



PAG-ASA  
25 years of support to victims  
of human trafficking



PAG·ASA

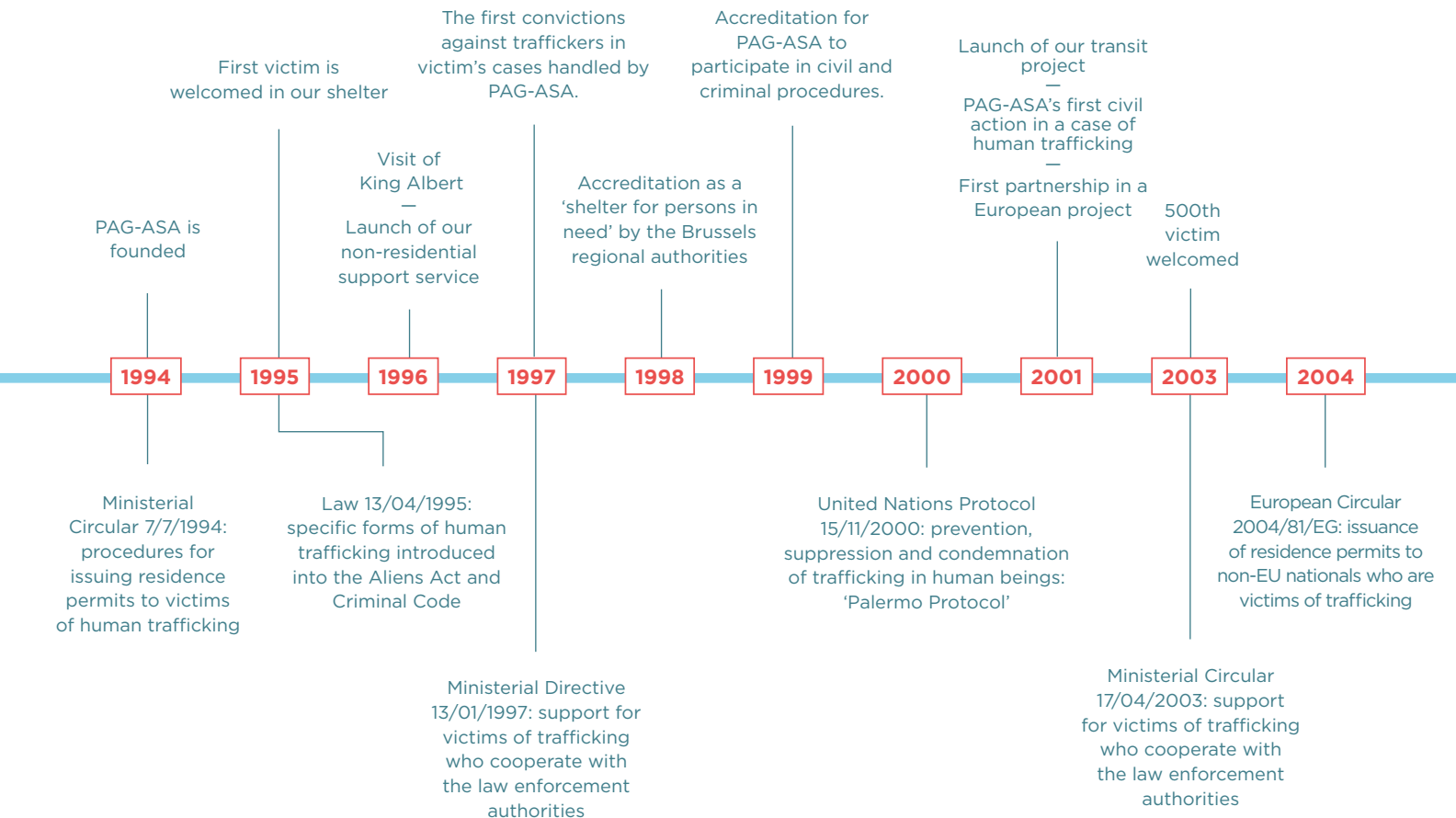
# FOREWORD

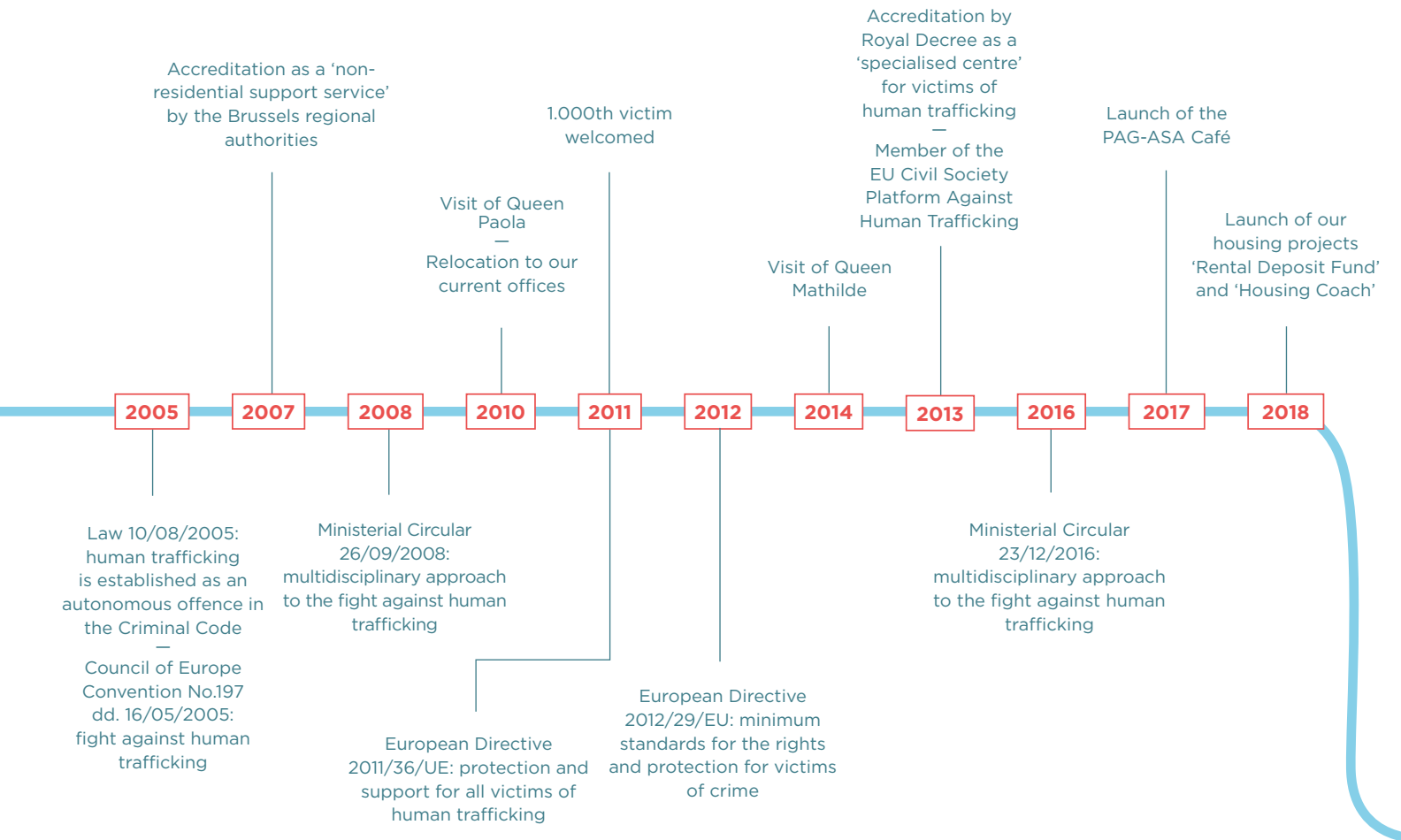
25 years ago, our founders came together to decide on a name and logo for their new organisation. Equipped with pen and paper, they drew the image of a bird as a symbol of freedom. Inspired by the strength of victims, they chose the name PAG-ASA, which means 'hope' in Filipino language. Hope for a better future, hope for a world where human trafficking no longer exists.

Since then, we have journeyed along a path rich in encounters, experiences and challenges. More than 1.500 victims have taken refuge at PAG-ASA. We have learned many things from every one of them, as well as from our mistakes and success stories. Our approach evolved with the needs of victims, and with the changing political and legislative landscape. Throughout the years, our vision and mission have been reinforced. We have continued to move forward. We have managed to create a solid organisation, also on financial and structural level. Good working conditions for our staff are essential to making sure our team can focus 100% on our principal mission: sheltering and counselling victims.

As idealists, we dream that there will be no more reason for PAG-ASA to exist in 25 years, that one day we can close our doors, and that human trafficking will no longer exist. Until then, we are here, eager to continue the fight against trafficking and to defend the rights of victims, together with our partners. Our bird is still here too, ready to discover new horizons with us.

Heidi De Pauw (President) and Sarah De Hovre (Director)





# VISION AND MISSION

**VISION :** PAG-ASA aspires to a society in which the exploitation and trafficking of human beings no longer exists. As long as this ideal society does not exist, PAG-ASA advocates for a society where everyone stands against the exploitation of people, where the exploiters are rigorously condemned by the authorities and where all victims of human trafficking have access to adequate support, so that they have the resources to build a new life.

**MISSION :** PAG-ASA is present for all (potential) victims of human trafficking. This entails two core missions. The first is to provide quality support to victims of human trafficking. This means ensuring our support is tailor-made to the individual, in the short and long term, and is focused on the recovery and (re)-integration into society. The second is to actively participate in the fight against trafficking in human beings at the national and international level. This includes cooperating with the relevant public authorities, both in the field and at policy level, as well as awareness-raising, information sharing, training and providing advisory services.

# COLLABORATION

PAG-ASA is one of three specialised centres in Belgium dedicated to victims of human trafficking, which are recognised and mandated for by the national authorities to support victims under the framework of the 'special procedure for protection and assistance'. Thus, PAG-ASA takes part in the multidisciplinary approach to the fight against human trafficking, collaborating closely with all its partners.

# VALUES



Equality



Transparency



Engagement



Pluralism



Respect



Openness



Trust

# WORKING PRINCIPLES



The victim at the heart of all our activities



Working as part of a network



Holistic and sustainable support



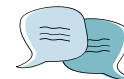
Empowerment and fostering autonomy



Professional discretion and confidentiality



Respecting laws and regulation



Dialogue and active participation

# 3 OUT OF 1,507

**Trisha\* (Philippines)** arrived in Belgium when she was 15. For 5 years, she worked for a family. She was tasked with looking after the children and domestic tasks, 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. One day, when she really could not handle it anymore, she ran away. She sought help from the police, who brought her to PAG-ASA. Trisha stayed in the assistance programme for 5 years. It was not always easy, but finally she has achieved her dream: she pursued her studies and now works as a nurse.

**Joyce\* (Nigeria)** arrived in Belgium thinking that she was going to work in a hair salon. This was promised to her when she left her country. But in order to pay back for her trip, she was forced into prostitution. She did not want to, but had no other choice. When the police found her during a raid, she was very afraid to be deported to Nigeria because she did not have residence documents. The police referred her to PAG-ASA. Today she has residence documents, rents her own apartment and is following a vocational cooking course. She still receives our support with regards to her legal case against the trafficker.

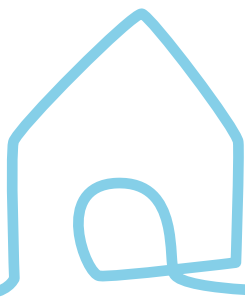
**Mohamed\* (Morocco)** knew exactly how long he had worked for a construction company prior to arriving at PAG-ASA: 1 year, 4 months and 6 days. He slept on site in the warehouse, where there was not even a toilet, and he worked without a break for 6 days a week. The labour inspectors found him during an inspection and brought him to PAG-ASA. He stayed in the assistance programme for 6 years. Finally, his employer was found guilty and condemned to pay him compensation.



# OUR SUPPORT TO VICTIMS



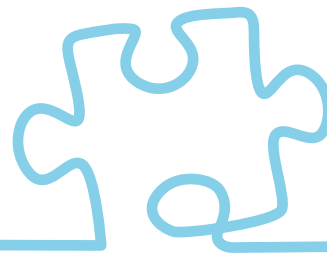
**Reception and  
referrals**



**Sheltered  
housing**



**Legal and  
administrative  
support**



**Psychosocial  
support**

# RECEPTION AND REFERRALS

By 'referral', we mean every request for help that arrives at PAG-ASA. These requests can be made by phone, fax, email or directly, via a visit to our offices. Each referral is handled with care, as every person deserves a high-quality response. However, requests do not always relate to a situation of human trafficking: for a large number of referrals, it is clear from the outset that it is related entirely to another problem. In these cases, we work together with the person to find an alternative solution and ensure he/she is directed to another relevant service provider. For each referral with the slightest indicator of human trafficking, we take the necessary steps to get a clearer picture of the (potential) victim's situation. When there are clear indicators of human trafficking, we evaluate with the potential victim (and the person who referred him/her) whether PAG-ASA's support is desired.



7.144

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF REFERRALS

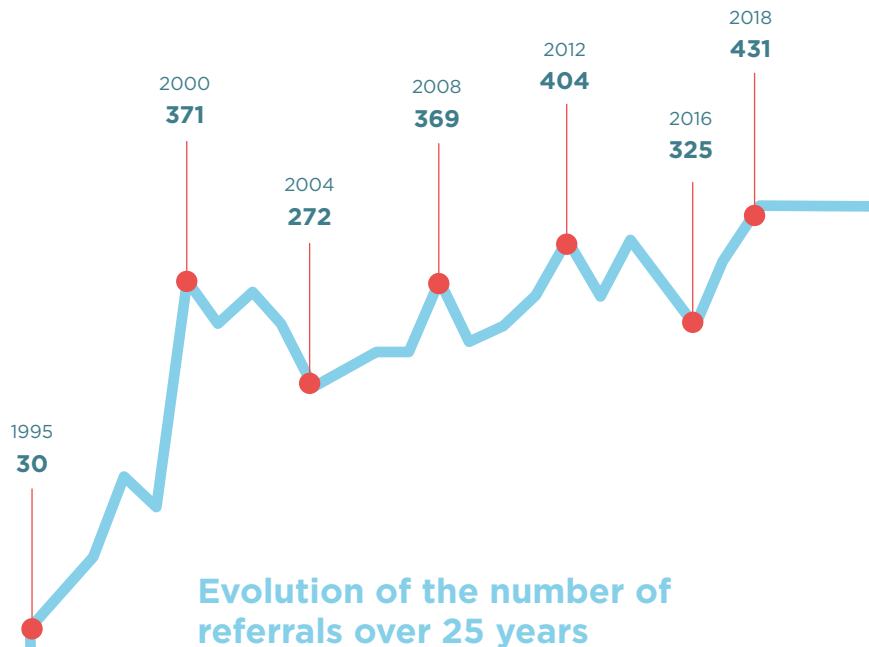
24/7

STAFF ARE REACHABLE  
AROUND THE CLOCK

## Persons/organisations who referred potential victims to PAG-ASA over the last 5 years

Victims themselves	583
Social sector	304
Law enforcement	278
Private persons	260
Legal aid services	117
Services for UFM*	89
Services for foreigners and migrants	83
Medical sector	64
Unknown	67
Other specialised centres for victims of THB (Sürya / Payoke)	57
Diplomatic body	7

\* UFM = Unaccompanied Foreign Minors



# SUPPORT PROGRAMME

For victims, arriving at PAG-ASA marks the start of a new chapter. This is a chapter they courageously embark on, a journey that will allow them to overcome trauma and regain control of their lives. Each victim receives holistic and tailored support:

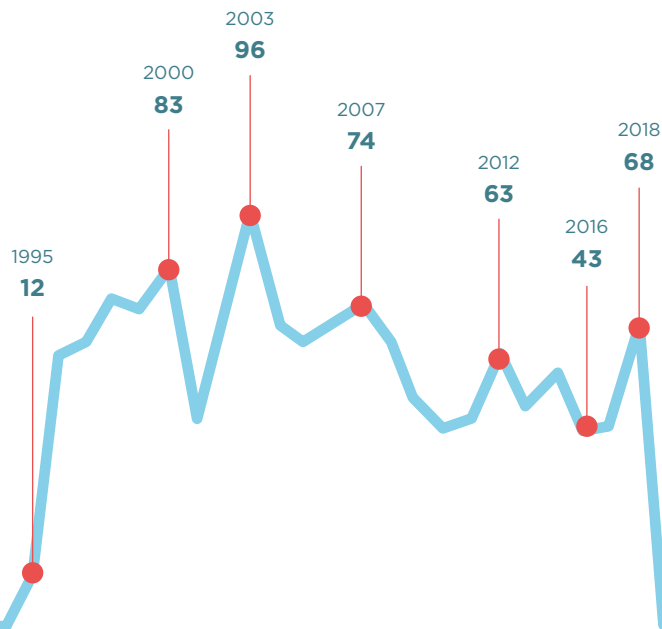
- **Holistic** because it includes three different components (administrative, legal and psychosocial) and addresses all areas of a person's life.
- **Tailored** because the support is adapted to the needs, skills, personality and background of each individual.

To strengthen the **individual support** programme, PAG-ASA also organises **group-based support and activities**. Rebuilding life after exploitation also means building a social life: making new friendships is essential to banish isolation. We regularly organise group activities, both for the residents in our shelter as well as for our 'walk-in' clients, who have their own rental accommodation.

# 1.507

TOTAL NUMBER OF VICTIMS  
SUPPORTED BY PAG-ASA

## Evolution of the number of new victims entering our support programme over 25 years



# 200

NUMBER OF VICTIMS SUPPORTED  
BY PAG-ASA EACH YEAR

# 3<sup>to</sup>5

YEAR  
TYPICAL LENGTH  
OF SUPPORT

RECORDS

# 1

DAY  
SHORTEST DURATION  
OF SUPPORT

# +20

YEARS  
LONGEST DURATION OF  
SUPPORT (STILL ON-GOING)

# SHELTER

Our shelter is a place of **peace and safety**, where victims have time to recover. It serves as a kind of stop-over, where, at their own pace, victims can reflect on their prospects for the future and take their first steps towards a new life. Our shelter is open to anyone identified as a victim of human trafficking, regardless of their nationality, sex or the form of exploitation they have endured. We can accommodate women, men and small families. The 16 private bedrooms each have their own bathroom, allowing us to accommodate a mixed and varied group. Our shelter also offers a common floor with a shared kitchen, living areas and a creative art-room.



*I have left the shelter and I have my own apartment and a job. But I still keep in my heart all the good moments I spent there."*

SOFIA\*, BULGARIAN, EXPLOITED IN ANTWERP

# 16

INDIVIDUAL BEDROOMS



# 5.417

CUMULATIVE  
NUMBER OF NIGHTS (2018)

# 4<sup>to</sup>6

**MONTHS**  
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY

# 97%

HIGHEST RATE OF OCCUPANCY  
(IN 2012)\*

RECORDS

# 1

**NIGHT**  
SHORTEST STAY

# 409

**NIGHTS**  
LONGEST STAY

\*this means that our shelter was almost full on a continuous basis. When all the rooms are occupied, we seek out (temporary) alternative accommodation, always taking into consideration the background and needs of the victim concerned. In exceptional circumstances, we have the potential to exceed our capacity, to accommodate 18 residents.

# LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The **legal component** of our support relates to the criminal procedure against the trafficker(s). This means supporting the victim when making declarations or lodging a complaint, informing them of any developments in the investigation, and facilitating the contacts with a lawyer when the case goes to court. Close collaboration with the police and labour inspectorate, as well as with the prosecutor's office, enables us to best defend the interests of victims.

When a victim arrives at PAG-ASA without a residence permit, there is also an important **administrative component** which involves filing requests (and extensions for) residence documents to the Immigration Office, as part of the special procedure for victims of human trafficking. PAG-ASA takes care of all the necessary steps to obtain (temporary) residence permits, as well as work permits.



*I am always surprised by the resilience of victims. Even after trauma and all the things they have endured, they still find their inner strength."*

EMILY\*, SOCIAL WORKER AT PAG-ASA





## THE PAST 5 YEARS:

98

NON-BELGIAN VICTIMS WHO WERE  
REGULARISED UNDER THE HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING PROCEDURE OR FOR  
HUMANITARIAN REASONS

25

NON-BELGIAN VICTIMS WHO CHOSE  
TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY OF  
ORIGIN

147

TRIALS AGAINST EXPLOITERS IN  
CASES HANDLED BY PAG-ASA

52

CASES\* WHICH DID NOT LEAD TO A  
TRIAL DUE TO A DISSOLUTION OR  
DISMISSAL OF THE CASE

16

NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH  
PAG-ASA ACTED AS A CIVIL PARTY

\* Here, a trial implies that the public prosecutor pursued the case in court for human trafficking.  
Following this, there may have been a conviction or an acquittal (full or partial). There could be several victims involved in one case.

# PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

The psycho-social (residential or walk-in) component of our support touches on different areas of the victim's life, depending on the needs of the individual. We support each victim to develop their own life plan. Our approach promotes the empowerment, autonomy and emotional resilience of each person, so that they can once again thrive independently in society. When the victim is not (or no longer) living in our shelter, our support programme continues with a 'walk-in' service. The person has regular meetings with his social worker, which can take place at their home, at PAG-ASA or out and about. The frequency of these meetings depends on the context and needs of the person (daily, weekly or monthly appointments).

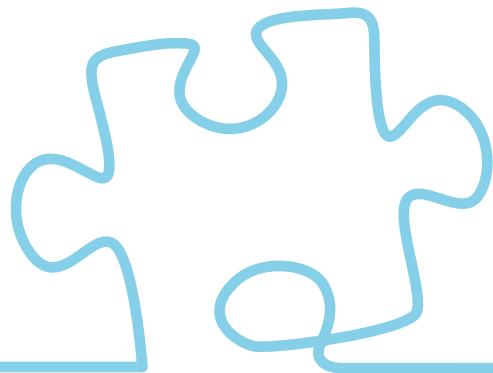
We regularly collaborate with other organisations, either when a problem goes beyond our area of expertise, or when their activities would complement those of PAG-ASA. By doing so, we also help victims to build a larger social network for when the day comes that they are ready to leave PAG-ASA.

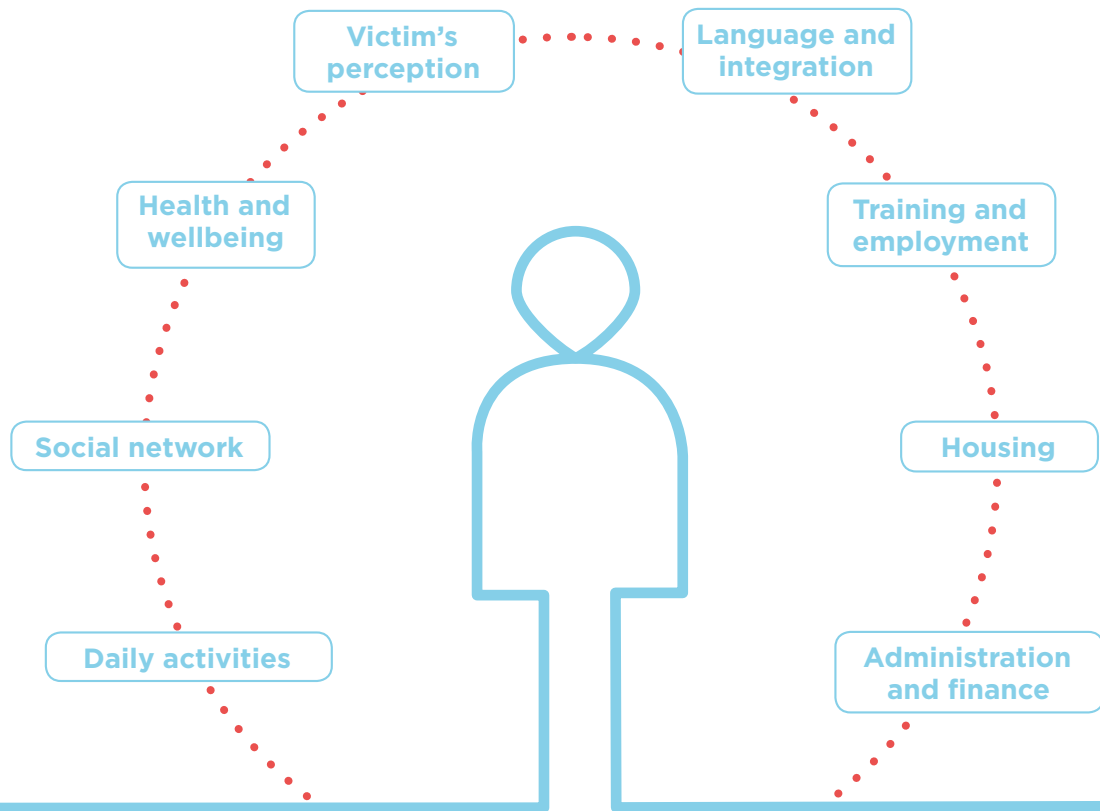
1.024

HOURS WORKED BY INTERPRETERS  
OVER A YEAR (2018)

180

HOURS OF INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS  
WITH VICTIMS PER MONTH (2018)







# PROFILE OF VICTIMS

Our statistics clearly show that there is no 'typical' victim: man or woman; adult or minor; Belgian, EU citizen or third country national; anyone can be a victim of human trafficking. Age, sex, level of education, nationality and socio-economic background have no bearing. Many victims are vulnerable. This vulnerability can be linked to various factors, such as: difficult social, family or economic context; alcohol, drugs and/or medication addiction; mild or severe mental health issues.

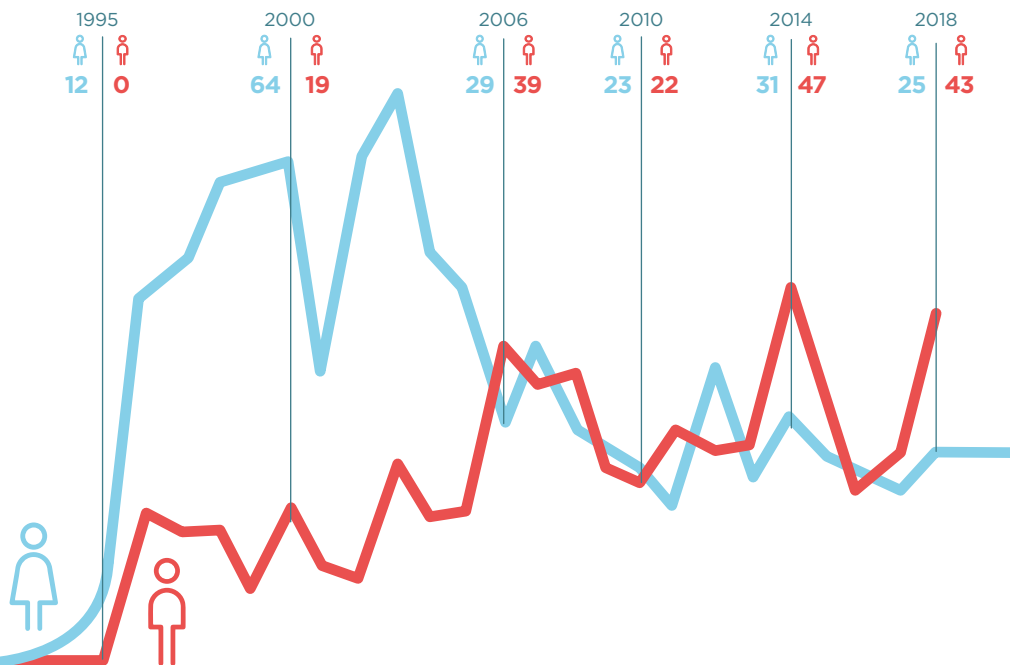
However, all victims seem to have one thing in common. They all share the same dream, the dream of a better future... and the misfortune to have met an unscrupulous person who took advantage of that dream.



 **62%**  
WOMEN

 **38%**  
MEN

## Evolution of the ratio women/men over 25 years



# NATIONALITIES OF VICTIMS

358

## European Union

Belgium  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
United Kingdom  
Former Yugoslavia

325

## Asia

Afghanistan  
Bangladesh  
China  
India  
Indonesia  
Iran

Iraq  
Jordan  
Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyzstan  
Nepal  
Pakistan  
Palestine  
Philippines  
Russia  
Sri Lanka  
Syria  
Tajikistan  
Thailand  
Tibet  
Uzbekistan  
Vietnam

287

## Sub-Saharan Africa

Angola  
Benin  
Burkina Faso  
Cameroon  
Cape Verde  
Chad  
Côte d'Ivoire  
DRC  
Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Guinea-Bissau  
Kenya  
Lesotho

Liberia  
Madagascar  
Mali  
Mauritius  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Rwanda  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Sudan  
Tanzania  
Togo

187

## North Africa

Algeria  
Egypt  
Morocco  
Tunisia

208

## Europe (outside EU)

Albania  
Armenia  
Belarus  
Bosnia  
Georgia

Kosovo  
Macedonia  
Moldavia  
Serbia  
Turkey  
Ukraine

103

## Latin America

Argentina  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Colombia  
Ecuador  
Haiti  
Honduras  
Jamaica  
Mexico  
Peru  
Dominican Republic  
Venezuela

1

## North America

United States





24%

EUROPEAN UNION

22%

ASIA

20%

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

14%

EUROPE (OUTSIDE EU)

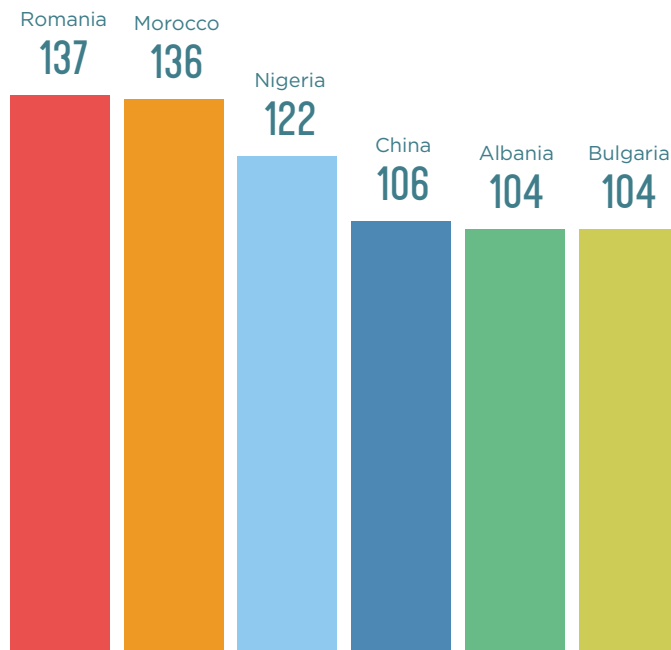
13%

NORTH AFRICA

7%

LATIN AMERICA

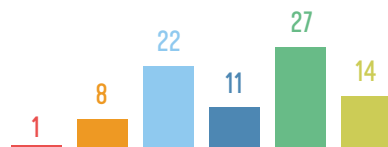
# THE 6 MOST COMMON NATIONALITIES



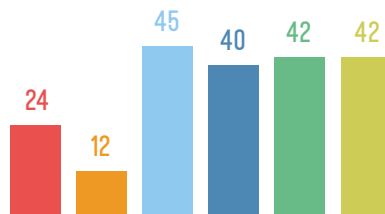
So far, PAG-ASA has provided support to victims of 98 different nationalities. From these 98 countries, 6 account for more than 100 victims. These nationalities remained present throughout the years, with some fluctuations.



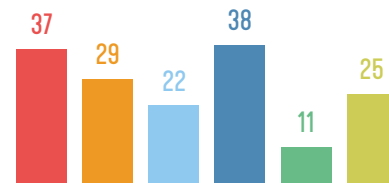
## Evolution



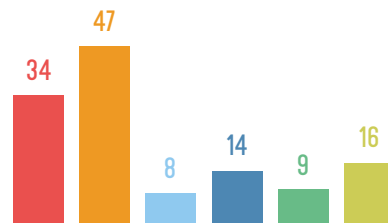
1995 – 1998



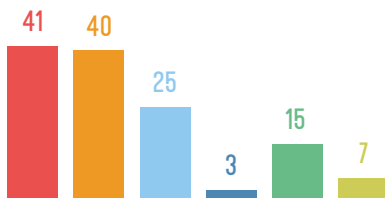
1999 – 2003



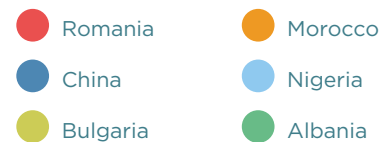
2004 – 2008



2009 – 2013



2014 – 2018



# PLACE OF EXPLOITATION

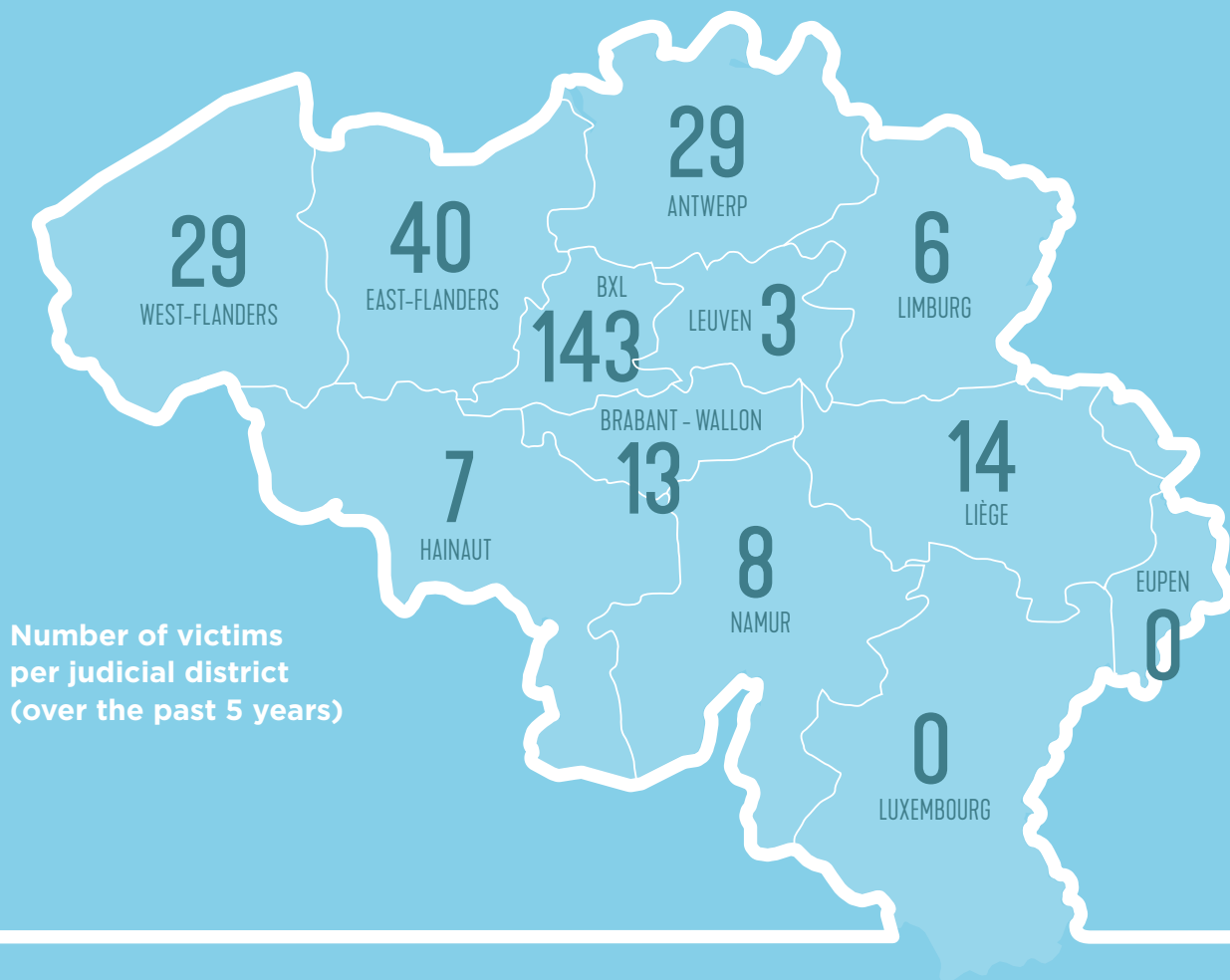
Victims may have been exploited anywhere in Belgium. Usually, the investigation into human trafficking is launched by the prosecutor (either criminal law or labour law) from the location where the exploitation occurred.

PAG-ASA's mandate is not linked to any particular region or judicial district in Belgium. It can therefore shelter and support victims regardless of the location where they were exploited. Consequently, we work closely with the police, inspectors and prosecutors across all judicial districts. Indeed, it may happen that a victim exploited in Antwerp, for example, feels unsafe there and is redirected to our shelter in Brussels (or vice versa). It may also be that PAG-ASA's shelter is full and that a victim is redirected to one of the other specialised centres, Payoke or Sürya (or vice versa). Each scenario is assessed according to the context and needs of the victim in question.

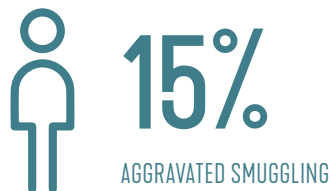
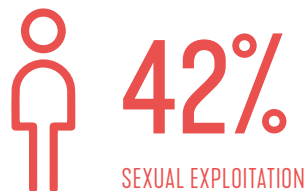


*I worked outside, where everybody could see me, but no one questioned my working conditions."*

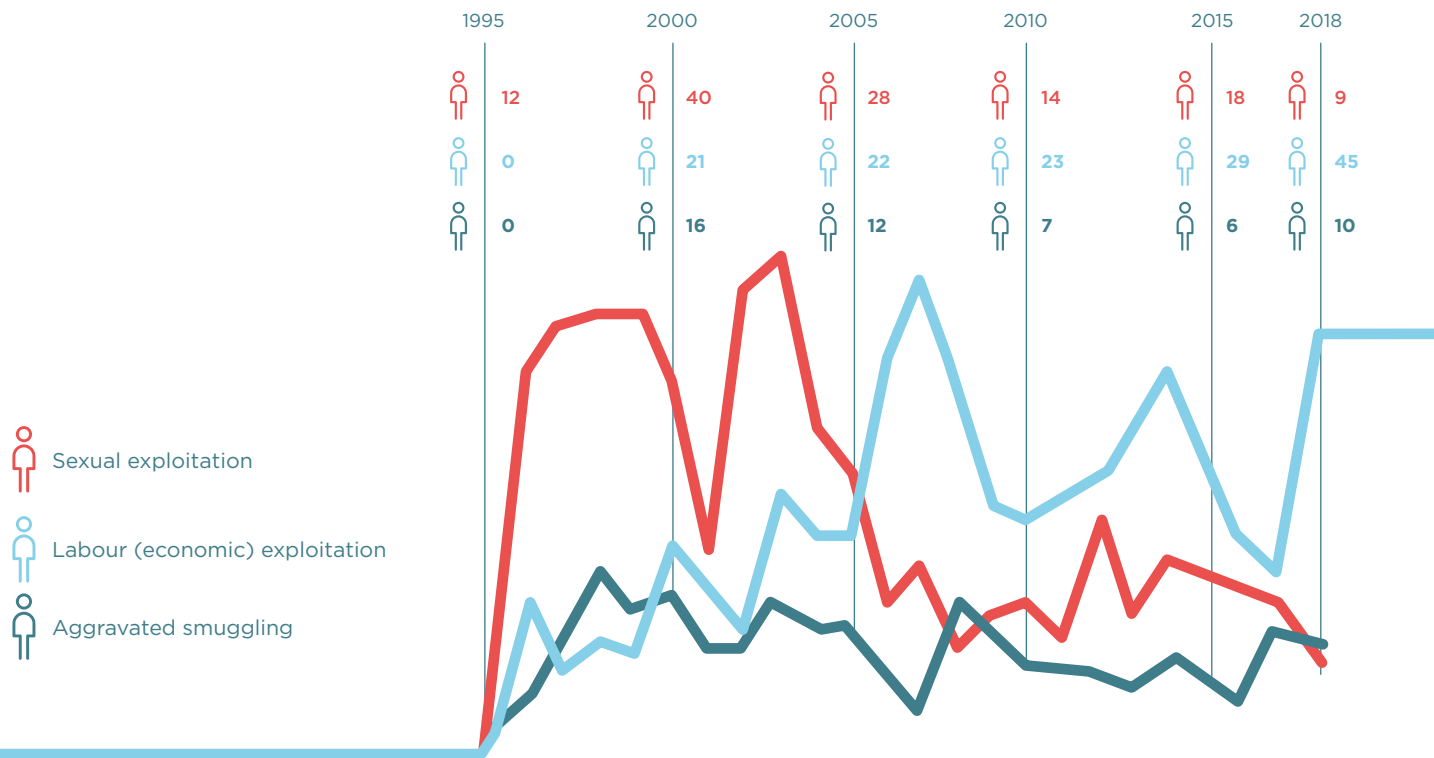
CRISTO\*, SENEGAL, EXPLOITED IN GHENT



# TYPE OF EXPLOITATION

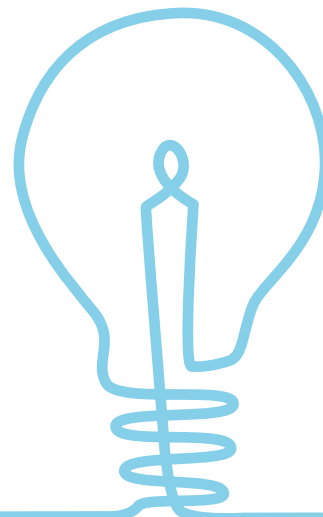


## Evolution of the numbers by type of exploitation over 25 years



# TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

We offer training and awareness raising for professionals who are in contact with at risk groups and/or potential victims. PAG-ASA is regularly contacted by partners and other local and international organisations. We try to respond positively to almost every request. Indeed, we believe that training and awareness raising is essential: only when professionals are made aware of the issue and capable of recognising the signs of a potential situation of human trafficking, will they be able to refer victims to a specialised centre for trafficked victims far more quickly.



OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS :

4.018

NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS  
TRAINED

390

NUMBER OF HOURS OF TRAINING  
GIVEN BY PAG-ASA

23

NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL  
DELEGATIONS WHO HAVE VISITED  
PAG-ASA

### Professionals who have received training from us:

Local and federal police • Regional and federal inspection services • Judges • Public Prosecutors • Guardians  
Government officials • Lawyers • FEDASIL and Red Cross shelters • Social services • Youth services  
Hospitals • Social workers • Social Welfare Authorities • Street workers • Immigration Office • Federal Public  
Service Justice • UFM services • Youth Welfare • Educators • Nurses • Municipal authorities • EU institutions  
United Nations agencies • Embassy staff

# OUR TEAM

## Director

Sarah De Hovre

## Psycho-social support

Anne-Sophie  
Annelies  
Ayako/Zoï  
Eva  
Joke  
Judith  
Liesbeth  
Maaïke/Tim  
Marc

## Administration, Finance and Infrastructure

Bénédicte  
Lien  
Marleen  
Nathalie  
Patrick/Jean-Marc  
Sylvette

## Training and communication

Ilse  
Mara

## Legal support

Anna  
Anne-Marie  
Liesbeth  
Mary  
Sally

## Volunteers

Alina  
Amy  
Carmelo  
Céline  
Charlotte  
Clara  
Elle

Giulia  
Jean-Marie  
Karel  
Katarina  
Lieve  
Marie  
Mike  
Olivia  
Ornella  
Roos  
Simon  
Teodora



## Board of administration

Heidi De Pauw - President  
Johnny De Mot - Honorary President  
Anne-Marie Claeys  
Jozef De Witte  
Lieven Denys  
Ingrid Pelssers  
Johan Vangenechten  
Representative of the Federal  
Migration Centre Myria

24

EMPLOYEES

8

ADMINISTRATORS

19

VOLUNTEERS

# WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Federale Overheidsdienst **Justitie**  
Service public fédéral **Justice**



COMMISSION COMMUNAUTAIRE COMMUNE  
GEMEENSCHAPPELIJKE GEMEENSCHAPSCOMMISSIE



**actiris.brussels**  
au coeur de l'emploi | de weg naar werk



**bps-bpv.brussels**  
Bruxelles Prévention & Sécurité  
Brussel Preventie & Veiligheid

A huge thank you to our private donors and organisations who have supported us financially over the years:

Cera • Euroclear Belgium • Fonds Cecilia Ramos • Innerwheel II Antwerpen • Samilia Foundation  
Soroptimist International Belgium • Stichting Koningin Paola • Talitha Koum • United Fund for Belgium  
Zusters van Liefde Roeselaere • Vzw De Overmolen • Vzw Oever • Vzw Welzijnszorg

If you would like to give us a little financial boost, you can make a transfer to our  
account number **BE20 0011 7035 9156** under the name of PAG-ASA asbl.  
PAG-ASA can issue tax exemption certificates from 40 euros per year.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français  
Dit verslag is ook beschikbaar in het Nederlands  
Via: [info@pag-asa.be](mailto:info@pag-asa.be) / [www.pag-asa.be](http://www.pag-asa.be)

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