

REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN ROMANIA January – June 2007

The report has been finalized and submitted to our institutional partners for possible supplements on 24 September.

The report is structured in two parts, as follows:

A – Evolution of the trafficking phenomenon;

B – Stage of accomplishment of objectives contained in the National Action Plan 2006-2007.

A brief review of the first part of the report has revealed the following aspects:

- ✓ the downward trend of the phenomenon, also noticeable in 2007, has been maintained, with a total number of victims of **936**, compared with **1281** on the same period of the previous year;
- ✓ all victims were Romanian nationals;
- ✓ for the first time, the number of victims trafficked for the purpose of forced labor, respectively **425**, has exceeded the number of victims sexually exploited, that is **406**.

Backed by these remarks, it has been ascertained that the number of female victims fell to 528, accounting for 56% of all victims, compared with 77% on the first 6 months in 2006 and, implicitly, an increase to 408 in the number of male victims, representing 44%, as recorded on the same period in 2006.

While the group of victims exploited for labor is a mixed one comprising mostly males (81%), the group of sexually exploited victims is strictly female: out of 406 victims 405 were girls and women.

Out of 425 victims exploited for labor, 200 were exploited in agriculture, 141 in constructions and 27 in the hotel industry.

As regards the victims' age it has been confirmed that it ranges between 13 and 68 and alongside other studies on this factor, it is worth mentioning that of the overall number of victims **150** are underage, with 113 of them trafficked for sexual purposes, 15 for begging, 10 for forced labor and the rest for child pornography.

In relation to the destination countries of trafficking, figures show that, for the period under review, victims continued to be trafficked in Italy (225) and Spain (209), as traditional countries of trafficking, and, surprisingly remarkable for the second half of the current year, 141 victims were trafficked in the Czech Republic.

Mention should be made that 105 persons were victims of the internal trafficking.

Victims generally come from all historical regions of the country. The regions with the highest reported number of victims are Teleorman -66, Mures -61, Arges – 56, Constanta – 53, Dolj – 54, Iasi – 45. It should be specified that there were only 11 recorded victims in Bucharest.

In terms of the form of exploitation, the victim's profile suggests that:

- as a rule, the victim exploited for labor is a male of bi-parent family, aged over 25, coming from both urban and rural areas, recruited through false job offers, emotionally abused, obliged to debts and crossing the border illegally, usually by bus;
- the sexually exploited victim is a female of single parent family, aged between 18 to 25, coming from urban areas, single, a secondary school graduate, recruited by an acquaintance or close friend and physically and emotionally abused.

Chapter 2 – The National System for Monitoring and Assessment – describes the Agency’s IT application designed to receive and process trafficked victims’ personal data with a view to their identification and expeditious referral to specialized support services, monitoring of assistance provided to victims and better understanding and evaluation of the dynamics of the phenomenon.

To this end, a tool kit has been developed containing:

- ✓ victim’s initial evaluation chart;
- ✓ victim’s assistance chart.

A set of 70 indicators are laid down in the charts, of which 28 are conjointly reported by specialized police structures, that can input information directly through the Ministry’s metropolitan communication network.

The intended indicators are divided into 6 categories:

- identification personal data;
- pre-trafficking period;
- recruitment and transportation;
- exploitation period
- assistance period
- post-assistance period.

The Agency’s National Data Base on Trafficking became operational on 1 January 2007 and most of the information contained in the present report has been supplied by it. Our data base is highly appreciated by international organizations as well. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Vienna uses our national data base as a model in establishing regional data base indicators within the framework of the project aimed at improving the anti-trafficking responses in South Eastern Europe, fact highlighted during the first regional seminar in the project held in Croatia.

Chapter III – The Institutional Framework to Combat Trafficking in Persons – sets forth the drafts of legal norms developed in order to improve the legal and institutional framework to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and provide assistance for victims’ reintegration, such as:

- ✓ draft of the Joint Order by competent ministers to set up, organize and bring into operation the Thematic Working Group to nationally co-ordinate activities for the protect of and assistance to victims of trafficking, submitted to the competent authorities for approval;
- ✓ draft of Government Decision to approve the specific National Standards for Specialized Assistance Services provided to trafficked victims, also under approval;
- ✓ amendment of Law 678/2001 on preventing and combating trafficking in persons;
- ✓ draft of NAATIP President Decision to approve assessment and authorization indicators of trafficking in persons preventive projects;
- ✓ draft of the National Mechanism for Victim Identification and Referral

Chapter 4 – National Prevention Projects and Programs – gives a detailed account of the “**Be careful! There’s a price to pay**” national campaign whose aim was to reduce people’s vulnerability to trafficking and promote the toll-free number 0800 800 678. According to Print Media Rating Office, the message of the campaign was published in 3 national major newspapers with more than 13.5 million readers.

The findings of the survey conducted on a targeted group, pre and post tests, were encouraging, showing:

- a 1.45% increase in the number of persons who had known about trafficking;
- a drop by 6.92% in the number of persons who couldn't differentiate trafficking in persons from prostitution;
- an increased level of information, evaluated through a changed perception on victimization by trafficking;
- an increase of the campaign high-visibility compared with previous activities (while the pre-test showed that 40% of those interviewed had known about prevention campaigns, in the post-test the rate reached 92%).

The campaign was extended nationally through the NAATIP Regional Centers which performed 1,257 specific activities. During the reporting period the Help-line Service was operational 24 hours a day.

Chapter 5 – Combating Trafficking in Persons – presents the dynamics of actions in combating trafficking which indicates an increase in the number of investigations of trafficking offenders from 618 in the previous year to 641 in the period under review. There is also mention made about the significant rise of the number of convictions following the constant work of carried out by police and public prosecutions department. The total number of convictions for the first 6 months in 2007 is 131 compared to 187 convicted persons in the whole year of 2006.

The number of investigations conducted during the reporting period is 316.

The prosecutors with the Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism related Offences developed exchanges of information with counterpart agencies in destination countries in 13 cases involving trafficking in persons. They also received 44 requests of international assistance in criminal matters; 18 requests were dealt with in cooperation with the police service, while the rest of 26 are under investigation.

At the same time Romania made 26 such requests to judicial authorities in other countries; as of today, 4 of them have been solved.

Chapter 6 of the report reviews the protection, assistance and social reintegration of victims of trafficking, with emphasis being placed on the need to establish some mechanisms and producers aimed at ensuring a coordinated action of investigations into trafficking crimes conducted by criminal investigative bodies, on one hand, and the assistance services to victims of trafficking, on the other hand. Practice has demonstrated that the outcomes of the investigation process were higher when assistance specialists with NAATIP, NGOs or local agencies with responsibilities in the field were involved.

Previously, victim identification was not based on a coordinated mechanism; the victim alone was expected to notify about his/her situation. Therefore, the Agency has developed a project of identification and referral norms to establish a unitary **coordination** of all agencies and organizations involved in the process in order to increase the number of victims identified and referred to specialized support services.

The Agency has also developed **a project to set up national standards for specialized victim assistance services**, a set of norms based on which protection of and assistance to victims shall be carried out as a complex and ongoing process accommodated to the needs and characteristics of each individual victim.

There has been ascertained during the first six months in 2007 that the lack of necessary funds in delivering assistance services represents a major problem.

Romania's accession to EU has led to a reduction in European non-imburement financing programs and several NGOs with responsibilities in the field have been confronted with serious difficulties in carrying on their support activities, even closing down some of the shelters.

For that reason and in accordance with its functions, the Agency set up the **National Interest Program** aimed at supporting victim recovery and social reintegration activities for a two month period. The program is going to be implemented in the next months until the end of 2007.

In terms of **international co-operation** in the field of trafficking in persons, among other numerous contacts and participations together with foreign counterparts, mention should be made about the project developed in association with the Dutch government: **"Improving the quality of protection and assistance to women victims of trafficking and streamlining measures to prevent trafficking in women"**. The project has been approved and is being currently implemented.

There should also be underlined Romania's participation in the **"Program to Support the Development of Transnational referral mechanisms for trafficked Victims in South-Eastern Europe"**, developed by ICMPD with American financial support.

The Agency enhanced the co-operation with US through the American Embassy in Bucharest and carried on the series of regional seminars for the implementation of **"Victim/witness in Trial Coordination"** project. In a study conducted by the US Department of Justice, the project was recommended as a model of good practices for the countries in the region.

In the **Summary and Recommendations** chapter, mention is made about the Czech Republic which, in addition to the so called traditional countries of destination, becomes visible with a large number of victims trafficked in a relatively short period of time. Due to the fact that these victims come from all regions of Romania, we believe that a well structured international trafficking network is operating in the region to which police investigation bodies in close conjunction with competent Czech authorities should pay greater consideration.

We consider as appropriate that a new progress assessment indicator should be introduced concerning the security measures required by prosecution services and forfeiture under special circumstances ordered by courts. As of today we do not possess any information about courts having ordered such measures, taking into account that public prosecution offices decide the inalienability of traffickers' assets for the purpose of forfeiture.