



MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR  
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

# **2023 STATUS REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Crime Prevention Department**

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## 1. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS

In 2023, unfortunately, the escalated phase of the war in Ukraine, which began on 22 February 2022, continued. In this context, preventive awareness campaigns aimed at protecting war refugees from any type of crime, including the trafficking in human beings (hereinafter referred to as “THB”), continued. Even as a result of such campaigns, it can still be stated that even in 2023 (status as of 25 June 2024) **there was no victim of THB from among refugees from Ukraine confirmed** (this fact is related to both initiated, ongoing or completed criminal proceedings, and to a probable victim who, based on defined criteria, was included in the Program for the Support and Protection of Victims of THB).

**Compared to the previous year, in 2023 no significant changes were recorded** in the structure of the crime of THB or in the forms of its perpetration. However, it is still very difficult to predict the development trends of the criminal activity of THB, especially in view of the disturbing international situation – the ongoing war in Ukraine and the escalating tensions in the Middle East.

As in previous years, **the Czech Republic has been a country of destination and transit**, as well as **a country of origin** in the area of THB. The main forms of the THB were **the misuse of THB victims for forced prostitution, forced labour** or other forms of exploitation or profit from such conduct. The situation, structure and dynamics of THB-related crime is thus comparable to the year 2022. The actions and behaviour of the perpetrators once again give a more sophisticated impression, also confirmed by the increasing use of trickery, misuse of addiction or mistake.

For certain specific target social groups, violence has been recorded by perpetrators as a means of coercing victims into obedience. It can be stated that the THB-related situation, as it was investigated on the territory of the Czech Republic, is similar to that in other European Union member states and correlates with current European trends of this type of organized crime. This conclusion results, among other things, from information obtained during expert meetings within the project of the European Union Agency for Cooperation in the Field of Law Enforcement (European Police Office, hereinafter referred to as “Europol”) – European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats – Trafficking in Human Beings, hereinafter referred to as “EMPACT”, “EMPACT THB”).

Conducted criminal proceedings, findings from the environment of interest and international police cooperation in the course of 2023 confirmed the continued rise in cases of THB for the purpose of use for forced labour or other forms of exploitation, when the perpetrators mainly **target persons from socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds**. These persons **are forced to perform physically demanding work, especially in the construction industry**. The perpetrators take either all or a substantial part of the wages, as well as social benefits or pensions, from the victims when they are paid. THB victims are also often forced to take out loans or commit petty theft.

“**Agency employment**” continues to be an important area of interest, regarding the activities of legal entities that have permission from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MLSA”) to mediate work. As **the country of origin** of those interested in employment, in 2023 **the countries from the Balkan region were most often represented**, especially Romania, Bulgaria, **but also the Philippines**,

**Nepal and Mongolia.** Nationals of Ukraine were very often holders of travel visas of Poland, while similar cases were recorded also in 2022. The trend of employment of nationals of Moldova, who presented forged Romanian documents during official meetings in order to have easier access to the labour market for citizens of European Union member states, **continued.** The Czech Republic continues to be a source country, citizens of the Czech Republic are victims of labour and sexual exploitation on its territory as well as abroad, with most cases being recorded and investigated in the United Kingdom. **The situation in the field of illegal trafficking in human tissues and organs in the Czech Republic was still very satisfactory in 2023.** According to available information, this form of THB does not occur in the territory of the Czech Republic. **The transplant system in the Czech Republic is so regulated that illegal handling of organs and tissues would be very difficult to conceal.** This is mainly contributed by establishing rules for ensuring traceability, at every stage of the process from collection to transplantation, as well as the traceability of both organ donors and organ recipients. Act No. 285/2002 Coll., on the donation, collection and transplantation of tissues and organs and on the amendment of certain laws (Transplantation Act), sets out obligations regarding the traceability ensured by health service providers when providing health services in connection with the donation and transplantation of tissues and organs. These include transplant centres, health care providers performing tissue procurement and tissue transplantation, and tissue banks. An important role in ensuring the traceability and traceability of donors and recipients of tissues and organs is played by the Transplantation Coordination Centre (hereinafter referred to as "TCC"), which, among other things, maintains the National Registers related to the donation, collection and transplantation of tissues and organs. TCC also selects the most suitable recipients for the removed organs and tissues intended for direct transfer to the recipient's body. This selection is made exclusively from the National Register of Persons Waiting for Organ Transplantation based on a written pre-defined allocation algorithm. The TCC also ensures and coordinates international cooperation in the implementation of the exchange of organs intended for transplantation and performs tasks related to the exchange of organs between the European Union Member States and between European Union member states and third countries. All these measures lead to the fact that illegal trade in human tissues and organs in the Czech Republic is practically impossible.

**A continuing trend is the increasing sophistication of the THB-related criminal activity, where victims in many cases have very little chance of discovering that they have become the object of interest of an organized group of criminals.** Perpetrators are constantly improving the methods by which they mislead victims already in the source country about the conditions under which they will live and work in the country of destination. To do this, they use very high-quality forged documents and knowledge of the environment of the regions in which the trafficked persons are obtained in the country of origin, as well as knowledge of the environment in the countries of destination. In the past, also in the field of THB for the purpose of labour exploitation, the already mentioned activity of intermediary companies for so-called "agency employment" has been recorded, in which, in addition to participation in THB, the commission of economic crime is also detected.

**A complicated situation persists in the issue of surrogacy.** Foreign reproductive clinics continue to hire women primarily from Ukraine, but also from other countries, to become surrogate mothers, especially for citizens of Western countries who do not meet the legal

requirements for legal surrogacy. In the last stage of pregnancy of surrogate mothers, members of organized groups arrange for them to travel to the territory of the Czech Republic, where the birth will take place. The surrogate mother and the client then pretend to be a couple in front of the registry office in the Czech Republic and make a declaration of paternity. They declare in agreement that the father of the unborn child is the man present, which will result in the subsequent entry of the man as the father of the child in the birth certificate. Furthermore, the surrogate mother and the client declare that the child will acquire citizenship through the father. After the birth of the child, the surrogate mother signs a set of documents in which she waives her rights to the child and gives consent to its relocation to the father's country. At the same time, she gives the man a power of attorney to take all legal actions in relation to the child independently. After that, a travel document is issued for the new-born at the relevant consular office. After receiving it, the man takes the new-born to his home country. Members of the National Centre for Combating Organized Crime of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as "NCCOC") are involved in the EMPACT THB project, operational action (hereinafter referred to as "OA") 2.2 – Illegal Commercial Surrogacy and Trafficking in Children. Currently, the Czech Republic has taken over the position of leader in this project after the Republic of Bulgaria. The aim of the project is to share information about specific cases, legal regulations, prosecution strategies, cooperation with third countries and the creation of proposals for legislative changes.

According to the non-profit organization La Strada Czech Republic, public service company (hereinafter referred to as "La Strada"), in 2023 the continued trend was not only **the exploitation of refugees from Ukraine, but also other labour migrants**, who, due to a language barrier, emergency or unfamiliarity with the environment, become an easy target for dubious employers or exploiters. In particular, their **dependence on work and accommodation, combined with the lack of other alternatives, facilitates their exploitation**. In the past, La Strada employees encountered cases that pointed to **serious violations of the rights of employees on the labour market in the Czech Republic**. Considering their number and intensity, **it is not possible to talk about isolated incidents**, but about the widespread practices among employers. These practices reveal gaps and deficiencies in the legal framework, which aims to effectively protect the rights of employees and ensure fair, transparent and decent working conditions.

Current legislation and control mechanisms in the area of protection and enforcement of employees' rights appear to be insufficient. Although labour inspectorates (hereinafter referred to as "LI", "LIs") plays a key role in detecting violations of the law by employers, and can impose sanctions on them, their competence in cases of unpaid wages is limited. Despite the inspectorate's finding of breach of duty by the employer, there is no effective mechanism that would make it easier for employees to collect their wages. **The injured employee is thus forced to assert his or her claim in court, which puts him or her in a difficult situation, as court proceedings usually take a long time and are associated with high costs. This fact discourages many employees from asserting their rights, and employers are well aware of this fact.**

## 2. CRIMINAL STATISTICS

### 2.1 Number of registered crimes

**According to the statistics provided by NCCOC, a total of 20 crimes of THB (+2) were registered in 2023, of which 13 crimes were solved directly and 6 crimes were resolved subsequently.**

### 2.2 Perpetrators in criminal proceedings

It remains true that the number of foreigners committing this crime is lower than the of citizens of the Czech Republic. Of the **25 prosecuted and investigated persons** in 2023, **22 were citizens of the Czech Republic** and **3 were foreigners**. Of the total number of 25 prosecuted people, **10 were men and 15 were women**. Furthermore, there were **6 recidivists** and **3 minors**. The proportion of foreign nationals committing the crime of THB did not change practically in 2023. Again, most of them were foreign nationals who used some legal form of residence in the territory of the Czech Republic and committed criminal activities together with citizens of the Czech Republic. For a long time, it has been found that the country of origin of these foreigners continues to mostly coincide with the country of origin of the trafficked victims.

**According to data recorded by the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic** (hereinafter referred to as "MoJ"), a total of **15 criminal offences of THB** under the provisions of Section 168 of the Criminal Code **were recorded in 2023. A total of 13 persons were convicted** – of which 5 persons were sentenced to a conditional imprisonment and 8 persons were given unconditional sentences (of which 2 in the range of 1-5 years and 6 in the range of 5-15 years).

### 2.3 Selected case studies

For a better idea of the current modus operandi, below is presented a brief description of the case of criminal prosecution for the crime of THB.

*The investigators of the Department of Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration (hereinafter referred to as "DHTIM") of the NCCOC charged 8 natural persons and 1 legal person with the crimes of "solicitation" and "participation in an organized criminal group" in connection with the operation of dozens of websites advertising the provision of sexual services for payment. Criminal investigators have been dealing with the case with the codename MARKÝZ [MARQUIS] since May 2022. The criminal proceedings were carried out throughout the territory of the Czech Republic, most abundantly in Prague and the Central Bohemian Region. Together 8 natural persons were detained. Through the organized operation of advertising websites, the accused persons were supposed to profit from the provided prostitution, when by their actions for a very long time, according to the established facts, they should have obtained an unauthorized benefit in the order of several tens of millions of CZK (the exact amount has not yet been calculated). The entire group had a dominant position in the Czech Republic in their business activities, and they significantly abused this when committing their criminal activities. As part of the criminal proceedings, NCCOC investigators blocked more than 40 advertising websites, on whose the provision of sexual services was offered, as part of securing tools used to commit crimes. Assets*

worth approximately 63 million CZK were secured as proceeds from criminal activity. These assets were mainly real estates, gold bars, funds in bank accounts and in cash, as well as a motor vehicle. Accused natural persons face prison sentences ranging from 2 to 10 years.

## **2.4 Victims of trafficking in human beings**

### **2.4.1 Victims in criminal proceedings**

Given that police statistics in the case of THB **show only the number of offences according to the objects of attack, the number of victims cannot be stated here. Simultaneously, if one act is reported in the statistics,** it means that it is one act **where the object of the attack was at least one person who has the given characteristic,** i.e., a juvenile aged 15-17. However, by reporting the number of acts, not the number of victims involved, from the statistics it is not clear whether it involved one person with a given characteristic or more. The informative value of these statistics is at a very poor level. The creation of targeted measures is challenging, and reporting on the situation in the Czech Republic within the framework of international obligations is therefore complicated. Therefore, improving data collection in the area of trafficking in human beings is one of the tasks of the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic for the period 2020-2023, the validity of which has been extended until 2025. This task is closely interconnected with the long-term project of development and innovation of statistics, the aim of which is to create a summary of proposals for changing the monitoring of crime, offenses and administrative sanctions for the purpose of criminal policy. The intention is to expand the availability of data on crime, to connect crime statistics with individual entities, to find easily and analyse individual criminal proceedings, as well as to reduce the administrative burden in reporting crime statistics and to streamline the entire system of entering and sharing data with an emphasis on saving resources and workforce.

### **2.4.2 Potential victims and the Program for the Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings**

**As part of the Program,** which is intended for 18+ victims of THB, including both citizens of European Union member states trafficked in the territory of the Czech Republic, third-country nationals trafficked in the territory of the Czech Republic and citizens of the Czech Republic trafficked in the territory of the Czech Republic or abroad, **a total of 18** (including one reclassification) **probable victims** of THB were included in **2023 (probable victims were classified both by a cooperating non-governmental non-profit organization /hereinafter referred to as “NGOs”/ and by the Police of the Czech Republic).** These were persons from the Czech Republic (9), Slovakia (1), Ukraine (3), Romania (1), Venezuela (3) and Colombia (1). There were **8 women** and **10 men** from this group. Regarding **6 persons** (from the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Venezuela and Colombia) **there was a suspicion regarding sexual exploitation, one case involved forced begging** (Ukraine), in cases of all other persons there was a **suspicion regarding labour exploitation.**

**A total of 335 probable THB victims have been included in the Program since 2003.**

Victims included in the Program were provided with accommodation, psychosocial services, health services, retraining courses, interpreting services, legal assistance and the lawyer services. Emphasis was also placed on job search assistance. All victims enrolled in the Program agreed to file a request to investigation their cases to the relevant department of

the Police of the Czech Republic, and all victims also agreed to cooperate with law enforcement authorities (including two victims who used the 60-day cooling-off period). **One person used the opportunity to arrange voluntary return to the country of origin under the Program (Colombia).**

In 2023, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Moi”) issued no long-term residence permit for the purpose of protection in the territory pursuant to Section 42e of the Act on the Residence of Foreigners to foreigners who were probable THB victims and cooperated with law enforcement authorities. (6 citizens of the Philippines still have a valid residence permit of this type on the territory of the Czech Republic, which was granted in 2019). No other residence permit was granted for a similar reason.

## **2.5 Care for victims of trafficking in human beings**

In addition to the Program, the Czech Republic has an entire system of social services, which is regulated by Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Social Services Act”) that can be used for victims of trafficking in human beings. This Act regulates the conditions for providing assistance and support to natural persons in an unfavourable social situation through individual types of social services, as well as the requirements for entitlement to care allowance and the requirements for issuing authorisations for the provision of social services<sup>[1]</sup>, etc.

According to the Social Services Act, it is possible to provide social services only based on registration with the locally competent regional authority. The list of registered social service providers is publicly accessible in the Register of Social Service Providers at the web address <https://www.mpsv.cz/registr-poskytovatelu-sluzeb#/registr-poskytovatelu-prehled>.

**A total of 57 providers of social services are currently registered in the Register of Social Service Providers,<sup>[2]</sup> the predominant target group of which are victims of trafficking in human beings. Of this number, 28 providers are also focusing on persons under the age of 18. (Source: Register of Social Service Providers, Information as of 26 April 2024).** Within the subsidy procedure to support the provision of social services the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MLSA”) has been on the long-term basis supporting organizations that provide social services mainly to the target group of the “THB victims”. **Subsidy support to these organizations by the MLSA for 2023 amounts to CZK 29,258,115.**



### 3. RELATED CRIME AND ACCOMPANYING PHENOMENA

#### 3.1 Situation in the area of prostitution

No significant changes were recorded in the area of prostitution in 2023. Sexual services are still most often provided in so-called “private houses” or in the form of an escort service. Street prostitution has been on the decline for a long time and can only be recorded to a lesser extent and in specific localities, most often especially in the Ústí Region and South Bohemian Region, while the social and educational level of street prostitutes are at a low level. To a large extent, these are the riskiest prostitutes in terms of health and hygiene, using narcotic and psychotropic substances. The findings confirm the information that due to the large number of persons providing sexual services, prostitution is voluntary in almost all cases. Many people actively offer themselves as “occasional” prostitutes and respond to job offers in erotica, presented in the press or on the Internet. It is clear from the surveys that a wide range of people from various social, age and educational levels engage in prostitution. Conducted criminal proceedings, findings from the environment of interest and international police cooperation in the course of 2023 confirmed the growing trend of cases in which the possible exploitation of prostitution of women from Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia took place on the territory of the Czech Republic. Persons providing paid sex services are increasingly moving into the online space, which brings different risks than contact activity.

#### 3.2 Situation in the area of soliciting

In 2023, police statistics showed a total of 74 (+7) **registered criminal offences of soliciting** under the provision of Section 189 of the Criminal Code. A total of **58 cases** were **solved**, **51 (+23)** persons were **prosecuted, of which 3 were legal entities** (see table section). In the statistics for 2023, the MOJ reported **27 recorded cases and 25 persons convicted for the crime of soliciting** under the provision of Section 189 of the Criminal Code. The trend in relation to sentences imposed remained unchanged in 2023, with **suspended sentences** (16) exceeding unconditional sentences (4).

#### 3.3 Situation in the area of illegal/unauthorized employment of foreigners

A significant entity in the area of combating illegal employment of foreigners is, apart from the police, also the State Labour Inspection Office (hereinafter referred to as “SLIO”), or its regional LIs, which perform inspections in the field of compliance with the provisions of Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Employment Act”), including those that regulate conditions of work performed by foreign citizens in the Czech Republic, compliance with provisions of Act No. 262/2006 Coll., Labour Code, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Labour Code”), and other legal regulations governing working and wage conditions, and inspections in the area of compliance with health and safety regulations at the workplace. In practice, the most severe violations of labour

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<sup>[1]</sup> Social services include social counselling, social care services and social prevention services. Social services are provided as residential, outpatient or as field work services.

<sup>[2]</sup> As of 23 February 2023.

regulations may have a closer connection with the criminal law, i.e. the THB crime and minor offences concerning the enabling of illegal work.

**Of the total number 6,574 inspections focused on detecting illegal employment, the performance of illegal work was detected by regional LIs in 751 entities.** The LIs detected a total of **2,801 illegally employed natural persons** during their inspections. Specifically, **583 citizens of the Czech Republic, 62 citizens other European Union member states and 2,156 foreigners, citizens of third countries.** Control activity in 2023 revealed, as in previous years, a greater number of cases of foreigners who performed work, especially in violation of the issued employment permit or employee card – most often in conflict with the type of work activity or the place of work or the employer for whom such permit was issued. In such an action, there is a possible connection with disguised employment mediation, since at the time of processing such authorization, in particular, disguised employment agencies do not know the actual place of work of such a foreigner. The performance of illegal work by citizens of the Czech Republic was most often associated with the so-called “schwarz system” (false self-employment or undeclared employment), when these persons were employed, for example, as welders, construction workers or workers in transport or social services. **Together 604 fines totalling CZK 134,582,500** were imposed on employers in 2023 for enabling and performing illegal employment. In the case of detected illegally working foreigners, the most common were citizens **of Ukraine** (1,699), **Moldova** (163) and **Vietnam** (77). Others included nationals of Turkey (25), Georgia (25), Uzbekistan (24) and Kazakhstan (19).

In 2023, illegally working foreigners were most often detected at employers in the manufacturing industry (115 entities); construction (107 entities); accommodation, catering and hospitality (98 entities); wholesale, retail; repair and maintenance of motor vehicles (98 entities). **In 2023, the labour inspection authorities took part in a control action that focused on possible labour exploitation.** The event was organized by the Police of the Czech Republic as part of the European Action Days 2023 and the labour inspection authorities actively participated in it. **27 inspections** were carried out by regional LIs, which revealed **56 violations of legal regulations** and **7 illegally employed natural persons**, mainly citizens **of Moldova and Ukraine.**

**In 2023, SLIO carried out a total of 420 inspections directly focused on the area of disguised employment mediation. Inspections were carried out on 410 business entities**, of which 390 were legal entities and 20 natural persons doing business. Out of the total number of 420 inspections, **deficiencies were detected in 352 cases** and **the total number of detected violations of labour regulations reached 1,294.** Disguised employment mediation was **also detected in another 190 entities** as part of inspections, primarily focused on another inspection area. These controls were most often focused on illegal employment. In 2023, a total of 309 entities were found to have disguised employment mediation. Also, in 2023, 183 business entities were revealed that enabled the performance of disguised employment mediation. **Controls aimed at combating disguised employment mediation simultaneously detected 593 persons performing illegal work. In 543 cases, they were foreigners** (most often citizens **of Ukraine**), **in 20 cases they were citizens of other European Union member states** and **in 30 cases citizens of the Czech Republic.** **A total of 199 fines totalling CZK 116,870,000 were imposed in 2023** for the offense of covert employment mediation and its facilitation. These are all fines

imposed in 2023, so some of them may be fines for disguised employment mediation detected by inspections carried out in previous years.

The objective of the control activities of the labour inspection authorities in **the area of agency employment** is to contribute to compliance with labour law regulations resulting from both the Labour Code and the Employment Act. Both the Labour Code and the Employment Act impose a number of relatively strict legislative obligations on employment agencies and users, which these entities are required to fulfil properly. The labour inspection authorities pay a lot of attention to agency employment. This is an important part of the control activities of individual inspectorates in terms of eliminating negative phenomena associated with agency employment. **In 2023, a total of 175 inspections were carried out**, focused directly on the area of agency employment and employment mediation. During these inspections, a total of **185 violations of legislation** relating to both the Labour Code and the Employment Act were detected. These **violations were detected in 81 controls**. In 2023, **446 fines in the total amount of CZK 12,070,000 were imposed on employment agencies for offenses in the area of agency employment and employment mediation**. Based on suggestions from the General Directorate of the Employment Office of the Czech Republic, 323 fines were imposed in the total amount of CZK 3,029,500. In addition to monetary fines, employment agencies were also given 14 reprimands.

**Inspections of working conditions of holders of temporary protection from Ukraine** were also in 2023 focused on **the area of labour relations** (for example, wage conditions, working hours, breaks at work, payment of bonuses for working overtime, at night, on Saturdays and Sundays, equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination of employees, working conditions of pregnant employees, employees who are breastfeeding, and employees up to the end of the ninth month after giving birth and juvenile employees, fulfilment of information obligations by employers towards the Employment Office of the Czech Republic); **the area of employment** (allowing the performance of illegal work, performance of illegal work and disguised employment mediation) and also regarding the **occupational safety and health protection at work**.

**In 2023, the labour inspection authorities received a total of 26** inspection requests related to the employment of citizens from Ukraine. These whistle-blowers mainly pointed to unpaid wages, poor working conditions or drew attention to the performance of work without concluding an employment contract or an agreement on work carried out outside employment relationship (agreement on work performance, agreement on work activities). **A total of 475 checks were carried out in 2023** in connection with compliance with the conditions of holders of temporary protection from Ukraine, when **the working conditions of a total of 2,944 holders of temporary protection from Ukraine were checked**. In connection with inspections of the working conditions of this target group, **114 fines in the total amount of CZK 23,900,000 were imposed in 2023**, of which 62 were in the form of an on-the-spot order (block fine).

**During 2023, two meetings of the Interdepartmental Authority for Combating Illegal Employment took place** (17 May 2023 and 18 December 2023). **The main topics were – the current situation regarding relevant legislative proposals and the issue of refugees from Ukraine and the activities of the Undeclared Work Platform (UDW)** as well as the content of negotiations with the MoJ regarding the criminal offense of illegal employment of foreigners and negotiations with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the

Czech Republic regarding the withdrawal of trade licenses for enabling the performance of undeclared work and covert agency employment. In the course of 2023, only two of the three permanent working groups of the Inter-Departmental Body for Combating Illegal Employment (hereinafter referred to as "IDBCIE") held meetings, namely **the Working Group on the Issue of Illegal Work** (hereinafter referred to as "WGIIW") and **the Working Group on the Issue of Employment Agencies and Disguised Employment Mediation** (hereinafter referred to as "WGIEADEM").

The WGIEADEM dealt with the amendment of the Aliens Act, one part of which enshrines the ban on employing foreigners from third countries through employment agencies, the cancellation of employment agency insurance in the event of their bankruptcy, and the issue of revoking permits for employment mediation and the proposal on the introduction of labour agency certification. The discussion of the WGIIW was concentrated to summarizing the status of the legislative process of adopting the amendment to the Employment Act, which mainly concerns agency employment, as well as another part of the amendment, concerning the protected labour market and the supplement to the employment of foreigners with regard to the point system and a set of measures to combat illegal employment.

#### **4. INFORMATION ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

In addition to law enforcement agencies, Authorities for Social and Legal Protection of Children (hereinafter referred to as "ASLPC") plays an important role in solving the situation of child THB victims, protecting the rights and defending the interests of the child at risk. Direct work with child THB victims takes place most intensively at the ASLPC level of the municipality with extended powers, which have the greatest range of competences according to the Act on the Social and Legal Protection of Children. The social and legal protection of children agenda (hereinafter referred to as "SLPC") is provided at this level 24/7 (during non-working hours, there is a working emergency service).

**From the point of view of the SLPC agenda, child THB victims are,** under the provisions of Section 6 letter e) of Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on the Social and Legal Protection of Children, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "SLPC Act"), the children **on whom a criminal offense threatening life, health, freedom, human dignity, moral development or property, was committed, or there is suspicion of committing such a crime. This group of children at risk is included in the category of abused, mistreated and neglected children.** Already in 2015, when the provisions of Section 9a, paragraph 3 of the SLPC Act came into force, the SLPC team should have a specialist on the agenda for the protection of abused and mistreated children, to help this category of children in a targeted manner. Such a specialist will subsequently develop professionally and will be a professional support for other team members if they solve a case with an overlap in the SLPC area. The system of helping a child who has been trafficked works in such a way that the situation is always investigated in cooperation with law enforcement authorities and other experts (Police of the Czech Republic, public prosecutor's office, medical facilities) and further steps are proposed to resolve the situation.

Every year, the MLSA monitors important statistical indicators on the performance of SLPC, which are processed in **the Annual Report on the SLCP Performance**, with the fact that

the Annual Report reflects the situation for the previous year (see the link [https://www.mpsv.cz/statistiky- 1](https://www.mpsv.cz/statistiky-1)).

**From the point of view of trafficking in children, the following areas are monitored in the Annual Report:**

- The number of children in whom abuse for the production of child pornography was registered or proven in the reference year;
- The number of children in whom abuse for prostitution was registered or proven in the reference year;
- The number of cases in which ASLPC filed a criminal complaint with the Police of the Czech Republic or the Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of committing a crime against life, health, freedom, human dignity, moral development or property of the child (criminal reports of committing a criminal offence under Act No. 40/2009 Coll., the Criminal Code, specifically under Section 169 – entrusting a child to another person for adoption or other similar reason, Section 193 – abuse of a child for production of pornography, and Section 193a – participation in pornographic performance).

Other types of commercial abuse of children are not monitored separately within the Annual Report on the SLPC Performance.

Only cases that have been reported to and resolved by ASLPC are registered in the Annual Report. **In 2023** 21 boys and 75 girls were abused for the **production of child pornography** (together 96 cases, 31 less than in 2022). **An even greater decrease** was related to the area of **child prostitution, when in 2023** ASLPC dealt with a total of **10 cases of child prostitution** (4 boys and 6 girls), while **in 2022** there were 21 cases. Nevertheless, there is still a need to pay increased attention to these topics, including the safety of children in cyberspace. Even in 2023, in terms of age, children in the age category **from 6 to 15 years remained the most at-risk group**, while a **higher incidence** of abuse has long been recorded **among girls**.

As far as the Facilities for Children – foreigners are concerned, **a total of 44 unaccompanied minors** (-37), **33 boys and 11 girls**, were admitted to the facilities in 2023. Of these, 13 were in the age group under 15 and 31 in the age group over 15. **Only 2 children were asylum seekers**. In terms of ethnicity, as a result of the war, the majority are children from Ukraine (15), followed by children from Syria (11) and Afghanistan (4). In 2023, no THB victims were identified. However, there are isolated but serious cases of abuse or mistreatment of children in biological or foster families.

**The potentially endangered group of persons from the point of view of child trafficking includes both the group of unaccompanied foreign minors** (hereinafter referred to as "UFM") and **the group of refugee children from Ukraine who come to territory of the Czech Republic from Ukraine accompanied by someone other than their legal representatives or parents**. For that reason, even in 2023, the MLSA regularly participated in strategic meetings and groups to coordinate the adaptation and integration of refugees from Ukraine, convened by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Other regular interdepartmental meetings and methodological meetings took place with the Office for International Legal Protection of Children (hereinafter referred to as "OILPC"), where specific topics of social and legal protection of children were addressed, especially in relation to UFM from Ukraine or in relation to potentially endangered children from Ukraine who came to territory of the Czech Republic accompanied by a foreigner, i.e. accompanied

by someone other than a parent or other legal representative according to Ukrainian law. Other regular interdepartmental meetings on UFM took place in cooperation with the Public Defender of Rights and NGOs handling with the target group of refugees. MLSA also conducted regular specific methodological meetings with representatives of regional authorities to address the situation of child refugees from Ukraine, especially UFM or children at risk.

During 2023, the MLSA updated the website with all the necessary information for people fleeing from Ukraine due the war:

- <https://www.mpsv.cz/web/cz/ukrajina>
- <https://www.mpsv.cz/web/cz/zajisteni-pece-o-deti>

Education and information were also provided by the SLPC bodies throughout the Czech Republic in the form of professional advice.

In 2023, the MLSA issued several leaflets aimed at providing basic information regarding the functioning of the institutions for the social and legal protection of children in the role of guardian and the extension of temporary protection regarding UFM in the following language mutations: Ukrainian, Russian and English. The leaflet also contains basic information regarding ensuring safety for UFM.

Of the public administration bodies, the OILPC with its seat in Brno and the municipal office of the municipality with extended powers depending on the child's place of residence are responsible for providing social and legal advice for UFM. The OILPC is a SLPC body that comprehensively ensures the SLPC agenda in relation to foreign countries, including the protection of children who apply for international protection in the territory of the Czech Republic, or who do not apply for international protection. The OILPC monitors the number of UFM cases that were recorded by the SLPC authorities on the territory of the Czech Republic.

In 2023, there was an increased need to provide more in-depth training for the SLPC in the issue of prevention and recognition of signs of child trafficking, as well as in the topic of migration and refugees, in connection with the war in Ukraine. In addition to education within the scope of SLPC quality standards, the MLSA worked intensively in 2023 in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (hereinafter referred to as "UNICEF") to set up two more extensive training sessions for SLPC authorities. The first training covered the topic of child trafficking prevention, specifically aimed at the SLPC, in cooperation with the organization La Strada. The implementation of these trainings is planned for January-June 2024. These trainings build on 4 successfully completed trainings that were implemented in 2023 in cooperation with the Prague City Hall, La Strada and UNICEF, when, according to the plan, these trainings will be expanded in 2024 also to all other regions across the whole territory of the Czech Republic. The second training is a 5-day intensive training of national experts on migration from among the staff of the OILPC, regional authorities, etc., by a foreign expert in the area of protecting the rights of migrant children in an international and national context, and then there will be a cascade of training of SLPC authorities across Czech Republic. Implementation of these trainings is also planned for 2024.

In its activities, the MLSA mainly concentrated to preventive activities. For that reason, an extraordinary grant call was announced for the year 2023 to support temporary activities for families with children from Ukraine (especially aged up to 6 years) for the period from 7/16 to 31 December 2023 in support area A and for the period from 1 January to 31 July 2024

in support area B. The MLSA monitors the situation of citizens from Ukraine and their families throughout the entire period of the military conflict in Ukraine. At the same time, it reflects the economically unfavourable impact on NGOs, municipalities and their subsidized organizations, regions and their subsidized organizations, which provide services and activities to these families and children. The MLSA and UNICEF are committed to mutual cooperation aimed at those areas of support that will ensure children and families from Ukraine have access to integrated, multidisciplinary and adequately funded community and family protective services, early childhood care, social protection, etc. For the purposes of this grant title donates funds to UNICEF to the MLSA in the amount of CZK 19.5 million for the period from July 2023 to July 2024. The services have a preventive, integrative and supportive character, they are supposed to strengthen the adaptation of families and children in new conditions after arriving in the Czech Republic, to strengthen parental competence, to provide children with opportunities to play and learn, to improve the quality of family and community relations, to support families in caring for children, in their upbringing and help with their application on the labour market while reconciling employment and family life, and help in preventing risky situations in the family, solving crisis situations in the family, providing help with babysitting and getting to know the basics of the Czech language.

**In 2023, the implementation of the project: ["Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking"](#)**, implemented by Accendo – Centre for Science and Research, a registered institute (hereinafter referred to as "Accendo"), in cooperation with Charles University, continued. Mol acts as a professional manager in the project in order to apply the results of the project in practice.

The project includes:

- Initial analytical study – it will map the situation in the area of child trafficking in the Czech Republic, including an assessment of the possible sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry and will include an analysis of criminal cases of child trafficking,
- Methodology for identifying and providing assistance to child THB victims will respond to the main conclusions of the conducted study regarding the forms of this criminal activity and will create effective procedures for identifying child THB victims. The methodology will also focus on procedures for helping child THB victims.
- In the educational program to identify and support of child THB victims – in order to increase the number of identified cases of child trafficking in the Czech Republic and to provide assistance to these victims, based on research findings, a proposal for an educational program/course will be created for persons who can get into contact with child THB victims.
- Proposal for a preventive project aimed at increasing legal awareness of child trafficking among the general public – the preventive project will be created based on examples of good practice from the Czech Republic or abroad. It will be applied to the selected region. The preventive project will be aimed at the general public with the aim of increasing public awareness and sensitivity to the forms of child trafficking in the Czech Republic identified as part of the research, a thus involving a wider circle of members of the public in the fight against this type of criminal activity.

In 2023, all project activities took place in accordance with the established schedule. Monitoring of open sources on the issue was carried out. In terms of the scope of the topic,



interviews were conducted with relevant actors, especially in risky locations. Cooperation is also ongoing at the international level (Slovakia, Finland, Germany and Lithuania). With use of the communication channels of the Police of the Czech Republic, close cooperation was established among Accendo, the Office of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service (OCPIS) and the NCCOC. There were online and personal meetings with the professional manager, where the further procedure regarding the collection and evaluation of information was agreed upon. At the end of 2023, the Resulting Study was in the final stage of completion. The implementation of the project will continue in 2024.

## **5. SUPPORT FROM ASSISTING ORGANIZATIONS**

### **5.1 La Strada Czech Republic**

**In 2023, the La Strada organization provided outpatient or residential social services to a total of 78 clients.** The organization's clientele used social services in the form of **contact counselling or a complex of social services** (*represents cooperation on the overall solution of the client's situation, such as housing, financial security, health, cooperation with the police, legal assistance, psychological care, etc.*).

Out of the total number of clients, comprehensive social services of La Strada were provided to 78 clients; **27 clients (11 women, 16 men) established cooperation anew, 51 clients (21 women, 27 men and 3 transgender persons) continued the cooperation started in previous years.**

In 2023, as in the previous year, migrants predominated among the La Strada clients compared to the citizens of the Czech Republic. These foreign clients originated from **India, Venezuela, Ukraine, Colombia, Guinea, Slovakia, Philippines and Thailand. Forced labour and labour exploitation** continued to be the predominant form of THB in this regard. As in previous years, forced prostitution was the second most prevalent form of THB in 2023, with seven new cases recorded. One of these cases was also linked to forced marriage and one new case involved forced begging. **A total of 49 persons were foreign nationals** (26 women, 20 men, 3 transgender persons). Compared to the previous year, there was a slight increase in the share of citizens of the Czech Republic in 2023. The most represented group of foreign nationalities were citizens **of the Philippines, similar to previous years. It involved 18 people.** The complex of social services was also used by citizens **of Slovakia (7), Ukraine (7), India (5), Venezuela (3), Poland (3), Romania (1), Bulgaria (1), Latvia (1), Colombia (1), Guinea (1) and Thailand (1).** In the case of citizens of the Czech Republic, the target countries where exploitation took place were the **Czech Republic (17), the United Kingdom (11) and Ireland (1).** Most clients established cooperation and drew on the organization's comprehensive social services based on a reference from **the Police of the Czech Republic.** A significant number of clients contacted the La Strada SOS line **thanks to information obtained from field workers of the La Strada organization or from someone in their social circle.** They also referred clients to La Strada and cooperating NGOs, possibly other **institutions.** A total of **69 clients who used the La Strada's complex of services in 2023 cooperated with the Police of the Czech Republic** or law enforcement authorities in the United Kingdom. The age range of clients was wide: the youngest adult client was a 22-year-old woman and the oldest was a 72-year-old woman. The youngest client was a one-year-old child. **In 2023 was**



the average age of La Strada's women client 36 years and the average age of La Strada's men client 44 years.

### Women

**During 2023, 11 women and 1 child newly established cooperation with the La Strada.** A distinct trend from recent years still prevails, where forced labour significantly exceeds forced prostitution. **For female clients newly admitted to the La Strada's services in 2023, the form of THB was forced labour in 3 cases, forced prostitution in 6 cases, and forced begging in 1 case.** In the case of 1 client, was reported a combination of **forced marriage and forced prostitution.**

A person with citizenship of the Czech Republic, trafficked for the purpose of forced prostitution, **was being recruited through a distant relative**, who subsequently benefited from the client's earnings. In the case of a client who was trafficked for forced labour, the perpetrators took advantage of her financial distress and took advantage of her vulnerable situation. **Clients of foreign citizenship were recruited through acquaintances in the country of origin or in the Czech Republic.** Some of them received job offers through acquaintances in their countries of origin, and they were also provided with travel and transportation to the Czech Republic on tourist visas. **In the case of one client from Ukraine, the recruitment was based on a job offer with the possibility of earning from home and an offer of accommodation, while the recruitment took place through people from the same community. In the case of female clients from Thailand and the Philippines, recruitment took place through an employment agency.**

Female clients from Thailand and the Philippines were required to work overtime, for which they were not paid. If the clients drew attention to poor working conditions and demanded the termination of the employment relationship in an orderly manner, **threats to cancel the residence permit followed.**

For female clients from the Czech Republic, there were threats of physical violence against them or their family members and physical violence as such. In the case of female clients from Ukraine, **threats of loss of housing** remain a common means of coercion, which is linked to employers and/or specific accommodation providers, who subsequently abuse women or take advantage of their work.

Clients from the Czech Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Guinea and Ukraine who **were forced to provide sexual services**, in one of these cases also a forced marriage, recently cooperated with the La Strada. **One client was forced to beg, another worked in a massage parlour and the last one at fairground attractions.**

### Men

**In the course of 2023, 16 men newly established cooperation with the La Strada.** Newly arrived men came from the Czech Republic (8), India (5), Slovakia (1), Ukraine (1) and the Philippines (1). In 2023, **a total of 43 men used the complex of social services of the La Strada.** In terms of citizenship, **citizens of the Czech Republic (23) remains the most numerous clients. Citizens of the Slovak Republic (6), India (5), Poland (3), the Philippines (2), Bulgaria (1), Ukraine (1), Romania (1) and Latvia (1) also used comprehensive services. Regarding all newly arrived clients, it was about forced labour and labour exploitation.**

In the case of some clients, recruiting them from a **homeless environment** and exploiting their socially weak situation, financial distress and other added vulnerabilities played a key role. The perpetrators targeted people with certain vulnerabilities, such as **addiction to alcohol or other addictive substances, the absence of a family background, long-term neglected health, a high level of debt or a criminal history**. In most cases, the key role was played by the promise of housing and income.

In the case of some foreigners, recruitment took place via the Internet and through “grey” employment agencies. In the case of one client, his vulnerability was abused – the client was incapacitated and was staying on the territory of the Czech Republic without a guardian. The most frequently used means of coercion were **the use of distress and dependence** of persons who have no family and social background and **the threat of losing the housing**.

The forms of coercion in some cases were **the restriction of personal freedom, threats of physical violence or physical attack itself**, as well as **confiscation of personal documents**. In the case of foreigners, the most frequently used means of coercion are the use of **the threat of revoking the residence permit or causing problems with the foreigner's legal stay in the territory of the Czech Republic**. Furthermore, the perpetrators significantly abused the addiction of the victims resulting from the language barrier and ignorance of the legal system of the Czech Republic. In cases of newcomer clients – citizens of the Czech Republic and foreigners, key role played **work in the construction industry, performing excavation or demolition work, as well as maintenance and repair of real estates**.

Some of the clients were forced to work **in the offenders' households**, or after completing one work shift they were sent to another workplace where they had to continue working **without rest**. In most cases, the money was paid to the accounts of the perpetrators, or was reduced by the perpetrators, and the clients only received a smaller amount of money.

In the case of foreigners, **work in warehouses played a key role, as well as industry and delivery work**. Most often they worked 10 to 14 hours a day without breaks for rest and lunch. The men were either not paid in full, or overtime hours were not paid, and large sums were deducted for accommodation, food and other unspecified items.

In 2023, the La Strada field team carried out a total of **91 field trips**, i.e. 2 more than in the previous year, to practically all regions in the Czech Republic. A significant part of screenings this year took place in workplaces and accommodation facilities, including mass accommodation facilities for war refugees. Screenings were carried out mainly in the following sectors (in order of frequency): **distribution and storage, construction, agricultural operations, retail sales, light industry, street begging, food production, heavy industry, the environment of fairground attractions and massage salons**. An important part of the field trips was also **networking with organizations and institutions in the regions** – especially NGOs, ASLPC, Employment Office of the Czech Republic and LIs.

In 2023, **intensive online monitoring and communication** with the Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking target group was carried out on social networks and several online communication platforms (especially in the thematic groups *Jobs in Prague*, *Jobs in the Czech Republic*, *Ukrainians in the Czech Republic* and others), where there were contributions by this organization with preventive and advisory content and reactions to non-

serious or risky offers published here, **up to several tens of thousands of people were contacted.** In 2023, **a total of 1,824 people from the target group were contacted in the field**, of which 899 were women (i.e. 49 %), as well as **163 people close to the target group** (people from the environment of the target group and people in a work or personal relationship with people from the target group), of which 115 (i.e. 71 %, significantly the highest proportion of contacted persons) were women from **Ukraine**, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Philippines, Moldova, Vietnam, Romania, Poland, India, Bulgaria, Hungary, Indonesia, Mongolia and Thailand. Smaller groups of people and individuals with the citizenship of **the People's Republic of China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Serbia, North Macedonia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, Nepal, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Argentina, Mexico, Azerbaijan or Greece were also contacted.** The citizenship of several dozen persons was not established. In 2023, war refugees from Ukraine were also a significant group of people contacted in the field. Some of them came by **recruitment directly in the country of origin** (where a large group of people who have lost their background, feared for their lives and looked for any way to get to a safe country is easily accessible to recruiters), while some of them are “only” **defrauded and after paying the intermediaries, they found themselves in territory of the Czech Republic completely penniless. Some of them were employed in the Czech Republic under exploitative conditions, significant amounts have been deducted from their wages for alleged services in arranging stay, securing work and accommodation** (even in the cases, they got free accommodation provided by the state).

On the basis of information from the environment, field trips aimed specifically at the very **vulnerable target group of minors, citizens of Ukraine, were implemented.** This target group was also intensively contacted through other NGOs and other institutions (see the relevant chapter of this Report). According to observations in the field, it can be concluded that the number of minors and persons under the age of 26, citizens of Ukraine, residing in the territory of the Czech Republic gradually increased even in 2023. If these persons work and are also accommodated through agencies or intermediaries, then **the situation of isolation and dependence on accommodation provided by the employer can increase their vulnerability to exploitative THB practices. For recruitment in the country of origin** (without significant differences, whether it is the European Union member state or a third country outside the European Union), **means of electronic communication are increasingly used** – social networks and online communication platforms, various discussion forums focused on work in Europe / the Czech Republic, advertising on internet job exchanges, etc. As in the previous year, in 2023 this means has been unequivocally the most frequently used way for the La Strada clients to learn about employment in the Czech Republic.

During 2023, **14,426 pieces of preventive and informational materials of the La Strada**, containing the service offer with contacts and self-identification questions aimed at recognizing the THB situation were purposefully distributed in the field. Of these, 10,641 were given directly to people from the target group and people close to the target group. Other materials were distributed to selected locations in the field, organizations and institutions. Materials from other relevant organizations and institutions were distributed rather occasionally during fieldwork during this period. Furthermore, 725 pieces of stickers with the offer of services and the contact of the La Strada were **pasted in suitable places.**

In the field, the most frequently addressed questions related to the following topics (in order of frequency) were solved with the contacted persons: **non-payment of wages/remuneration for work and wage compensation; non-payment of mandatory contributions by the employer; pressure to perform illegal work; illegal deductions from wages; non-compliance with working hours, work breaks and shift scheduling in violation of the Labour Code or non-compliance with the Regulation of the Government of the Czech Republic on minimum wages, guaranteed wages and wage supplements; unlawful termination of employment by the employer; changes in the type and/or conditions of work after arrival in the Czech Republic; poor accommodation conditions provided by the employer; non-fulfilment of notification and registration obligations by the employer and termination of employment and change of employer for holders of employee cards.** In several cases, the questions also related to **extortion, dangerous threats, unjust enrichment and violence by the employer.**

In 2023, a significant increase in the number of people who contacted the La Strada SOS line was recorded: A total amount of **558 people**, with whom **2,271 actions were performed.** Most of the callers were not citizens of the Czech Republic. The trend of a higher number of people from countries outside the European Union persists. In 2023, **77 % of callers, citizens of countries outside the European Union,** contacted the line; **callers, citizens of the European Union member states made up 13 % of cases; 10 % of cases were represented by callers – citizens of the Czech Republic** (qualified estimate). In 2023, clients were most often provided with **professional social counselling on the SOS line (75 %)**, followed by **basic counselling (23 %)**, which most often related to foreigner's issues and **crisis intervention (2 % of cases).** La Strada offers its clients the mediation of legal representation. **In 2023, a total of 63 clients used mediated legal services.** Legal representation is already offered at the initial stage of cooperation and is often used.

An important point is **the assistance to clients in making claims for compensation for damage caused as a result of THB abroad. For several years in a row, this has mainly been the case of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA),** in which, with regard to language, legal and other differences, communication and cooperation between the client's legal representation in the United Kingdom, the client and the client's legal representation in the Czech Republic is essential. In 2023, a court hearing took place in the United Kingdom regarding damages arising from the THB situation of a client of La Strada.

## **5.2 Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague**

**The main focus of the Magdala Project is to support THB and domestic violence victims. In 2023, through the Magdala Project, assistance was provided to four THB victims** (all of them were women), which were provided with comprehensive social services including accommodation. Two female clients started using the project's services in 2016 and 2017, while the cooperation continued throughout 2023. Two new female clients started to be involved in the project with their children in 2023. The average age of these female clients was 30 years. Two clients are citizens of the Czech Republic. Three clients are raising children aged 3-10. One new client is childless. Clients who came to the counselling centre in 2023 in an environment of prostitution were identified through NGOs. These were persons

from an unfavourable socio-economic environment, mainly of Roma origin, while most of them grew up in children's homes. These victims and their children were during the period of cooperation with the Magdala Project provided with: accommodation in the network of charity shelters, professional social counselling, legal counselling, socio-therapeutic counselling, food and material support. In 2023, the Magdala Project staff worked on the long-term basis with clients being treated with a psychiatric diagnosis and then worked with women who were in a situation of prostitution and domestic violence and were trying to overcome the current situation. The Magdala project focused mainly on the return of these people to "ordinary life", i.e. overcoming a difficult life situation, or improving their position on the labour market.

**The Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague** (hereinafter referred to as "Caritas") **also met with five women**, of whom 4 were childless, and 1 with children, identified by the organization as **potential THB victims**. These were refugees from Ukraine who encountered situations during the journey, or from their relatives, that can be evaluated as THB. At the moment, these clients are using residential services, are cooperating with the Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague, and they do not want to resolve the situation through legal means. These clients are also under the care of a psychologist and are processing their traumas, mainly related to their situation in Ukraine.

**Women or mothers with children from an environment of prostitution, who mainly need counselling, want to leave the environment of prostitution and solve their debt problems in a different way turn to the counselling centre.**

**In 2023, representatives of the Caritas went to nightclubs twice a month on average.**

The number of women in the clubs is not decreasing, and these workers again and again met single mothers who are trying to solve their desperate financial situation through prostitution. At the same time, there is a significant decrease in customers, with many men arriving very drunk and often arrogant. As customers dwindle, in less prosperous clubs, operators are letting in potentially problematic clients – and the women working here are afraid of them. These workers rarely met women from Ukraine as part of field programs, they are ever hardly to be seen in the clubs. All the more, there is a fear that many women from Ukraine are locked up in private homes or in clubs, where the Caritas field workers are not allowed to access. Next year, the Caritas would like to focus more on monitoring new clubs and private houses, both in Moravia and in Prague.

**The Magdala project** also provides field services in the Olomouc, Zlín and Ústí regions. In 2023, there was closer cooperation with the dioceses of Brno and Litoměřice, specifically the Blansko Regional Charity and the Litoměřice Charity. In 2023, the Caritas financed the THB prevention activities provided in these regions. In 2023, the field service worked with a total of 151 clients, 3 of whom were identified as potential THB victims. The field working group consists of two field workers and a driver. On the evening of the trip, the team members load the prepared material and go to pre-planned nightclubs. In the nightclub, the operator would take the team members to a place where the workers can be alone with the clients.

After the introduction of the service, the client is provided with sexually transmitted diseases testing and is given the necessary time to open up and talk. If possible, a solution to a difficult situation is sought, the client is offered leaflets with the necessary contacts and information, or specific help. If the client is at risk of THB, she will receive appropriate information and an

offer of help. Regular visits to nightclubs and places of street prostitution in Prague – THB monitoring and prevention, interviews with club operators, distribution of leaflets and small gifts, counselling, spiritual support – took place once a week. Representatives of the organization were also in contact with some of the women outside of the field service meetings. The most frequent locations of field trips were Brno, Olomouc, Teplice, Dubí, Bílina, Chomutov and Mikulov. The average age of these clients was 34 years. Most often, these were women from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Vietnam, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Field workers made visits to people involved in the sex business and provided them with crisis intervention, basic social counselling, spiritual support and information about sexually transmitted diseases. Financial difficulties, debt problems and fear of war were among the most common regarding the clients of field services.

### **5.3 Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren**

Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, Centre for National Programs and Services (hereinafter referred to as “Diaconia ECCB”) has been implementing the social service of asylum housing for men, couples and women who are trafficked on the labour market and exploited at work. The crisis assistance service was registered 4 years later, following the need to solve the problem of exploitation without the need to provide housing. The service is provided at two detached workplaces in Brno and Pilsen, and there is a workplace for both services in Prague. In October 2023, an outpatient crisis assistance service was registered, mainly in connection with the STOP VIOLENCE project, which works with violent persons or those with a tendency to act aggressively. This year, the operation of the service will be fine-tuned and networked within other services.

In 2023, the residence **service of asylum housing was provided to 42 clients** (4 women and 38 men; their average age was 40 years). The largest number of people came from **Mongolia (20)**, followed by Bulgaria (12), Ukraine (2), Georgia (1), Romania (2), Armenia (1), Morocco (1), Iraq (1), the Russian Federation (1) and Slovakia (1).

The most frequently resolved client problems were: employment crisis (31), client has become a victim of crime (3), unpaid salary (4), unpaid sick leave (2), fraud (2), work accident (0), crisis in connection with the war situation in Ukraine (0) and **THB (0) – already included in the Mol program through the organization La Strada.**

In 2023, the field crisis assistance service provided assistance to a total of 114 clients. There were 66 clients in Prague, 3 clients in Brno, of which 20 were women and 49 men. In Pilsen, the service was provided to 45 clients, of which 22 were women and 23 men. Most people came from: Bulgaria (73), Ukraine (15), Romania (8), Slovakia (5), Czech Republic (4), Turkey (4), Azerbaijan (2), Mongolia (1), North Macedonia (1) and Syria (1).

Field crisis assistance is provided directly in the field; however clients usually do not share all information during consultations; information about their place of residence is often not being shared, nor do they always need to define their exact age. Crisis assistance workers visit locations where there is a potential occurrence of clients with issues regarding the employment law area. On the spot, information about the service is passed on and support options are offered for possible future cooperation. As already stated in the text, Diaconia ECCB uses offices in Prague, Pilsen and Brno. It serves locations nationwide and it' staff is able to travel to remote locations. The organization cooperates with the Mol on mapping localities with the THB occurrence. In 2023, a total number of 16 field trips were carried out,

in which localities with the occurrence of foreigners and potentially exploited persons were targeted. Approximately **250 people were approached** in the field and more than **2,500 pieces of information leaflets were distributed** to hostels and institutions throughout the Czech Republic. **Most often, workers dealt with cases related to non-payment of wages. They also supported persons in crisis in connection with an unfavourable social situation in the employment area. The support also concerned families from Ukraine, especially in the area of escorts to offices, processing of benefits and support in the framework of medical procedures.**

The employees of Diaconia ECCB solve the problems of exploited people with a comprehensive approach, and an integral part of this work is precisely assistance in the exercise of rights – securing documents, mediation of legal assistance and possible assistance in criminal proceedings.

#### **5.4 International Organization for Migration**

In the context of THB, all the activities of the International Organization for Migration (hereinafter referred to as “IOM”) in 2023 were primarily focused on the prevention of labour exploitation of holders of temporary protection. IOM was involved in the implementation of only two cases of voluntary returns, regarding one citizen of Romania and one citizen of Bulgaria. In both cases, voluntary return was funded through the United States Department of State's Emergency Victim Assistance (EVA) Fund. Both clients have been victims of alleged employment fraud. As part of its activities aimed at preventing labour exploitation of holders of temporary protection, the IOM assesses the situation in 2023 as follows:

- The permanent shortage of people on the labour market results in the intensification of manipulation of foreign workers by intermediaries.
- The aim of the manipulation is to lure foreigners from legal employment into seemingly legal and more profitable work. Foreigners, for whom it is often difficult to correctly evaluate such fraudulent offers, subsequently find themselves in an illegal position. This mechanism, in combination with other tactics, such as, for example, the well-known combination of work and accommodation, puts victims in a state of dependence on an intermediary.
- Socially responsible employers thus lose employees in whom they have invested resources during recruitment and training.
- In order to prevent these and similar situations, it is necessary to find effective ways to increase general awareness of the risks among foreign workers (a meaningful ongoing campaign, pre-departure orientation).

#### **5.5 Pleasure without Risk**

The organization Pleasure without Risk, registered association (Rozkoš bez rizika, hereinafter referred to as “R-R”) helps clients through professional social counselling (including the R-R Internet Counselling Centre) and field programs. As part of their core activity, R-R employees actively monitor trends in the sex business scene and determine the needs of their clients. As part of their direct activities, R-R employees actively monitor trends in the sex business scene and determine the needs of their clients. Through social services, they search for and contact persons who provide, have provided, or are considering providing paid sexual or erotic services – and offer them their services. R-R

helps the above-mentioned persons in their life situations and enables them to obtain information, knowledge and skills that will lead to the safest possible provision of paid sexual or erotic services. R-R focuses on enabling these people to deal with risks that may threaten them both now and in the future.

The target group of R-R services are clients (including foreigners) between the age of 18 and 64. Persons providing paid sexual or erotic services are by R-R considered in particular: sex workers (offering these services physically or online), erotic masseuses, porn actors/actresses, strippers and dancers in nightclubs clubs. These people, who are commercially exploited and people who lead risky lifestyles or are threatened by this lifestyle, can also be THB victims.

The main aim is support and help clients to solve adverse social situations. R-R aims for people using its services to:

- be informed about possible health, social and psychological risks and consequences of the work in the sex business, understood them in the context of their own situation and knew strategies for managing them;
- know safety strategies for working in the sex business;
- found their value and their boundaries, and be able to define them not only towards customers and other people on the scene (colleagues, managers, etc.), but also towards the public;
- to find out their current state of health in relation to sexually transmitted diseases and knew how to prevent them, or how to solve their problems;
- be informed about their legal rights and obligations in relation to the sex business.

In 2023, the R-R provided its ambulatory and field social services to a total of 2,212 individuals. Altogether 817 field trips were made, of which 127 with a use of the mobile ambulance. **In total, R-R provided its clients with 5,424 services** (a service is defined as one meeting with a client, within the framework of which several types of counselling can be used; in most cases, it was personal contact, fewer contacts were made by phone or through e-mail). R-R is most often in contact with clients from the Czech Republic, but also from Ukraine, Slovakia, Moldova, Nigeria, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Philippines and elsewhere.

For the year 2023, R-R staff have not met anyone who says that he or she provide paid sexual services without consent, yet they repeatedly verify their consent as part of social counselling, mostly for people with addiction, mental illness or intellectual disability. For people who are particularly vulnerable, there is a possibility that they are in prostitution with consent, but involuntarily, for example due to mental capacity, mental illness and/or addiction, they cannot adequately assess the situation and are THB victims or victims of solicitation. During online monitoring, R-R maps the advertising of women from Asian communities who do not use their services and with whom it is impossible to establish direct contact (only managers answered the phone-calls). R-R employees recorded hypotheses about the alleged THB and involuntary provision of services in discussion servers intended for customers, which, of course, cannot be verified. Throughout the Czech Republic, the trend of reducing the number of people providing paid sexual services in nightclubs continues. This is related to the decrease in the number of open night clubs. There are also fewer women who offer their services on the street. **Both women and men move into the**



**private scene and the sex business continues to become more hidden.** At the same time, R-R records an increase in the number of people in the online environment and registers an increase in advertising and new profiles of sex workers. During 2023, R-R noticed several trends in some regions, such as pressure from customers to reduce the prices of sexual services or a greater demand for the female service providers “on the route”. Most of the time, R-R workers encounter the provision of paid sexual services with consent, while still encountering the practices of “pimps” who exploit female prostitutes – but such females do not perceive this aspect as essential, because the respective person is their partner or family member.

Child prostitution has not yet been a topic of R-R activities. This issue mainly concerns excluded locations and hostels, girls from educational facilities and the online environment.

**R-R workers have never met a child younger than 15 years old in the environment of the prostitution scene.** In 2023, R-R was contacted by several girls aged 17 with a request for help and provision of services in the South Bohemian and Ústí Regions. R-R research in 2023 shows that 20 % of female clients started providing sexual services before the age of 18. In 2023, a roundtable on the child prostitution took place in the South Bohemian Region. As a possible solution, R-R proposes preventive social work with juveniles in prostitution, the aim of which would be the identification of victims of pimping and THB, support and assistance in solving an adverse social situation, and effective cooperation of victims with a follow-up network (NGO, Police of the Czech Republic). Furthermore, R-R proposes education about the spectrum of existing social services regarding the child prostitution prevention and possible related procedures.

## **5.6 Administration of Refugee Facilities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic**

### ***Centre for the Support of Integration of Foreigners of the Administration of Refugee Facilities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic***

In 2023, most of the centres to support the integration of foreigners (hereinafter referred to as “CSIF”) of the Mol Refugee Facilities Administration (hereinafter referred to as “RFA”) encountered cases of labour exploitation, especially unfair practices of employment agencies that use the language barrier, fear of the unknown, as well as material, housing and financial needs of foreigners, whether migrating for work or fleeing war. In connection with the wave of migration from Ukraine, there is still an increased concern that these persons could become THB victims. CSIF social workers, while working within the Regional Assistance Centres for Helping Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as “RACHU”), record coercive activities and fraudulent practices of some employment agencies. There are also suspicions of abuse of refugees by third parties when obtaining humanitarian benefits, which were subsequently taken from them after payment. CSIF social workers point to the recurring issue of linking employment with accommodation, when an employee – a foreigner – is more easily isolated and manipulated, when he or she can face the threat of cancellation of the residence permit (and being kicked out of the hostel) when refusing illegal working conditions. Although clients are offered options as part of CSIF social and legal counselling to proceed in such cases, they usually refuse any involvement of the authorities or the Police of the Czech Republic and the submission of official initiatives or complaints. Clients

increasingly refuse to address their situation in any way, for a variety of reasons, often lacking trust in local institutions and organizations. Specifically, in the Liberec Region, cases of labour exploitation with THB suspicion were handed over to the La Strada and the Police of the Czech Republic, which further dealt with the cases. However, a case that would be qualified as THB has not been recorded.

CSIF social workers are equipped with contacts to organizations focusing on the THB agenda. They cooperate mainly with the La Strada, regularly preparing a series of trainings and workshops for these social workers, and whose information manuals and leaflets are available to employees and foreigners in every CSIF. In 2023, CSIF staff participated in several platforms and conferences dealing with THB. CSIF representatives in the Pilsen Region also became members of the working group dealing with the issue of exploitation.

### ***Work with Clients Department of the Administration of Refugee Facilities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic***

#### ***Short-term shelter and Regional Assistance Centres for Helping Ukraine of the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic***

The most common case of exploitation is working for “Agencies” without written agreement, basically on a mere oral arrangement. The recruitment and offer takes place over the Internet. Upon arrival, is worker provided with the accommodation, which is often unsatisfactory. Work is difficult or not available at all. People are often transferred to other facilities, where foreigners are under psychological pressure – which consists of manipulation, threats, lack of knowledge of the language and threats of deportation back to Ukraine (for men). Manipulation regarding the financial situation of relatives in Ukraine (for women), “punishments” for unfulfilled work, deductions from wages for accommodation, meals or “failing to meet the standard” is also common.

In the last 3 months of 2023, there were more suspected cases of labour exploitation. Suspicions regarding the sexual abuse were recorded in just a few cases. Recent specific cases (abuse, exploitation and threats) can be described as follows:

A man, a foreigner aged 45-50 without documents, worked illegally for a construction company. The work took place in the vicinity of Prague. He was told that he was being moved to another facility, but the person appeared at RACHU. He said that he did not receive a salary, nor a work contract, and he got into the current situation with threats from the police and prison. The man was in a bad mental state. He was provided with contacts (psychologist, social support, lawyer, emergency accommodation) and the case was handed over to the Police of the Czech Republic.

Another case of abuse of authority was a situation where a client was charged a high amount for energy costs and therefore sought legal help.

### ***State integration program***

For the year 2023, the State Integration Program (hereinafter referred to as “SIP”) registered one case of possible THB. This was a client enrolled in SIP with an individual integration plan. The suspicion related to labour exploitation. A social worker trained in THB prevention within the framework of the RFA has repeatedly discussed with the client about this topic. The employee afterwards contacted the La Strada and the Association for Integration and

Migration (hereinafter referred to as “AIM”), describing the signs and circumstances of possible THB. La Strada continued to address the case directly.

With regard to reception and residence centres and facilities for securing foreigners, in 2023 the identification of a client who encountered sexual exploitation in a country other than the Czech Republic took place. The case was handled by the La Strada and AIM. In all other cases, social workers at no facility were able to identify a possible THB victim. If there was suspicion on the side of the social workers, the clients refused to resolve their situation with the follow-up organization and the Police of the Czech Republic. All clients received contacts and information on possible procedures for dealing with possible THB.

## **6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

### **6.1 Funds provided by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic**

The Mol finances the Program for the Support and Protection of THB Victims. **In 2023, the amount of CZK 2,371,220** was used by NGOs for services under this Program, including preventive activities. As part of extraordinary activities related to refugees from Ukraine in the Czech Republic, the amount of **CZK 69,510** was provided. An amount of **CZK 93,176** was provided for preventive activities aimed directly at refugees from Ukraine (however, this amount was spent as part of the Program's preventive activities, i.e. it is already included in the total amount for the year 2023).

### **6.2 Funds provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic** **In 2023, the MLSA provided subsidies to organizations whose target group are mainly THB victims with the total amount of CZK 29,258,115.**

The mentioned organizations provide services to clients regardless of age, so their clients may include persons under the age of 18 who are THB victims.

In connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, no support was paid to organizations in 2023 under extraordinary subsidy titles. As part of the extraordinary subsidy procedure of the MLSA for the year 2023 for the payment of expenses of social services related to assistance to persons on the territory of Ukraine (care services), no additional support was awarded to the respective organizations.

## **7. PREVENTION AND EDUCATION**

The following chapters contain information on educational activities, research, awareness activities, information campaigns, coordinated activities in the Czech Republic and at the international level.

### **7.1 Education**

Also in 2023, educational activities focused on the THB issue were organized in cooperation with state institutions and NGOs from the Czech Republic, but also in cooperation with partners from the international environment. The aim was to inform about the activities of the Mol in the THB area, the functioning and streamlining of the Program, the possibilities of support and protection of THB victims and current trends in the THB area. The key topic was also to inform about the possibilities and method of identification of potential victims by the relevant professional groups that may encounter them in the course of their profession.

## **Police education**

Experts of the Department of Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (hereinafter referred to as "DTHBIM") of the NCCOC regularly participated in online meetings of representatives of the European Union member states under the auspices of **the Analytical Project Phoenix** (AP Phoenix, platform for THB issues) at Europol. As in 2022, one of the topics was also "THB – Risks for Refugees from Ukraine", based on the mutual exchange of information from individual countries and sharing of preventive activities.

**On 28 February 2023, a seminar was held at the Judicial Academy in Kroměříž**, Prague branch, focusing on the THB related criminal activity. Representative of DTHBIM of the NCCOC, as a lecturer, presented current trends in the THB area to the present prosecutors and judges and introduced them to the prepared case study.

NCCOC experts successfully completed a three- month online **course Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals** (hereinafter referred to as "HELP") on the THB issue organized by the Judicial Academy of the Czech Republic under the patronage of the Council of Europe.

As part of **the EMPACT project**, NCCOC experts are involved in the activities of the working group "**Commercial Surrogacy and Sale of Children**", from 2024 in the position of leader. The aim of the project is to share information about individual cases, legal regulations, prosecution strategies, cooperation with third countries and possible proposals for legislative changes. On 23-25 October 2023, NCCOC officers participated in an expert meeting at the headquarters of the General Directorate "Combating Organized Crime" of the Bulgarian Police Force (Главна Дирекция "Борба с Организираната Престъпност"; GDCOC) in Sofia within the project EMPACT THB, OA 2.2 – Illegal Commercial Surrogacy and Sale of Children.

Members of DTHBIM of the NCCOC in 2023 participated in online seminars and webinars on THB organized by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Education and Training (European Police Academy, hereinafter referred to as "CEPOL").

In 2023, the activities of NCCOC experts focused on **cooperation with SLIO based in Opava** and individual LIs in the area of information exchange and education continued. On 12 December 2023, as part of the training of LIs workers for the Central Bohemian Region, the methodologist of the Department of International Cooperation and Methodology (hereinafter referred to as "DICM") of the NCCOC gave a presentation on the current development of the situation in the area of labour exploitation from the perspective of the Police of the Czech Republic.

DICM of the NCCOC, in cooperation with the Department of Crime Prevention of the MoI, renewed the organization of expert working meetings, so-called "**round tables**", **aimed at improving the identification of potential THB victims**. The main aim of the organized events is to increase the quality of detection of potential THB victims and at the same time to improve mutual cooperation and communication between public administration bodies, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations and other interested entities in a specific region. On behalf of NCCOC, lieutenant colonel M.Sc. Antonín Vavrda, methodologist for THB of the DICM and col. M.Sc. Libor Honeš, manager of the 2nd department of DHTIM took part in the meeting. In 2023, the so-called "round tables" were held **in the Ústí Region on 5 June 2023** and **in the Pilsen Region on 19 December 2023**.

Mr. Honeš, as a representative of the Police of the Czech Republic, continued to be a member of the permanent working group of the IDBCIE, established within the MLSA.

In 2023, a **seven-week certified course of the Central European Police Academy** (Mittleuropäische Polizeiakademie, MEPA) **was implemented** for level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which is traditionally focused on **organized crime and other serious forms of cross-border crime**, their prevention and combating. The co-organizer of the course is the Czech Republic, a member of DHTIM as a lecturer, NCCOC presented current trends in the THB area.

**From 5 to 6 September 2023, an instructional-methodical workshop for THB specialists** took place in the Šumava hotel in Kašperské Hory, with the participation of NCCOC police officers, other Criminal Police and Investigations Service specialists from individual regional police directorates, SLIO and LIs staff and representatives of NGOs involved in the functioning of the Program for the Support and Protection of THB Victims.

The DICM of the NCCOC methodologist in charge of the THB agenda continued during 2023 in **lectures for the Alien Police Service officers** assigned to the external border. The lectures were held at the educational **facility of the Mol in Holešov**, as part of the educational program “Basic Rights, Protection of Personal Data and Dealing with Particularly Vulnerable Persons During Border Control”.

In 2023, the DICM of the NCCOC methodology held several lectures on the **THB agenda for consular workers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic** as part of their specialization course before being seconded to embassies abroad.

On **21 and 24 November 2023**, the DICM of the NCCOC methodologist held lectures as part of the **Criminology** course on the topic of “Methodology for investigating organized crime and THB” for the master's degree students of the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague.

### **Judicial education**

**The education of judges and prosecutors**, which takes place through the Judicial Academy, **remains optional**. These educational events are characterized **by an optional character** and serves mainly for further education of the respective justice workers. Due to the voluntary nature of education through the Judicial Academy, it is not possible to order this in a directive way.

Completion of selected educational courses is mandatory for the newly established institute **of judicial candidates**. The mandatory seminars that judicial candidates will have to attend as part of their annual professional training include a five-day interactive seminar in the area of criminal law dedicated to the criminal process “Proceeding from the idea of the indictment to the announcement of the verdict” and one simulated trial of their choice, which can be “Simulated Main Trial”. **Education regarding the mentioned THB area of will not be mandatory for judicial candidates, however, they will also be able to optionally register for seminars prepared for the target group of judges and prosecutors as part of their professional training.**

On **28 February 2023**, JUDr. Jana Zezulová, Ph.D., from the Supreme State Attorney's Office, together with JUDr. Milan Šimek (Regional State Prosecutor's Office Hradec Králové) participated as lecturers in the Judicial Academy seminar on **THB issues**.

Furthermore, **in May 2023, a course of the HELP** program of the Council of Europe was organized in the form of e-learning, tutored by JUDr. Jana Zezulová, Ph.D., from the Supreme State Attorney's Office. The course was intended for judges, prosecutors and all other legal professionals involved in THB combating and prosecuting, and in addition to national legislation, it also included an analysis of the Council of Europe “Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings” and relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, other international instruments and national examples of good practice for the protection of THB victims. The course also included a new module focused on the issue of labour exploitation.

### **Other educational activities**

The THB agenda is always an integral part **of consular education**. Lectures dedicated to this issue are provided by the MoI. Consular education takes place at several levels. The basic type of consular education is the so-called “pre-departure training”, implemented in the form of three-week courses. In 2023, these lectures were provided by NCCOC. The presentations were aimed at getting to know the THB forms and manifestations, the possibilities of helping THB victims of human trafficking and support systems for them. Consular staff were also informed about the possibilities related to embassies cooperating with relevant organizations that deal with THB agenda and can, if necessary, provide follow-up assistance to victims.

### ***La Strada***

In 2023, the organization La Strada was significantly active in **primary prevention among young adults**. During the respective events, the target group was given information about labour market risks that can lead to situations of labour exploitation and THB. This was done through interactive workshops, educational videos and through sharing practical experience. A total of 17 workshops were organized **and 245 people were trained**.

Adults were also trained on the topic of safe employment. The training took place directly in organizations attended by the respective adults. La Strada representatives visited a total of 5 organizations working with foreigners, mainly refugees from Ukraine – **31 people were trained**.

La Strada created **a video training for refugees from Ukraine**, intended for distribution on social networks, which contains the most important information about the entry of foreigners into the labour market in the Czech Republic, about the key provisions of the Labour Code and labour-related legal conditions, and about the issue of labour exploitation and THB.

In 2023, two **accredited trainings for RFA were implemented**. The training was mainly focused on the THB-related legislation, the identification of a trafficked person and a detailed description of the services and operations of the La Strada. In the practical part, methods of communication with trafficked and exploited persons and procedures in specific situations for exercising their rights and interests were tested.

In 2023, there were **5 accredited training courses Introduction to the THB issue with a focus on children and young people**, where **a total of 62 ASLPC workers were trained**. In total **60 workers from various NGOs working with migrants** were also trained in **establishing contact with a trafficked person on crisis and counselling phone lines and in the field**.

In 2023, La Strada continued a project called **“Cross Continent Collaboration to Protect Asian Trafficking Victims in Europe”**. This project, funded by Porticus Asia and organized by La Strada International, also involved other members of La Strada International, namely La Strada Poland and the Association for the Development of Alternative Reintegration and Educational Procedures (Asociatia Pentru Dezvoltare Practicilor Alternative De Reintegrare Si Educatie, ADPARE) from Romania. Together, the THB phenomenon related to people from Asia resided to the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania was mapped, as well as the effectiveness of the related aid system, the rights of the victims of this crime and the relevant jurisprudence.

In 2023, cooperation with the Office of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees continued** in the framework of the project **“Awareness and Prevention of Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Response to the War in Ukraine”**.

In 2023, **the activities of the organization La Strada focused on minors from Ukraine** residing in the territory of the Czech Republic continued. **Two types of prevention materials** were created – leaflets in Ukrainian containing information on the specifics of employment of minors, self-identification in case of an exploitation and/or THB situation and useful contacts including ASLPC contacts. These materials were **sent to 24 organizations working with young refugees from Ukraine throughout the Czech Republic**, always in the requested number of pieces, on request, **in a total number of 2,310 pieces**.

In 2023, the La Strada organization **newly created and accredited (accreditation of the MLSA) a full-day training** on the THB issue and exploitation for employees of institutions and organizations who are in contact with foreign minors as part of their work with their target group.

A basic methodology was also created **for people working with a potentially trafficked or exploited person, which was given to 50 ASLPC workers** as part of training and during field trips.

As another preventive activity, **11 organizations** working with young refugees held **training on safe employment of young people – 84 people were trained**.

La Strada also created **a video training** for young refugees from Ukraine containing the most important information about the entry of foreigners into the labour market in the Czech Republic, the key provisions of the Labour Code and labour-legal conditions, and the issue of labour exploitation and THB. This video is intended for distribution on social networks.

### ***Caritas of the Archdiocese in Prague***

As part of the above-mentioned Magdala Project, the organization carried out the following lecture and educational activity in 2023, which was carried out by field team workers focused on awareness-raising and THB prevention:

1 March 2023: Saint Voršila Elementary School, Prague.

12 April 2023: Pedagogical and Social Higher Vocational School, Prague.

26 April 2023: Youth Centre at the Holy Mother Social Secondary Vocational School, Jihlava.

27 April 2023: Secondary Vocational Social School at Holy Mother, Jihlava.

27 April 2023: Janštejn Educational Institution.

28 April 2023: Private Higher Vocational Social School, Jihlava.

23 June 2023: Parish of Bělohrad.

26 September 2023: Social Vocational High School Prague.

22 October 2023: Interspace (Meziprostor) Třebíč.

10 November 2023: Czech Christian Academy Letohrad.

### ***Facilities for children – foreigners***

The facility for children – foreigners (hereinafter referred to as “FCF”) places particular emphasis on the language competence of clients in the framework of the THB and abuse prevention. Therefore, regular Czech language tutoring is carried out, both by FCF employees and by external lecturers or NGOs. The school curriculum of the FCF school also includes cross-cutting topics related to the issue of abuse and THB. As part of individual and group work with long-term clients, FCF focuses mainly on the prevention of risks related to the integration process. Many socialization programs served this purpose. In addition, FCF provides therapeutic services, a program of preparation for leaving the facility and other services according to the individual needs of clients. As part of the prevention of risks, including THB and abuse, various seminars and workshops are organized in cooperation with other organizations aimed at raising awareness regarding the risks associated with life in Europe (such as the topic of extremism). In 2023, there were two workshops organized by the La Strada on the topic of labour exploitation and 2 seminars organized by the Organization for Aid to Refugees on the topic of financial literacy. Legal and social counselling is continuously provided to clients. Professional employees participate in educational events, seminars and courses dealing with THB issues, according to needs and possibilities. Interdepartmental expert groups are held regularly, where the THB topic is also discussed.

### ***International Organization for Migration***

In the context of the prevention of labour exploitation, IOM implemented the following educational activities, which were undertaken from the funds allocated to IOM activities, within the framework of the Refugee Response Plan in the context of the war in Ukraine:

- **Training of HR professionals of small and medium-sized enterprises called “Ethical Employment of Foreigners”.** This is a series of trainings, 9 of which were implemented in the second half of the year. The aim of the training was to orient HR professionals in the legal aspects and ethical standards related to employing of the foreigners. During the trainings, the IOM appeals to social responsibility and draws attention to the negative effects of illegal or unethical employment of foreigners.
- **Training to increase the intercultural competences of SLIO employees.** This activity aims to increase the effectiveness of detecting illegal employment and labour exploitation by improving the ability to establish more effective communication with foreign workers during inspections.
- **Providing labour and legal advice to foreigners.** Counselling is provided directly (IOM Info Centre) and via implementation partners operating in the Liberec, Pardubice, Hradec Králové and Karlovy Vary regions. Counselling helps foreigners better navigate the labour market and prevent situations leading to labour exploitation.
- **Monitoring of the accommodation capacities in the context of the controversial linking of accommodation with employment,** when foreigners are forced to accept labour exploitation by the threat of losing their accommodation.



- **Pilot project to increase the capacity of basic organizations of the Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions** to offer support and assistance to foreigners in the workplace.

### ***State Labour Inspection Office***

An integral part of the activity of SLIO, as well as regional LIs, is prevention and education, aimed at both employers and employees. This is implemented not only as part of the control activities of inspectors, but also through labour law consultancy, which is regularly provided to the general public at regional LIs. **In 2023, over 11 consultations were provided** within individual LIs **and more than 6,000 questions were answered via the free phone line.** Inspectors of illegal employment regularly participate in professional seminars or trainings, which are on the topic of both the issue of employment of foreigners and, for example, on the topic of disguised employment mediation, which is also one of the most socially harmful phenomena. The education of inspectors of illegal employment, who are specialized in the area of employment of foreigners, is organized within the SLIO in the form of regular professional seminars or training. These seminars or trainings are organized in cooperation with other control bodies that focus their activities on the employment of foreigners and are attended by experts working on the issue in question.

**In 2023, an expert seminar** on methodologies for the issue of employing foreign workers was held, when, among other things, inspectors were informed **about the THB issue by a representative of the Police of the Czech Republic – NCCOC.** There were also three rounds of the seminar, called **“Strengthening the Intercultural Competences of SLIO and LIs inspectors”**, implemented by Slovo 21 as part of the **IOM and Mol project.**

**Personal or online meetings of LIs representatives with representatives of the regional platform of the Centre for the Support of Integration of Foreigners have been taking place for a long time.** These meetings take place several times a year, almost throughout the territory of the Czech Republic. In 2023, representatives of the LI authorities actively participated in several conferences, seminars and online trainings, focused on the topic of labour exploitation, possibly also THB, secondment of workers and the related topic of agency employment. Representatives of the LI authorities participated with colleagues from the Czech Social Security Administration in the inspection carried out by the Financial Police of Austria. This control event was organized by the European Labour Authority (ELA), which also organized a seminar on the subject of labour exploitation in cooperation with CEPOL, with the participation of SLIO representatives.

### ***Department of Work with Clients of the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic***

**In 2023, in relation to the RFA Department of Work with Clients, 15 employees were trained**, including: Ruzyně (1 social worker), Zastávka (1), Kostelec nad Orlicí (1), Havířov (1), Bělá-Jezová (1), Balková (2), Vyšší Lhoty (2), integration asylum centre (2) state integration program (1) and short-term shelter agenda (1). It is a regular two -day training organized by the La Strada, focused on identification, communication and information transfer for persons who are possible THB victims. The next follow-up training should take place in 2025.

## 7.2 Prevention

With regard to the ongoing war conflict in Ukraine, the awareness, education and prevention campaigns that were launched in the Czech Republic shortly after the start of the aggression of the Russian Federation in 2022, continued. Their aim is to continue to contribute to the maximum protection of very vulnerable refugees from Ukraine (especially women and children) from any criminal activity, including THB. All important information is continuously updated and is still available on the websites of all central state administration bodies – in the Ukrainian language as well.

The coordination of preventive activities against human trafficking is still taking place within **the Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Human Trafficking** (hereinafter referred to as “ICG”), which includes both representatives of state authorities and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Likewise, the coordination group within the Consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations Helping Migrants in the Czech Republic, continued to operate.

As part of the European Day of THB Combating, the Mol presented an overview of preventive and educational projects and other activities to minimize the related risks, as well as websites and phone numbers where people from Ukraine can apply for help (<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/prehled-pomoci-osvetovych-kampani-a-aktivit-vprevenci-obchodovani-s-lidmi-z-rad-osob-prchajicich-pred-vaikou-na-ukrajine.aspx>).

**In March 2023, a workshop for ICG members and other invited interested parties, organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (in cooperation with the Mol) **focused on the situation of refugees from Ukraine and the possibility of helping countries directly affected by the wave of migration from Ukraine, took place.**

In 2023, as part of the Program for the Support and Protection of THB Victims, La Strada, in cooperation with the Mol Crime Prevention Department (financing of activities), prepared preventive videos and online seminars on the topic of labour exploitation in relation to refugees from Ukraine, which are continuously presented at relevant educational events. As part of this collaboration (La Strada and Mol), two 60-minute videos were also produced in 2023 for the most hidden part of the refugee population from Ukraine residing in the territory of the Czech Republic. This target group lives in isolation, mostly in private apartments without access to relevant information. The created videos contain the most important information about the entry of foreigners into the labour market in the Czech Republic, key provisions of the Labour Code and labour law conditions, and the issue of labour exploitation and THB. One is aimed at adults from this target group and the other reflects the specifics of adolescents and minors. Refugees continue to be provided with concrete and intensive assistance in all aspects of their lives with the aim of ensuring their safety, protection and maximum integration into the normal life of our society.

**The Police of the Czech Republic** has intensified its criminal intelligence activities and monitors the situation both offline and online. Representatives of the Police of the Czech Republic participate in regular online meetings within Europol and continue to be in close contact with NGOs representatives. To prevent fraud and crimes against persons fleeing from Ukraine, the Police of the Czech Republic created preventive materials in the form of leaflets and audio/video spots. These materials are distributed through the Police of the Czech Republic and the Mol. In the case of the Mol, the materials were disseminated to

regions and municipalities through crime prevention managers, crime prevention assistants and volunteer organizations.

In addition to the educational and preventive activities mentioned in chapter 5, MLSA in 2023 elaborated the **“Analysis of Current Findings and Existing Outputs in the Areas of Labour Exploitation and Illegal or Irregular Employment of Foreigners and other Related Topics in the Pilsen Region”**. The analysis was prepared in cooperation with stakeholders who are active in the given area (SLIO, Alien Police Service, NGOs, employers). The analysis offers a very comprehensive, in-depth view of the situation of foreigners in the precarious conditions of the labour market in the Pilsen Region. In the end, the analysis deals with recommendations for improving the situation and we emphasize, among other things, a comprehensive integration policy and its implementation in practice, including the so-called “two-way” principle.

The area of prevention of illegal employment and labour exploitation is addressed both by the MLSA and SLIO. The SLIO website is continuously updated throughout the year and any changes in legal regulations are considered in the information materials. The information or information leaflets available on the SLIO website contain basic data on the labour law conditions of employees or on the conditions of occupational safety and health protection. The information is available in several language mutations, with Polish, Ukrainian, French, German, Bulgarian and Romanian versions available in addition to the English language pages. These provide basic information about the labour inspection authorities and their control powers, and selected information leaflets are also translated into these languages (for example, “Basic Information for Foreigners on Labour Law Regulations in the Czech Republic”). These information channels enable foreign workers to obtain basic information and familiarize themselves with the applicable labour law regulations in the Czech Republic, as well as, for example, the issue of sending workers to the territory of the Czech Republic. The given issue was also dealt with by **the research project of the Occupational Safety Research Institute**, a public research institution, in cooperation with the Institute of State and Law of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, a public research institution, in the years 2020-2022, commissioned by the MLSA. As part of this project, the following websites were created:

Work of foreigners in the Czech Republic – <https://pracecizincu.cz/cs/>.

Work of the European Union member states citizens in the Czech Republic – <https://eu-citizens.cz/cs/>.

Within the framework of these webpages, which are available in several language mutations, foreigners can learn about the issue of illegal work in the Czech Republic, how to work legally in the territory of the Czech Republic – and also about labour law conditions in the Czech Republic in an interactive way through clickable links. As part of this project, an audio podcast and a video spot were also created, which introduce the issue in question:

[PODCAST Illegal work of foreigners and occupational accidents in the Czech Republic](#)

[VIDEO SPOT The story of Vitaliy – the consequences of an occupational accident for an illegal worker](#)

**In 2023, La Strada also regularly published posts on Facebook for persons fleeing the war in Ukraine** with contacts and information aimed at preventing their exploitation and THB in the territory of the Czech Republic. These posts included a set of safety tips when looking for accommodation-related work (focused mainly on female refugees), a series of THB

prevention safety tips in Ukrainian, answers to frequently asked questions on the topic of safe movement on the labour market in the Czech Republic, etc.

In September 2023, **the national round was evaluated European Crime Prevention Awards** (hereinafter referred to as “ECPA”) **for the year 2023**, on the topic “Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Labour Exploitation and Other Types of Exploitation”. As part of the national round, three nominated projects were awarded (equally, without order):

- “Program for Support and Protection of THB Victims” (implementers: MoI Crime Prevention Department, La Strada, IOM, NCCOC).
- “Prevention of Exploitation and THB of a Particularly Vulnerable Group of Minors Arriving as a Result of the Military Conflict in Ukraine” (implementer: La Strada).
- “Labour Exploitation Prevention” (implementer: IOM).

From the mentioned projects, ICG members **for the ECPA 2023 European round nominated** the project “Program for Support and Protection of THB Victims”, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2023. The European round took place in Valencia in December 2023. Part of the presentation of the winning project was a newly created, approximately 5-minute video spot, describing a model situation of THB taken from a real case (in Czech with optional English subtitles). Representatives of the MoI Crime Prevention Department, La Strada and NCCOC collaborated on the preparation and creation of this video (produced by professional filmmakers). Of course, the information in the video also relates to cooperation with the IOM, as well as other auxiliary entities (within the Program). In the future, the videos will be used for other preventive and educational activities.

## **8. LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS AND JUDGMENTS OF COURTS RELATED TO TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

No legislative changes directly related to these crimes were adopted in 2023, and no legislative changes in this area are planned for 2024 either.

**However, on 1 January 2024, Decree No. 339/2023 Coll.**, which amends Decree No. 37/1992 Coll., **On the Rules of Procedure for District and Regional Courts**, as amended, introduces new specializations of judicial departments under the provision of Section 2 paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure – **one of them applies, among other things, to crimes against human dignity in the sexual area**, i.e. to crimes of **soliciting** (Section 189 of the Criminal Code), **prostitution endangering the moral development of children** (Section 190 of the Criminal Code), and to the criminal offense **of THB** under the provision of Section 168 paragraph 1 letter a) and Section 168 paragraph 2 letter a) of the Criminal Code.

**Currently, a revision of the directive on the THB prevention**, the fight against this phenomenon and the protection of related victims is being negotiated. However, its adoption cannot be assumed earlier than the fall of 2024, so its implementation will probably only take place in 2025.

**Amendment of the definition of illegal work** – there was adopted amendment to the Section 5 letter e) of the Employment Act. The aim of the process was to simplify the identification of illegal work, considering the method of control. LI bodies no longer have to deal with the so-called “sign of consistency”, it means, these bodies do not have to prove whether the person found at the workplace meets the conditions that the jurisprudence brought in addition to the legal regulations.

**A new penalty of banning activity for the offense of enabling the performance of illegal work and disguised employment mediation** – an amendment to Sections 139 and 140 of the Employment Act was adopted. This penalty is not mandatory, but it allows the LI authorities to respond to the large-scale commission of the offense of enabling the performance of illegal work by some entities.

**Extension of the impossibility to employ foreigners with an employment card or blue card** – adopted amendment to Section 37a of the Employment Act. There is a secondary penalty for enabling illegal work according to the Employment Act consisting in the impossibility of employing foreigners with an employment card or blue card, also for cases of the offense of covert employment mediation and enabling the performance of disguised employment mediation and also regarding the non-cooperation during inspection.

**Impossibility to issue a work permit** – adopted amendment to the Section 99 of the Employment Act. The Employment Act anchored a secondary sanction for enabling illegal work consisting in the impossibility of issuing a work permit. There was also an extension to the offenses of disguised employment mediation and enabling the performance of disguised employment mediation and also regarding the non-cooperation during inspection.

**Extension of the additional penalty of the obligation to return the contribution** related to the active employment policy to all types of illegal work – an amendment was adopted regarding the Section 119 of the Employment Act.

**Extension of the additional sanction of non-granting contributions** under the active employment policy to all types of illegal work – amendment to Section 118 of the Employment Act was adopted.

**Extension of the option not to publish job vacancies** – amendment to Section 38 of the Employment Act was adopted. The extension also applies to cases of the offense of disguised employment mediation and enabling the performance of disguised employment mediation and also regarding the non-cooperation during inspection.

**Liability for the fine imposed for enabling the performance of illegal work** within subcontracting chains – amendment to the Section 141a of the Employment Act was adopted. It makes it possible to deal with the highly widespread negative phenomenon of subcontracting chaining, where at the end of the chain there is often only a box company, and the fine can't be enforced.

**Increase in the fine for non-cooperative offenses** according to the Act on Labour Inspection – an amendment to Sections 9a and 22a of the Act on Labour Inspection was adopted. The Act on Labour Inspection contains special non-cooperation offenses that allow the violation of the duties of the inspected person to be punished under the provision of Section 9 of the Act on Labour Inspection, according to which, among other things, the inspector can, in justified cases, invite the inspected person to appear at the workplace of the office or inspectorate within a specified period and provide data, documents or things related to the performance of control. Controlled person is obliged to obey this call, unless he or she proves a serious obstacle that prevents him or her from fulfilling this obligation within the specified period.

**Obligation to keep records of working hours for work performance agreements and work activity agreements** – transposition amendment to the Labour Code was adopted. The measure makes it possible to actually control any exceeding of the legal limits for agreement on work performance, agreement on work activities.

**Record of work performance agreements** – an amendment included in the consolidation package outside the scope of the employment section, effective from 1 July 2024. Work performance agreements are very often a legal institute by which employers circumvent the prohibition of illegal work.

**Newly established status of a recognized employer.** The status of a recognized employer is a condition for reporting to the Employment Offices of the Czech Republic regarding vacant jobs where it is possible to employ a foreigner who needs a work permit to work in the Czech Republic.

**Preferential migration “point system”,** under which employees especially demanded by the labour market in the Czech Republic will be granted priority issuance of an employee card with a validity period of 3 years.

## 8.1 Court Judgements

Statistics from the Ministry of Justice indicate **a total of 15 cases of the crime of human trafficking in 2023. A total of 13 persons were finally convicted** under the provisions of Section 168 of the Penal Code. The sentences issued in 2023 under Section 168 of the Penal Code were related to the topic of **trafficking for sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation (labour exploitation)**. Two cases are presented below for illustrative purposes, including selected sections justifying the type and amount of sentence imposed.

### 8.1.1 Case report No. 1 (Regional Court in Brno)

**Victim:** Woman and man, adults, citizens of the Czech Republic.

**Offender:** Woman and man, adults, citizens of the Czech Republic.

**Means of Coercion:** Offenders, through intentional joint action, with the use of threats of other serious harm and deception, caused another person to be used by others for sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual abuse. Offenders profited from such situation, and committed such crime with the intention that another person be used for prostitution.

**Modus operandi:**

1. Both offenders, after a prior agreement during the unspecified time in the summer of 2018, offered (on the basis of the initiative of the offenders) to the victim (woman) that for the sum of CZK 300,000 they would arrange the killing of her ex-husband, which was to be carried out by an unspecified person of Russian nationality who works for a mafia organization, the so-called “agency”. She accepted this offer, after which the two perpetrators convinced her at least until the spring of 2021 that the preparation for her husband's killing was already underway, and for that purpose they repeatedly demanded additional financial resources, intended for this very purpose. However, the perpetrators kept these funds for their own use and never intended to carry out or mediate the killing of the victim's ex-husband. This way caused the victim the damage in the total amount of CZK 447 001.

2. Both perpetrators, after a prior agreement, in an unspecified period from the summer of 2018 until at least the beginning of 2021, forced the above-mentioned victim to engage in prostitution, in a nightclub and then in a private apartment, using a fictional story to force her to engage in prostitution – related to the existence of a so-called “agency” of contract killers from the Russian-speaking criminals subculture, whom they themselves impersonated on

social networks and in whose names they repeatedly threatened the victim that if she did not perform prostitution, they would harm her children. The victims themselves, as well as the perpetrators, were looking for clients. The perpetrators also set up a user account for victim on the portal “Amateri.cz” (Ammateurs.cz) in order to increase the number of the clients. At the same time, the perpetrators demanded commissions from the victim for her activities, often in amounts of up to CZK 5,000 per day, thus obtaining an amount of at least CZK 120,000 from the victim.

3. After a previous agreement, from the end of August 2020 to May 2021, both perpetrators again used a fictional story about the existence of a so-called “agency” of contract killers from the Russian-speaking criminal subculture – and demanded the victim and her boyfriend, under the threat of physical harm to their children or the abduction of the victim's friend's daughter to the Russian Federation for prostitution, other financial resources. In one case, the perpetrators also demanded an amount of CZK 1,000,000,000 (one billion), although they undoubtedly had in mind the amount of CZK 1,000,000 (one million). Then both victims, out of fear for the fate of their children, handed over a total of CZK 219,443 to the perpetrators, believing that this sum would be handed over to the so-called “agency” of contract killers, resulting in damage to both victims in the amount of at least CZK 219,443.

**Duration of exploitation:** At least 2.5 years.

**By the above actions, both offenders committed:**

- the crime of fraud under the provision of Section 209 paragraph 1, paragraph 3 of the Criminal Code, in complicity under the provision of Section 23 paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code (ad 1);
- the THB crime under the provision of Section 168 paragraph 2 letter a), paragraph 3 letter d) of the Criminal Code, in complicity under the provision of Section 23 of the Criminal Code (ad 2);
- the crime of extortion under the provision of Section 175 paragraph 1, paragraph 2 letter d) of the Criminal Code, in complicity under the provision of Section 23 of the Criminal Code, terminated at the stage of attempt under the provision of Section 21 paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code (ad 3).

**Punishment:** The perpetrators were sentenced to a total prison term of 3 years, while the execution of this sentence was conditionally suspended for a probationary period of 5 years.

### 8.1.2 Case report No. 2 (Regional Court in Brno)

**Victims:** Two underage girls, citizens of the Czech Republic, one of whom acts as an accomplice (she was convicted in a separate proceeding by the Regional Court in Brno – the Youth Court).

**Perpetrators:** The above-mentioned minor girl and adult woman, citizens of the Czech Republic.

**Means of coercion:** The perpetrator enticed the child to be used by others for sexual intercourse, and committed such an act with the intention that another be used for prostitution.

**Modus operandi:**

1. The perpetrator M. Š. at an undetermined time, but no later than 30 January 2021, lured the victim R. Š., whom she was aware was a person under the age of 18, into prostitution by offered her easy access to funds by sending nude photos, selling used underwear and providing sexual services for a fee. When R. Š. reacted positively to the abovementioned proposal, the perpetrator, in cooperation with the victim, set up a profile on the Internet erotic dating site "Amateri.com" (Ammateurs.com), on which she published an advertisement offering the sale of photos and sexual services operated by the victim, R. Š. Through this dating site, the victim repeatedly communicated with clients, whom, for a financial reward, sent photos of her naked body, or provided them with sexual services upon agreement, in the form of classic intercourse or the oral intercourse. Sexual services took place in clients' vehicles for prices ranging from CZK 2,000 to CZK 4,000, depending on the service provided. The clients either paid to the R. Š. in cash or sent the money for these services in advance to M. Š.'s bank account, which subsequently handed over these funds to the R. Š. In the event that the meeting with the clients was mediated directly by M. Š., she asked the clients for a commission for the mediation or a financial reward for looking after the child of the R. Š. at the time when the meeting with the clients was supposed to take place. M. Š. committed the above-mentioned behaviour with the obvious intention of profiting from the prostitution that the victim R. Š. operated, i.e. to obtain funds for her own needs without any effort, and at the same time with the knowledge of the negative impact of her actions on the further development of the respective minor, at which apparently encouraged tendencies towards a promiscuous and parasitic way of life, including the possibility of obtaining a means of subsistence through this lifestyle.

2. M. Š., together with the victim R. Š., prosecuted separately, lured the victim V. D., who they knew was a person under 15 years of age, to engage in prostitution on the premises of the hostel, by offering her easy access to funds for providing oral sex with D. D., with whom they both communicated via social networks for this purpose. D. D., after the V. D. agreed to provide him with oral sex on 2 May 2021, sent an amount of CZK 4,000 to M. Š.'s account in advance on 1 May 2021, from which M. Š. gave an amount of CZK 2 000 to the involved minor for providing oral sex to D. D. The amount of CZK 1,000 was given to the juvenile R. Š., who was supposed to accompany the V. D. to the meeting place with D. D., and CZK 1,000 left in her bank account as a reward for mediation – after that the planned meeting did not take place. The conduct was committed with the clear intention to profit from the prostitution that the victim V. D. would operate, i.e. to obtain funds for own needs without any effort, but also with the knowledge of the negative impact of the actions on the further development of the victim minor, who showed the possibility of obtaining a means of subsistence through this lifestyle.

**Duration of exploitation:** Several months.

**By the above actions, both offenders committed:**

M. Š.:

- the THB crime under the provision of Section 168 paragraph 1 letter a), paragraph 3 letter d) of the Criminal Code;
- the offense of endangering the upbringing of a child under the provision of Section 201 paragraph 1 letter a), letter c), paragraph 3 letter a) of the Criminal Code.

Minor R. Š.:



- the THB crime under the provision of Section 168 paragraph 1 letter a), paragraph 3 letter d) of the Criminal Code;
- the offense of endangering the upbringing of a child under the provision of Section 201 paragraph 1 letter a), letter c), paragraph 3 letter a) of the Criminal Code

**Punishment:** On the concluded agreement on guilt and punishment, **M. Š. was sentenced to a total imprisonment of 3 years, while the execution of this sentence is conditionally suspended for a probationary period of 5 years.**

**In a separate proceeding, minor R. Š. was sentenced by the Regional Court in Brno (Youth Court) to a total criminal imprisonment for 1 year, which is conditionally suspended for a probationary period of 2 years.**

## 8.2 Findings of general courts and the Constitutional Court

Regarding the decision-making activity of the Constitutional Court and general courts in 2023, no significant decision regarding the issue of THB was recorded.

## 9. PARTNERSHIP

### 9.1 Partnership within the Czech Republic

This chapter presents examples of cooperation at both the strategic and operational levels. The cooperation of individual organizations continued to be affected by the aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, and the related effort to help and protect women and children from Ukraine, located on the territory of the Czech Republic, from various types of criminal activity, including THB.

Cooperation continued between the Police of the Czech Republic on one side, and SLPC authorities, Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, Lis and NGOs on the another, while the most intensive cooperation in 2023 was related to the organizations like La Strada, Diaconia ECCB, Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague (Magdala Project) and IOM. Furthermore, the cooperation of the Police of the Czech Republic with local self-government authorities, employment offices, financial authorities, trade authorities, medical facilities, registry offices and other public administration bodies continues.

The Police of the Czech Republic, through the DHTIM of the NCCOC, is involved in the EMPACT project on the issue of THB crime. Within this platform, joint actions of European countries are implemented to fulfil the priorities of the criminal policy of the European Union in the fight against serious international and organized crime. Joint activities, the so-called "Action Days", are planned, which consist in the implementation of control actions on specific dates in the territory of various member states. The aim of the events is to find, document and evaluate knowledge about the environment of interest and the people who move within it. On the territory In the Czech Republic, the inspection took place between 10 and 17 June 2023, focusing on the issue of labour exploitation. The event was managed by the DHTIM and DICM of the NCCOC. Outside of the EMPACT project, repeated inspections of nightclubs in the Pilsen Region were carried out separately in cooperation with the Alien Police Service and the locally relevant Lis – in order to find out information about the possible sexual exploitation of women from Ukraine and South America. These controls did not reveal any victims. To a lesser extent, targeted controls were carried out with the participation of

a smaller number of entities, when these controls resulted from the requirements of individual criminal proceedings that were conducted in the said period.

In 2023, two regular **ICG sessions were held**, on 28 June 2023 and 5 December 2023. ICG permanent members and other invited guests mainly dealt with the following topics during these sessions:

- Current events in the fight against THB with an emphasis on experience and activities in relation to refugees from Ukraine in the Czech Republic.
- Preparation of the revision of Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011, on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.
- Adoption of the new methodological instructions of the First Deputy Minister of the Interior for the management of the internal security and police education section of 14 December 2022 and its application in practice.
- Preparations and new public contracts for the Program of Support and Protection of THB Victims.
- Information from two regular meetings of **the European Union Network of the National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms** (hereinafter referred to as “NREM”).
- Elaboration of the 5. Progress Report in the fight against THB for the period 2021 – 2023 for the Czech Republic for the Office of the European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at the European Commission.
- Realized activities in the area of THB combating within the framework of the Presidencies of the Czech Republic in the Council of the European Union.
- Realization of the project at in the Security Research Program for State Needs 2022-2027 (SecPro) named “VC20222025009 – comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking” (implementers: Accendo and Charles University).
- Information on the progress of the 2nd round of the **Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** (hereinafter referred to as “GRETA”), January 2023 – Autumn 2024, in relation to the evaluation of the implementation of the “Council of Europe Convention on Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings”.
- Fulfilling the tasks of the National Strategy for the Fight against THB for the Period 2020-2023.

## 9.2 International cooperation

International cooperation in 2023 continued to work for both the state and non-profit sectors. Since the ratification of the “**Council of Europe Convention on Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings**” by the Czech Republic in March 2017, **the 2nd round of GRETA monitoring (January 2023 – autumn 2024)** is already underway as part of the evaluation of the implementation of this Convention. Monitoring takes place mainly through a questionnaire survey and subsequent communication with the authorities of the monitored Convention state parties, including direct discussion with all interested subjects. From 31 October to 3 November 2023, the 2nd evaluation visit to the implementation of the “Council of Europe Convention on Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings” took place in the MoJ premises.

**Two NREM meetings took place in 2023, in April and November.** The main topics discussed during them were: the global nature of THB and the European Strategy on

Combating of the Trafficking in Human Beings for the Years 2020-2025. During the second session, the new preventive media campaigns of the Office of the European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at the European Commission, entitled "Stop Trafficking in Human Beings" and "Break the Invisible Chain", were presented. These campaigns were launched on the occasion of the European Day Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October 2023; on the same day, this aspect was publicized on the Mol website and in other ways).

**In March 2023 a workshop** for ICG members and other invited interested parties **organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe** took place (in cooperation with the Mol) focused on the situation of refugees from Ukraine and the possibility of helping the states directly affected by the migration Wave from Ukraine.

**On 28-29 June 2023**, JUDr. Daniela Příbylová (Regional State Prosecutor's Office of České Budějovice) participated in the meeting – **2nd meeting of prosecutors – THB specialists in The Hague**, organized **by the European Union Agency for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters, Eurojust**.

**On 9 November 2023, a workshop** organized by an international non-profit organization, "End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism International" (ECPAT International, hereinafter referred to as "ECPAT") **entitled "Prevention and Fight against Child Trafficking in the Czech Republic"** was held in Prague. This workshop was planned as part of this organization's international project on child trafficking on the Vietnam-Germany trajectory. ECPAT representatives were positively surprised by the complexity and effectiveness of cooperation at all levels in the fight against and prevention of THB in the Czech Republic. ECPAT representatives are currently incorporating the knowledge presented at this workshop into their project. Before the final outputs of the project, they will consult their knowledge and conclusions with the relevant representatives of the Czech Republic.

**On 13 November 2023, at the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic** took place **negotiations** regarding the determination of competent authorities, their competences and responsibilities at the national level for the activities established by the Regulation **of the European Parliament and the Council on Standards of Quality and Safety for Substances of Human Origin Intended for Human Application** and on the repeal of Directives 2002/98/EC and 2004/23/ EC.

**In 2023 the Czech Republic**, as part of a regular **evaluation by the government United States of America, received 2022 anti-trafficking** audit outcome, according to which **the Czech Republic continues to be included in Group I** (states that, from the point of view of the United States Department of State, meet the minimum standards in relation to the THB issue).

## **10. PRIORITIES**

The priorities of the Czech Republic in relation to the prevention and combating of THB in 2024 are as follows:

- prevention of abuse of refugees from Ukraine, residing in the territory of the Czech Republic, to THB;
- implementation of the "Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking" project;

- improving the abilities of workers in the field to identify THB victims (with use of the existing tools and aids, targeted training, as well as deepening the cooperation of public administration bodies with the non-profit sector and other interested entities).

## TABLES

### 1. STATISTICAL OUTPUTS OF THE POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

<b>1a: CRIME OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2012-2023 (UNDER SECTION 168 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE)</b>												
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registered acts	24	18	20	18	22	16	13	20	18	14	18	20
Of which solved	18	11	14	7	15	11	9	12	11	6	9	13
Solved subsequently	4	5	5	2	2	5	4	1	2	6	3	6
Prosecuted persons	22	25	16	12	23	24	15	26	20	21	16	25
Of which males	15	20	8	6	17	21	11	13	12	14	9	10
Of which females	7	5	8	6	6	3	4	13	8	7	7	15
Of which foreigners	3	2	3	4	1	6	2	6	2	4	2	3
Of which nationals of the Czech Republic	19	23	13	8	22	18	13	20	18	17	14	22

<b>1b: CRIME OF SOLICITING (UNDER SECTION 204 OF THE OLD CRIMINAL CODE, SECTION 189 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE)</b>												
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registered cases	42	52	57	50	36	60	34	37	19	34	67	74
Solved cases	30	38	49	44	27	52	24	30	17	24	58	58
Prosecuted persons	46	44	72	63	35	42	33	27	28	29	28	51

## 2. STATISTICAL OUTPUTS OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

<b>2a: NUMBERS OF PERSONS SENTENCED AND PENALTIES IMPOSED FOR TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS UNDER SECTION 168 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE AND SECTION 232a OF THE OLD CRIMINAL CODE)</b>												
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Convicted persons	11	19	6	19	8	9	16	12	8	21	13	13
Unconditional sentences	10	17	4	12	6	6	13	11	5	18	6	8
Conditional sentences	1	2	1	7	2	3	3	1	3	3	7	5

<b>2b: PERSONS SENTENCED FOR SELECTED CRIMES IN 2023</b>									
Year 2023		Sec 164	Sec 165	Sec 166	Sec 167	Sec 168	Sec 189	Sec 190	Sec 342
Total criminal offences		0	0	1	0	15	27	0	5
Total convicted persons		0	0	1	0	13	25	0	1
Victim	Child	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Female	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sentence	Conditional	0	0	0	0	5	16	0	1
	Unconditional	0	0	1	0	8	4	0	0
	Up to 1 year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	From 1 to 5 years	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0
	From 5 to 15 years	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	0
Judicially waived cases		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exonerated		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

X – Data on victims of crime are not available, only victims of domestic violence are monitored.

### 3. TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 (MLSA, FCF)

<b>3a: NUMBER OF IDENTIFIED CASES OF CHILDREN IN THE YEARS 2013 – 2023 (MLSA)</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Child pornography</b>	<b>Child prostitution</b>
2023	96 (75 girls, 21 boys)	10 (6 girls, 4 boys)
2022	127 (106 girls, 21 boys)	21 (11 girls, 10 boys)
2021	100 (90 girls, 10 boys)	8 (6 girls, 2 boys)
2020	77	5
2019	114	8
2018	151	2
2017	119	9
2016	66	23
2015	57	15
2014	87	17
2013	33	17

### 3b: STATISTICAL DATA ON UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS IN 2023 (FCF)

<b>Total unaccompanied minors (of which from Ukraine)</b>	<b>44 (15)</b>
Boys (of which from Ukraine)	33 (10)
Girls (of which from Ukraine)	11 (5)
Up to age of 15 (of which from Ukraine)	13 (6)
Over the age of 15 let (of which from Ukraine)	31 (9)
Asylum seekers (of which from Ukraine)	2 (0)
<b>Country of origin</b>	
Ukraine	15
Syria	11
Afghanistan	4
Germany	3
Turkey	3
Morocco	1
Jamaica	1
Egypt	1
Moldovia	1
Somalia	1
Sweden	1
Rumania	1
Tunis	1
<b>Termination of stay</b>	
Escape (of which from Ukraine)	18 (0)
To family care (of which from Ukraine)	6 (5)
Referred to another facility (of which from Ukraine)	6 (4)
In care of the third party (of which from Ukraine)	1 (1)
Reaching the age of majority (of which from Ukraine)	2 (0)
Refugee Facilities Administration of the Mol (of which from Ukraine)	0 (0)
Still in facility (of which from Ukraine)	11 (5)
<b>Average duration of stay</b>	<b>74,8 days</b>



#### 4. STATISTICAL OUTPUTS OF THE MOI

2023 STATISTICS OF THE MOI PROGRAM FOR THE SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS						
	Total	Males	Females	Sexual exploitation	Labour exploitation	Other forms
Number of victims	18	10	8			
Sexual exploitation	6	0	6			
Labour exploitation	11	10	1			
Other forms	1	0	1			
Nationality/Citizenship						
Czech Republic		7	2	1	8	
Slovakia		1			1	
Romania*		1			1	
Ukraine		1	2	1	1	1
Venezuela		0	3	3		
Colombia		0	1	1		

\*Repeated admission

#### 5. STATISTICAL OUTPUTS IN RELATION TO ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT (MLSA)

5a: NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE AREA OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE EMPLOYMENT ACT AND NUMBER OF DETECTED ILLEGALLY EMPLOYED PERSONS					
Year	Number of inspections	Number of persons detected during illegal work			
		CZ nationals	EU nationals	Foreginers	Total
2016	9 308	760	193	1 337	2 290
2017	9 707	767	234	1 917	2 918
2018	8 840	763	225	3 595	4 583
2019	9 457	622	207	3 513	4 342
2020	5 557	556	141	2 413	3 110
2021	5 222	312	288	2 695	3 295
2022	6 572	475	79	2 007	2 561
<b>2023</b>	<b>6 574</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2 156</b>	<b>2 801</b>

## 6. MLSA SUBSIDIES PROVIDED TO NGOs IN 2023

<b>6a: 2023 SUBSIDIES PROVIDED BY MLSA TO ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES LARGELY TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING</b>	
<b>Diaconia ECCB – Centre for National Programs and Services</b>	<b>8 878 800</b>
Asylum houses	4 758 355
Crisis intervention	4 120 445
<b>Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague</b>	<b>9 639 596</b>
Professional social counselling	9 639 596
<b>La Strada Czech Republic</b>	<b>10 739 719</b>
Field programs	1 970 166
Asylum houses	2 910 520
Crisis intervention	2 532 437
Professional social counselling	2 146 266
Telephone crisis intervention	1 180 330
<b>Total</b>	<b>29 258 115</b>

<b>6b: NUMBER OF SOCIAL SERVICES THAT HAVE A REGISTERED TARGET GROUP OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND FURTHER PROVIDE SERVICES ALSO FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 (2023)</b>		
<b>TYPE OF SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SERVICES</b>	<b>OF WHICH NUMBER OF SERVICES ALSO FOCUSED ON PERSONS UNDER 18</b>
Asylum houses	10	9
Crisis intervention	2	2
Low threshold facilities for children and youth	0	0
Professional social counselling	29	6
Social activation services for families with children	0	0
Social rehabilitation services	2	2
Telephone crisis intervention	8	5
Field programs	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>29</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Accendo	Accendo – Centre for Science and Research, a registered institute
AP Phoenix	Analytical Project Phoenix
ASLPC	Authority for Social and Legal Protection of Children
Caritas	The Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Education and Training; European Police Academy
Coll.	Collection of Law
CPIS	Criminal Police and Investigation Service
CS	Czech language
CSIF	centres to support the integration of foreigners
CZ	Czech Republic (also as Internet domain)
CZK	Czech koruna, Czech crown
DHTIM	Department of Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration
Diaconia ECCB	Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
DICM	Department of International Cooperation and Methodology
DTHBIM	Department of Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration
EC	European Commission
ECPA	European Crime Prevention Awards
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism
ELA	European Labour Authority
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats
Employment Act	Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended
EO	Employment Office of the Czech Republic
EQF	European Qualifications Framework, a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe
etc.	et cetera; and so on
EU	European Union
EUROJUST	European Union Agency for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters; European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FCF	Facility for children – foreigners (facility for children of foreign nationals)
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
HELP	Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
https	Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure
ICG	Interdepartmental Coordination Group for Combating Human Trafficking
IDBCIE	Inter-Departmental Body for Combating Illegal Employment
IOM	International Organization for Migration
La Strada	La Strada Czech Republic, public service company
Labour Code	Act No. 262/2006 Coll., Labour Code, as amended
LI, LIs	Labour inspectorates
MEPA	Mitteleuropäische Polizeiakademie; Central European Police Academy
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic
MoI, MOI	Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic
MoJ, MOJ	Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic
NCCOC	National Centre for Combating Organized Crime of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police of the Czech Republic
NGO, NGOs	Non-government organisation(s)

No.	Number
NREM	European Union Network of the National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms
OA	operational action
OCPIS	Office of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service
OILPC	Office for International Legal Protection of Children
Program	Program for the Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of the Interior
RACHU	Regional Assistance Centres for Helping Ukraine
Report	Status Report on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic
RFA	Mol Refugee Facilities Administration
R-R	Rozkoš bez rizika (Pleasure without Risk, registered association)
SLIO	State Labour Inspection Office
SLPC	social and legal protection of children
SLPC Act	Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on the Social and Legal Protection of Children, as amended
Social Services Act	Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended
Status Report	Status Report on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic
TCC	Transplantation Coordination Centre
THB	trafficking in human beings
UDW	Undeclared Work Platform
UFM	unaccompanied foreign minors
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WGIEADEM	Working Group on the Issue of Employment Agencies and Disguised Employment Mediation
WGIIW	Working Group on the Issue of Illegal Work