

Myria publishes the English version of its annual report on the trafficking and smuggling of human beings, 'Latin American sex work: a high-risk carousel'

As the independent national rapporteur on human trafficking, the Federal Migration Centre is publishing the English version of its 2024 annual report today, entitled 'Latin American sex work: a high-risk carousel'. It particularly draws attention to the phenomenon of Latin American sex work and calls for the fight against trafficking to be adapted to the new realities of the digital world. These realities are leading to the creation of new, subtle forms of exploitation that require properly adapted investigative resources. Myria is also calling for stronger international collaboration and awareness-raising among the players concerned.

Prostitution carousels require international collaboration

The presence of female and male sex workers originating from Latin America in Belgium and Europe is not a recent phenomenon. In the last few years, however, Myria has noticed an increase in situations of exploitation involving criminal networks. The victims are mainly women, including trans women, from Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela, recruited to work as prostitutes in Europe under the (false) promise of being able to earn a lot of money quickly.

Criminal networks, organised into various cells at national and international level, set up '**prostitution carousels**' that force these women to work in private locations and advertise their services online. These women are constantly moved from one town to another to stay out of sight of the authorities and further increase their dependence on their exploiters, making it difficult for the police to detect them.

While many women are aware that they will be working in prostitution in Europe, the working conditions are often more restrictive and the income much lower than expected. They are forced to hand over a large part of their earnings, with the networks exercising constant control over them.

The proceeds from this exploitation are often transferred abroad to invest in property and companies. International cooperation and information exchange are therefore essential to dismantle these international criminal networks and expose their financial flows.

Strengthening collaboration with internet platforms

Nowadays, internet platforms and social media play a major role in the organisation of sex work in general, especially among Latin American sex workers, thus calling for a targeted approach to combating online trafficking.

Networks active in the exploitation of Latin American women often work with intermediaries, such as phone operators, who use social media and messaging apps to arrange appointments with clients and manage the adverts for sexual services.

Police resources and their investigative powers must therefore be strengthened and adapted to the new digital context of exploitation.

Myria has also noted examples of good practice, such as the proactive collaboration between a platform advertising sexual services and the police, with a view to reporting potential abuse. Myria is therefore calling for such collaboration to be strengthened in order to improve the detection of victims, the identification of perpetrators and the collection of evidence.

Drawing attention to Latin American victims and, in particular, to the situation of trans people

In its report, Myria highlights the particularly vulnerable situation of Latin American trans sex workers. In order to strengthen their trust in the authorities, Myria recommends that the police, the judiciary and reception centres be made aware of the specific situation of this target group.

Minors

Finally, the report also contains a collective contribution on the reception of child victims of trafficking. This is Myria's initial response to one of the recommendations it received from the Special Parliamentary Commission on human trafficking and smuggling.



Download the [Annual report 2024 Trafficking and smuggling of human beings](#) or read it online on [Myria's website](#).

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