, thereby increasing transparency and trust in the resolution process.

In August 2025, a new Labour Inspection Portal was launched as part of the digitization of public administration. The portal facilitates complaint submission, provides advisory services, and allows registered (non-anonymous) users to manage their submissions.

As part of a pilot initiative between the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and State Labour Inspection Office, labour inspections have been linked to additional support services. These include targeted assistance for foreign workers in submitting complaints, provided through cooperation with intercultural mediators and NGOs offering linguistic and cultural support. The initiative also improves access to information and advice for vulnerable workers, strengthens interinstitutional cooperation in addressing suspected cases of labour exploitation, and ensures that procedures are shared with social service providers.

According to the Administration of Refugee Facilities of the Czech Republic, activities already include systematic and proactive identification of potential victims of trafficking in human beings across all forms of exploitation—sexual, labour, and criminal—including vulnerable groups such as applicants for international protection and individuals placed in detention facilities prior to expulsion. These aspects are an integral part of our existing screening mechanisms and control processes.

The Ministry of the Interior operates a free social assistance hotline for Ukrainian citizens, which provides counselling in areas such as employment, children's rights, and integration into the education system. The hotline is anonymous. Ukrainian citizens can also visit the related website¹³, where they can find job offers and comprehensive guidance on related administrative matters.

¹³ [Information on aid to Ukrainians](#)

Another option is to seek assistance from non-governmental organisations. For example, La Strada Czech Republic offers anonymous crisis support, social and legal counselling, accommodation in shelters, assistance with voluntary return to the country of origin, and operates an SOS helpline for victims of trafficking in human beings. Information is available on the website¹⁴ in nine languages.

Additionally, individuals may contact the Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman) for further support.

- putting in place practical co-operation and data sharing agreements between labour inspectors and law enforcement in order to ensure that personal information of workers, whether collected in the course of labour inspections, joint inspections, reporting or complaints mechanisms, is not used for immigration enforcement purposes, but to tackle the perpetrators of trafficking offences;

According to the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy (OAMP) of the Ministry of the Interior, regular training sessions have been conducted over the long term within the framework of established inter-agency cooperation. These trainings are aimed at cooperation partners and focus on the provision of recovery and reflection periods, as well as the granting of residence permits to presumed victims of trafficking in human beings.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as part of a pilot initiative between the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the State Labour Inspection Office, labour inspections have been systematically connected with a range of complementary support services. This cooperation enables targeted assistance for foreign nationals in submitting complaints, facilitated through collaboration with intercultural mediators and non-governmental organisations that provide linguistic and cultural support. It also contributes to improving access to information and advisory services for vulnerable workers, strengthening interinstitutional cooperation in addressing suspected cases of labour exploitation, and ensuring that procedural guidance is effectively disseminated to social service providers.

Cooperation between the State Labour Inspection Office and the Police of the Czech Republic is conducted based on clearly defined rules. Within this cooperation, information and findings related to potential criminal activity are shared. In cases where it is determined that a victim of a criminal offence is residing illegally in the territory of the Czech Republic, deportation is not initiated. Such individuals are entitled to protection as victims of crime, and the Ministry of Interior may grant them a visa for tolerated stay, which can be extended repeatedly. If the person is a victim of trafficking in human beings and is included in the Programme of Support and Protection for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, they may also apply for long-term residence for the purpose of protection.

- strengthening the training and guidance on the identification of victims of trafficking provided to relevant professionals (in particular staff working in asylum and immigration detention centres, staff examining asylum requests, as well as labour inspectors), in cooperation with civil society and lawyers.

The Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of Interior confirms that it devotes regular and systematic attention to the professional training of all relevant staff, particularly employees of asylum and detention facilities. The training is conducted in accordance with current methodologies and in cooperation with relevant partners from civil society and the legal sector, with the aim of ensuring a unified, highly professional, and sensitive approach to potential victims of trafficking in human beings. The training is delivered by an accredited provider at two-year intervals, and it is essential to ensure that at least one staff member from each asylum and detention centre participates. The course is designed as a two-day, practice-oriented, interactive training. On the first day, participants are introduced to the basic theoretical frameworks of human trafficking—its mechanisms, forms, and relevant legislation. The most comprehensive part of the course focuses on identifying individuals as trafficked persons. Emphasis is

¹⁴ [Looking for help - LaStrada](#).

placed on acquiring knowledge of the indicators of trafficking and developing the skills needed to conduct interviews with trafficked persons. The second day is dedicated primarily to the safety of trafficked individuals and the health and psychological impacts of trafficking. Participants learn about existing measures for the protection of trafficked persons' rights and for supporting their social reintegration. Each module of the course combines lectures with interactive educational techniques, and the instruction is illustrated with numerous case studies from practice.

Work with individuals in asylum and detention centres in relation to the prevention and response to trafficking in human beings is carried out systematically by the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior. Social workers, during the initial interview and throughout the clients' stay, in accordance with the relevant internal directive governing social work in the Refugee Facilities Administration facilities, pay close attention to any facts that may indicate possible trafficking in human beings. Their responsibilities also include monitoring whether clients exhibit signs of being potential victims of trafficking. When a presumed victim is identified, information is forwarded without undue delay, and contact is facilitated with a cooperating non-governmental organisation La Strada specialising in trafficking issues.

Furthermore, social workers and designated the Refugee Facilities Administration staff are required to familiarise themselves with the indicators of potential trafficking in human beings, as developed by the Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

- ensure that all victims of trafficking under the jurisdiction of the Czech Republic, including asylum seekers and persons trafficked abroad but detected in the Czech Republic, benefit from assistance measures in accordance with Article 12, paragraph 1, of the Convention

The Ministry of the Interior, Department of Asylum and Migration Policy (OAMP), possesses and applies all necessary tools to ensure adequate implementation of Article 12(1) of the Convention, as well as Council Directive 2004/81/EC. These tools primarily include the provision of relevant residence permits (or the possibility to remain in the territory) for individuals who meet the criteria set out in Article 14(1) of the Convention. The Police of the Czech Republic confirms that the assistance described in Article 12(1) of the Convention is part of the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking. If a person requests assistance and meets the conditions for inclusion in the programme, the support is provided immediately and in full accordance with all points of the mentioned paragraph. The Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) offers help and support to victims of crime in accordance with Act No. 45/2013 Coll., on Victims of Crime. Victims are informed about their rights and the support available to them throughout all stages of criminal proceedings, the course of the proceedings and their legal status, and specialized support services, including programmes for victims of human trafficking. Victims can contact any of the 74 PMS centres and 2 field offices across the Czech Republic on working days. PMS proactively offers assistance to all victims involved in cases handled by the service, and interpreters are provided for non-Czech-speaking victims in their native language. The Ministry of Justice – National Grants Division of the Legal Department develops a new Registry of Providers of Assistance to Victims of Crime, in relation to Article 12(1)(d) of the Convention (“counselling and provision of information in a language the victim understands”). Regarding Article 12(1)(a) of the Convention (material assistance), Department of Criminal Policy of the Ministry of Justice decides on applications for financial aid submitted by victims of crime and on the satisfaction of claims for compensation under Act No. 59/2017 Coll., on the Use of Financial Resources from Property Criminal Sanctions. Within these agendas, the Ministry of Justice ensures equal access to support for all victims of crime, including victims of human trafficking.

5. Take further steps to improve the identification of, and assistance to, child victims of trafficking, in particular by:
 - establishing a clear procedure (National Referral Mechanism) for the identification of child victims of trafficking which takes into account the special circumstances and needs of child victims, involves child specialists and ensures that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all proceedings relating to child victims of trafficking and

children at risk. This procedure should ensure that all child victims of trafficking detected in the Czech Republic are identified as such, rather than as victims of other criminal offences;

The Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings—including issues related to children—has become part of the permanent advisory bodies of the Government of the Czech Republic. The group includes representatives of central government authorities, professional associations, law enforcement bodies, inspection authorities, non-governmental organizations, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The group is administered by the Ministry of the Interior and meets at least twice a year. In addition to sharing information about the activities of individual members, the Coordination Group continuously monitors the implementation of tasks outlined in the current national strategy, including all ongoing and planned prevention activities. It also serves as a platform for discussions on the preparation of a new strategic document for the upcoming period.

One of the projects of the Coordination Group is the KID Card. The KID Card is a tool for identifying abuse and provides guidance for recognizing acute threats to a child's life, safety, and health. It outlines procedures for ensuring the child's protection in accordance with their best interests and applicable legal regulations. The card is intended for professionals who may come into contact with at-risk children. Teachers, social workers, healthcare professionals, emergency responders, police officers, and firefighters thus have a practical tool to help them identify endangered children in a timely manner. The KID Card contains indicators of child endangerment divided into three thematic categories: physical signs of abuse, behavioural indicators in the child, and signs of risky behaviour by caregivers. It also includes important contact information that anyone can use in cases of suspected abuse.

The Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Interior, and Health collaborated to unify child endangerment indicators across sectors as part of the task under the National Action Plan for Mental Health 2020–2030. The development of the card was supported by the Czech Expert Society for Inclusive Education and leading Czech psychologists. The ministries continue to ensure that the methodology reaches the regional level and is applied in practice. Its practical use is also part of the Crime Prevention Strategy of the Czech Republic for the period 2022–2027. The KID Card is used (or can be used) for identifying potential child or youth victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as in related prevention activities.

A free video course titled *"How to Recognize an Endangered Child,"* is available to the public. The course is designed to support early identification of children in risk and provides practical tools for delivering effective and sensitive assistance. It is intended for professionals and caregivers working with children, including educators, social workers and healthcare staff.

- collecting disaggregated data on presumed and identified child victims of trafficking;

As part of the Agreement on Mutual Cooperation between the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic and organizations providing assistance to victims of crime, and in collaboration with the Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of the Interior, a professional discussion has been initiated regarding the modification of the system for monitoring statistical data on crime. It is anticipated that the implementation of these changes will take place within a five-year timeframe, across the departments of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (including the Police of the Czech Republic) and the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic.

In this context, lists of attributes recommended for inclusion in the newly developed crime statistics monitoring system have been requested from assisting organizations, taking into account their specific areas of expertise. The collected data have subsequently been forwarded to the Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of the Interior, under whose authority the planned changes will primarily fall.

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- strengthening the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings amongst unaccompanied foreign children and children in institutional care, by taking a proactive approach and increasing outreach work, including online;

As a result of the war in Ukraine and the subsequent influx of refugees, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs identified the need to raise awareness about the prevention of child trafficking among social workers working with vulnerable children, particularly in the area of child protection services (OSPOD). Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, OSPOD staff have had access to a set of indicators of potential trafficking, specifically adapted for child victims, provided by the organization La Strada. However, based on practical experience, interactive professional training has proven to be the most effective tool in this area, allowing participants to practice the practical application of child trafficking indicators.

For this reason, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in cooperation with UNICEF, organized two types of extensive training sessions on this topic. The first training was conducted in collaboration with the NGO La Strada and regional authorities. It took place from January to May 2024 and was specifically focused on the prevention and early identification of potential child trafficking for OSPOD staff across the Czech Republic. Representatives from all regions except Prague participated, totalling approximately 160 individuals. This training built on four successful sessions held in 2023, during which around 40 OSPOD representatives were trained in cooperation with the Prague City Hall, La Strada, and UNICEF.

The second training was a five-day intensive course for Czech migration experts, including staff from the Office for International Legal Protection of Children, regional authorities, and others. It was led by a UNICEF expert on the protection of migrant children in both international and national contexts. The training also included a section dedicated to child trafficking prevention. Following this, cascade training sessions were held for child protection workers across the Czech Republic. These sessions were conducted in all regions, including Prague, except for the Central Bohemian Region.

The cascade trainings on child protection for professionals working with refugees and migrant children focused on a holistic and sensitive approach to working with these groups. From October to December 2024, 13 cascade training sessions were held, bringing together 220 professionals working with children, youth, refugees, and migrants. These sessions equipped participants with practical knowledge and tools to provide sensitive and comprehensive support to vulnerable children. The main topics included psychosocial support and mental health, case management, prevention of trafficking in human beings, and gender-based violence. The training addressed various aspects of working with unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), aiming to provide participants with a comprehensive overview and practical skills for effective work with foreign children. It also sought to raise awareness and equip participants with tools necessary for providing professional and sensitive support to this vulnerable group.

The training was divided into several parts. The first focused on mental health and psychosocial support, emphasizing that every professional can provide psychosocial support. This section covered child development and communication techniques. The case management module introduced basic characteristics, principles, steps, and the role of the case worker. The third part focused on child trafficking prevention and aimed to clearly explain the basic concepts related to this issue. In the section dedicated to refugees, unaccompanied children, and children separated from their families, participants were introduced to the legal aspects of foreign nationals' residence in the Czech Republic. The final part addressed domestic and gender-based violence, its characteristics, forms, types, cycles, and the distinction between violence and abuse. Participants were also introduced to the concept of gender-based violence and specific examples of this form of abuse.

The training was based on the methodological guide *"Child Protection for Professionals Working with Refugees and Migrants."* Its goal was to equip professionals with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively protect and support vulnerable children in humanitarian settings. The training reflected the specific challenges faced by refugee and migrant children and aimed to enhance participants' capacity to provide comprehensive, child-centred care in diverse cultural contexts. This initiative highlights the Czech Republic's commitment to positively impacting the lives of children.

- providing specialised assistance to child victims of trafficking which takes into account their specific circumstances and the best interests of the child.

Since 2003, the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings has provided comprehensive assistance to victims, including children. This includes safe accommodation, crisis intervention, legal assistance, and the possibility of residence legalization for foreign nationals. As part of the project *"Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking,"* a new methodology for identifying child victims and training programmes for frontline workers were developed. The pilot phase of these programmes began in 2024 in the Central Bohemian Region.

The main legal instrument ensuring protection and support for children who have become victims of criminal offences is Act No. 45/2013 Coll., on Victims of Crime. Under this law, children (i.e. persons under the age of eighteen) hold a privileged status, as they are considered *ipso facto* to be particularly vulnerable victims. Child victims of trafficking in human beings are therefore classified as particularly vulnerable victims *ex lege* for two legal reasons: because they are children (Section 2(4)(a) of the Act) and because they are victims of trafficking in human beings (Section 2(4)(c) of the Act).

The concept of particularly vulnerable victims is based on the assumption that while all victims require a sensitive approach, some are especially at risk of secondary victimisation or intimidation by the perpetrator. These victims require special measures beyond standard procedures to minimise the risk of further harm. This category is associated with specific rights and protections, including the right to free professional assistance (Section 5(1)), the right to avoid contact with the perpetrator or at least direct visual contact (Section 17(2) and 20(4)), the right to be interviewed by a person of the same or opposite sex according to the victim's preference (Section 19(1)), the right to a same-sex interpreter (Section 19(2)), the right to be interviewed in specially adapted premises with the most sensitive approach possible and ideally without repeated questioning (Section 20), and the right to free legal assistance (Section 51a(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code). Children are also granted additional protections beyond those afforded to other particularly vulnerable victims, such as the right to be interviewed by a specially trained professional (Section 20(2), final sentence).

Interviews with child victims are subject to special procedural rules designed to minimise psychological stress. These include the use of specialised interview rooms, the requirement that questions be asked exclusively through law enforcement authorities, limitations on repeated interviews, the possibility of conducting the interview as a non-repeatable urgent act, and an emphasis on an exceptionally considerate approach. Officers of the Police of the Czech Republic cooperate with child protection services (OSPOD) and undergo training focused on child victims of crime.

6. Ensure that the recovery and reflection period is applied to all presumed foreign victims of trafficking, regardless of the age of the victim, the country of exploitation or of whether they agree to be included in the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, including those to whom the Dublin Regulation is applicable.

In terms of current practice regarding the granting of residence support to persons who have been given a recovery and reflection period, the above-mentioned recommendation is being implemented as a standard procedure. The primary criteria guiding the administrative authority in granting residence permits to such individuals are Articles 12, 13, and 14 of the Convention, Council Directive 2004/84/EC, and Act No. 326/1999 Coll., into which the Directive has been transposed. The origin of the presumed victim, their age, or the country of exploitation or trafficking are not decisive, provided that there are sufficiently rational and reasonable grounds to assume that the person concerned is a probable victim of trafficking in human beings, and that these grounds are duly submitted to the administrative authority by competent cooperating partners

7. Take further steps to guarantee access to compensation and legal remedies for victims of trafficking, in particular by:

- ensuring that the collection of evidence about the harm the victim has suffered, including the financial gain from the exploitation of the victim or loss sustained by the victim, is part of the criminal investigation with a view to supporting compensation claims in court;

As part of the investigation and examination of criminal offenses, the Czech Police (NCOZ) is collecting the evidence as well as calculates the damage and financial loss caused to the victim by the perpetrators. These documents are then submitted as part of the case file along with a proposal to file charges.

All victims of human trafficking are entitled to free legal assistance without any conditions. Victims who enter the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking receive other forms of assistance as well, and special attention is paid to the issue of compensation.

- ensuring that victims of trafficking can effectively receive compensation from the offenders, as part of the criminal proceedings and within a reasonable time;

In order to ensure timely compensation from offenders within criminal proceedings, the Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) assists victims/injured parties by facilitating out-of-court settlements through mediation, based on the voluntary agreement of all involved parties. PMS also supports victims in asserting claims for both material and non-material damages during criminal proceedings.

To help victims obtain financial assistance from the state, PMS provides support and guidance in submitting applications for state financial aid for victims. It also assists victims in asserting claims for compensation of material or non-material harm during the enforcement of financial criminal sanctions.

- reviewing the eligibility criteria for financial assistance from the State to ensure that it is effectively accessible for all victims of trafficking, whether they were trafficked to, from or within the Czech Republic, and regardless of their nationality and residence status;

The legislative framework for compensation of victims of trafficking in human beings in the Czech Republic consists of a set of national laws, European directives, and international conventions that collectively ensure the protection of victims' rights and their access to compensation.

The foundation is the Criminal Code (Act No. 40/2009 Coll.), which defines trafficking in human beings as a criminal offence under Section 168. Within criminal proceedings, the victim has the right to claim compensation for damage caused by this offence – for example, for physical or psychological harm, loss of income, or medical and legal expenses. This claim may be submitted directly within the criminal proceedings, where the court decides on the offender's obligation to compensate the damage. Another key legal instrument is Act No. 45/2013 Coll., on Victims of Crime, which grants victims of trafficking the status of "particularly vulnerable victims." This status provides access to free legal assistance, psychosocial support, protection of personal data, and safety measures. The Act also regulates the possibility, under certain conditions, of receiving one-time financial assistance from the state, intended for victims of crime, including trafficking in human beings. In terms of practical support, the Czech Republic operates the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the International Organization for Migration. The programme provides victims with crisis intervention, legal counselling, safe accommodation, healthcare, interpreting services, assistance with legalizing residence, and in some cases, permanent residence on humanitarian grounds.

This comprehensive framework ensures that victims of trafficking in human beings have not only legal instruments to claim compensation, but also practical support and protection that enables them to recover safely and decide on further cooperation with state authorities.

8. Take measures to ensure compliance with the provision on the non-punishment of victims of human trafficking for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they were compelled to do so, pursuant to Article 26 of the Convention. Such measures should include the adoption of a specific legal provision and/or the development of guidance for law enforcement officials and prosecutors on the scope of the non-punishment provision, including with regard to criminal offences.

The forthcoming amendment to the Criminal Code and related legislation proposes the introduction of a specific provision reflecting the non-punishment principle into domestic criminal law. The most appropriate method of implementation was chosen to be a procedural solution, consisting in the extension of the grounds for discretionary termination of criminal prosecution under Section 172(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The non-punishment principle will thus be reflected in domestic law as an exception to the principle of legality, allowing criminal proceedings to be discontinued based on the prosecutor's discretionary authority, provided it is demonstrated that the criminal offence was committed by a victim of human trafficking as a direct consequence of their exploitation by the trafficker. In exercising this discretion, the public prosecutor is obliged to take into account and assess all relevant circumstances of the case. The application of prosecutorial discretion is subject to the corrective of proportionality. The prosecutor's discretion will be limited in cases where the accused acted in a manifestly disproportionate manner given their situation. A similar authority will also be vested in the court during judicial proceedings.

The non-punishment principle receives regular attention in the annual reports of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (from the perspective of Article 26 of the Convention and Article 8 of the EU Directive), as well as in seminars for public prosecutors specializing in this criminal offence. The Council of Europe's HELP online course on trafficking in human beings has been made available to specialized public prosecutors, judges, and members of the NCOZ.

9. Take measures to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking, including by:
 - ensuring that human trafficking offences are investigated and prosecuted as such every time the circumstances of a case allow this, rather than being requalified as lesser offences, notably when the case falls under the jurisdiction of regional police directorates, and lead to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for those convicted;

The principle of officiality and legality is one of the foundations of Czech criminal law. All criminal offenses that the Police of the Czech Republic or the Public Prosecutor's Office learn about in a credible manner are duly investigated. The legal classification of the offense is subject to the supervision of the public prosecutor from the initiation of criminal proceedings and cannot be changed without proper justification. The Police of Czech Republic prioritize finding the most effective procedures and approaches to ensure that all perpetrators involved in the incriminated conduct are punished, and that all victims are identified and, where possible, removed from harmful environments.

Part of the work of the Police also includes continuous improvement, learning about latest trends and forms of exploitation, and enhancing cooperation with other actors involved in combating human trafficking. These activities are actively supported and/or coordinated by expert staff of the Ministry of the Interior, especially in connection with the Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking.

The principle of legality obliges the public prosecutor to prosecute all criminal offenses they become aware of, unless the law provides otherwise (see Section 2(3) of the Criminal Procedure Code). It prevents selective prosecution and implicitly includes the requirement that the legal classification of the offense must correspond to the factual findings made during the various stages of criminal proceedings. Legal

assessment must therefore be continuously reviewed to ensure it remains consistent with new evidence or findings that may arise during the proceedings.

The Supreme Court is committed to contributing to these goals indirectly through the consistent development of its case law. By clarifying the interpretation of legal provisions and formulating standards to be followed by lower courts, it seeks to promote a unified and principled approach to cases of human trafficking. In particular, it aims to establish a framework for the correct legal classification of these offenses that reflects their seriousness and prevents trivialization of the phenomenon. At the same time, it emphasizes the protection of victims and the alignment of domestic law application with international obligations binding on the Czech Republic.

In this regard, the Court takes into account requirements arising from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, methodological materials of CEPEJ, and broader standards adopted by the Council of Europe and other international monitoring bodies. It is committed to integrating these sources into its case law in a way that supports the effective functioning of the justice system as a whole.

The Supreme Court also recognizes that human trafficking is a constantly evolving phenomenon and that legal responses must adapt accordingly. Therefore, it is committed not only to maintaining but also to continuously developing its case law in this area to ensure that its decision-making practice responds to new forms of exploitation and new challenges identified by international and domestic institutions. In this way, it aims to provide lower courts with authoritative and up-to-date guidance, support consistency in judicial decision-making, and contribute to the ongoing strengthening of the criminal justice response. Through these efforts, the Supreme Court seeks to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing the credibility of the criminal justice system and ensuring that cases of human trafficking are addressed fairly, consistently, and with due regard to their seriousness.

- reviewing gaps in the investigation, prosecution and conviction of cases of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, and taking the necessary measures to address them, including legislative measures if necessary;

To ensure the lawful conduct of police authorities, the system is complemented by oversight and control from the Public Prosecutor's Office. The public prosecutor supervises the legality of pre-trial proceedings, has the authority to intervene in their course, issue instructions to police authorities, and review the justification for initiating or terminating criminal prosecution.

In addition, higher-level public prosecutor's offices oversee the activities of lower-level offices, creating a multi-tiered system of control aimed at preventing procedural errors, incorrect legal qualification, or violations of the rights of parties to the proceedings.

The Czech legal framework for combating human trafficking is largely aligned with the legislation of other EU countries. Czech law has already transposed the current EU regulations in this area (a consultation process is currently underway regarding amendments to criminal law in connection with Directive 2024/1712/EU). Since 2017, the crime of human trafficking under Section 168 of the Criminal Code has been committed predominantly in the form of sexual exploitation. However, this does not mean that labour exploitation is not given due attention.

It has long been shown that this criminal activity is mostly committed in the form of co-perpetration, often in connection with other crimes – most commonly moral offenses, and sometimes drug-related crimes. Offenders are usually sentenced to unconditional imprisonment. The criminal activity is mostly committed within the territory of the Czech Republic, although in some cases it extends abroad.

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the area of human trafficking is continuously monitored. New judgments are included in the ECHR case law overview on human trafficking, which is regularly updated and published on the extranet of the Public Prosecutor's Office, making it accessible to all specialized prosecutors (a similar approach is applied in the area of illegal migration, which is often

related to trafficking). Case law of general courts and the Constitutional Court related to this criminal activity is also monitored.

In judicial practice, legal qualification under Section 168 of the Criminal Code does not pose difficulties. Judgment No. 24/2012 Sb. is fully respected; among other things, it states that the conduct of a perpetrator who incites, mediates, hires, lures, or persuades a person under eighteen years of age to engage in prostitution, or profits from such conduct, cannot be qualified as pimping under Section 189 of the Criminal Code, but as human trafficking under Section 168. Given the status of the victim (a child under Section 126 of the Criminal Code), this constitutes a specific criminal offense.

- ensuring that the length of legal proceedings in cases of trafficking of human beings is reasonable, in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (related to Article 6, paragraph 1 of the ECHR) and the standards set by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

The length of judicial proceedings in the Czech Republic is considered proportionate to the mentioned standards. None of the complaints submitted to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in cases of human trafficking were found justified in relation to the duration of proceedings. The length of criminal proceedings is monitored and depends on the need to clarify the criminal activity with full responsibility, objectivity, and completeness.

Victims are often not Czech citizens, and it is necessary to use the European Investigation Order (EIO). Effective international cooperation is crucial due to the organized nature of this crime. However, cooperation with foreign countries may also prolong proceedings—especially when the victim has already returned to their home country.

Proceedings are conducted in accordance with ECHR case law, which has established auxiliary criteria for assessing excessive length of proceedings—such as the complexity of the case, the conduct of the parties, the actions of the authorities, and the importance of the proceedings for the participant (see e.g. *Neumeister v. Austria*, 1968, No. 1936/63).

Within the structure of the Public Prosecutor's Office, internal regulations have introduced specialization of prosecutors in human trafficking cases at regional, high, and supreme levels. At the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, a national rapporteur operates for human trafficking, violence against women and children, illegal migration and employment, gender-based, domestic and sexual violence, and victim rights protection. An annual report on the state of human trafficking in the Czech Republic is published.

The national rapporteur contributed to the preparation of responses to the USA TIP questionnaire for the previous calendar year. The TIP Report is published annually by the USA Department of State. In July 2024, the Czech Republic received the results of the USA government audit for 2023 and, as in previous years, was ranked among Tier 1 countries—representing the highest possible rating. This confirms that the Czech Republic fully meets the minimum standards for effective combat against this crime and ensures appropriate victim protection.

A working group for victims of crime will operate at the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, focusing also on the status and protection of victims of human trafficking. Special attention will be paid to the victim's right to effective investigation and access to legal assistance.

The Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office is represented in the THB Focus Group—composed of specialized prosecutors combating human trafficking. The establishment of this group is a key measure of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021–2025). It is implemented by the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in cooperation with Eurojust and aims to strengthen judicial cooperation in cross-border trafficking cases and improve the criminal justice response through enhanced understanding.

Within the Czech Police, a specialized unit has been established: NCOZ SKPV, Department of Criminal Structures, Division of Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration. This unit plays a key role in investigating organized trafficking and migration-related crimes.