Situational Update
Issue No 26, 30 July 2026

Victims of trafficking in human beings in asylum and reception

The information presented in this Situational Update complements the developments reported in the Asylum Report 2026. It is a follow-up to Fact Sheet No 34, covering the period 1 July 2025-30 June 2026.

EU legislation contains provisions which address asylum applicants with special needs who may be considered particularly vulnerable, including victims of human trafficking. These provisions ensure that vulnerable applicants receive adequate support to benefit from their rights and comply with the obligations, which are defined under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

EU Member States were obligated to transpose the revised EU Anti-Trafficking Directive by 15 July 2026, which aims to address emerging challenges and strengthen strategic and operational responses to tackling human trafficking. One of the main requirements is to adopt a national action plan by 2028 to ensure a coordinated and sustainable response to human trafficking and establish formal referral mechanisms and national focal points for cross-border referral of victims

In parallel, the entry into force of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum in June 2026 fostered the development of tools to strengthen early identification of vulnerable persons, including presumed trafficking victims, in asylum and reception systems and to have an effective national referral system.

The upcoming EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2026-2030 is planned for later in 2026. It involved a public call for evidence from various stakeholders to shape comprehensive and efficient policy responses in addressing new threats, opportunities to tackle the phenomenon and challenges posed by new technologies in targeting vulnerable populations, such as asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

Methodology

This situational update presents the latest policy and legislative developments in EU+ countries, based on publicly-available information on trafficking in human beings in asylum and reception systems. The sources of information include national authorities, EU institutions, international organisations and civil society organisations.

The reporting on national practices, activities and recommendations serves as examples which are not exhaustive and do not imply endorsement on the part of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). Due to the continuously changing situation, the information described may have changed or been updated by the time of publication. Please consult the original sources for the latest developments and information.

1. Key trends and highlights in 2025-2026

1 **July 2025**

- EMN released a study which noted a significant rise in the number of third-country nationals in the EU who are trafficking victims. The study underlined the importance of operational cooperation and strategic partnerships.

2 **September 2025**

- The Council of Europe's Anti-Trafficking Division launched a new database on case law related to human trafficking as part of the HUDOC-GRETA Database. The database contains cases which were identified during GRETA's evaluations.

3 **October 2025**

- Eurostat released its report and main findings based on data on trafficking in human beings, covering 2013-2023. It found that over 83,000 victims were registered in 10 years, with the number of trafficking victims from non-EU countries having tripled.

4 **December 2025**

- The European Commission launched a Call for Evidence for developing the new EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. Stakeholders were invited to share their input, expertise and proposals.

5

- The EU Anti-Trafficking Hub published a study on trafficking for labour exploitation in selected EU Member States.

February 2026

- The European Commission launched a multilingual EU-wide awareness-raising campaign, "End Human Trafficking. Break the Invisible Chain", to tackle human trafficking.

6

March 2026

- Europol opened its European Centre against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS) as a result of the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The centre provides operational, technical and forensic support to dismantle high-risk migrant smuggling networks.

7

May 2026

- The EU Anti-Trafficking Hub released a study on the collection and improvements of EU statistics on trafficking in human beings .

July 2026

- EU Member States are obligated to transpose the revised Anti-Trafficking Directive, adopted in 2024, by 15 July 2026.

Upcoming

Late 2026

8

- The European Commission plans to publish the EU Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2026-2030.
- The EU Anti-Trafficking Hub will publish its study on national referral mechanisms.

2. Developments at the national level in 2025-2026

- The Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection (DMMIP) in **Cyprus** transferred its anti-trafficking duties and responsibilities, as well as the Multidisciplinary Thematic Coordination Group (MTC), to the Ministry of Justice. This move was welcomed by 14 civil society organisations in Cyprus, which issued a joint statement in February 2026 calling for the appointment of a national rapporteur and systematic training on human trafficking for frontline staff.[9]

- **Italy** introduced several new measures and amended its legislation to transpose the EU Anti-trafficking Directive.[1] In March 2026, the Council of Ministers approved a legislative decree for a preliminary examination, which included measures to strengthen the system to combat trafficking by adapting the framework for criminal sanctions to new and emerging forms of exploitation. Specifically, the Criminal Code was amended

[1] Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1712/oj/eng

to include in Articles 600 and 601 the crimes of exploitation of surrogacy, illegal adoption and forced marriage. The text takes into account the evolution of criminal means, including explicit reference to the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in both recruitment and the dissemination of material relating to exploitation. It also introduces the principle of non-punishment for crimes committed under duress. Furthermore, the rules on the administrative liability of entities (Legislative Decree No 231 of 8 June 2001) were integrated, providing for pecuniary sanctions ranging from EUR 100-EUR 600 and disqualification sanctions for a period of no less than 6 months for legal entities involved in the new trafficking crimes.[10]

- In view of implementing the new measures in the upcoming **Italian** National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings and Severe Exploitation 2026-2028 and following the reorganisation of the Department for Equal Opportunities, the new Office for Policies against Human Trafficking and Severe Exploitation will now be responsible for the coordination of preventative measures and victim support.[11]

- **Italy** has also introduced urgent measures to regulate the entry and management of foreign workers and migrants with Decree Law No 146/2025 of 3 October 2025. The decree foresees that victims of labour exploitation receive a work permit for 1 year, providing access to the *Assegno di Inclusione* (social inclusion benefits), similar to victims of trafficking and domestic violence.[12]

- **Denmark** launched its Strategy and Action Plan to combating trafficking in human beings for the period 2026-2029. It focuses on further strengthening cooperation and coordination between authorities, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders, including in asylum and in reception.[13] In the previous year, the fourth evaluation report of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) recommended to Denmark to establish a comprehensive vulnerability assessment and provide continuous training to relevant staff working with asylum seekers. GRETA especially called on the Danish authorities to address the absconding of children from reception facilities and to improve the identification of child trafficking victims.[14]

- **Finland** launched its National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2026-2027.[15] During 2025, Finland also published its National Referral Mechanism Handbook for the identification of and assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings, which is a practical tool for professionals to improve the identification of victims, their referral to services and the organisation of services and care.[16] In January 2025, forced marriage was added as a form of trafficking to the Criminal Code of Finland.[17]

- **Germany** extended its temporary internal border controls in order to take decisive action against smuggling and trafficking.[18]

- With Law 5307/2026, **Greece** introduced new measures to improve the identification and referral of trafficking victims, to reinforce safeguards and to ensure a more coordinated response in asylum and reception processes. The new provisions foresee that national authorities and service providers must immediately inform the National Referral Mechanism when identifying presumed victims (Article 38(4)).

- **Norway** launched a new National Strategy against Human Trafficking (2025-2030) in May 2025, with the objective of strengthening efforts to combat human trafficking. The strategy focuses on ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated approach, as well as on prevention, assistance and protection for victims, and prosecution of offenders. Five

ministries are responsible for implementing 18 measures during 2025-2030. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) participates in the inter-directorate group established to contribute to improved services and measures.[19]

- **Poland** initiated work on implementing Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which amends Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims. As part of these efforts, Poland also began drafting a comprehensive law on combating human trafficking to systematically and holistically regulate state actions in this area. To develop this legislation, a special working group was established within the Interministerial Team for Combating Human Trafficking.[20]

2.1. Efficient procedures and safe spaces for trafficking victims

- In **Greece**, the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) updated its standard operating procedures which provide guidance to frontline staff on the identification and management of human trafficking victims. The revisions were the result of consultations with staff working in the field and other relevant stakeholders (including the National Centre for Social Solidarity). The standard operating procedures describe a referral pathway to provide relevant support. The RIS also updated information material for staff to facilitate assessments and procedures, for example a vulnerability assessment tool, a tool for the identification of gender-based violence, several templates to be used by the medical and psychosocial support staff, etc.[21]

- Creating additional safe accommodation spaces for victims of human trafficking was one of the main developments in reception in **France**. The asylum department of the Ministry of the Interior published a call for expression of interest in October 2025 for the provision of an additional 50 places for the reception of female asylum seekers and refugees who are victims of violence or human trafficking, and their children, within the national reception system.[22] There are currently 350 adapted and secure places in the national reception system dedicated to victims of violence and trafficking.[23]

  Following Marseille and Bordeaux, in December 2025 Strasbourg and in June 2026, Toulouse became the third and fourth regional branch of the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) to sign a charter for the protection of female asylum seekers who are victims of different forms of violence and human trafficking. The objectives set out in the charter demonstrate a clear commitment to detect, support and protect vulnerable women throughout the asylum procedure, including through the provision of emergency accommodation.[24]

- The **French** Defender of Rights *(Défenseur des droits)* published a report in July 2026, calling for better identification and procedures for minors who are victims of trafficking. It recommended that national authorities systematically take into account trafficking indicators and refrain from placing minors in detention, including in transit zones at the borders.[25]

- In the second half of 2025, the **Netherlands** observed an increase in signs of transgressive behaviour and risks of criminal exploitation among some Syrian unaccompanied minors and young adults. As a result, there were more Syrian minors who were both perpetrators and victims of criminal exploitation in protected reception centres. Therefore, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) jointly with the Red Cross, developed a guidance document for staff working with unaccompanied minors to have a structured dialogue with youth, informing them about risks, which would reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their resilience. For victims, these dialogues can facilitate self-identification as victims and encourage them to seek appropriate assistance and protection.[26]

- The Ministry of the Interior and Administration in **Poland** again increased the budget for the National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking (KCIK) to 2 million PLN. The decision was due to the increased demand for support resulting from the influx of refugees from Ukraine. The centre ensures a 24-hour hotline, crisis intervention, safe housing and comprehensive assistance for victims.[27]

2.2. Artificial intelligence, modern technologies and digital recruitment of victims

- Various stakeholders from the EU, international organisations and civil society organisations gathered during 2025-2026 at global fora to discuss emerging trends, challenges and the role of modern technologies, such as AI, in tackling and preventing human trafficking. They also addressed the increasing misuse of digital platforms and applications.[28]

- The latest European Commission consultation to develop the new EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2026-2030 gathered input from various stakeholders, namely national authorities, which suggested to invest in digital capacities, including advanced digital tools and AI-based monitoring[29] to support timely identification and effective multi-agency coordination both at the national and international levels.[30] Addressing digital recruitment, the Council of Europe's GRETA suggested to create an EU-wide framework for risk indicators on online trafficking recruitment based on real case patterns, including the so-called 'lover boy' methods, fraudulent job offers and crypto-based payments.[31]

- Services at the national level, for example applying for a residence permit, often involve using information and communication technologies and digital applications. In this context, the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) called on authorities to provide physical access to public services, since some victims may not have free access to electronic tools, such as laptops and mobile phones, and can encounter difficulties when using digital tools for keeping track of their residence permit application[32]

- To ensure accessibility to services for all, the European Disability Forum called on including disability rights, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, into the new upcoming EU-Anti Trafficking Strategy and to integrate a disability perspective in migration and asylum policies.[33]

- The IOM released a new dataset on trafficking, using innovative technologies to support data collection and protect the safety and privacy of victims. The data provide information on the socio-demographic profiles of victims, types of exploitation and the trafficking process, including the means of control used on victims.[34]

2.3. Training for frontline staff to better meet the needs of trafficking victims

- In its annual evaluation report for 2025, the **Belgian** independent National Rapporteur on Trafficking drew attention to psychological vulnerabilities and called for strengthened training and specialisation of staff to better meet the needs of trafficking victims.[35] The Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) is currently developing new, comprehensive training on the detection of trafficking cases.[36]

- From June 2025-June 2026, the **Greek** RIS carried out continuous and targeted training to increase staff expertise. Numerous training courses focused on addressing the needs of applicants with vulnerabilities, including trafficking victims.[37]

- In **Italy,** a Level 1 Human Trafficking training programme was delivered for staff working in Immigration Departments of prefectures and in reception centres. The programme consisted of 18–20 hours of online self-paced learning, followed by 2 days of in-person training. The training was offered through two sessions in 2024, two additional sessions in 2025 and three sessions in 2026.[38]

- In **Malta**, the Human Rights Directorate and Valletta Cruise Port, a subsidiary of Global Ports Holding, signed a strategic memorandum of understanding to prevent human trafficking and strengthen security and vigilance within sea terminals. The memorandum foresees activities such as enhancing early detection of victims, the capacity of frontline staff at key entry points to identify victims of trafficking, awareness-raising among the general public and travellers at Malta's ports, and inter-agency cooperation. Standard operating procedures will be developed for staff to guide them on how to act in suspected human trafficking cases.[39]

- The Red Cross in the **Netherlands**, jointly with NGOs Defence for Children and FIER (the national centre of expertise on (sexual) violence, exploitation and honour-related issues), provided training on recognising and responding to signs of human trafficking to 600 staff working with unaccompanied minors in the asylum system between June 2025-June 2026. It was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Justice as part of the multi-annual Action Program against Human Trafficking and was well received as there were concerns about the exploitation of young asylum seekers.[40] In collaboration with the Red Cross and FIER, an online training programme was also developed for staff at locations for unaccompanied minors and COA professionals working with young adults. The training covers recognising signs of human trafficking, learning how to ask follow-up questions and understanding how to handle signals. After completing the online training, participants can enroll in an in-depth e-learning course on human trafficking, which is eligible for continuing education credits *(Stichting Kwaliteitsregister Jeugd (SKJ))*.[41]

- Since September 2025, **Poland** has expanded its anti-trafficking training initiatives to include a new professional group of frontline staff: 112 emergency call operators. These specialised training sessions are conducted under an agreement between the Ministry of the Interior and Administration of Poland and the IOM Poland.

- In September 2025, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in **Poland** organised a pilot project "Violence as the Language of Power: Latin America Without Filters" for members of provincial anti-trafficking teams and the Police and Border Guard. Given that Latin American citizens are the most frequently identified victims of human trafficking in Poland, the one-day workshops were designed to help frontline staff better understand their culture and needs. The sessions were prepared and conducted by academic experts specialising in Latin American society.[42]

- To strengthen preventive measures in the countries of origin of human trafficking victims, **Poland** initiated cooperation with foreign diplomatic missions stationed in the country. On 8 October 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a workshop organised by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, in cooperation with the CBSS Secretariat and IOM Poland. Attended by accredited diplomats and national institutional representatives, the event focused on the practical application of the CBSS handbook for embassies. The programme featured expert-led sessions by the Swedish Migration Agency and IOM Poland, alongside an inter-institutional panel with the Police and Border Guard, aimed to enhance the capacity of diplomats to identify, support and protect victims.[43]

- In **Poland**, the National Bar Council of Attorneys-at-Law (Krajowa Izba Radców Prawnych (KIRP)), which has more than 54,000 members and provides continuous professional training to lawyers across 19 Regional Bars, engaged Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) to develop online training modules on child human trafficking for legal experts. The training curriculum launched in March 2026 includes five modules covering: Defining Child Trafficking — Legal Dimensions and Typology; International Law and Child Trafficking in the Polish Legal Context; Standards for the Protection of Child Trafficking Victims; The Lawyer's Role in Supporting a Child Through Legal Proceedings; and Working with Child Victims — Procedural Practice from a Child Rights Perspective.[44]

2.4. Other projects, activities and observations

- In June 2025, the project HOST was launched for a period of 24 months. It is funded by AMIF and aims to prevent and combat sexual and labour exploitation of migrants and refugees in the hospitality sector, especially in highly-touristic areas, in **Greece**, **Italy**, **Spain**, **Cyprus**, **the Netherlands** and in **the EU** more broadly. The work is coordinated by the Social Action and Innovation Centre (KMOP), and the project brings together local authorities, labour inspectorates, trade unions, migrant communities and NGOs.[45]

- In July 2025, the AMIF-funded REACHing project – coordinated by the French CSO Forum réfugiés in cooperation with IRC Italia, the Greek Council for Refugees and Cesie ETS – was launched for a period of 24 months. Its main objective is to deploy small mobile expert teams to several regions of **France**, **Italy** and **Greece** to provide support to victims and build the capacity of professionals on issues relating to trafficking in human beings in the context of asylum.[46]

- **Greece** joined the Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence against Children, which brings together countries and international partners committed to accelerating action to eliminate all forms of violence against children, including trafficking, exploitation and abuse, in the context of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It also serves as a common framework for cooperation to share data and best practices, monitor progress and highlight challenges.[47]

- The CSOs Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) and eLiberare published a report on Lessons Learned from Counter-Trafficking Efforts Following the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine in June 2026. The research focuses geographically on Czechia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, countries that have served as primary transit and destination points for displaced children from Ukraine.[48]

- During 2025 and 2026, the **Polish** National Police continued the nationwide "ESCAPE TRUCK" campaign, which focuses on the prevention of forced labour and human trafficking. The campaign achieved widespread local media coverage, effectively reaching diverse public audiences.

- In March 2026, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in **Poland**, alongside the OSCE, PKP Polish Railway Lines S.A. and PKP S.A., launched a nationwide educational campaign against human trafficking. Directives 2011/36/EU and 2024/1712 obligate Member States to cooperate with the private sector to combat this crime and protect victims. As the first large-scale partnership campaign between public and private institutions in Poland, this initiative fulfils legal requirements while demonstrating the vital need for inter-institutional cooperation.

- The **Polish** Ministry of the Interior and Administration, in cooperation with national stakeholders and NGOs, developed the "Catalogue of the Rights of Human Trafficking Victims in the Polish Legal System" in August 2025 to provide better support to victims of trafficking and implement GRETA recommendations. Written in an accessible, non-legal language, the catalogue was prepared in Polish, English, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian and Romanian and was distributed primarily to the Police and Border Guards and the National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking.

- An EU-UN meeting focused on the rise of trafficking victims from Latin America in the EU.[49] The European Commission consultation for the upcoming EU Anti-Trafficking Strategy also included feedback on the importance of carrying out continuous training on new victim profiles, with a focus on Latin American women and trafficking for sexual exploitation. Spain is an important destination country, but victims are also living and transiting through other EU countries.[50]

- The IOM launched various prevention initiatives and activities. For example, the global campaign “Anyone a victim” supports survivors of human trafficking which mobilises public engagement and fosters a more rights-based and community-centred approach across countries of origin, transit and destination.[51] Another campaign addresses the increasing use of sports as a cover for child trafficking and exploiting young athletes.[52]

- The Council of Europe's GRETA published various evaluation reports, namely for Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Romania, in the framework of its 4th evaluation round. The reports focused on vulnerabilities, support for vulnerable victims, prevention measures and the use of information and communication technologies. The main concerns identified in the GRETA reports were delays in the identification of trafficking victims, their referral to the adequate support services and the lack of systematic training of frontline staff.[53] GRETA called on countries to introduce more measures to ensure timely vulnerability assessments (in Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Latvia, Malta and Portugal) and to provide systematic training for faster identification among border police officers, asylum case officers, staff in reception facilities, staff in detention facilities and other relevant frontline professionals (in France, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Romania). GRETA recommended introducing specific procedures for children in the national identification and referral mechanism in France and establishing protocols and guidance on identifying child trafficking victims in Portugal. It also raised concerns about children absconding from reception centres and the risk of unaccompanied minors becoming trafficking victims in France, Denmark and Malta.

- GRETA issued guidance in July 2026 with practical recommendations to address current shortcomings in accessing residence permits by trafficking victims.[54]

- In its concluding observations, the UN Committee against Torture called on France[55] to effectively implement existing legislation; reinforce procedures to identify as early as possible victims of torture, trafficking and gender/based violence amongst asylum seekers; and provide them with priority access to the refugee status determination procedure and urgent medical treatment.[56]

- Trafficking victims may initially be identified as criminal offenders and not recognised as victims who were forced to commit criminal acts. In this framework, the 35th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) adopted a resolution in June 2026 addressing trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced criminality, including crimes such as online fraud, drug trafficking, theft, extortion, forced begging and activities linked to scam centres. This resolution emphasises victim identification, the principle of non-punishment for victims, strengthened prevention measures and stronger international cooperation. [57]

4. Recent case law

The EUAA Case Law Database gathers jurisprudence from EU+ countries related to CEAS. For cases related to trafficking in human beings in the asylum and reception context, please see here.

During 2025-2026, jurisprudence related to human trafficking focused on adequate vulnerability assessments and the timely identification of trafficking victims being transferred under the Dublin III Regulation.

- The Court of Cassation in Italy upheld the appeal of a Nigerian woman who claimed to be a victim of trafficking and found that the lower tribunal had failed to properly assess indicators of human trafficking. The court stated that the lower court had failed to

adequately assess the victim's vulnerabilities, her risk of being re-trafficked and gender-based persecution in her country of origin.

- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) considered that the Swiss authorities did not sufficiently examine and assess the trauma and mental health of a victim of trafficking from Nigeria who was to be transferred under the Dublin procedure. The applicant had been sexually exploited in Italy and subsequently threatened for debts, when she fled to Switzerland to seek international protection. However, the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) requested the Italian authorities to readmit the applicant, stating that reception conditions in Italy would not be adequate. The UN CEDAW concluded that the Swiss authorities had failed to conduct an individualised and gender-sensitive assessment of the asylum claim and a removal to Italy would have amounted to a breach of Articles 2(d) and 6 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, since she was at real risk of irreparable harm, potential persecution and traumatisation due to her mental state.[58]

5. EUAA support to national administrations

The EUAA is committed to supporting EU+ countries in their efforts to identify and refer presumed victims of human trafficking to the specialised care and support services that they need. The Agency aims to build capacity and strengthen practical cooperation and information-sharing among EU+ countries and other relevant experts on trafficking in human beings in the context of asylum and reception.

In the framework of its operational support to Member States, the EUAA and countries intensified efforts in 2025-2026 to address trafficking in human beings with new measures across several national contexts.

Greece

- The EUAA launched activities with national partners to support the development of a new National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking.
- The EUAA supported the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) in drafting revised standard operating procedures for identification and response to possible cases of trafficking in human beings. The Agency also assisted the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVPIP) in the drafting of guidelines to manage unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are affected by or at risk of human trafficking.
- The EUAA cooperated with the GSVPIP in the planning, funding and project management of national and multi-national projects on trafficking, including EMBRACE, Host and Safe Borders.
- The EUAA supported the development of training material and facilitated training and capacity-building activities targeting a wide range of stakeholders. This included seven pocket guides which were published under the scope of the PROCAP project offering guidance on the identification of potential trafficking victims to personnel in various industries and services: airports, public transportation, maritime transportation, the tourism industry, MoMA's Reception and Identification Service, labour inspection and within the educational system.

Italy

- The EUAA adopted standard operating procedures at the prefecture level throughout the country to ensure that presumed trafficking victims are identified and referred in accordance with established national procedures.
- Additionally, in June 2025 the EUAA and Italy updated the operational vademecum for the reception and care of unaccompanied minors *(Vademecum Operativo per la Presa in Carico e Accoglienza dei Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati)* with a dedicated chapter on human trafficking.
- The EUAA and national authorities cooperated in the design of new anti-trafficking protocols across different regions in the country.

More information on the EUAA's operational assistance: https://www.euaa.europa.eu/operations

The Agency is adapting its range of training modules, practical tools and guidance material to meet the requirements of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Over 2025-2026, the following tools have been developed:

- **Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception** including vulnerability aspects to support Member States in the implementation of reception-related aspects of CEAS, including the identification, assessment and response to the needs of persons with special needs and (presumed) victims of trafficking. https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/operational-standards-indicators-reception-including-vulnerability-aspects

- **Referral toolkit**: The Referral Tool which is used by registration officers, reception officers, asylum case officers, first line officers, and decision- and policymakers facilitates the referral of applicants with special needs, including trafficking victims and supports authorities in mapping the support services available in the territory. It harmonises communication among the actors involved in the referral process. https://reftool.euaa.europa.eu

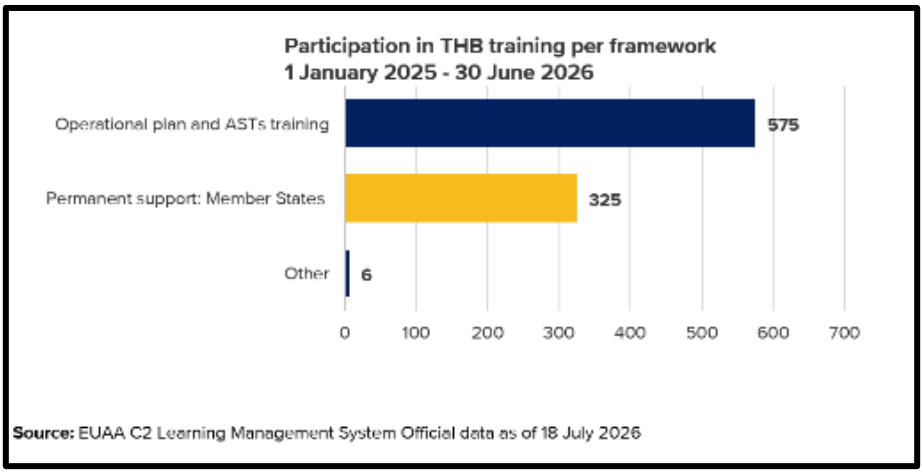
Upcoming: Later in 2026, the EUAA will publish a mapping report based on surveys circulated among EUAA networks on the topic "Addressing Trafficking in Human Beings in the Context of Asylum and Reception".

More information on technical support and vulnerability toolkit: https://www.euaa.europa.eu/asylum-knowledge/vulnerability

The EUAA training curriculum ensures that asylum and reception officials throughout Europe have the skills needed to provide fast and fair procedures which are in line with EU standards. Between 1 January 2025-30 June 2026, the EUAA delivered 44 sessions related to trafficking in human beings, with close to 900 learners. The training sessions were tailored to various target groups, ensuring that specific roles received relevant training. For example, frontline roles within NGOs and national administrations were the primary recipients of training on trafficking in human beings to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to better manage victims.

Across EU+ countries, the highest number of participations in EUAA training on trafficking in human beings were staff from Italy, Spain, Germany and Greece. These four countries jointly accounted for almost 80% of total participations.

Most attendees of the EUAA training courses participated under the Agency's Operational Plans to build capacity in Member States and as part of Asylum Support Teams. This was particularly the case in Italy, Spain and Greece. With a 94% satisfaction rate for the training activities, national officials reported that they were quickly able to apply the knowledge they gained in the field.



More information on EUAA training: https://www.euaa.europa.eu/asylum-knowledge/vulnerability

Conclusions

Forms of exploitation and patterns in human trafficking continue to evolve and adapt to changing migratory flows. Emerging trends and the use of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, create additional challenges to tackle trafficking. And challenges continue in asylum and reception systems to ensure that victims of trafficking are not re-exploited or exposed to additional trauma. Particular attention is required to the specific risks and protection needs of children, who may not disclose exploitation or may be overlooked or misidentified in asylum and reception. Therefore, child-sensitive identification and referral mechanisms are essential to ensure prompt access to appropriate protection and specialised support, guided by the child's best interests.[59]

Examples in this report show the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration among entities at the national level, including national authorities, international and civil society organisations, health professionals, municipalities, etc., when providing support to asylum applicants who are victims of human trafficking, especially unaccompanied minors and separated children. Specialised training and capacity-building on trafficking for frontline staff and stakeholders, who are in contact with presumed victims, remain high priorities for Member States to ensure timely identification and referral of support services.

Expanding and harmonising data collection across the EU will help to better understand the trafficking phenomena, including the profile of victims and recruitment methods used. Data can also help to develop targeted policies and practices to tackle trafficking.

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[15] Ministry of Justice (Finland) (28 May 2026). Suomi torjuu ihmiskauppaa : Ihmiskaupan vastainen toimintaohjelma 2026–2027 [Finland combats human trafficking: Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2026-2027].

[16] Ministry of Justice (Finland) (29 January 2025). Ihmiskaupan uhrien tunnistamis- ja ohjausmekanismi (NRM) : Käsikirja uhrien tunnistamiseen ja auttamiseen [Victim Identification and Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings: A Manual for Identifying and Assisting Victims].

[17] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Finnish Immigration Office.

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[19] Government of Norway (28 May 2025). National strategy against Human Trafficking (2025-2030).

[20] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by the Office for Foreigners, Poland

[21] Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Greece) | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου. Standard Procedures: Reception & Identification Service.

[22] Ministry of the Interior (France) | Ministère de l'Intérieur (24December 2025). Appel à manifestation d'intérêt : Spécialisation de 50 places pour l'accueil de femmes demandeuses d'asile ou réfugiées victimes de violence et/ou de la traite des êtres humains [Call for expression of interest: Specialising 50 reception places for female asylum applicants or refugees who are victims of violence or trafficking in human beings].

[23] French Office for Immigration and Integration | Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII) (21 April 2026). Le dispositif d'hébergement spécialisé [Specialised accommodation facilities].

[24] French Office for Immigration and Integration | Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII) (9 December 2025). Signature de la charte pour la protection des femmes demandeuses d'asile à Strasbourg [Signing of Strasbourg Charter for protecting female asylum seekers].

[24] French Office for Immigration and Integration | Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII) (25 June 2026). A Toulouse, une nouvelle étape pour la protection des femmes demandeuses d'asile victimes de violences.

[25] Defender of Rights | Défenseur des Droits (20 July 2026). Mieux protéger les mineurs victimes de traite des êtres humains : Les recommandations de la Défenseure des droits [Better protection for minors who are victims of human trafficking: Recommendations from the Defender of Rights].

[26] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) (Netherlands).

[27] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by the Office for Foreigners (Poland).

[28] European Commission (19 December 2025). Anti-Trafficking networks address the role of modern technology.

[29] European Commission (31 December 2025). Feedback from National Anti-Trafficking Centre of the Crime Prevention Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Feedback reference F33362600; European Commission (26 January 2026). Feedback from Ministry of the Interior and Administration (Poland), Feedback reference F33368283; European Commission (7 January 2026). Feedback from Polish National Police, Feedback reference F33363122.

[30] European Commission (26 January 2026). Feedback from General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVPIP), Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greece, Feedback reference F33367980.

[31] European Commission (26 January 2026). Feedback from Council of Europe - Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Feedback reference F33368418.

[32] European Commission (26 January 2026). Feedback from Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'Homme (CNCDH), Feedback reference F33368516.

[33] European Disability Forum (3 February 2026). Not invisible: Disability rights in the next EU Anti-Trafficking Strategy.

[34] IOM (22 May 2026). IOM Releases New Trafficking Dataset on CTDC.

[35] Centre fédéral Migration MYRIA (8 December 2025). Rapport annuel Traite et trafic des êtres humains 2025, Victimes : les voir, les écouter | Annual report Trafficking in human beings 2025, Victims : Seeing them, listening to them.

[36] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) (Belgium).

[37] Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Greece) | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, Εκπαιδευτικές Δράσεις Υπηρεσίας Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης. Reception and Identification Service Educational Activities.

[38] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Ministry of the Interior, Italy.

[39] Valletta Cruise Port (October 2025). Valletta Cruise Port Takes Leading Role in Strengthening Human Trafficking Prevention Measures.

[40] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by the Red Cross (Netherlands).

[41] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) (Netherlands).

[42] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by the Office for Foreigners (Poland).

[43] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by the Office for Foreigners (Poland).

[44] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).

[45] Greek Forum of Refugees (13 October 2025). GFR joins "HOST" – Tackling trafficking in hospitality sector, with a focus on migrants and refugees', TCN workers; La Strada International (July 2025). Projects: HOST- Tackling human trafficking in the hospitality sector.

[46] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Forum Réfugiés (France).

[47] Ministry of Migration and Asylum (Greece) | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (18 February, 2026). Η Ελλάδα στη Διεθνή Συμμαχία για την Εξάλειψη της Βίας κατά των Παιδιών [Greece in the International Alliance to Eliminate Violence against Children].

[48] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).

[49] European Commission (8 July, 2025). EU and UN cooperate on combatting trafficking in human beings.

[50] European Commission (26 January 2026). Feedback from the Human Trafficking Unit, Spanish General Prosecutor's Office, Feedback reference 33368479.

[51] IOM (24 November 2025). IOM Launches Global Campaign to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking.

[52] IOM (13 August 2025). IOM backs Mission 89 to Strengthen Fight Against Child Trafficking in Sport.

[53] Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (9 October 2025). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Bulgaria; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (12 November 2025). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Romania; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (1 December 2025). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Denmark; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (6 February 2026). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Latvia; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (6 May 2026). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Malta; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (4 June 2026). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Portugal; Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (8 June 2026). Fourth evaluation round, Evaluation report Norway.

[54] Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (15 July 2026). Council of Europe anti-trafficking expert group GRETA issues guidance for strengthening trafficking victims' access to residence permits.

[55] UN Committee against Torture (22 May 2025). Concluding observations on the 8th periodic report of France, CAT/C/FRA/CO/8.

[56] UN Committee against Torture (May 2025). Concluding observations on the 8th periodic report of France: Committee against Torture.

[57] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (5 June 2026). 35th Session of Crime Commission closes by strengthening cooperation against emerging criminal threats.

[58] United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW], *C.O.E. v Switzerland*, 172/2021, 2 July 2025. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database.

[59] Input to Situational Update (July 2026) provided by UNICEF.