

# WHAT IS INVERT?

## PROBLEM & FOCUS

The INVERT project focuses on the issue of labour exploitation as a form of human trafficking. It aims to disrupt the financial side of traffickers' business models and to intensify the efficacy of the investigations, prosecutions, and judicial responses.

## APPROACH

The INVERT project intends to combat the labour traffickers' use of legal companies in the exploitation of victims. It will achieve this outcome by enabling EU prosecutors' offices, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and judicial authorities to identify victims and disrupt these business models and, in consequence, interrupt the trafficking chain.

## FUNDING & SCOPE

The project, funded by the ISF (Internal Security Fund) of the European Commission, involves 7 partners in 3 EU Member States – Belgium, Hungary, and Italy – and runs for 24 months

## JOIN US

Visit the [INVERT website](#) and subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to join us in our mission to tackle labour exploitation in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings.

### Who is involved in the project?

- Transcrime - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy)
- Victim Support Europe (Belgium)
- National Institute of Criminology (Hungary)
- National Gendarmerie/Arma dei Carabinieri (Italy)
- CBRNe Security and Defense Observatory (Italy)
- Palermo Prosecutor's Office (Italy)
- Milan Prosecutor's Office (Italy)

# INVERT

Identifying  
compaNies and  
Victims in the  
Exploitation phase to  
disRupt the financial  
business model of  
adult and child labour  
Trafficking

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## WHAT IS TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR LABOUR EXPLOITATION?

The trafficking of both adults and children is a serious human rights violation, compromising human dignity, the well-being and the freedom of those affected. Human Trafficking inflicts significant human, social, and economic damage on its victims, while traffickers and other actors involved in the illicit trade (with or without intent) reap substantial profits. In the period 2019-2020, EU Member States reported **14,311** victims of trafficking in human beings, **63%** of whom were women and girls, and **23%** were children.

Trafficking for labour exploitation is the second most prevalent form of trafficking in human beings in the EU (**28%**) with men being the primary victims (**66%**).<sup>1</sup> Between 2021 and 2022, the number of victims identified rose by **20.5%**. Of these, non-EU citizens accounted for **54%** of the cases.

Concurrently, reports of labour exploitation surged by **51%**: men comprised **70%** of the victims. Children made up **19%** of all victims trafficked in the EU, highlighting the severity of child trafficking as a form of human exploitation.<sup>2</sup> However, the dark figure of this crime – the number of unreported cases – is extremely high and therefore, it is difficult to evaluate the real extent of the problem.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2022). Report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings (Fourth Report). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0736>

<sup>2</sup> Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (2025, January 20). New Progress Report on combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. Available at: [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-progress-report-combatting-trafficking-human-beings-2025-01-20\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-progress-report-combatting-trafficking-human-beings-2025-01-20_en)

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2022). Global estimates of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriages. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed\\_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_854795.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854795.pdf)

## HOW WILL INVERT ACHIEVE ITS GOALS?

- By conducting in-depth research into key trends and characteristics of trafficking for labour exploitation, affecting both adults and children.
- By identifying victim- and company-focused risk indicators to inform the design of the INVERT tools.
- By developing two user-friendly risk assessment tools to help prosecutors and LEAs identify both victims and companies involved in trafficking for labour exploitation.
- By delivering comprehensive training modules that extend the prosecutors' and LEAs' knowledge – gathered during the research phase – of labour exploitation, prepare them to use the INVERT tools, and raise their awareness of victim-centric approaches to interviewing potential victims.
- By testing these tools through a piloting phase using real criminal cases in two different environments (general - day-to-day investigations, and specific – e.g., areas affected by organised crime).



## ANTICIPATED RESULTS



Increased capacity (of prosecutors and LEAs) to identify companies and businesses at risk or complicit in labour exploitation.



Improved effectiveness of criminal investigations into human trafficking for labour exploitation.



Enhanced cooperation both across the justice and legal system, and alongside NGOs and other public and private actors.



Reduced number of human trafficking victims, thanks to a more accurate and swifter identification of both places of exploitation and potential victims through the use of INVERT tools and training modules.