

Press release

German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings provides previously unrecorded data on trafficked persons in Germany

New KOK data report analyses 612 cases of specialised counselling centres in Germany. Women and girls were affected in 96% of the cases. 60% of those affected came from West African countries, just under 5% from Germany. In 17% of the cases, recruitment took place in Germany. Germany was named as the place of exploitation in 44% of the cases.

Berlin, 18 October 2022 - On the occasion of the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings – KOK presents its third data report on trafficking in human beings and exploitation in Germany. The data is collected by specialised counselling centres for trafficked persons only upon informed consent of the client. KOK's analysis helps to gain better knowledge about trafficking in human beings in Germany and to develop effective policies for the protection of trafficked persons and successful prosecution.

Looking beyond crime statistics

The data of the specialised counselling centres show that following their assessment regarding the occurrence of criminal offences of trafficking in human beings or forced prostitution is leading to corresponding investigations in very few cases only. Preliminary proceedings were initiated in only 29% of the recorded cases. The number of charges is even lower. "This clearly shows that the extent of trafficking in human beings and exploitation is only inadequately recorded in the criminal statistics" Sophia Wirsching, executive director of KOK concludes. In addition, the present data report offers insights into the situation of trafficked persons in Germany in terms of social law and residence rights.

Figures from NGOs complement criminal statistics

The only reliable figures on trafficking in human beings in Germany are presented in the annual Situation Report on Human Trafficking of the Federal Criminal Police Office. However, their informative value is limited because the report only refers to cases in which preliminary proceedings have been opened and concluded. The KOK's data collection complements these crime statistics with civil society analyses and broadens the spectrum. "Not only can this data expand the previously known bright field, it also offers the possibility of mapping the needs of those affected by trafficking in human beings and exploitation," explains Margarete Mureşan, KOK board member and head of the IN VIA Berlin specialised counselling centre. Practical experience shows, for example, that the residence prospects of half of the clients are uncertain. However, a residence status is often a prerequisite for access to benefits, access to the labour market or compensation claims. This underlines the need for humanitarian residence permits, independently of cooperation in criminal proceedings, an objective also included in the coalition agreement of the federal government.

Info box

KOK data survey on trafficking in human beings and exploitation in Germany 2021 at a glance:

19 participating specialised counselling centres
725 cases in total entered in the database
612 cases available for analysis
437 cases taken on by the specialised counselling centres in 2021
96 % of the trafficked persons receiving counselling were women
60 % of the clients come from West African countries, with the majority (44%) coming from Nigeria
73 % of the clients are aged between 22 and 39
81 % of cases were categorised as forced prostitution by the specialised counselling centres

The German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings – KOK is an association of 42 organisations that support trafficked persons and migrant women affected by violence. The KOK comprises the majority of specialised counselling centres for trafficked persons in Germany as well as other NGOs active in this field.

We are glad to arrange interviews for interested media representatives.

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