

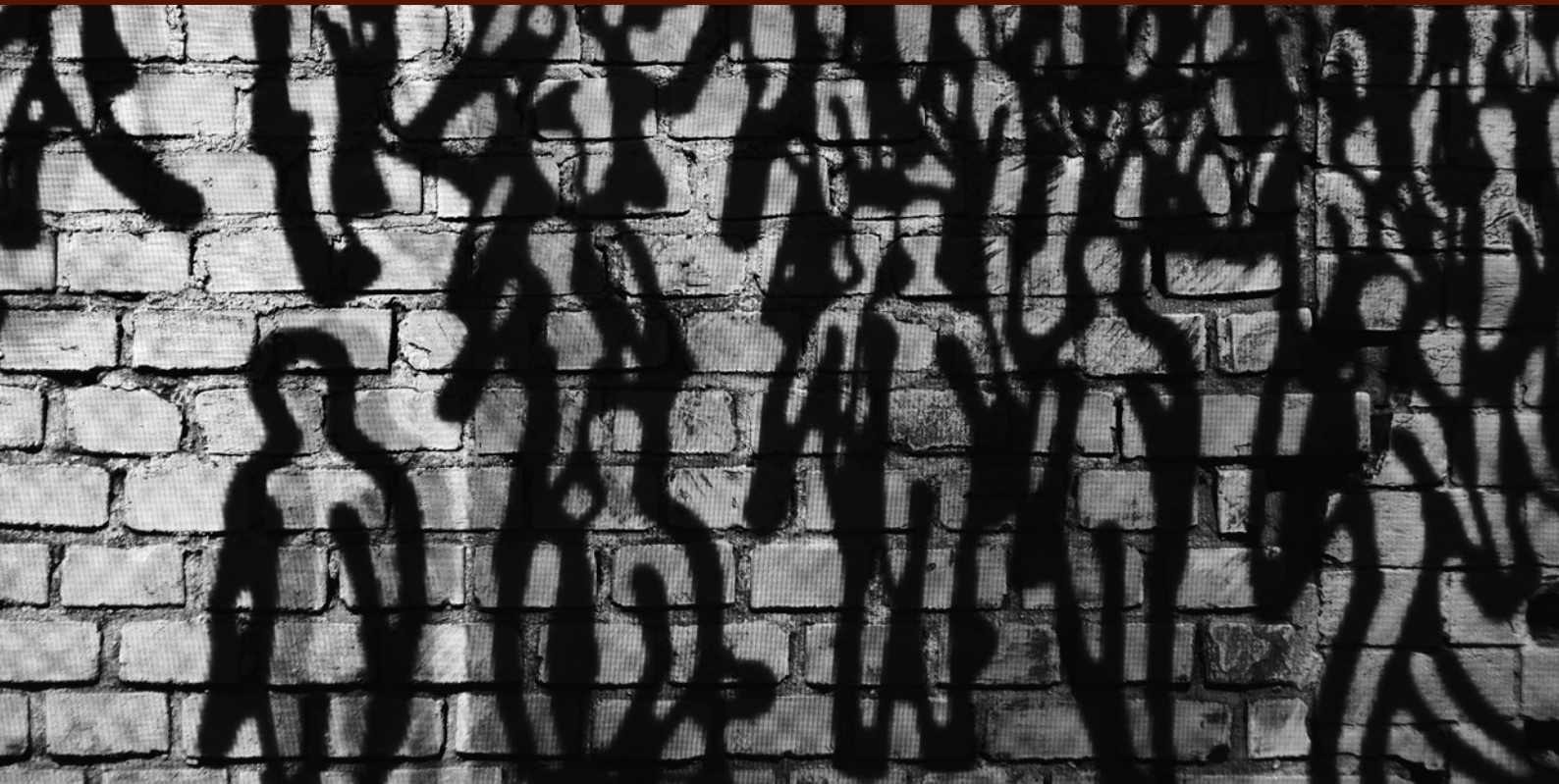


National Rapporteur on Trafficking in  
Human Beings and Sexual Violence  
against Children

Factsheet on

Trafficking in Human Beings: Visible and Invisible II

*A quantitative report 2008-2012*




## Accurate data informs us what needs to be done

Trafficking in Human Beings: Visible and Invisible II provides an overview of what is known about trafficking in human beings in the Netherlands. The report raises new questions, the answers to which must be central in shaping policy towards human trafficking. The figures allow organisations with responsibility for protecting victims, investigating human trafficking and prosecuting offenders to reflect critically on their own role in combating human trafficking. What do the statistics imply for the fight against human trafficking? What subjects require further research? Where is there room for improvement?

The existing statistics on human trafficking provide an insight into the measures currently being taken to combat human trafficking and information that can be used to enhance anti-trafficking efforts. Investing in better registration makes human trafficking visible and facilitates an information-driven approach: accurate data informs us what needs to be done.

C.E. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen,  
*National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings  
and Sexual Violence against Children*

A photograph of a modern building with a blue corrugated metal facade. Two rows of windows are visible, each with a yellow vertical stripe between the panes. The building is set against a clear sky, and other buildings are visible in the background.

“Statistics hold a mirror up to organisations: of the human trafficking that is visible and of the measures being taken to combat human trafficking. This information guides the strategy for tackling human trafficking.”

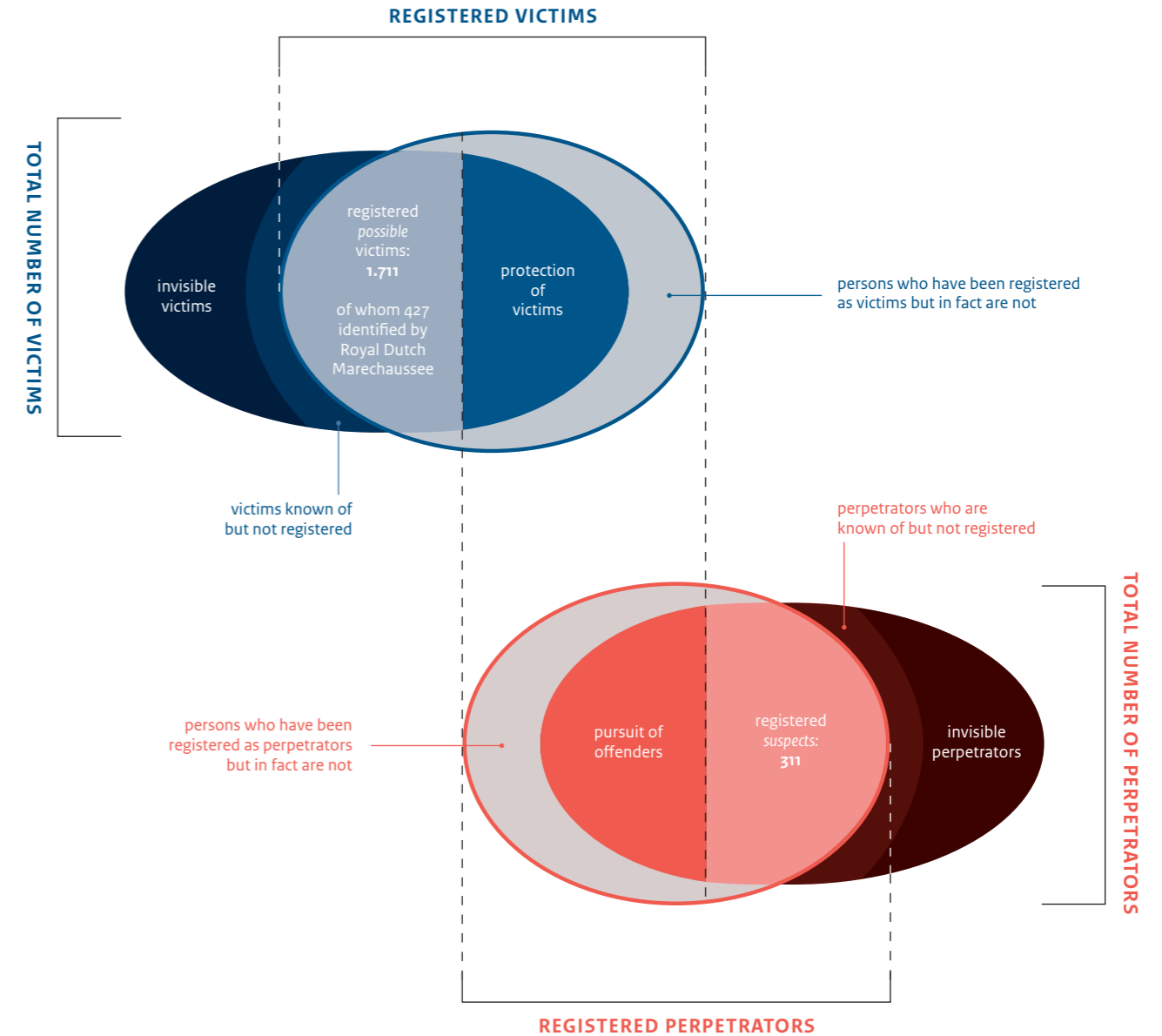
# How many human trafficking situations are visible?

## Visible

1,711 possible victims were registered in 2012, a substantially higher number than in 2011 (1,222). Registration for the purposes of the National Rapporteur's mandate is a task of CoMensha. The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) registered the largest ever number of suspects in 2012: 311 (compared with 257 in 2011). These figures for possible victims and suspects do not necessarily represent the full scale of human trafficking. What is visible, and what is registered, depends on many factors. Greater awareness of the phenomenon and increased capacity for investigations could lead to more signs of human trafficking situations being reported: the principle of 'the harder you look, the more you will find'.

## Invisible

The total number of victims and perpetrators in the Netherlands is unknown. What remains invisible is the dark number: the human trafficking situations that are not known to the authorities, such as the social services or the police. How much of the human trafficking is invisible, and hence the total scale of human trafficking in the Netherlands, can only be estimated. Reliable estimates are lacking at the present time.



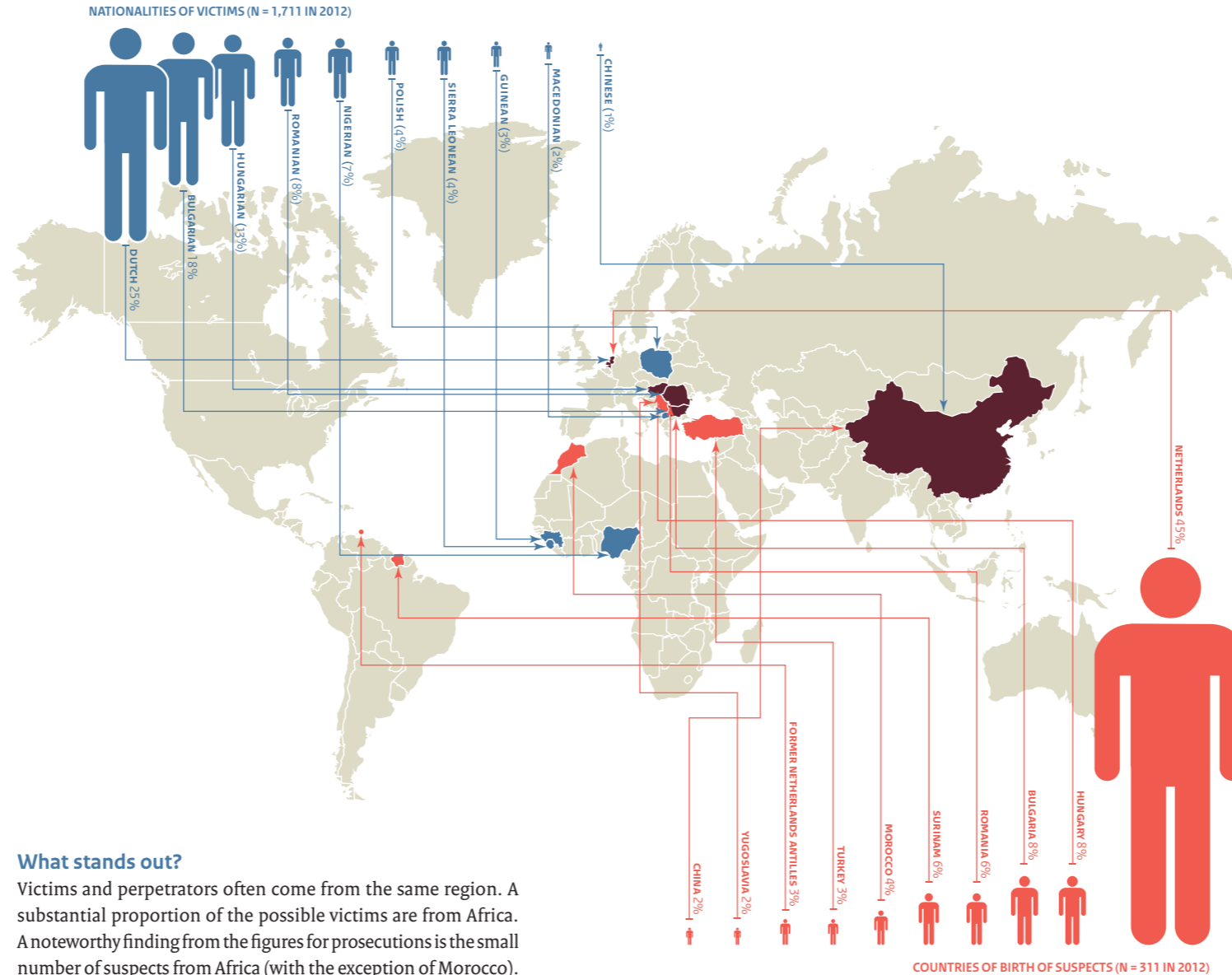
# Visible human trafficking: what do we see?

## Who are the possible victims?

The *registered* possible victims are generally female (88%), their average age is 25.4, and most come from the Netherlands, closely followed by Central and Eastern European countries. A quarter of the victims come from Africa.

## Who reports the victims?

The number of victims registered by CoMensha depends on which organisations report them and whether they are required to do so. The police and the Royal Dutch Marechaussee are obliged to report possible victims and accordingly account for most notifications. The Royal Dutch Marechaussee, in particular, reported more presumed victims in 2012 than in previous years: they were mainly Bulgarian, Hungarian and Romanian women who were identified on arrival at an airport or along the national borders. They are often women who may intend (or wish) to work in prostitution in the Netherlands. There is not necessarily any question of coercion or (the intention of) exploitation. It can already constitute human trafficking for a person to recruit, transport or move a woman with the intention of getting her to work in the sex industry. The types of human trafficking situations that are revealed also depend on the remit of agencies. The Inspectorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, for example, naturally only reports instances of exploitation outside the sex industry.



## What stands out?

Victims and perpetrators often come from the same region. A substantial proportion of the possible victims are from Africa. A noteworthy finding from the figures for prosecutions is the small number of suspects from Africa (with the exception of Morocco).

## Who are the suspects?

Most of the *registered* suspects are male (81%), their average age is 31.6, and most come from the Netherlands, closely followed by Central and Eastern European countries as well as Surinam, Morocco, Turkey and the Former Netherlands Antilles.

## What are the roles played by suspects?

Suspects can play a variety of roles in the human trafficking process. The largest group of suspects acted as **pimps** (sometimes in combination with other roles). There seems to be a connection between the personal characteristics of suspects and the role they play. **Recruiters** have a criminal record most often, followed by pimps. **Housing providers** come relatively frequently from Turkey, Morocco or Surinam. **Transporters** who bring victims from other countries to the Netherlands are often from Central or Eastern European countries, as are bodyguards and the individuals who arrange documents such as work permits for victims. **Bodyguards** are the youngest category (and perhaps also the least experienced?). **Drivers**, who bring victims to their workplace in the Netherlands, are often from the Netherlands.

# The protection of victims and the investigation of human trafficking are two sides of the same coin.

Protecting the victim must be central to efforts to combat human trafficking. This protection extends from identification to after-care.

## Protecting victims calls for a tailored approach

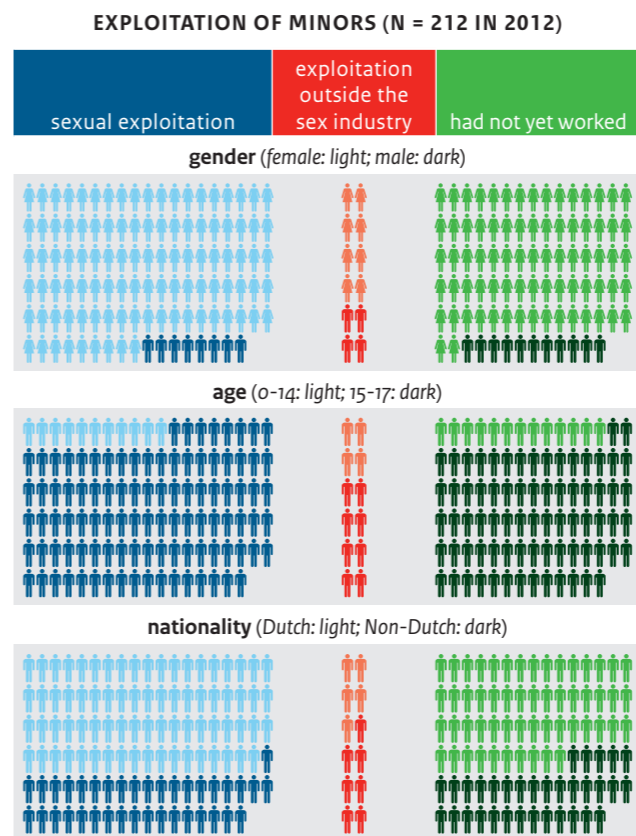
There is no such thing as a stereotypical victim. It is not always possible to assign victims to a specific category in terms of their personal characteristics and the help they need. Some victims are similar in some respects (such as gender, age, nationality and/or the sector in which they were exploited), but differ in others (such as the help they need). Individual characteristics and the help required can differ for every victim. Protecting victims therefore calls for a tailored approach.

## Where can barriers to human trafficking be erected?

Broadly speaking, two types of human trafficking situation can be distinguished: those where the victims were recruited in the Netherlands and those where they were recruited abroad. In the former instance, the victims are usually also from the Netherlands, but not always. Some foreign victims have also been recruited in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, recruitment normally occurs in the hospitality sector or nightclubs, via internet, at school or in prostitution zones: this is where barriers can be erected or reinforced.

## Possible victims who are minors

Minors constitute a group that still require special attention in anti-human trafficking efforts. The National Rapporteur has drawn attention to this group on previous occasions. Since 2013, Stichting Nidos, the agency responsible for exercising guardianship over every unaccompanied minor asylum seeker in the Netherlands, has been reporting possible victims to CoMensha. In 2014, the Youth Care Agency announced that it would be adopting measures.



With respect to eleven minors, the sector in which they were exploited was not known: they are disregarded in the figure.

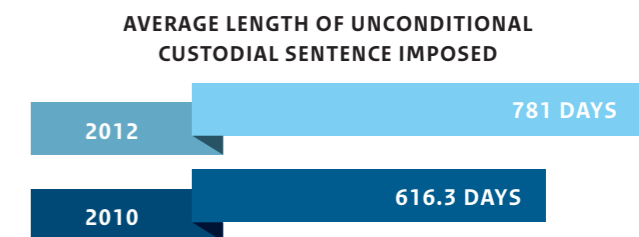
## Statements by victims

Investigations rely heavily on the statements made by victims. Almost half of all criminal investigations were based on statements by victims (a complaint to the police, for example). Frequently, more complaints or statements follow in the course of an investigation. In almost all (95%) of the criminal investigations that were reviewed, at least one victim made a complaint or a statement. In 78% of the investigations, all of the victims made a statement.

Greater efforts could be made during investigations to conduct a financial investigation and to apprehend criminal networks and legal organisations that, consciously or otherwise, facilitate human trafficking. Although the police, the Royal Dutch Marechaussee and the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment are aware of them, little seems to be done to address these links.

## How are human trafficking cases disposed of?

The conviction rate for human trafficking was substantially higher in 2012 than in previous years. There was also an evident trend towards heavier sentences. The average length of unconditional custodial sentence imposed was just over 25 months, compared with just over 20 months in 2010. Consequently, it seems that the higher sentences introduced by statute from July 2009 are being followed.



# Invisible human trafficking: what do we not yet see?

## African victims invisible?

The police receive many complaints that provide few if any leads for an investigation, particularly from possible victims from African countries. A survey by the National Rapporteur showed that this probably applied to more than 200 complaints in 2012. Meanwhile, there is the remarkable development that this category of possible victims seem to be less visible: in 2012, only 17% of the 1,711 registered possible victims were nationals of African countries, compared with 28% in the preceding year. And 57% of all victims who were granted temporary residence came from Africa, compared with 67% in 2011. Are there fewer African victims in the Netherlands? Are they concealing themselves more than previously? Or is less attention being devoted to identifying and reporting these victims?

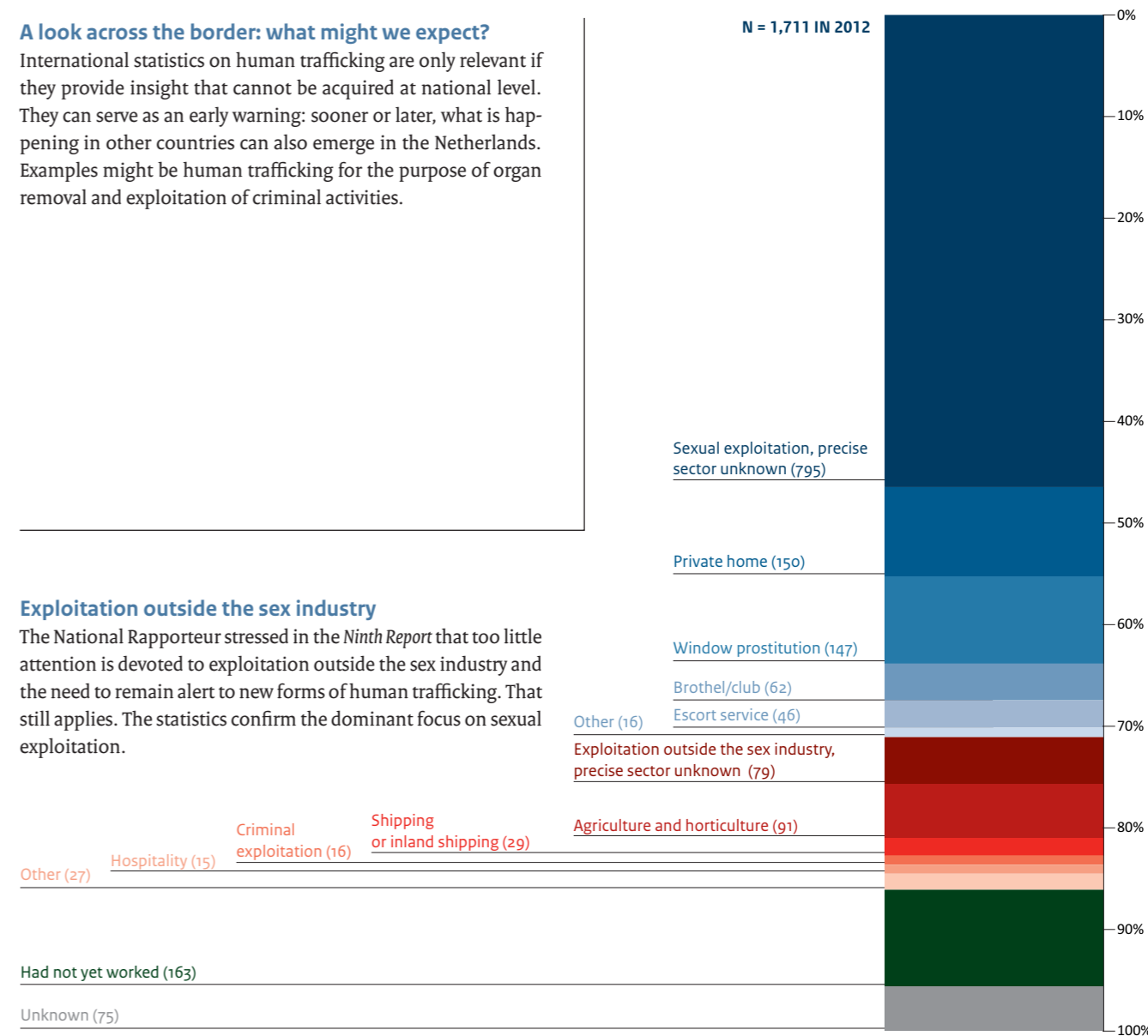
Little is known about the possible victims from Africa other than the fact that their complaints reportedly contain few leads for further investigation. The absence of such leads does not necessarily preclude the possibility of human trafficking. It is important to carry out a national analysis to discern trends and links, but that is not possible at the moment because there is no structural and uniform system for registering the complaints.

## A look across the border: what might we expect?

International statistics on human trafficking are only relevant if they provide insight that cannot be acquired at national level. They can serve as an early warning: sooner or later, what is happening in other countries can also emerge in the Netherlands. Examples might be human trafficking for the purpose of organ removal and exploitation of criminal activities.

## Exploitation outside the sex industry

The National Rapporteur stressed in the *Ninth Report* that too little attention is devoted to exploitation outside the sex industry and the need to remain alert to new forms of human trafficking. That still applies. The statistics confirm the dominant focus on sexual exploitation.



# The Dutch Rapporteur reports on the nature and scale of human trafficking and sexual violence against children in the Netherlands

## What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is exploitation or the intent to exploit. In fact it covers all labour or services which are performed under duress, in the widest sense of the word, and which people have not chosen to do voluntarily. Human trafficking and exploitation may be accompanied by poor working and living conditions though not always.

## What does the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children do?

The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children reports on the nature and scale of human trafficking and sexual violence against children in the Netherlands. The rapporteur monitors the effects of policy conducted in these domains, identifies bottlenecks and makes recommendations to improve the tackling of these themes. The National Rapporteur has no investigative authority and is not a complaints agency. The National Rapporteur has a unique, independent position in relation to the government and is both a national and international authority.

## Who is the National Rapporteur?

The National Rapporteur is Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen has worked for years as judge, most recently as vice-president of the district court at The Hague. She was previously a public prosecutor. The National Rapporteur is supported in her work by a team of researchers from diverse disciplines including lawyers, criminologists, anthropologists, politicalologists, philosophers and social psychologists.

## What activities does the National Rapporteur carry out?

The National Rapporteur publishes reports on human trafficking and sexual violence against children in the Netherlands and on the effects of the government policies pursued. The reports contain recommendations for improving measures to tackle human trafficking and sexual violence against children, information about relevant legislation and regulations, prevention, the detection and prosecution of perpetrators and care for victims. The National rapporteur collects quantitative and qualitative data by means of independent research, through research in external databases and the organisation and participation in meetings and conferences. The rapporteur takes part in diverse task forces and expert groups in the field of human trafficking and sexual violence against children. The National rapporteur is also active internationally. She advises within a network of rapporteurs on the European policy to be conducted in the fight against human trafficking.

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