



GRETA

Group of Experts on Action
against Trafficking in Human Beings

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

Third evaluation round

**Thematic focus: Access to justice and effective remedies for
victims of trafficking in human beings**

Replies should be sent to: Trafficking@coe.int

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Introduction

In accordance with Article 38, paragraph 1, of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (“the Convention”), GRETA evaluates the implementation of the Convention following a procedure divided into rounds. At the beginning of each round, GRETA selects the specific provisions on which the evaluation procedure is based.

The first round of monitoring of the Convention provided an overview of its implementation by State Parties. The second evaluation round of the Convention examined the impact of legislative, policy and practical measures on the prevention of trafficking in human beings (THB), the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking, and the prosecution of traffickers, paying particular attention to measures taken to address new trends in human trafficking and the vulnerability of children to trafficking.

GRETA has decided that the third evaluation round of the Convention will focus on trafficking victims’ **access to justice and effective remedies**, which is essential for victims’ rehabilitation and reinstatement of rights and reflects a victim-centred and human-rights based approach to the fight against human trafficking. A number of provisions of the Convention establishing substantive and procedural obligations are relevant to this topic. Moreover, victims of trafficking, by virtue of their status as victims of human rights violations, are entitled to effective remedies under the European Convention on Human Rights. Access to justice and effective remedies must be guaranteed, in a gender- and age-sensitive manner, to all victims of trafficking subject to the jurisdiction of State Parties, irrespective of their immigration status or presence on the national territory and notwithstanding their capacity or willingness to co-operate in any criminal investigation.

Access to justice and effective remedies is contingent on the fulfilment of a number of preconditions, including prompt and accurate identification of victims of trafficking, the provision of a recovery and reflection period, the availability of material, psychological, medical and legal assistance, regularisation of the victim’s stay, the right to seek and enjoy asylum, and the application of the principle of *non-refoulement*. These preconditions, corresponding to different provisions of the Convention, have been examined at length during the first and second evaluation rounds of monitoring of the Convention. Consequently, GRETA has decided to ask each State Party for an update on the implementation of GRETA’s previous recommendations on selected topics, through a separate country-specific part of the questionnaire, rather than including once again questions related to the same provisions in the general questionnaire for the third evaluation round.

States Parties are requested to transmit to GRETA a reply to this questionnaire **within four months** from the date it was sent. The reply to the questionnaire should be submitted in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English and French), and preferably also in the original language. Where appropriate, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the reply may refer to information contained in the report submitted by the national authorities on measures taken to comply with the Committee of the Parties’ recommendation concerning the implementation of the proposals made in GRETA’s second evaluation report. States Parties should provide links, copies or extracts of relevant legislation, regulations, national action plans and case law mentioned in the reply to the questionnaire, in the original language and, wherever possible, also in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe.

A variety of stakeholders and civil society representatives should be effectively consulted in the preparation of the reply to the questionnaire, to ensure that the information provided is as comprehensive as possible.

Part I - Access to justice and effective remedies

1. Right to information (Articles 12 and 15)

1.1 How, at what stage and by whom are presumed victims and victims of THB informed of their rights, the relevant judicial and administrative proceedings, and the legal possibilities for obtaining compensation and other remedies, in a language that they can understand? Please provide copies of any information materials developed to inform victims of THB, including any materials specifically developed for child victims, in the languages in which they exist.

1.2 How is the obligation to provide translation and interpretation services, when appropriate, met at different stages of the legal and administrative proceedings by different agencies?

2. Legal assistance and free legal aid (Article 15)

2.1 How, by whom and from what moment is legal assistance provided to victims of trafficking? How is legal assistance provided to children?

2.2 Do all presumed victims of THB have access to legal assistance, irrespective of immigration status or type of exploitation?

2.3 What are the conditions for access to free legal aid for victims of THB, including children? For which types of proceedings is free legal aid available? Is free legal aid available to help victims claim compensation and execute compensation orders? Please provide the text of the relevant provisions.

2.4 Are there lawyers specialised to provide legal aid and represent victims of THB in court? What regulations, if any, are applicable to the provision of such legal aid/representation?

2.5 How is the provision of legal assistance and free legal aid for victims of THB funded? Do victims have to pay a fee to obtain legal assistance or start a procedure, or are there other financial barriers in place? If yes, please specify the amount(s).

3. Compensation from the perpetrators (Article 15)

3.1 What measures are in place to enable courts to award compensation to victims of THB, including children, from the perpetrators as part of criminal proceedings? What is the role of prosecutors in this respect?

3.2 How is the amount of compensation calculated and are there specific criteria or models for calculating it? What types of injury/damage and costs are covered? Are there any circumstances/conditions that would lead to a reduction of the amount of compensation?

3.3 How are compensation orders/verdicts enforced? What measures are in place to guarantee and ensure effective payment of compensation?

3.4 When foreign victims of THB are removed from or choose to leave the country where the exploitation took place, what measures are in place to enable them to obtain compensation and other remedies?

3.5 What procedures are in place to ensure effective access to compensation for victims of THB for the purpose of labour exploitation? Can such victims bring civil claims for compensation and/or recovery of unpaid wages and social contributions on the basis of tort, labour, employment or other laws? Please specify the relevant measures. Can victims of THB working in irregular employment or without a contract claim unpaid wages and other compensation and if yes, how is the amount of unpaid wages and other compensation established?

3.6 What training is provided to build the capacity of relevant professionals, such as lawyers, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges, to enable victims of THB to obtain compensation and other remedies?

4. State compensation (Article 15)

4.1 Do the eligibility criteria for State compensation schemes for victims of crimes exclude some victims of THB (e.g. due to irregular residence status, nationality, nature of the offence)? Does access to State compensation depend on the outcome of the criminal case and on failure to obtain compensation from the offenders?

4.2 How is the amount of State compensation calculated so as to address the gravity of the harm endured by the victim?

4.3 Is it possible for foreign victims of trafficking to submit claims for State compensation in your country after being returned or repatriated to their countries of origin? Please provide examples of any such cases and indicate the measures stipulating such a possibility.

4.4 Are victims seeking State compensation liable for lawyers' costs and fees? Are State compensation awards subject to taxation? Does the receipt of compensation have consequences for access to social security or other benefits?

5. Sanctions and measures (Article 23)

5.1 Please describe the legislative and other measures adopted by your country which allow to: i) confiscate or otherwise deprive perpetrators of the proceeds of criminal offences, or property of an equivalent value to those proceeds; and ii) identify, trace, freeze or seize rapidly property which is liable to confiscation, in order to facilitate the enforcement of a later confiscation. Do these measures allow the identification, tracing and seizure of property into which the proceeds of illicit activities have been converted?

5.2 In what way do victims of THB benefit from seized and confiscated assets of perpetrators of THB? Do the confiscated assets go directly to victims, to a compensation fund or scheme for victims of trafficking or to other programmes for the assistance or support of victims of THB? Please provide information on seizures and confiscations of assets in THB cases and how they were used.

5.3 Is it possible to use plea bargaining or some other form of settlement in cases of THB? If yes, please provide the relevant provisions. What protections are in place for victims of THB to ensure that their right of access to justice and effective remedies is not compromised by the plea bargaining or settlement in the legal process?

5.4 What is the average duration of court proceedings in THB cases? In which circumstances are such cases given priority? Do you have a system to fast-track human trafficking-related prosecutions in order to improve the trial process and reduce the burden on victims and witnesses, including children? What safeguards are in place to ensure that judges deal with cases of THB without undue delay?

5.5 How do you ensure that sanctions for THB offences are effective, proportionate and dissuasive?

6. Ex parte and ex officio applications (Article 27)

6.1 What is the procedural position of a victim of THB in criminal proceedings? What steps are taken to assist victims of THB, including children, to enable their rights, interests and views to be presented and considered during the criminal proceedings against offenders? Who is entitled to assist victims of THB in court? Can victims of THB be represented by NGOs in criminal proceedings?

6.2 If the authorities fail to discharge their obligation to effectively investigate and prosecute suspected cases of trafficking, what possibilities for redress exist for victims of THB and their families? To what extent have victims of trafficking, including children, access to complaint mechanisms, such as Ombudsman institutions and other national human rights institutions?

6.3 What reporting and complaint mechanisms are in place for victims of trafficking who are in an irregular migration situation and/or in detention?

6.4 Can victims of THB bring claims against the State or its officials for: i) direct involvement in THB; ii) failure to prevent THB or protect them from THB? Have there been cases where State agents or persons acting on behalf, or at the direction, of the State were found responsible for engagement in THB and/or failure to prevent it or protect victims from THB by third parties? Please provide information on any prosecutions against diplomatic and consular staff for alleged involvement in THB.

6.5 What steps have been taken to strengthen and maintain the capacity of prosecutors to effectively prosecute trafficking cases?

7. Non-punishment provision (Article 26)

7.1 Please indicate what measures are taken to ensure that victims of THB, including children, are not punished for their involvement in unlawful activities (criminal, civil, administrative offences), to the extent they were compelled to do so, providing any concrete examples of their implementation.

7.2 Can persons who have breached national laws in the course, or as a consequence, of being trafficked have access to remedies for victims of trafficking, including State compensation?

8. Protection of victims and witnesses (Articles 28 and 30)

8.1 How are victims of THB protected in practice against potential retaliation or intimidation before, during and after legal proceedings? How is the assessment of the needs for protection performed and who recommends the application of the protection measures? Who is responsible of the implementation of the protection measures?

8.2 How do you ensure that victims are provided with realistic and practical information about the progress of the case and whether the perpetrator has been detained or released?

8.3 How do you ensure respect for the victims' right to safety, privacy and confidentiality during court proceedings?

8.4 In how many cases were witness protection measures used for the protection of victims and witnesses of THB, including children? If witness protection measures/programmes are not applied to victims of trafficking, what are the reasons?

8.5 When victim protection is provided by NGOs, how are NGOs resourced and supported to perform this function and how do the police and the prosecution co-operate with NGOs?

8.6 How do you ensure that child victims of THB are treated in a child-sensitive way and are provided with protection before, during and after judicial proceedings in accordance with the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice? Are interviews with children conducted in specially designated and adapted spaces by professionals trained to interview children? What measures are taken in order to ensure a limited number of interviews?

9. Specialised authorities and co-ordinating bodies (Article 29)

9.1 What budget, staff and resources, including technical means, are put at the disposal of law enforcement bodies specialised in combating and investigating THB?

9.2 If your country has specialised units for financial investigations, financial intelligence units and asset and recovery units, please describe whether and how are they used in investigating and prosecuting THB cases. Which special investigation techniques do these units use? Which public and/or private bodies do these specialised financial investigation units co-operate with in relation to THB cases?

10. International co-operation (Article 32)

10.1 How does your country co-operate with other countries to enable victims of THB to realise their right to redress and compensation, including recovery and transfer of unpaid wages after they leave the country in which the exploitation occurred?

10.2 Has your country co-operated with other countries in the investigation and prosecution of THB cases through financial investigations and/or Joint Investigation Teams? Please provide statistics on such cases and examples from practice.

10.3 How many mutual legal assistance requests and/or European Investigation Order have you made in THB cases and what was their outcome?

10.4 What forms of international co-operation have proven to be particularly helpful in upholding the rights of victims of trafficking, including children, and prosecuting alleged traffickers?

10.5 What international co-operation measures are in place to ensure protection and assistance to victims on return from your country to their countries of origin following their participation in criminal proceedings?

10.6 What international co-operation measures are in place to protect and assist victims of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation through online streaming where the perpetrator is a national or habitual resident of your country and elements of the crime have occurred in your country's jurisdiction?

11. Cross-cutting questions

11.1 What steps are taken to ensure that victims of THB have equal access to justice and effective remedies, irrespective of their immigration status and the form of exploitation?

11.2 What steps are taken to ensure that criminal, civil, labour and administrative proceedings concerning victims of THB are gender-sensitive?

11.3 What steps are taken to ensure that procedures for obtaining access to justice and remedies are child-sensitive, readily accessible to children and their representatives, and give weight to the child's views?

11.4 What steps are taken to ensure that private entities take steps to prevent and eradicate trafficking from their business or supply chains and to support the rehabilitation and recovery of victims? What options exist for victims of trafficking to access effective remedies from businesses implicated in human trafficking?

11.5 What legal, policy and practical measures are taken in your country to prevent and detect situations where corruption facilitates human trafficking and infringes the right of victims of THB of access to justice and effective remedies? Please provide information on any known or proven cases of corruption or related misconduct of public officials in THB cases and any sanctions issued.

Part II – Country-specific follow-up questions

12. Please provide information on new developments in your country since GRETA's second evaluation report concerning:

- emerging trends of trafficking in human beings (new forms of exploitation, new recruitment methods, vulnerable groups, gender-specific aspects of trafficking, child trafficking);
- the legislation and regulations relevant to action against THB (e.g. criminalisation of THB, identification and assistance of victims of THB, recovery and reflection period, residence permit, supply chains, public procurement);
- the institutional and policy framework for action against THB (bodies responsible for co-ordinating national action against THB, entities specialised in the fight against THB, national rapporteur or equivalent mechanism, involvement of civil society, public-private partnerships);
- the current national strategy and/or action plan for combating trafficking in human beings (objectives and main activities, bodies responsible for its implementation, budget, monitoring and evaluation of results);
- recent case law concerning THB for different forms of exploitation.

13. Please provide information on measures taken in your country in respect to the following recommendations made in GRETA's second evaluation report:

- develop and maintain a comprehensive and coherent statistical system on trafficking in human beings by compiling reliable statistical data on measures to protect and promote the rights of victims as well as on the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of human trafficking cases;
- adopt legislative, administrative, educational, social, cultural or other measures to discourage demand for the services of trafficked persons, for all forms of exploitation;
- adopt as a matter of priority a National Referral Mechanism for child victims of trafficking which takes into account the special circumstances and needs of child victims, involves child specialists and ensures that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all proceedings relating to child victims and children at risk;
- evaluate the funding needs of victim assistance programmes and adapt the respective resources, ensuring that there are sufficient accommodation places for female, male and victims of trafficking;
- review the legislation in order to ensure that the recovery and reflection period is specifically defined in law as provided for in Article 13 of the Convention, and that all possible foreign victims of trafficking are offered a recovery and reflection period;

- ensure that the return of victims of human trafficking is conducted with due regard to their rights, safety and dignity, including the right to non-refoulement (Article 40(4) of the Convention), and in the case of children, by fully respecting the principle of the best interests of the child.

Part III - Statistics on THB

14. Please provide the following statistics, **per year starting with 2015**, where available disaggregated as indicated below:

- Number of presumed victims and identified victims of THB in the sense of having been recognised by a state institution or mandated NGO as bearers of rights to services provided for by the Convention (with breakdown by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, internal or transnational trafficking, and body which identified them).
- Number of victims of THB identified as part of the asylum procedure (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).
- Number of victims of THB who received assistance (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, internal or transnational trafficking).
- Number of child victims of THB who were appointed legal guardians.
- Number of victims of THB granted a recovery and reflection period (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).
- Number of victims of THB granted a residence permit, with an indication of the type of the permit and its duration (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).
- Number of persons given refugee status or subsidiary/complementary protection on the grounds of being victims of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).
- Number of victims of THB who claimed compensation, who were granted compensation and who effectively received compensation (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, with an indication of whether the compensation was provided by the perpetrator or the State, and the amount awarded).
- Number of victims of THB who received another form of financial support from the State, with the indication of the amount received.
- Number of victims of THB who received free legal aid.
- Number of victims of THB who were returned or repatriated to/from your country (disaggregated by sex, age, country of destination, form of exploitation).
- Number of investigations into THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims concerned).
- Number of prosecutions in THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims and defendants concerned).
- Number of convicted perpetrators of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).
- Number of convictions for THB, with an indication of the form of exploitation, whether the victim was adult or child, the type and duration of the penalties, and whether they were effectively enforced or suspended.
- Number of judgments in THB cases resulting in the confiscation of assets.
- Number of convictions of legal entities for THB.