Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

REPORT 2025

Eight drivers of impact

1

Financial investigations

The Office strengthened the capacity of public authorities and the financial sector to trace and seize trafficking-related financial flows and to use financial intelligence proactively in victim identification and investigations.

2

Supply chains

Labour trafficking in supply chains remained a focus by clarifying procurement procedures, training law enforcement and labour inspectors, raising awareness and due diligence, and partnering with the private sector and international actors.

3

Simulation-based training exercises

Immersive "learning-by-doing" exercises improved multi-agency and transnational co-ordination, trauma-informed interviewing, victim-centred practices, and knowledge of trends among a wide array of anti-trafficking stakeholders and first-line responders.

4

Lived experience expert engagement and protection

Meaningful structural inclusion of survivors remained at the heart of the OSCE's anti-trafficking work. Lived experience experts were included at unprecedented levels shaping OSCE's and partners' policy and practice.

5

Prevention and addressing vulnerabilities

Building resilience in at-risk communities and tackling children's vulnerabilities and needs were strengthened through the specific focus on child trafficking of the 25th OSCE Alliance Conference and resulting publication, which examined the link between institutional care and child trafficking.

6

Armed conflict and crises

The Office continued to prioritize protecting people displaced by war and crises from the risks of trafficking, including individuals affected in and around Ukraine, and helping participating States embed crisis preparedness in their anti-trafficking strategies.

7

Technology and artificial intelligence

Combining training, research, survivors' input, and international partnerships, the Office advanced a comprehensive approach to support participating States in addressing the growing reality that the vast majority of trafficking cases now involve a digital dimension.

8

International and regional partnerships

Close co-ordination and collaboration within the OSCE as well as strategic partnerships with participating States, leading international and regional organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector remained central to maximizing impact.

The Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) provides policy leadership and tools to help States implement anti-trafficking commitments through its "policy to practice" approach. Its work is guided by priorities established by OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator Kari Johnstone: pursuing a comprehensive approach to all forms of human trafficking; placing victims and survivors at the centre of efforts; improving prevention; ensuring proactive victim identification and implementation of the non-punishment principle; strengthening victim-centred, trauma-informed criminal justice responses using digital and financial tools; and deepening results-based co-operation with States, civil society, and international organizations.

In 2025, the Office continued to strengthen the capacity and resilience of OSCE participating States and partners to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. It refined tools, expanded where the OSCE can add unique value, and centred efforts on the expertise of victims/survivors, contributing to a comprehensive, cross-dimensional response.

Human trafficking devastates lives throughout the OSCE region. Behind every statistic is a person whose dignity and rights must be restored. In 2025, trafficking continued to evolve rapidly, with criminal networks exploiting new technologies and vulnerabilities. Conflict and displacement created conditions traffickers exploit, while victims frequently were unidentified and lacked adequate assistance. These realities call for building on the OSCE's strengths: our comprehensive security approach, field presence, and ability to convene States, civil society, and survivors.

EIGHT DRIVERS OF IMPACT | 2025

01 The Office strengthened the capacity of public authorities and the financial sector to trace and seize THB-related financial flows.

The "follow-the-money" approach helps disrupt trafficking networks, deprives traffickers of illicit profits, and can fund victim compensation.

Main achievements

In 2025, the Office assisted States and stakeholders to disrupt trafficking networks and seize illicit profits, targeting traffickers' motives. Through technical assistance, research, and direct engagement with policymakers, financial intelligence units, regulators, and banks in Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, and Switzerland, as well as workshops in Montenegro, Spain, and Türkiye, the Office supported the identification of victims and perpetrators and aided investigations and prosecutions. Engagement with private sector platforms broadened awareness of trafficking's financial footprint across the OSCE region, informing risk assessments in both public and private sectors.

Impact story

The Office's support led to Switzerland's first public-private partnership against trafficking-related illicit finance, uniting authorities and financial institutions to share trafficking data and intelligence. This resulted in the first strategic guidance for financial institutions on human trafficking indicators. Switzerland's Anti-Money Laundering Office reported trafficking-related reports from financial institutions doubled – from 35 in 2023 to over 70 in 2025 – with improved detection.

02 Detecting and preventing labour trafficking in supply chains remained a central focus, within the OSCE's procurement and through international engagement.

Human trafficking in supply chains often hides deep within complex global production networks.

Main achievements

In 2025, the Office engaged with Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Greece, Latvia, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan and co-operated with the OSCE. In 2025, the Office engaged with Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Greece, Latvia, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan in promoting responsible recruitment practices and supporting States in embedding anti-trafficking safeguards into labour migration and procurement frameworks. It also co-operated with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo on strengthening procurement frameworks.

Internationally, the OSCE leveraged its role as Secretariat of the UN Procurement Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Supply Chains to help shape procurement standards that influence billions in global annual expenditure.

Impact story

The Office supported Uzbekistan in finalizing its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, using multi-stakeholder workshops to identify key priorities and practical actions for its effective implementation. This strengthened national ownership of the Plan while helping ensure that measures to prevent human trafficking and labour exploitation are integrated into Uzbekistan's broader business and human rights framework.

03 The immersive "learning-by-doing" exercises improved multi-agency co-ordination, trauma-informed interviewing, and victim-centred practices.

Simulation-based training exercises are one of the most innovative and impactful tools to strengthen national and cross-border responses to trafficking.

Main achievements

These exercises replicate real-world trafficking scenarios and unite practitioners from law enforcement, migration, prosecution, social services, NGOs, labour inspectors, and financial investigators to enhance investigations and skills. In 2025, the Office delivered a regional simulation in Kyrgyzstan with over 100 practitioners from all five Central Asian States and Türkiye; supported Bosnia and Herzegovina's first national simulation, strengthening interagency co-ordination; and ran a multi-country simulation in Germany with the International Justice Mission, involving over 50 practitioners from Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania.

Impact story

An independent evaluation confirmed these exercises' measurable impact: participants consistently reported improved co-ordination, trauma-informed interviewing, and victim-centred practices. Many applied new skills to identify victims, improve investigations, and build referral networks. Real-life cases show simulations can directly dismantle trafficking networks. The format's replication by States and partners demonstrates its effectiveness.

04 Lived experience experts were included in meaningful and structured roles at unprecedented levels having direct impact in shaping OSCE policy and practice.

Survivor inclusion is both right and smart: their expertise leads to more effective, cost-efficient policies, relevant services, and better prevention.

Main achievements

In 2025, the Office further elevated lived experience experts, shifting survivor engagement from symbolic to structured inclusion. The 25th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference featured the largest number of lived experience experts as speakers and participants, ensuring States heard first-hand perspectives on gaps, trends, and criminal strategies. Lived expertise informed national consultations on victim protection in Ireland and contributed to an expert meeting on technology-facilitated trafficking in Spain. The Office supported ODIHR in establishing National Survivor Advisory Councils and helped States institutionalize lived experience expertise.

Impact story

The 2025 OSCE survey showed an increase from 24% in 2021 to 69% in 2025 of States reporting active survivor feedback mechanisms, and 67% reported using lived experience expertise to draft anti-trafficking strategies or improve shelter conditions.



05 Prevention and addressing vulnerabilities

One in three trafficking victims is a child*, and every victim is one too many.

Main achievements

The Alliance Conference on child trafficking brought together over 830 participants and launched a groundbreaking advocacy document on children in institutional care, highlighting risks of orphanage trafficking. The Office also worked with Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Uzbekistan to strengthen resilience in at-risk communities and integrate anti-trafficking safeguards into migration and social policies.

Impact story

The Orphanage Trafficking paper opened new avenues with participating States, faith-based organizations, tech social media companies, and other partners, contributing to global efforts to reform child institutionalization, child safeguarding online, and highlighting the vital role of local NGOs in protection.

06 The Office played a key role in protecting people displaced by war and crises and helped States embed crisis preparedness into anti-trafficking strategies.

Crises magnify vulnerabilities, and traffickers are quick to exploit them, at the outset, during, and after.

Main achievements

The Office engaged with authorities in Ukraine and nearly 40 participating States hosting Ukrainian refugees, alongside international, civil society, and private sector partners to strengthen victim identification and referral in crisis settings. It organized around 100 workshops, trainings, and consultations for more than 5,000 professionals; the #BeSafe campaign, in collaboration with Thomson Reuters, reached more than 3 million people, providing Ukrainians with critical information to help protect them from exploitation. The Office also developed guidance to integrate crisis into national anti-trafficking action plans and THB into emergency response plans.

Impact story

A partnership with the Polish Railway Security Guard trained railway security staff to detect, prevent, and disrupt human trafficking during humanitarian emergencies, showing how frontline actors outside traditional anti-trafficking structures can play a critical role in prevention and victim identification.

07 The Office's comprehensive approach helped stakeholders combat technology-facilitated THB, including through the positive use of technological tools.

Traffickers increasingly exploit technology to recruit, exploit, and control victims; today the vast majority of trafficking cases involve a digital dimension.

Main achievements

In 2025, the Office delivered practical workshops for criminal justice practitioners in Malta, Slovakia, Spain, and Turkmenistan on open-source investigation, web scraping, and digital analysis tools. It deepened partnerships with the Bali Process Regional Support Office through three webinars on trafficking and Generative AI, and with INTERPOL. As an advisory member of Tech Against Trafficking, the Office engaged technology companies to promote responsible practices and positive innovation.

Impact story

Workshop participants over the past two years reported concrete outcomes: eleven States proposing to add technology-facilitated trafficking to national action plans, nine initiating new policies or laws, five drafting criminal code amendments, three legislating requirements for online platforms, fifteen appointing national focal points, two establishing task forces, and ten creating cross-border partnerships.

08 International and regional partnerships

A global and increasingly complex crime, combating trafficking requires strong collaboration within governments, across societies, and transnationally.

Strategic co-ordination with stakeholders deepened in 2025. The Office closely co-ordinated with OSCE field operations, ODIHR, and Secretariat across all three dimensions, and with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA). Updated guidance on Key Action Areas for Parliaments to combat human trafficking launched in June serves the PA and lawmakers across the region. Beyond the OSCE, it strengthened collaboration with UN agencies (UNODC, IOM, ILO), the Council of Europe, EU institutions (Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, Frontex, Europol, European Labour Authority), Council of the Baltic Sea States, and INTERPOL. Through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), the Office promoted aligned policies and survivor-centred approaches globally. Co-operation with ASEAN, the Bali Process, and Organization of American States reflects growing demand for OSCE expertise.





* UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020

REVIEW | 2025

The OSR/CTHB carried out activities in 37 participating States, issued two publications with five in the pipeline, including the 5-year survey. Co-operation with pS deepened in 2025, with two country visits and seven other official visits by the Special Representative and as evidenced by the record high participation of 55 States submitting data to the third OSCE-wide survey on trafficking in human beings (conducted every five years). Simulation exercises brought together experts from over 16 countries, while technology work directly informed new laws, policies, and action plans across at least a dozen States. Lived experience experts were included at unprecedented levels in shaping OSCE policy and practice, while our partnerships amplified impact across and far beyond the OSCE region.

2025 in numbers

- → **55 participating States** contributed to the OSCE survey on human trafficking
- → Activities delivered across **37 participating States**
- → **5,000+ professionals** trained through **100+ capacity-building activities** since 2022
- → **3 simulation-based exercises** conducted, engaging experts from **16+ countries**
- → **3 million+ people** reached through targeted awareness campaigns since 2022
- → **830+ participants** convened at the Alliance Conference on child trafficking

LOOKING AHEAD | 2026

Building on milestones to adapt for the future

In 2026, the Office will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its current structure and build on milestones to advance its work to strengthen prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership to combat human trafficking via a victim-centred, trauma-informed, and whole-of-society approach while preparing for future challenges. The Office will continue to meet States' requests for data, practical tools, analysis, and exchange of promising practices to help respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, as it has done on technology, financial investigations, and people fleeing war and other crises. The Office will continue to prioritize partnerships that make the most effective use of resources, foster complementarity, and strengthen States' capacities.

Promoting evidence and adapting guidance for current and tailored action

The Office will continue to prioritize deepening understanding of evolving trends, good practices, and gaps, ensuring policies and actions are grounded in evidence-based data, and provide tools to counter these threats. The 2026 Survey Report will outline findings from pS reporting on trends, cases, and victims detected and analyse long-term progress on implementing anti-trafficking commitments. The Office will also release Following the Money 2.0 guidance, with a focus on tracing virtual asset transactions linked to THB; lived experience-informed guidance on detecting forced criminality; an assessment of cyber-scam operations in the OSCE region; and research on THB and illicit drugs. This edition of the financial guidance will offer practical, step-by-step advice for investigators, regulators, and financial institutions on how to detect trafficking-related financial activity, providing red-flag indicators and case studies to support earlier detection and stronger disruption. The work to assist Financial Intelligence Units to build robust partnerships for trafficking-related data-sharing and collaboration will also continue.

Going to scale on projects

Supply chains will focus on high-risk industries and sectors reliant on labour migration, with a focus on recruitment and mobility while expanding collaboration with the private sector in response to new legislative requirements. **Simulation-based** exercises will expand to cover additional priority regions, including South-Eastern Europe, and advance progress toward States' institutionalization of the methodology. The Office will further continue helping embed **crisis preparedness** into States' anti-trafficking strategies, ensuring that systems are equipped not only for current challenges but also for future crises. The portfolio on technology and financial investigations will continue to strengthen participating States' policy and operational preparedness to address the evolving nature of technology-facilitated trafficking, with a key focus on AI, trafficking into cyber-scam operations, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and preventing trafficking through youth empowerment.

Centring work on victims and survivors

In addition to supporting the ethical inclusion of lived experience expertise and diverse stakeholders' proactive victim identification and provision of comprehensive services, the Office will focus in 2026 on helping improve detection and protection in emerging forms of THB, notably of trafficking for criminal exploitation. With the fast growth in the scale and gravity of criminal exploitation, advancing progress on consistent, effective implementation of the non-punishment principle will be a priority.

"Trafficking in human beings is not an abstract problem. It destroys lives, families, and communities. Survivors remind us daily that behind every statistic is a human being whose dignity and rights must be restored."

Dr. Kari Johnstone
OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

OSCE

Wallnerstrasse 6, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Office: +43 1 514 36 6257
Email: info-cthb@osce.org

Follow OSCE
x.com/osce_cthb
www.osce.org/cthb