1. **Polish national action plan against human trafficking**

Poland in 2021 adopted the National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking for 2022-2024[[1]](#footnote-1) (hereinafter: NAP). This plan is another of the consecutive documents defining tasks in the field of counter-trafficking in human beings. Poland is both a country of origin, a country of transit and a country of destination for victims of this practice. The report shows that Poland has implemented a number of measures aimed at, among other things, efficiently diagnosing cases of human trafficking, constantly monitoring the phenomenon, conducting training or proposing legislative changes. These activities are to be revised and improved, due to the fact that the criminals involved are constantly looking for new ways to recruit more victims. As the authors of the report emphasize: „Currently, the most common form of exploitation in human trafficking is exploitation for forced labor, the second most common being exploitation for prostitution and in the porn industry. Many people who want to improve their life situation choose to look for work outside the country, where they become victims of perpetrators of exploitation and trafficking crimes. The Republic of Poland, due to its location, good economic situation and thanks to its various development opportunities, is an attractive destination for people not only from neighboring countries such as Ukraine or Belarus, but also from other countries (such as Romania, Bulgaria or Asian countries). In view of the increasing number of people wishing to work in Poland and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, it is necessary to intensify prevention, information and education activities at all possible levels, reaching as many people as possible”.

Specific objectives of the NAP[[2]](#footnote-2):

* Raising public awareness of the phenomenon of human trafficking;
* Raising the standard of support provided to victims of human trafficking (including underage victims of human trafficking);
* improving the effectiveness of institutions responsible for prosecuting the crime of human trafficking by improving legal tools, structures and implementing best practices;
* raising the qualifications of representatives of institutions and organizations involved in countering human trafficking and supporting victims of this crime;
* to deepen knowledge of the phenomenon of human trafficking and the effectiveness of the measures taken, especially in the context of forced labor;

1. **Staff training and inter-institutional cooperation**

The NAP aims to intensify prevention, training and strengthen the role of Provincial Teams for Counteracting Human Trafficking, so that all parts that make up the anti-trafficking system are complementary. The activity of entities such as Provincial Teams for Counteracting Human Trafficking and the National Intervention and Consultation Center for Victims of Human Trafficking makes it possible to provide the necessary support and assistance to victims of human trafficking on the territory of Poland. The teams provide support to victims within the social welfare system, as well as conduct preventive activities through information campaigns on human trafficking and the dissemination of knowledge among, among others, young people, teachers and entrepreneurs.

Cooperation between state institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Border Guard, Police, Provincial Anti-Trafficking Teams and the National Intervention and Consultation Center for Victims of Human Trafficking made it possible to identify the most important needs, i.e. to intensify and expand training for employees who come into contact with potential victims of human trafficking, to increase awareness of entrepreneurs regarding the risk of forced labor, and to spread knowledge about ways to prevent and respond to this phenomenon.

Details of the training received can be seen here in the 2022 report[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. **Scale of human trafficking in Poland and assistance programs**

The authors of the report indicate that Poland is a destination country for victims of human trafficking, both citizens and foreigners. Foreigners most often come from European countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Romania), as well as Asia (Vietnam, Philippines, among others) and Africa (Uganda, Sierra Leone). These include women, men and children who are used for forced labor, prostitution or begging. In addition, there are also cases of victims of domestic slavery or forced marriages of convenience. Foreigners are most often recruited in their countries of origin, often through local employment agencies (they are misled about working conditions, pay and accommodation). Upon arrival, foreigners are stripped of their identity documents, and accommodation and working conditions differ significantly from generally accepted norms. Victims exploited in prostitution and other sexual services most often come from Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania, less often from African or Asian countries, and are often uneducated and emotionally and materially dependent on the perpetrators. Hence, it is usually necessary to provide psychological and medical assistance, educational support and help with social reintegration. Romanian citizens are the most common victims of exploitation in begging. Those sought out are those with visible disabilities, uneducated and in a difficult financial situation.

Transit of victims from Eastern Europe and Asia to Western European countries also occurs on Polish territory. In such cases, identification and assistance can be difficult, as foreigners do not always identify themselves as victims, and their priority is to reach the destination country and the promised work.

The report shows that between 2009 and 2020, 2270 people (941 Polish citizens and 1329 foreigners) benefited from the support of the National Intervention and Consultation Center for victims of human trafficking (hereinafter: KCIK). Among those who received assistance were citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Romania, the Philippines, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Georgia, Syria, Uganda, Cameroon, Sierra Leone or Guinea. KCIK provides assistance by providing accommodation in a secure center, food, basic medical care, psychological support, legal consultation, assistance in dealing with law enforcement agencies, and translator assistance. It also runs shelters and ensures that victims realize their due rights, supports state and local government institutions in identifying and working with victims of human trafficking, and provides preventive counseling for individuals and consultation for institutions providing assistance to victims.

1. **Good practices implemented in Poland**

The report on the implementation[[4]](#footnote-4) shows that in 2022, numerous anti-trafficking prevention programs were implemented in Poland, including consisting of:

* Strengthen cooperation with institutions organizing job fairs to disseminate knowledge about human trafficking and popularize rules of conduct that serve to minimize the risk of this phenomenon.
* Building awareness of the threat of exploitation and forced labor, e.g., through a poster campaign, informational meetings.
* Developing information materials and implementing information meetings and workshops for entrepreneurs on due diligence procedures in the area of human rights in business.
* Dissemination of knowledge on the phenomenon of human trafficking among school children and job seekers through the organization of information meetings
* Development and distribution of informational materials on the phenomenon of human trafficking, with particular emphasis on the phenomenon of child trafficking, including the preparation of informational and educational materials for use by teachers and students

1. National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for 2022-2024, <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/cba4f451-adc9-48a7-8871-2958256e83de> (access: 25.05.2024 r.). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibidem. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Report on the implementation of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for 2022-2024, <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/7ef4f83f-5878-4359-9890-eb80bf5f6523> (access: 24.05.2024 r.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Report on the implementation of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for 2022-2024, <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/7ef4f83f-5878-4359-9890-eb80bf5f6523> (access: 24.05.2024 r.) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)