

Thematic reports on domestic servitude of migrant women and girls and on the gender dimensions of contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences

Submission by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in response to the calls to stakeholders to provide information in relation to two reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

Requests:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/SRSlavery/Pages/DomesticServitude.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/SRSlavery/Pages/GenderDimensions.aspx>

Submitted to: srslavery@ohchr.org.

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The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is set to publish a short paper (working title 'Out of sight: migrant women exploited in domestic work') on the situation of migrant women (both EU and non EU nationals) exploited as domestic workers in the EU.

This is the first of three publications FRA will publish within the next year based on exploited workers' first-hand accounts of their experiences of severe labour exploitation (criminal forms of labour exploitation), based on interviews and focus groups FRA conducted with 237 exploited workers (exploited in 8 EU Member States) in 2017 as part of our [research on severe labour exploitation](#).

The three publications extend the evidence beyond the views of professionals who deal with labour exploitation, which the agency covered in a [2015 report](#) on severe labour exploitation (based on over 600 interviews with professionals such as labour inspectorates, trade unions, victim support organisations, police etc.).

This paper (which can be accessed from the project page from mid-June 2018:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2017/severe-labour-exploitation-workers-perspectives-selex-ii>):

- describes the particularly exploitative working conditions experienced by 51 migrant women – both EU and non-EU nationals – who worked as domestic workers in selected EU Member States between 2013 and 2017;

- outlines risk factors that lead to severe labour exploitation of domestic workers and presents opinions about how EU Member States can counteract these risks.

The main report, which looks at the experiences of exploited workers in many other sectors in addition to domestic work, will be published only in early 2019. The sample of 51 domestic workers is taken from the total sample of 237 workers we interviewed for this research – so domestic workers make up over one fifth of the exploited workers FRA reached through interviews in 2017. We saw it as very relevant to highlight in a separate short paper the ever-precarious situation of domestic workers and their particular vulnerability to experiencing labour exploitation. This is something which we first explored in a [report in 2011](#).

The stories of the domestic workers FRA interviewed for this paper reveal appalling working conditions and fundamental rights abuses in private homes across the EU. These stories indicate that, seven years on from FRA's first report on domestic workers in 2011, little has changed in terms of the risks and experiences of severe labour exploitation domestic workers in the EU face.

Research was carried out in eight EU Member States: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

All 51 domestic workers FRA reached were women - indicating that women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing labour and fundamental rights abuses in domestic settings.

Previous FRA research:

In a [2011 report about migrants in an irregular situation employed in domestic work in 10 EU Member States](#), FRA identified domestic workers as being at a heightened risk of exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse. Professionals interviewed by FRA for its 2015 report on [Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union](#) described the exploitation of foreign domestic workers as a 'grey area', where "exploitation of migrant women in the domestic sphere is so common that it is often not conceived of as a human rights violation". The professionals testified that severe exploitation of domestic workers is often fostered by a complete lack of monitoring.