

Monitoring Report: Human Trafficking in Germany

First Periodic Report

Germany has an obligation to combat trafficking in human beings and protect its victims under the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention and the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. The Monitoring Report: Human Trafficking in Germany, issued at two-year intervals, systematically evaluates the implementation of these two legal instruments.

1 What is human trafficking?

As used in the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention and the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, inter alia through the abuse of their predicament, for the purpose of exploitation. Sexual and labour exploitation are the two forms most common in Germany. Other forms include exploitation for begging, criminal activity and the removal of organs and – since the revision of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive – exploitation through forced marriage or illegal adoption and exploitation for surrogacy.

2 What was evaluated?

Implementation of the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention and of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive with respect to the following:

- Prevention of human trafficking
- Identification
- Support of victims
- Recovery and reflection period
- Residence permits
- Compensation and legal protection
- Strategic and institutional framework

In addition to a legal evaluation, data were evaluated from 5 federal ministries; 3 subordinate authorities; ministries of all federal states (Länder), 48 in total; and 7 civil society organisations.

3 How many victims of human trafficking are there in Germany?



The number of undetected cases is probably even higher. Standardised statistics are still lacking in Germany.

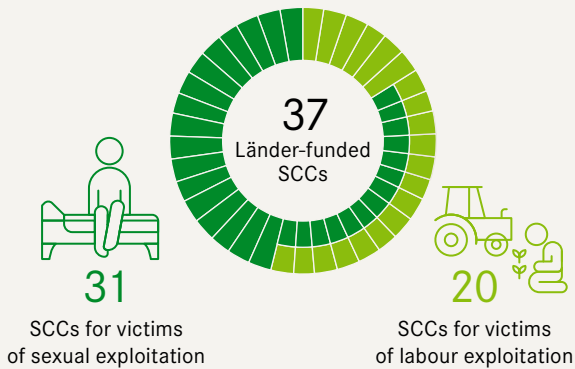
4 How many traffickers are caught?



Why there are so few convictions is unclear. However, professionals in the field report that there are many obstacles to the use of the criminal law provisions on human trafficking.

5 Where do victims of human trafficking go for support?

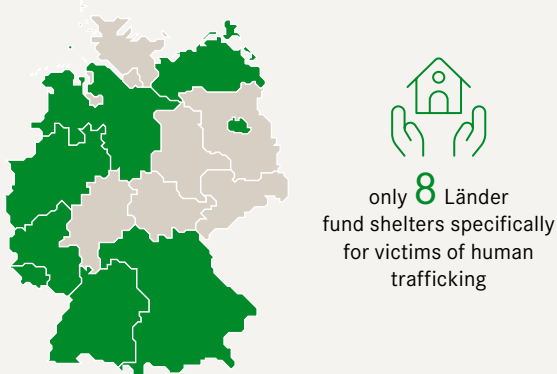
Victims of human trafficking obtain guidance and support from 37 specialised counselling centres (SCCs) in over 43 locations (as of 2022). Many SCCs support both victims of labour exploitation and victims of sexual exploitation.



While all Länder fund SCCs, access to SCC services is not available to all groups of victims in all Länder, as many SCCs are specifically for women. Five Länder did not fund an SCC that served men in 2022. Four Länder did not fund an SCC serving persons identifying as diverse.

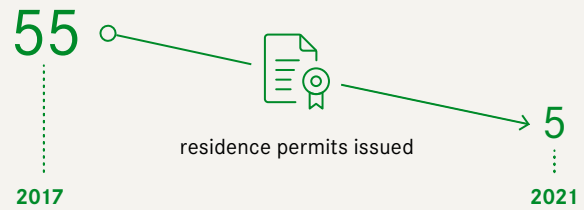
6 Once identified, what do victims need?

The time and a safe place to recover and regain stability is of particular importance for victims of human trafficking. Victims often have no secure housing or any other safe place to stay.

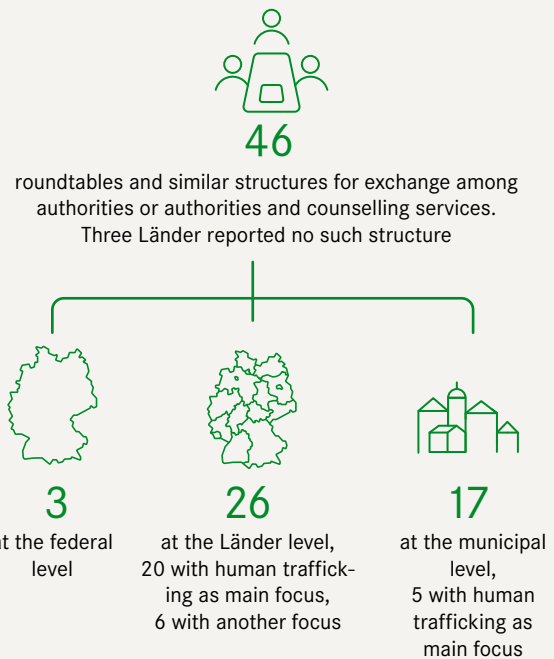


7 What happens if the victims do not have a German residence permit?

Victims of human trafficking can receive a special residence permit under Section 25(4a) of the Residence Act – but only if they testify against their traffickers. In practice, the obstacles to obtaining these residence permits are substantial.



8 How do authorities cooperate with one another and with the counselling services?



In addition, 12 Länder have agreements and concept documents in place addressing cooperation in the area of human trafficking. Thus far, five cooperation agreements have been established at the federal level.

Published by

German Institute for Human Rights | Zimmerstraße 26/27 | 10969 Berlin
info@institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de, www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de
October 2024

Funded by



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth