Annual Report 2025

HEUNI

From the director

Highlights of the year by Dr Natalia Ollus

The year 2025 was very productive and bustling, and perhaps one of our most impactful years yet. In terms of implemented projects it was just that: we had 15 externally funded projects, which surely is our all-time record with regard to the number of projects in a single year! In addition, we launched 8 new publications, organized or attended 130 events, and reached over 7000 persons. We also had more than 20 appearances in media and blogs, and some 16 000 unique viewers on HEUNI's website.

In 2025 we welcomed several new colleagues :

• Laura Järvenpää (MBA, M.Soc.Sc) joined us in December as our new Sustainability Expert. Laura comes with extensive experience from the European Parliament, where she worked with responsible business conduct and social sustainability. Most recently, Laura worked in a globally operating Nordic company as a sustainability manager. She got up to speed at HEUNI incredibly fast and immediately began contributing to our ongoing projects and trainings for businesses.

• Jenna Kenttälä (M.Soc.Sc.) joined us in August as a Research Assistant. Jenna is well-versed in questions of human trafficking thanks to her previous work at the Finnish National Assistance System for Human Trafficking, and has also previously worked as a research assistant at the University of Helsinki. Jenna's positive and enthusiastic demeanour brings great joy to the entire team, and she has provided crucial input to HEUNI's work.

• In addition, HEUNI has been grateful to enjoy the excellent contributions of three skilful trainees. Carolina Bäckström (LL.M.), Annette Bäckström (B.Soc.Sc.) and Sofie Relander (LL.B.) all played an important role in helping us achieve our objectives in 2025. Many thanks for your hard work!

• We were also joined by two new members on the HEUNI Advisory Board. Dr Alexander Trautrims, Professor of Supply Chain Management, Nottingham University Business School and Associate Director, University of Nottingham's Rights Lab joined us as a new members. Prof. Trautrims brings practical, pragmatic and academic inputs to our work on social sustainability, and we have already greatly benefited from his advice. Mr Ilias Chatzis, Acting Head of the Organised Crime Branch and Chief of the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section, joined as an ex officio member, representing the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. We warmly welcome the two new members!

We bid farewell to Saara Haapasaari, who returned to the private sector in the summer. I wish to thank Saara for leading HEUNI's efforts to develop and expand our corporate social responsibility work and portfolio, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours!

In terms of administrative changes, HEUNI became part of the Special Authorities of the Judicial Administration as of 1 January 2025. This administrative structure was established to provide support to 11 independent government agencies in questions of finances, human resources and information management. The administrative unit is not in a decision-making position in relation to HEUNI; rather, it provides much welcome support in tricky administrative and financial questions.

During the year, we had several substantive highlights, including:
• Finalising the EC-funded "EASY – It is never easy to talk about this" project. Under the project we developed several concrete tools for service providers working with victims of forced marriage. One of the key tools is a checklist for persons who may be subjected to forced marriage in order to self-assess their situation.
• Organising a major conference on youth crime, where experts from across the Nordic and Baltic region shared what really works to address and prevent youth crime. The conference findings have been summarized in ten recommendations for effective and proportionate criminal policy.
• Launched several tools and recommendations to strengthen the inclusion and interviewing of children in investigations of online sexual abuse
• Strengthening our Nordic outreach to address labour exploitation and producing a major research report on the intersections of work-related crime, work-environment risks and labour exploitation. We also created a checklist for labour inspectors and social partners in 6 languages and a set of videos.
• Created a checklist for public procurement actors to prevent labour exploitation in the procurement of cleaning services
I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone at HEUNI for their hard work and dedication, and to our partners and counterparts for their support and collaboration.

Natalia Ollus
HEUNI Director

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Operational Framework

THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND CONTROL, AFFILIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (HEUNI) FUNCTIONS under the joint auspices of the Government of Finland and the United Nations as an independent research and policy-making institute. HEUNI was established in 1981 with an agreement between Finland and the United Nations.

HEUNI's work is guided by its founding statutes, which state that HEUNI:

- organises seminars for policy-makers, administrators, experts and researchers;
- collects, provides, publishes and disseminates information;
- conducts research;
- and holds conferences and meetings.

HEUNI's work focuses on conducting research, on publishing the findings in easily accessible formats, disseminating the findings to relevant stakeholders, and providing advice to policy-makers related to the institute's areas of focus.

HEUNI's menu of services include the development of research methodologies, the collection and analysis of various forms of data, the development of indicators, measures, practical tools and guidelines, and the provision of training.

HEUNI selects and develops its areas of focus independently but is guided by the priorities of the United Nations.

HEUNI's mandate of work covers all of Europe but HEUNI aims to transfer European practices and knowledge also beyond this geographic region.

HEUNI is the European regional institute in the United Nations Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention programme network (PNI). HEUNI's affiliation with the United Nations means that HEUNI collaborates with other members of this network, closely follows the work of the UN vis-à-vis the prevention of crime and crime control within the framework of criminal justice and supports the UN in the implementation of its priorities, in particular the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

HEUNI's budget

The main administrative and budgetary responsibility for HEUNI lies with the Government of Finland, but part of the institute's turnover is covered through participation in externally funded projects and grants from, among others, the European Commission, the Government of Finland, and the United Nations.

EXPENSES	**809 587**
Personnel costs	675 657
Operational costs	91 739
Premises and its maintenance	42 191
INCOME	**921 900**
Budgetary funding from the Ministry of Justice	575 000
External funding (projects, commercial activities)	321 900
Rollover from the previous years	25 000



HEUNI'S ORGANISATION

HEUNI has a professional and motivated team of experts and efficient administrative processes that support the work of the institute.

In 2025, HEUNI employed 2 interns: Sofie Relander (Åbo AkademiUniversity), Annette Bäckström (Åbo Akademi University).

Director
Dr Natalia Ollus

Senior Programme Officers
Anniina Jokinen
Dr Julia Korkman

Researchers
Anni Lietonen
Anna-Greta Pekkarinen

Sustainability Specialist
Saara Haapasaari until 30 June 2025

Communications Officer
Aleksandra Anikina

Administrative and Finance Specialist
Ieva Silinevica

Assistant
Aili Pääkkönen

ADVISORY BOARD

The international Advisory Board of HEUNI serves as an important link with the United Nations and the various regions of Europe. The Chairman of the Advisory Board and four of its members are appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after consultation with the Government of Finland. Four members of the Board, including the Director of HEUNI, are appointed by the Government of Finland.

The members of the Advisory Board are appointed for a period of five years. For the 2023 – 2027 term the composition of the Board is as follows:

- Dr Katja Franko, Chairman of the Board, Professor of Criminology, University of Oslo
- Dr Mark Shaw, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
- Alexander Trautrims, Neil Wilkins, Head of Migrant Workers Programme, Institute for Human Rights and Business
- Dr Andrea Di Nicola, Director of the Centre of Security and Crime Sciences and Associate Professor of criminology at the Faculty of Law of the University of Trento
- Stephanie Futter-Orel, Executive Manager, WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe)
- Director, Division for Treaty Affairs, UNODC, (ex officio member)
- Dr Elina Pirjatanniemi, Professor, Director, Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University
- Ari Evwaraye, Head Of Strategy, Ministry of the Interior
- Dr Aarne Kinnunen, Counsellor, Ministry of Justice
- Dr Natalia Ollus, Director, HEUNI

A representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime participates ex officio in all deliberations of the Advisory Board.

In 2025 the Advisory Board convened in person in Helsinki in November 2025 for its formal annual meeting.

Focus areas

Strengthening the criminal justice responses to, including the identification of human trafficking and similar crimes (such as forced marriage, exploitation of children and young people, labour exploitation)



Highlights

In 2025, HEUNI's work on human trafficking focused on trafficking for labour exploitation, child trafficking, and trafficking-related forms of violence such as forced marriage. The year combined research, policy influence, capacity building and direct engagement with practitioners in Finland, the Nordic region and internationally.

A consistent message guided our work: trafficking is not only a criminal justice issue. It is also about identification, access to services, cooperation between actors, and ensuring that victims are recognised as rights holders.

- SafeBorders project launched to strengthen child trafficking protection across the EU.
- Continued advancement on forced marriage as trafficking, including tools dissemination and European-level engagement.
- INTEGRATE project outputs released, bringing a practical checklist and a comprehensive Nordic report on labour exploitation into the hands of practitioners, researchers and policymakers.
- Contribution to the EU Anti-Trafficking Hub and Council of Europe policy development on labour exploitation.

Labour exploitation and trafficking in working life

Labour exploitation remained a core focus area in 2025. HEUNI advanced both practical tools and policy discussion on how to detect, prevent and respond to exploitation of migrant workers.

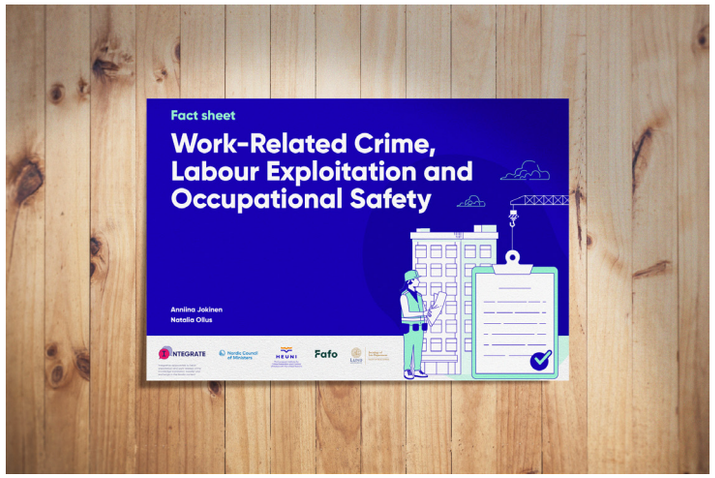
HEUNI, University of Lund and Fafo institute received funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers for a research project "INTEGRATE" which studies innovative solutions targeting challenges associated with work-related crime and work environment risks, with a special emphasis on combating labour exploitation.

Under the INTEGRATE project, HEUNI published two key outputs:

The INTEGRATE **checklist**, a practical tool designed to support frontline professionals in identifying and responding to labour exploitation in a structured and coordinated way. The checklist has been widely disseminated and presented in meetings with authorities, labour market actors and NGOs.

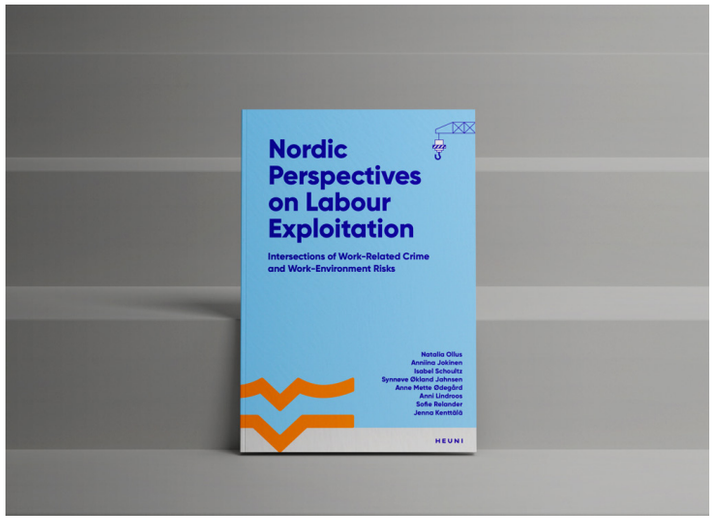
https://heuni.fi/-/integrate-checklist

Available in English, Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic



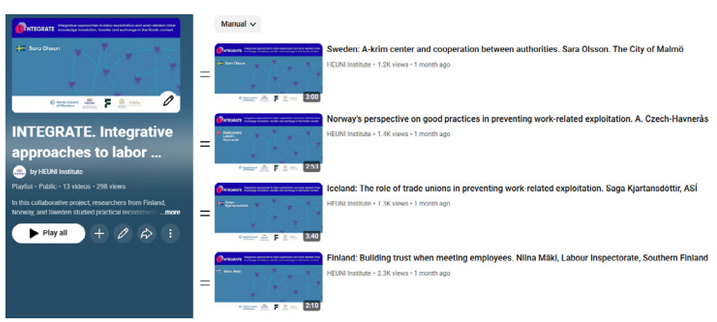
And HEUNI Report Series No. 111 "Nordic Perspectives on Labour Exploitation: Intersections of Work-Related Crime and Work-Environment Risks", which provides a comparative analysis of how labour exploitation is addressed across the Nordic countries. The report has informed Nordic exchanges and policy discussions, highlighting both strengths and structural gaps in existing systems.

The **research report** presents examples and key recommendations based on a mapping of existing knowledge and focus group discussions held in all Nordic countries with 67 participants. The report strengthens the evidence base on how work-related crimes intersect with labour exploitation, occupational safety risks and differing Nordic policy frameworks. A reference group of 25 Nordic and Baltic experts supported the development and dissemination of the project outputs, reinforcing regional cooperation and shared understanding.



https://heuni.fi/-/heuni-report-series-111.-nordic-perspectives-on-labour-exploitation

To complement the research report, factsheet and checklist, HEUNI produced a series of **12 short expert videos** in cooperation with frontline practitioners from across the Nordic region, including the *Salvation Army Norway, the Labour Inspectorate for Southern Finland, the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ), the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, and the Danish Centre against Human Trafficking.*
The videos present concrete examples of good practices in preventing labour exploitation, ranging from inspection methods and trust-building with workers to trade union engagement and inter-agency cooperation. Produced in both Nordic languages and English, the series strengthens cross-border learning.



https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcqZ2EJka-CeIdk3OUi2bhN-Mbk3o-KA5iF

Forced marriage as trafficking: from project results to ongoing practice

Forced marriage remained a priority theme in 2025. Although the EASY project has formally concluded, HEUNI continues to integrate its findings and tools into national and international work.

The EASY toolkit and checklist were widely presented across Finland in regional anti-trafficking network meetings and professional seminars. The tools were also disseminated at the launch of the updated Finnish National Referral Mechanism handbook. Feedback from practitioners confirms that concrete, practical tools are needed to support identification and referral in cases of forced marriage.

NEVER EASY – Checklist for individuals assessing forced marriage situations (multiple languages)

https://heuni.fi/-/never-easy-checklist



At European level, HEUNI contributed to discussions on forced marriage as trafficking, including at an ICAT side event during the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and at a Regional Conference on Forced Marriage in North Macedonia. HEUNI also participated in a La Strada International webinar launching new research on trafficking for forced marriage in Europe.

These engagements underline two developments: awareness of forced marriage as trafficking is increasing, and there is a clear demand for structured tools and referral mechanisms to ensure effective victim support.



"Long journey"– Toolkit for Supporting Victims of Forced Marriage

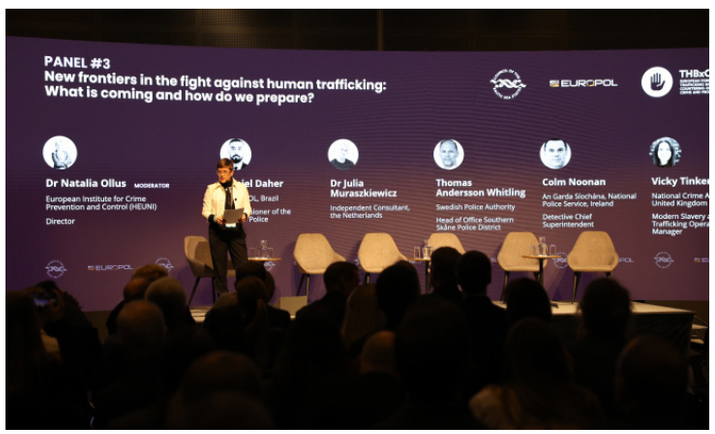
Available in English, Finnish, Italian, German Spanish and Catalan

Strengthening European coordination and policy development

HEUNI continued to engage actively in European anti-trafficking structures. Participation in the launch of the EU Anti-Trafficking Hub strengthens HEUNI's role in supporting EU-level policy through research, analysis and stakeholder dialogue. ADD SENTENCE HERE ON THE ANTH PAPER

ATH PA-PER LINK

Through these engagements, HEUNI brings Nordic experience into European discussions and ensures that practical lessons on victim identification, support systems and inter-agency cooperation inform broader policy development. HEUNI also took part in key regional and European fora, including the THBxOC European Forum against Trafficking in Human Beings organised by CBSS and Europol, as well as meetings of the EU Network of National Coordinators and



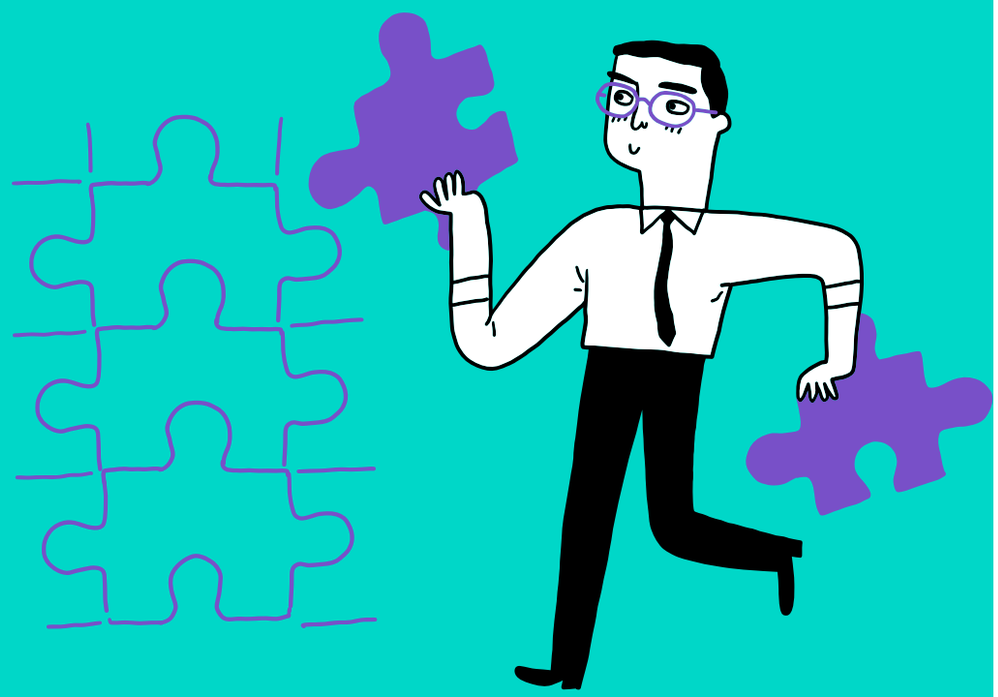
Natalia ollus chairing a panel at the HBxOC European Forum against Trafficking in Human Beings organised by CBSS and Europol

IN 2025, HEUNI STRENGTHENED NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN RESPONSES TO TRAFFICKING BY ADVANCING NORDIC SOLUTIONS TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION, EMBEDDING FORCED MARRIAGE FIRMLY WITHIN ANTI-TRAFFICKING SYSTEMS, AND CONTRIBUTING TO EU AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE POLICY DEVELOPMENT.



Focus areas

Enhancing the skills of businesses and public procurement agencies to identify and prevent exploitation in supply chains.



Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and prevention of labour exploitation in supply chains has become a distinct and growing focus area in HEUNI's work. This development reflects a deliberate effort to translate research into action and to engage directly with actors who can influence conditions on the ground. While HEUNI's research has long highlighted the links between labour exploitation, trafficking and business practices, experience has shown that prevention requires close cooperation with those responsible for procurement, reporting, risk management and due diligence.

Recognising this, HEUNI made social sustainability in supply chains a strategic focus area in 2023. Since then, the work has expanded steadily, combining research-based input with dialogue, training and practical sparring aimed at preventing labour exploitation and strengthening accountability across supply chains.

Between 2023 and 2025, HEUNI participated in or organised 153 events related to CSR and social sustainability, including meetings, trainings, sparring sessions and public appearances. 62 of these events included company representatives, indicating increasing private-sector engagement in addressing labour exploitation risks. Altogether, these activities reached approximately 4,869 participants, noting that some individuals may have attended multiple events.

The work engaged a wide range of actors, including ministries and public authorities, municipalities and public procurement bodies, companies and business networks, trade unions and labour organisations, research institutions and international organisations.

Partners and interlocutors included, among others, the *Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Justice*; the Cities of *Helsinki, Espoo and Tampere*; *Hansel, Senaatti-kiinteistöt* and *KEVA*; companies such as *Huhtamäki, Kesko, Posti, Mehiläinen, YIT, SRV, HOAS* and *Lapti*; labour market actors including *Rakennusliitto, PAM, Puhtausala ry, LO Sweden* and *EFBWW*; and international and research partners such as *OSCE, CBSS, IOM, UN Global Compact Finland, KTH Royal Institute of Technology* and *RISE Sweden*.

This breadth of cooperation reflects HEUNI's role as a connector between research, policy and practice, supporting coordinated responses to labour exploitation risks across sectors.

The year also included close cooperation with trade unions and labour inspectorates in Finland, Denmark and Sweden; dialogue with public procurement and infrastructure actors and trainings and sparring sessions with companies in sectors such as construction, cleaning, logistics, retail and housing.

New project launched in 2025: EMBRACE – Empowering Business Communities to Prevent Labour Trafficking

EMBRACE spans four EU Member States (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Poland) and draws on expertise from Finland and the Netherlands. It brings together businesses, migrant groups, civil society organisations, frontline professionals and public authorities to develop coordinated, preventive solutions.

A core output of the project is the development of practical Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for businesses, enabling proactive prevention, identification and response to labour trafficking in supply chains. The SOPs will be piloted across sectors and developed with a view to future certification to ensure sustainability and wider uptake. The project also supports civil society organisations in addressing online recruitment for labour trafficking, trains labour inspectors to identify trafficking risks, and develops an online grievance platform to enable reporting by workers, migrants and consumers. In addition, EMBRACE will produce policy recommendations and awareness-raising activities targeting both migrants and the general public.

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Focus areas

Strengthening the role of HEUNI in implementing the priorities of the United Nations visà-vis the prevention of crime and crime control.



As a United Nations-affiliated institute, HEUNI continued to support the implementation of UN priorities in crime prevention and criminal justice through research, policy dialogue, international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Highlights of the activities

In 2025, HEUNI further strengthened its role as a bridge between the Nordic region, Europe and the wider UN system, contributing expertise on topics including human trafficking, youth crime, investigative interviewing, victim-centred justice and humane criminal policy.

HEUNI remained actively engaged in UN-related networks and partnerships throughout the year. Director Natalia Ollus served as co-chair of the One UN Finland Network together with IOM Finland, helping coordinate joint activities and dialogue among UN entities in Finland. In 2025, the network focused particularly on preparations for the UN80 anniversary, reflecting on the importance of multilateral cooperation in a changing global environment. HEUNI hosted meetings of the One UN network and participated in the organisation of the UN80 seminar and reception, where Natalia Ollus delivered welcoming remarks on behalf of the network.

HEUNI also strengthened cooperation with UN partners through meetings with the Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the IOM delegation from Uzbekistan, and representatives of the United States Embassy and the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Rapporteur. Natalia Ollus additionally participated in the UNU-WIDER 40th Anniversary Reception, further reinforcing HEUNI's engagement with the wider UN community in Finland.

Contributing to international criminal justice policy

HEUNI continued to contribute to international criminal justice discussions through participation in global and regional forums. Julia Korkman represented HEUNI at the 34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna, the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. During the session, HEUNI organised and chaired a side event focusing on youth criminality, bringing research-based perspectives into international policy discussions.

HEUNI also maintained its engagement in the implementation of the Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering through participation in the ImpleMéndez COST Action. Julia Korkman represented Finland and the European Association of Psychology and Law in the project's management committee, contributing to the development of future training initiatives and publications, including work related to young offenders and human trafficking investigations.

Promoting evidence-based criminal justice and international knowledge exchange

HEUNI continued to share Nordic experiences and research internationally. During a visit by scholars from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, HEUNI presented its work on investigative interviewing of children, gender-based violence and human trafficking, contributing to international academic exchange on crime prevention and criminal justice.



34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna





HEUNI

The European Institute for
Crime Prevention and Control,
affiliated with the United Nations