TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS FOR BEGGING
- ROMANIA STUDY -

Publication co-financed by Switzerland through the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union.

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TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS FOR BEGGING - ROMANIA STUDY -

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

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The responsibility for the opinions expressed and the concepts treated within the study are solely the responsibility of the research team and does not reflect the position of Swiss Confederation.

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Abbreviations

ANITP - National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, Romania
DCCO - Direction for Combating Organised Crime
DGASPC - General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Rights Protection
ISJ - County School Inspectorate
UNODC - UN Office for Drug and Crime Control
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
SIMEV - National Integrated System for Monitoring and Assessment of Victims of Trafficking
UN - United Nations
Foreword

The 2012 ILO Global Report on Trafficking in Persons estimates that 20.9 million people are in forced labour around the world – including trafficked human beings, estimated at 2.5 million. An estimated 313,500 people, have been identified as being trafficked for begging, which is but a small sample of a vast hidden blight on our humanity. Tackling exploitation for begging must be addressed from a human rights approach to distinguish victims from criminals.

The international community has been making recent breakthroughs in focusing the fight against trafficking from a human rights centred approach. Since 2003, the EU has acknowledged the problem of trafficking for begging in the Brussels Declaration and in the same year, the OSCE launched an Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. Eight years ago, the Council of Europe established the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings from a gender and human rights basis, which came into force on the 1st February 2008. The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons first explicitly referred to begging in her 2009 report. Most recently, in 2011, the EU established the Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, with the preamble, in paragraph 11, focusing on the phenomena of exploitation for begging.

Romania and Switzerland both condemn trafficking in human beings as a serious violation of human rights. Romania is an origin country and Switzerland is a destination and transit country, yet only together can states work to combat this scourge. As such, we have formed the Swiss-Romanian working group to combat trafficking.

Switzerland’s efforts to combat human trafficking are many-faceted. Various governmental and non-governmental agencies – most of them in close co-operation with the Swiss Coordination Unit against the Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (KSMM) – support these efforts in various ways in the framework of the 2012-2014 National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking. Switzerland, under its Security Thematic Fund, has partnered with Romania to support work to counter trafficking.

Romanian national legislation on human trafficking is comprehensive and sets out the Romanian National Strategy to combat and prevent this criminal offense. The National Agency Against Trafficking in
Persons (ANITP) was formed in 2006 as the national coordinator of the anti-trafficking policies and activities. This study was conducted by ANITP under the auspices of the \textit{P(revention) I(dentification) P(rotection) - addressing anti-trafficking in Romania} project, jointly funded by Switzerland and Romania.

A tool to combat trafficking, is knowledge of its causes and vulnerabilities of victims. This Romanian study of trafficking in persons for forced begging provides such a picture. It highlights the vulnerabilities of potential victims, the characteristics of traffickers and outlines recommendations on combating both these aspects. This study will assist in facilitating ongoing campaigns and cooperation to fight against this heinous crime, to fight for the protection, assistance to, and dignity of the victims and most importantly, to prevent trafficking.

29 August 2013

\textbf{Simonetta Sommaruga}  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Radu Stroe}  \\
Federal Councillor \hspace{1cm} Minister of Internal Affairs  \\
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Switzerland
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Romania is one of the states that have explicit domestic legislation on trafficking in persons for forced begging. The victims of forced begging are not punished, irrespective of their age. Assistance to victims of trafficking is granted irrespective of the form of exploitation. Hence, a victim forced to beg is entitled to and receives the same type of assistance as other victims of trafficking. Moreover, through child protection mechanisms and legal proceedings, Romania determines all the possible situations that involve child begging. This also includes the situation when a child is forced to beg by another person, including the children’s parents.

Vulnerability to trafficking for begging is not particularly gender biased. Factors such as low levels of schooling, lack of employment opportunities, dysfunctional or absence of social support networks, poor conditions of living and also other elements all acting together, favour the coercion of the victim and indirectly their victimisation. Family-related dysfunctions, such as: violence, alcohol abuse, tense relations between the family members, the absence of a parental model or an inappropriate one, and the lack of effective support, may represent factors that increase an individual’s vulnerability to trafficking.

Regarding the methods used by traffickers and also the abuses that victims suffer during the trafficking period, there are no different particularities comparing trafficking for begging to other forms of trafficking.

Trafficking related to forced begging has mainly developed abroad. This evolution has been associated with the large profits obtained in trafficking for begging, in countries with high living standards, but also with the weak legislation of such countries, which mitigates the traffickers’ risk of being identified.

The traffickers operating abroad generally consist of individuals with criminal records, who have over time, oriented themselves towards this type of criminality, based on the significant volume of income that can be obtained, compared to the low level of risk undertaken. Interviews of both victims and experts related that most of
Executive Summary

the time, trafficking related to forced begging only represents one of the criminal actions performed by the traffickers operating abroad, such that traffickers also force victims into sexual exploitation or various street-related criminal offenses. In some cases, the traffickers were also involved in drug trafficking or car theft.

**Domestic trafficking** constitutes a small percentage of trafficking for forced begging. Domestic trafficking shows specific features, compared to the external trafficking. The victims are generally disabled persons, institutionalized minors or homeless children. The victims are forced into begging under the pretext of ‘protection’, yet most of these victims were already practicing begging in order to obtain a minimum daily living.

The study shows the situation of children who are exploited through begging by their own parents as a problem, which must be taken into account. The causes associated with trafficking by parents, include the lack of resources needed for decent living conditions as well as educational and cultural problems that prevent this group from being able to benefit from the social assistance that the Romanian state provides.

With respect to the **characteristics of traffickers**, those operating domestically generally operate individually or in small groups, by exploiting a low number of victims. Generally, no other criminal actions are envisaged, although sometimes, trafficking for forced begging is correlated with trafficking for sexual exploitation or with petty street crimes. The ratio of women to men is equal amongst domestic traffickers, with women and men being involved in both recruitment and exploitation.

The evaluation of the **vulnerability of persons** who are practicing begging, indicates that proper identification and referral of those victims to **adequate assistance** could break the chain of this particular type of trafficking. If the beggars could be removed from the streets and assisted in a proper manner, the traffickers would lose their assets and the victims could be assisted to exit the trafficking cycle. The assistance process however must be focussed, as an increasing percentage of victims being re-trafficked for forced begging is evident, as opposed to other forms of exploitation.
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The heterogeneity of the population falling into trafficking for forced begging, necessitates a diversity of the initiatives that would be taken in order to reduce vulnerability to trafficking. Areas such as education, justice and human rights should be taken into consideration when combating trafficking for forced begging.

Prevention measures should be focused to reduce the vulnerability of groups at risk. These changes should begin with the basic structures, as systemic changes in education or labour integration of vulnerable persons, raises the quality of life until development of programs designed to raise and build capacity and awareness of local authorities. Local initiatives could also target citizens in general with the aim of raising awareness, but also to enable individuals to react to possible cases of trafficking.
1. Introduction

Background on trafficking in persons for begging

Forced begging is a particular form of exploitation linked to trafficking in persons. Only recently have authorities in Europe and around the world identified a particular need to tackle, analyse and evaluate this phenomenon. The exploitation through begging has only occasionally been included in, or analysed within, international or national reports or legal instruments. Of these, most only address the measures or politics targeting trafficking in children for forced begging.

Begging manifests in at least three forms. First, voluntary begging; secondly, exploitation of voluntary begging; and finally, trafficking in persons with the purpose of exploitation through forced begging. Kirchofer made a distinction in a study regarding organised begging in Vienna, whereby in theory, there is a difference between the second and third instances - that is, the exploitation of beggars, and trafficking in persons for begging. Generally, the second instance is defined as a person making profits in an exploitive manner of another person that is begging. In the third instance, trafficking someone to beg infers a coercion by one person over another to be forced to beg, with the exploitation framed in coerced or forced recruitment and the inclusion of threats or actions that oblige the beggar to ‘work’ for the trafficker (e.g. confiscation of identification documents). However, Kirchofer noted the difficulty to make this distinction in practice, as the situations are somewhat similar. This difficulty could impact upon the ability to make a proper identification of, and assistance to, the victims of trafficking (VoT). The dimension of trafficking for begging is difficult to quantify, identify or differentiate from voluntary and exploited begging. The increase in this type of trafficking requires further study and analysis.

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Approaching trafficking in persons for begging

An approach to combatting trafficking in persons for forced begging could be added to the first international legal tool (the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional Palermo Protocols) which regulates trafficking in persons, as it currently has no specific mention of begging as a form of exploitation but it also does not exclude this form of exploitation.

The UNODC 2012 Trafficking in Persons Global Report, notes that 1.5% of globally trafficked persons in 2012 were identified as being trafficked for begging. This phenomenon was recorded or detected only in some parts or states of the world, with Romania being one of the states3.

Exploitation through forced begging is the third most prominent form of trafficking recorded by the Romanian authorities, after trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Annually, approximately 10% of the total identified victims exploited internally in or internationally to Romania, are trafficked for forced begging.

![Figure 1 The annual trends of various forms of trafficking in persons in Romania](4)

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4 Source: National Integrated System for Monitoring and Assessment of Victims, official data.
Introduction

Of all the forms of exploitation of victims of trafficking, forced begging is the most visible, as it is undertaken in public places (on the streets, at intersections, in stores and shopping centres) and is, in some cases, tolerated due to attitudes of mercy, Christian spirit and benevolence. Unlike other exploitation related to human trafficking, which can also take place in closed areas such as flats, brothels or other dwellings, traffickers of forced begging depend on crowded public places in order to make profit.

Romania has ratified and adopted numerous international conventions and European Directives on combating trafficking and related aspects. To implement the commitments in these conventions, institutional systems and mechanisms have been put in place in order to combat and prevent trafficking in persons. Romania is also prioritising work to combat trafficking in persons and minors.

1.1. Aim of the study

The study was conducted within the framework of the Prevention, Identification, Protection project, co-financed with the Swiss Confederation, under the objective: “To build up the intervention capacity of Romanian government actors (ANITP representatives, police officers, prosecutors, judges) involved in:

- prevention,
- identification, repatriation and reintegration of victims of Trafficking in Human Beings”.

This study aims to analyse trafficking in persons (or trafficking in human beings - THB) for forced begging in Romania, through

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understanding the factors that contribute to and facilitate this particular phenomenon, as ascertained from the characteristics of victims and the modus operandi of traffickers.

Understanding the contexts related to forced begging, the victims, the decisions made by victims of trafficking and circumstances which contributed to falling victim to trafficking, will assist in providing the information needed to shape and support the interventions of authorities to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. The results will present a picture of trafficking in persons for forced begging from the perspectives of both experts that interact with victims and also victims of trafficking.

This initiative was particularly motivated by the measures and instruments applied by the Romanian authorities that recognize and fight against this particular type of exploitation.

Within this study, data regarding victims of forced begging identified in 2010 and 2011 were analysed, whereby, 191 persons were victims of trafficking for forced begging, representing approximately 9% out of the total victims of trafficking identified from 2010-2011. The majority of victims were trafficked outside the country (approximately 81%).

During this period, most victims originated from the counties of Brasov (14 victims), Mures (30 victims), Timis (28 victims), Mehedinti (14 victims), Ialomita (12 victims), Braila (14 victims) and Sibiu (12 victims).

1.2. Operationalization of concepts

Unlike in most European countries, begging is illegal in Romania as set out by the Romanian Penal Code, art.326 : “The act of a person, who repeatedly appeals to public charity, asking material help even if he has the capacity to work, is punished from a month to 3 years in prison”.

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6 The official data regarding the total number of identified victims between 2010 and 2011 was 193 exploited through forced begging. Based on scientific reasoning, 2 victims were not considered in further analysis of the victim population due to the partial data available that could alter the results of the analysis.
In this study we understand the definition of exploitation for begging as the obligation of a person to practice begging under coercion or duress from another, where the profits and benefits go to the exploiter.

In Romanian law 678/2001 regarding the combating and prevention of trafficking in persons, the definition of trafficking in persons and minors is in compliance with the regulations of the additional Palermo Protocols to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime: “Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a person, through the use of threats or violence or the use of other forms of coercion, through kidnapping, fraud or misrepresentation, abuse of power or by taking advantage of that person’s inability to defend him/herself or to express his/her will or by giving or receiving money or other benefits in order to obtain the agreement of a person who has control over another person with the intent of exploiting the latter”7.

For the purposes of the study, the term ‘victim’ will be used for “a victim of trafficking exploited through forced begging” and the term ‘trafficker’ will be used for the perpetrator of such a crime.

In the category of victims of trafficking in persons, the study considered all persons that were trafficked and suffered all the elements that constitute this crime. Within the category of victims of trafficking in persons, the study also counted children, persons with disabilities or other categories of persons used and transported in order to be exploited through begging by acquaintances or even relatives, based on their situations of vulnerability. A position of vulnerability is defined as the situation in which the trafficked and exploited person has no real or acceptable alternative than to subdue to the abuse, being dependent on exploiter for assuring basic needs such as food, shelter etc.

A child or minor, used alternatively for this study, represents: “persons not yet 18 years old and have not acquired full legal capacity under the law”8.

An elderly person is a person older than 63 years old in case of women, and 65 years old in case of men9.

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7 Art.12, Law. No. 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons, with all further amendments.
8 Law no.272/2004 regarding protection and promotion of child rights, with all subsequent amendments.
1.3. The theoretical framework

The existing literature in the field of trafficking has highlighted numerous factors leading to trafficking in persons. Marginalization, social exclusion, poverty, traumatizing experiences, lack or low level of education, effects on a victim from an institutionalized system of child protection, family dysfunctions, lack of employment and education opportunities or belonging to a certain minority, are some of the most quoted ‘push’ factors of human trafficking, which also contribute to vulnerability of victims to the supply side of human trafficking. Hereinafter, the term of supply shall be used with respect to all conditions and circumstances characterizing the trafficking of vulnerable populations.

Other more general factors, defined as outside influences due to the context of globalization, may be to a certain extent considered as triggering trafficking. Factors such as: borders opening in countries with a transition economy; large income gaps between the state of destination and the state of origin; high illiteracy rate and economic system dysfunctions.

Influencing a victim’s susceptibility to trafficking – ‘push’ factors - are aspects such as: hearing of successful stories of people finding a better life; specific personality features of a victim; personal expectations of the victim; temptations offered by false friends; which all contribute in a complex, inter-correlated manner to the trafficking of victims.

Trafficking in persons is increasingly described through the contextualization or adjustment of the economic concepts of demand.

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9 According to the provisions of Law 17/2000 on elderly persons social work and of Law 263/2010 on the unitary pensions system.
Introduction

and supply, as the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking noted in the 2009 Report on Human Trafficking.\textsuperscript{14} Generally, in the context of human trafficking, demand is considered as consisting of the employer and/or customer (the persons benefiting from the services rendered by a victim, in case of sexual or labour exploitation) and of traffickers (the entire network of individuals involved in the victims’ recruitment, transport or exploitation\textsuperscript{15}). In the context of exploitation for begging, there are no other categories of individuals benefiting from the victims’ services, except the traffickers.

Although only a few surveys conducted at the international level have attempted to determine the motivation of traffickers, the frequent assumption for motivation - still not scientifically tested - is related to the huge profits generated by such practices.\textsuperscript{16}

Exploitation through begging has not been studied and addressed distinctly as a particular form of trafficking in persons until recently. Existing studies have focused on clarification and defining the concept as a particular form of trafficking or a form of forced labour exploitation. There are also papers that analyse the root causes of this phenomenon in order to improve prevention, especially analysis of the causes that generate victimisation. For example, Kirchofer defines the phenomenon of organised begging as being a hierarchical business. At the base are the beggars, collecting cash on the street, followed by those collecting proceeds from the beggars, and on top are the leaders, who are probably benefiting from the largest amounts of money and are involved in the exploitation of beggars or are paying third parties for trafficking.\textsuperscript{17} In the attempt to make distinction between organised begging and trafficking for forced begging, the author concludes with

the idea that, generally, practicing begging is forced but it is hard to have a clear cut distinction.\(^{18}\)

In the paper \textit{“Trafficking in Persons for the purpose of begging-Old Game, New Game”},\(^{19}\) Cherneva discusses the concept of trafficking in persons for the purpose of begging, suggesting new modalities of understanding the phenomenon. One of the central ideas that Cherneva raises is the question of the distinction of familial organised begging and forced organised begging, considering both to be forms of trafficking in persons. The cases of children obliged to practice begging by their parents or relatives, organised in order to exploit them, are treated as child trafficking. The arguments used by the author are as follows:

- the means used to control are not taken into consideration in the cases of children due to their position of vulnerability.\(^{20}\) Also, the position of vulnerability represents a situation in which the victim has no real or acceptable alternative than to subdue to the exploitation.
- the situation of exploitation occurs when a child is forced by the parents to beg and the proceeds of the begging are taken.\(^{21}\)

On the basis of the same reasoning, the exploitation of persons with disabilities or other categories of persons situated in a vulnerability position by the relatives for begging should be considered as being a situation of trafficking.

The UNICEF and Terre des Hommes Report\(^{22}\) highlights the difficulty of making a distinction between those children who are exploited and

\(^{18}\) Charles P. Kirchofer, 2010, ibid. page. 5  
\(^{19}\) Cherneva, (2009). \textit{Trafficking in Persons for the purpose of begging. Old game, new game}. Dissertation Thesis, interpreting these aspects related to UN Convention against organiyed crime and of the additional Protocols. The crime of trafficking in persons according to these international instruments has 5 main constitutive elements: action, mean, purpose, transnational character and the involvement of an organised criminal group. We will limit on the definition according our romanian legislation, where this crime has only 3 main constituents, as further will be presented in chapter 2.

\(^{20}\) The author presents the arguments generated by the Palermo Protocol additional to UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

\(^{21}\) The author is quoting the report by UNICEF and Terre des Hommes (2006). \textit{Action to prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe: A Preliminary Assessment}.

those who are trafficked. Analysing the definition of trafficking in persons from the Palermo Protocols, the report considers trafficking to also include the recruitment or movement of a child from one place to another in order to exploit him/her. This exploitation is defined as the situation in which the child is obliged to give at least a share of his/her earnings to another person, regardless who that person is (even a parent or a relative).

1.4. Objectives and research questions

This study aims to present and highlight the interrelated aspects that contribute to pull or push factors vis-à-vis human trafficking. At the same time, the study shall review the circumstances under which the victims are entering into, and managing to escape from, trafficking. An analysis of exploitation through begging, and its related abuses and trauma, is essential in order to understand the entire trafficking process. Likewise, socio-demographic characteristics, modes of organisation and operation of traffickers, shall also be explored and described. The results of this study will support and guide prevention strategies related to trafficking in persons for the purposes of begging.

The research questions will explore and evidence certain features specific to human trafficking with the purpose of forced begging:

- What elements make up the profile of the victims of this form of trafficking?
- Which factors increase the risk of trafficking?
- What are the characteristics and types of organisation of traffickers?
- What intervention measures could support prevention of this particular type of trafficking?

1.5. Methodology

1.5.1. Quantitative analysis

For statistical analysis, the National Integrated System to Monitor and Assess Trafficking in Persons (SIMEV) was developed by the National Agency Against Human Trafficking (ANITP) and became fully operational in January 2007. Technically, the national system is based on multi-level software, which uses a central database, a data
interrogation application and a web-type user interface. The access to this system is only permitted to users within ANITP, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Coordination Office, ANITP Regional Centres, as well as to certain users within the Offices to Combat Organised Crime and within the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Border Police. The data may also originate from other partner institutions besides the Ministry of Internal Affairs, for example NGOs, DGASPC, ISJ etc. Officers of ANITP Regional Centres collect the data. The analysis aims to create indicators at the national level to provide data on: the socio-demographic population of victims of trafficking; on the history of trafficking; the purpose of exploitation; and on all elements of the repatriation process, coordination or assistance in criminal proceedings.

The quantitative analysis was derived from registered data from SIMEV, administered by ANITP. This analysis drew correlations and trended frequencies vis-à-vis numbers of victims of trafficking for begging identified during the last two years (2010 - 2011). Figures regarding suspects of trafficking in persons for forced begging in 2011 were provided by the Organised Crime Unit within the General Inspectorate of Romanian Police.

1.5.2. The qualitative analysis

A thorough exploration of the risk factors and causes of vulnerability for victims of trafficking, together with a description of the conditions of and into, which they were trafficked, was derived from the 28 interviews with both former victims and with professionals who had contact with the victims.

The analysis was conducted with structured interviewing guidelines with open-ended questions for each category of participant. Consequently, four interviewing guidelines were developed: one addressed to the victims; another addressed to the experts in combating organised crime – the police; another addressed to the experts that provided healthcare to and protection of the rights of victims, and the fourth interviewing guideline targeted to specialised prosecutors on trafficking.

In Bucharest, the interviews were conducted by ANITP experts (psychologists, sociologists and social workers) and in the remaining
locations, by experts from the Regional Centres were involved (psychologists, social workers or lawyers).

Interviews were held in Braşov, Timiş, Mureş, Alba, Sibiu and Bucharest counties. With the exception of the capital, in recent years, all counties had experienced an increase in trafficking for begging. The decision to conduct interviews with experts in Bucharest was taken as it is the capital even if it is not a main source of victims.

1.5.3. Ethical issues

All the victims participating in study were adults and were interviewed based on informed consent. Commensurate with their cognitive level and understanding, the victims were verbally informed of the purpose and nature of the survey, and the implications arising from such participation (no remuneration as a result of their participation).

All confidentiality requirements related to the collected data were ensured with a privacy statement. All remarks, observations and information submitted during the interviews were treated under the condition of confidentiality, with no identification by third parties being possible.

The interviewing venue was selected solely based on the opinion of the participants, depending on location and availability.

Ethical issues and safety of participants throughout the study guided the entire research, both at the theoretical and at the practical interviewing level. Thus, whenever the experts considered that certain information, in particular related to the exploitation process, could have been acquired from previous documents, the ANITP officers involved in the interviewing process have referred to such documents, thus avoiding victims having to relive the trauma.

1.5.4. Selection of the survey participants

This survey does not intend to provide a statistical representation or an extrapolation of results to the total population of victims exploited by forced begging. Rather, it provides a cross sectional example and
description of the phenomenon in 2010 and 2011. Thus, the participant sample was based on the following criteria:

- sampling orientated by the purpose of the study: victims of forced begging and specialists in contact with such victims;
- the availability of the subjects (experts and victims);
- subjects (victims or specialist) that were working or living in counties were this type of exploitation related to trafficking registered a higher prevalence.

Former victims of trafficking were the main source of information giving a comprehensive description of the exploitation process, identification and presentation of vulnerability factors.

Experts were important sources of information to complete the picture of exploitation through forced begging and to highlight the trends of this phenomenon. Experts participating in the study were professionals who came into or could enter into contact with victims and traffickers, such as: police officers of organised crime units, prosecutors, and experts from state authorities or the private sector involved in victim assistance.

Aspects related to measures taken by Romanian authorities in prevention or combating trafficking for forced begging, were discussed in the interviews with experts.

The number and type of participants in the interviews were as follows: 8 former victims of human trafficking (face to face interviews); 1 district attorney; 6 experts in the area of combating organised crime, specialising in combating human trafficking; 11 public health, social work and children’s rights protection experts (DGASPC employees) and 2 NGO representatives specialized in the support and reintegration of victims of trafficking, totalling 28 interviewees.

1.5.5. Limitation of the Study

One of the main limitations of the study was related to the inability to extrapolate the results to the whole population of victims, due to the limited number of interviews conducted and the limited timeframe of the study.
Data and statements on vulnerability were based on the interviews and as such are individually contextual, hence the information should solely be viewed in this frame and not used for a generalisation of all circumstances.

The second limitation is related to factors of: a small sample size; a limited number of experts attending the interviews; and the constraints related to the time assigned to the survey, resulting in a compromise of selecting a limited number of experts from which to gather data.

The difficulty in accessing former victims posed another limit to the study. While during the interview preparation stage participation consent was received from a larger number of victims, at the time of conducting the interviews, the victims could no longer be contacted or were no longer interested in participation.

Although, initially, the study intended to include in the sampling only former victims with recent experiences of trafficking (trafficked in the period of 2010 - 2011), due to the limited number of victims willing to participate in the study, victims who escaped from trafficking in 2008 or 2009 were also interviewed. The interviewing of victims trafficked over a four year instead of two year timeframe, was a compromise made by the research team in order to assure a sufficient number of interviews for collecting characteristics of forced begging related trafficking. Hence, the sample of victims does not provide a thorough representation of domestic victims.

The information collected from experts gives a picture of trafficking for begging over a longer period of time than the two years initially considered in planning the analysis. Retrospective cases combined with the wide expertise of experts interviewed, have allowed for identification of the characteristics of trafficking for begging in its complexity, just at the moment when Romania is beginning to ‘recognize’ trafficking in persons and this particular type of trafficking.

Only figures regarding characteristics of suspected traffickers for 2011 could be obtained from the Organised Crime Department due to changes in their system between 2010 and 2011.
2. National legislative framework

The Romanian national legislation on human trafficking is comprehensive and sets out the national strategy to combat and prevent this criminal offense, in tandem with noted trends of trafficking in persons and European regulations encapsulated in Romanian legislation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>Obligation to practice prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Obligation to practice begging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Other forms of coercion</td>
<td>Obligation to practice pornographic acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbouring</td>
<td>Abduction</td>
<td>Labour exploitation or forced performance of services</td>
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<td>Receipt of person</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>Victim of other forms of sexual exploitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deception</td>
<td>Keeping in a state of slavery or other similar processes of deprivation of freedom or servitude</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abduction</td>
<td>Removal of organs, tissues or cells of human origin, in violation of the law;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking advantage of that person's inability to defend themselves or to express their will</td>
<td>Perform such other activities that violate fundamental human rights and freedoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The offering, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve consent of a person having control over another person</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 Matrix of elements of trafficking in persons in Romania.23

An act + a means + purpose = trafficking in persons

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23 Based on UNODC 2012 Global Raport on trafficking in persons, pg. 81
Table 1 presents the national definition of trafficking in persons and minors, as stipulated in Art.12 and 13 of Romanian law 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons. Furthermore, in Romanian legislation, the crime of trafficking is defined as: “Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a person, through the use of threats or violence or the use of other forms of coercion, through kidnapping, fraud or misrepresentation, abuse of power or by taking advantage of that person’s inability to defend him-/herself or to express his/her will or by giving or receiving money or other benefits in order to obtain the agreement of a person who has control over another person with the intent of exploiting the latter, commits a criminal violation of this Law and shall be punished with 3 to 12 years imprisonment and denial of a number of rights”\textsuperscript{24} and a crime of trafficking in minors: “Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a person aged under 18, with the intent of exploiting that person, commits the crime of trafficking in underage persons and shall be punished by 3 to 12 years imprisonment and denial of a number of rights”\textsuperscript{25}.

The crime of trafficking in persons has 3 main components: action, means and purpose. In the case of trafficking in minors, only two (action and means) are required to be identified so as to constitute a crime of trafficking.

The definition of trafficking in persons used in Romanian legislation is in accordance with the internationally recognized definition (in particular in alignment with the Palermo Protocols and the Convention of the Council of Europe), but going further by providing specific definitions of other forms of exploitation (for example, forced begging). Furthermore, Article 2c. of Romanian Law 678/2001 defines exploitation through begging as meaning “the exploitation of persons...forced into begging”. At the international or European level, no accepted definition of human trafficking by means of forced begging exists (with the exception of the EU Directive 36/2011/EU which contains provisions defining forced begging, based on similar criteria as applicable to forced labour), but, at national level, forced

\textsuperscript{24} Article 12 of the Law. No 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons.

\textsuperscript{25} Article 13 of the Law. No 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons.
begging is set out as one of the exploitation forms related to the criminal offence of human trafficking.\textsuperscript{26}

Forced begging can be understood as a form of forced labour or service, as defined by the ILO Convention no. 29 of 1930 on forced or mandatory labour: “the term \textit{forced or compulsory labour} shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”\textsuperscript{27} Consequently, the exploitation of begging-related activities, including use of a dependent trafficked person, is governed by the definition of human trafficking, only in the case where all elements characterizing forced labour or service are being met\textsuperscript{28} and the trafficked person’s consent must be assessed on a case by case basis.

Romanian Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of children’s rights, forbids exploitation and sets out children’s rights against any type of exploitation.\textsuperscript{29} Rights which, during the trafficking process, are constantly violated, affecting the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development integrity, corporal integrity, physical or mental health. To strengthen protection of children against exploitation or coercion to practice begging, the above law completes the legislation through Articles 132 and 133 of Law 272/2004, which prohibits exploitation for begging or coercion to practice begging by a parent or others and is punished with imprisonment between 1 to 7 years. The law gives special attention to cases where the child is forced to beg by their parent or legal guardian.

Given the scope and nature of this study, a note should be made on the regulation of begging in Romania. It is considered an offense for "a person who is able to work, to repeatedly call on the mercy of the

\textsuperscript{26} According to Art.2 c., Law 678/2001.
\textsuperscript{27} Article 2.1 http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029
\textsuperscript{29} Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of children’s rights sets out the actions to be taken in order to protect children against exploitation, economic exploitation, and other exploitation forms, against abuse and negligence and against abduction or any trafficking forms.

public, and determination of a person to commit such acts" under Article 3 paragraph 3 of Law 61/1991 on the punishment of violations of social standards, public order (republished in 2011). If the act becomes habitual it then falls under the framework of the Penal Code, in which Article 326 criminalizes "a person who, having the ability to work, repeatedly calls on public charity for material help, and they shall be punished by imprisonment from one month to three years." Thus in Romania, begging is always punished and in case of repetition, then criminal proceedings can be initiated against the beggar.

Because of the social approach of this study, relevant national legislative measures of other countries shall only be briefly mentioned, without comparing or performing analogies with EU measures.

The regulation of and/or punishment of ‘voluntary’ begging, differs from one western country to another. Some countries criminalize these practices (Australia), some states do not criminalize (Italy, Portugal and Finland), some states criminalize in certain circumstances (Romania) and in others, it is illegal but not punishable (Austria, the UK).

Taking into account the data and information gathered from the interviews regarding the assistance received by the victims, the remarks outlined in the following section are subject to a review of national measures or legislation regarding victims’ assistance, referral, protection and reintegration.

*General remarks regarding national regulations in the field of protection and assistance to victims of trafficking in persons.*

Victims of trafficking in persons identified in other countries are repatriated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also informing the Child Protection Directorate (DPC) and the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP).

Protection and assistance to victims is regulated by Government Resolution no. 1238/2007 approving national standards for specialized assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking, with
systemic and comprehensive principles and measures to be taken to provide adequate assistance.

The National Mechanism for Referral and Identification of victims of trafficking (MNIR)\textsuperscript{30} is a set of measures and actions taken in coordination with the state institutions and various non-governmental organisations, to protect the fundamental rights of victims and to ensure their protection and assistance needs are met.

Victims of trafficking in persons are entitled to receive assistance irrespective of the type of exploitation endured during trafficking.

\textsuperscript{30} Order no.335/2007 for approval of the National Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking Identification and Referral.
3. Characteristics of victims

According to the data from SIMEV, the number of victims trafficked into forced begging identified during 2010 and 2011 was 191, the equivalent of approximately 9% of the total victims identified during the same period. Age and gender distribution is shown in the below figures:

![Figure 3 Victims’ distribution by gender and age](image)

![Figure 4 Age pyramid](image)

Most of the victims were identified after their return to Romania by the units for countering organised crime. In only eight cases did foreign authorities (France, Spain, Poland, Italy and Lithuania) provide information on the situation or existence of cases of trafficking in persons.

Most victims trafficked for the purpose of forced begging (155), were internationally trafficked to France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Austria and others (see Annex “Destination countries for trafficking for begging”). One victim was exploited both within the country and abroad, whilst for four victims there was only an attempt to traffic them, but the location of the action was not identified. The rest of the victims (31 persons) were trafficked internally. According to SIMEV, 29 victims suffered from some form of disability. More males were trafficked than females, 67.5% and 32.5% respectively.

### 3.1. Living conditions of the victims prior to the trafficking process

#### 3.1.1. Vulnerable categories

As a result of the interviews with experts and victims, an overall picture of the vulnerabilities of certain categories of persons is described below.

From the point of view of psychological difference in age groups, *minors* present specific cognitive and personality traits, resulting in increased vulnerability due to the fact that they are fragile both from physical and psychological point of view, as well as having a reduced capacity to anticipate the actions of aggressors and an immaturity in assessing people and situations, i.e., they are gullible, naive etc.

According to the experts’ opinion, these characteristics are present in both minors with families and minors from an institutionalized environment (foster homes) as well as for those living on the street (street children).
Characteristics of victims

From the interviews with experts, it appears that another set of characteristics increase vulnerability: poor physical development, age, inclination toward juvenile delinquency, lack of supervision by parents of minors meaning that children flee home due to negative attitudes parents towards them etc.

**Persons with disabilities** are emerging as a particular category among victims, with characteristics of physical or mental deficiencies. These characteristics generate economic and social difficulties or even the inability to secure what is required for their day-to-day life. The diminished physical capacity and their inability to defend themselves against potential threats create an increased vulnerability for this category of victims. According to certain experts that work against organised crime and in victim assistance, the disabled victims are manipulated by means of promises related to surgical interventions abroad, purchase of prosthesis or medical appliances required by such individuals and/or various expensive medical interventions that cannot be performed in Romania.

Unlike other categories of victims, the victims/their families have a steady income from a disabled person pension or a caregiver allowance granted to a family member, in the case of a pronounced or severe disability. However, as indicated by two of the victims participating in the study, these revenues were still insufficient to ensure daily needs.

According to interviews with the experts, the elderly represent another category vulnerable to this type of exploitation. Elderly victims show a higher education level – at least middle school studies - but, similar to the other categories of victims, their incomes are insufficient for a decent life (including age-related medication). The elderly have an extremely vulnerable status, sometimes caused by the absence of their life partner (death or divorce). The loss of emotional support of the loved one has side effects on the individuals, placing them into a certain form of social exclusion, dominated by financial insecurity (exaggerated indebtedness towards certain persons, the loss of their house) or even by mental or other kind of deterioration, such as alcohol abuse, sensory and motor deficiencies, or difficulties related to intellectuality, amnesia etc.
During one interview, the category of **persons originating from asylums** was considered as being vulnerable to forced begging, due to the specific nature of their living environment (no support network), as well as due to their age characteristics (the existence of additional age-related needs - medication, medical instruments/prosthetics etc).

**Voluntary beggars** were considered as a vulnerable group during interviews with experts and by two interviewed victims. The lack of education and normal living conditions characterize this category of individuals who secure their daily living needs through begging. According to the experts, voluntary beggars are particularly vulnerable due to the lack of material and financial resources, and by the fact that they are socially marginalized. Sometimes they are extremely young single mothers who, as they beg all day on the street, eventually end up under the influence of traffickers, who manage to manipulate them and under certain circumstances, to even sexually exploit them.

### 3.1.2. Level of education

![Distribution in numbers of adult victims by education](image)

**Figure 5 Level of education of adult victims**

61 adult victims had graduated from secondary education, 33 victims had only primary education or had not undertaken compulsory
education. The quantitative distribution of adult victims depending on the level of education is presented in Figure 4. A low level of education (up to secondary education) amongst victims was mentioned in the majority of interviews (with both experts or victims).

The context and morpho-logical expression used for the low level of education was the most diverse: “low degree education”, “minimal education”, “no education”, “low education level”, “most of them have a null education level”, “absent education”, “minimal formal education”, “no training whatsoever”, “inexistent education”, “reduced education level”, “illiteracy”, “educationally limited”, “precarious education level”.

The lack of a minimal formal education (up to secondary education), necessary to obtain various types of professional qualification might reduce opportunities to enter the legal labor market. Thus, the low level of education is one of the main push factors for trafficking.

Even though it is very important, a low level of education is neither the only, nor the most important factor in vulnerability to trafficking. There are some victims with a higher level of education (secondary education) who became victims of trafficking in persons.

3.2. Area of origin of victims

From data obtained through SIMEV, 51% of the victims originate from rural areas and 49% of the victims originate from urban areas. However, based on the interviews, victims originating from a rural background, appears to be more frequently mentioned as a place or area, which, combined with other factors, that contributes to the victims’ vulnerability to trafficking.

3.3. Material and professional status

The central element of the interviews of both the experts and victims with respect to material and professional conditions, noted that victims have “a life lived at the limits of existence”, characterized by extreme poverty and amplified by the absence of a permanent working place. Only one victim out of the eight had a permanent working place prior to being trafficked.
The only income generating activities of the family members of the victims, consisted of seasonal work in agriculture, construction, timber cutting, in the forest or home cleaning services (the latter being in the case of women): “I used to work on a daily basis, in the village, whenever I could find work” (F, 33 years old).

Although it seems that most victims managed to find some work, the working places were not permanent and the incomes earned were insufficient for the day to day living: “From occasional work we used to buy some food” (F, 32 years old).

According to the answers provided during an interview with one victim, the family’s precarious financial condition generated the practice of begging by the victim, prior to becoming a victim of trafficking, as begging was considered at that time the only way to satisfy the family’s basic needs (food, clothes, cleaning products) “….the family used to earn its living by daily work or by begging, the family incomes being below the poverty line, practically living from one day to another” (B, 41).

Another reliable source of income consisted of child allowance and social welfare benefits, but in the case of a family with numerous members, such income still failed to meet the daily needs of the entire family.

Housing conditions could be a result of poor financial situation, where the victims were living in unsanitary houses or even trailers, which were not their property (housing provided by local authorities, housing of family members, improvised dwellings, abandoned houses), sometimes with no adequate sanitation or without even being connected to the electricity grid.

The extreme poverty and life without income, represent the pervasive poverty among the victims, one of the most frequent elements stated during the interviews with experts. The degree of poverty existing among the victims was mentioned by means of various linguistic constructions: “maximum poverty”, “financial problems”, “no money”, “hard living conditions”, “no material possibilities”, “poor families”, “precarious material condition”, “financial difficulties”, “could not earn their living”, “extremely poor”, “low incomes”, “no income sources”, “high level of poverty”, “lack of living incomes”,

Characteristics of victims
“live at subsistence limits”, “no sources of subsistence”. Thus, poverty, together with other social factors, is considered as one of the main triggering factors of victimization.

With reference to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which considered that “human beings are motivated by certain unsatisfied needs” based on elementary biological needs, such as the need for food, water, shelter, followed by those related to security and protection needs (house, clothes, safety), it can be seen that, during the discussions with both the victims and experts, all victims had in common the fact that basic needs were unmet or victims were facing real difficulties in satisfying such needs.

Expressions such as “I did not have enough money for food”, “with the money I had I could only buy little food” were frequently identified during the conversations with the victims. The failure to satisfy such needs oriented the victims’ behaviour towards a way of satisfying such needs, this representing, among others, a vulnerability factor exploited by the traffickers: “I have been talking to other villagers who were going to leave and I thought it would be fine... I did not ask many questions about the work or the payment.... Furthermore, I had nothing to lose; I did not need any money for leaving” (B. 40).

Following a critical analysis of their own existence prior to being trafficked, and after victims considered their own goals and achievements, it can be seen that most victims were unsatisfied with their own lives. It could not have been otherwise, as many of their basic ‘goals’ were not met (financial well-being, social support network etc.) In assessing their situation, many of the victims used expressions such as “I was not happy with my life so far; I liked nothing; I had no joy”.

Dissatisfaction with their own lives was not the result of disappointments resulting from an aspiration-goals discrepancy. Most victims performed a realistic assessment of their own possibilities and skills on one hand and their defined goals on the other, and there generally exists a balance between these two. For instance, one of the victims who had graduated eight grades at a special school for

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children with physical and psychological disabilities, stated that “I have little education, I am not good at business and I am not thinking of other ways to earn money, except for work... I know I’m not very smart, but I can manage by myself.” (B, 22).

3.4. Family and relations between family members

According to quantitative data, the two-parent family appears to be the main type of family of origin for child victims or minors, with 22 victims coming from this background (figure 5). Eight minors came from single parent families and eight minors had no family support (minors coming from institutional protection system or homeless children).

![Figure 6 Family type of victims that are minors](image)

Most interviewees referred to the victim as being from a large family, with the number of family or extended family members ranging from 3 years up to 16. Most victims were living with their parents, spouse or life partner and their children, sometimes even together with other relatives: “With no training, a precarious material condition, originating from large families, these victims have generally been
practicing begging in the country” (interview with an organised crime expert).

According to interviewed experts, certain dysfunctions can be identified within victims’ families that contribute to the minor’s vulnerability to victimisation, such as: tense relations between the family members, aggressive behaviour, alcohol consumption, absence of a parental model and emotional support, neglect, criminal history etc.

A situation where underage children are living with one parent and their sexual partner (out-of-marriage), was mentioned in three interviews.

Two of the four experts mentioned higher vulnerability in cases where elderly victims did not benefit from the support of any family member, or were living alone or in specialized institutions.

3.5. Civil status

Most adult victims identified in the period 2010 – 2011, were single (124 victims), out of which 22 stated that they lived with their life partner (consensual union). Others (35 victims) were officially married, while another five victims were divorced or widowers.
3.6. Health condition

The health status of victims of trafficking for begging, compared to victims exploited into other forms of trafficking, showed a higher ratio of individuals with mental deficiencies or physical disabilities. According to the experts, these victims are pursued by traffickers due to the specificity of this criminal activity. An individual with mental deficiencies can be easily manipulated, fooled and used in order to be forced to beg, and an individual with a visible physical disability (e.g., lack of limbs) inspires pity, encourages the pedestrians to give cash and, consequently, generate significant incomes for the traffickers: “...with the victims exploited by means of begging, the worse they look, the more pity they generate” (expert in the fight against organised crime).

3.7. Ethnic affiliation

Interviews with some experts estimated that depending on the local or regional characteristics, most victims belong to the Roma ethnic group, while other experts have stated that no victims belonging to a certain ethnic group showed a higher ratio statistically.

Thus it was concluded that for this sample study, ethnic affiliation is not a vulnerability per se, but can have characteristics associated with socio-economic difficulties, present in most cases of trafficking, for example: “In case of some Roma people, the only source of income consists of the child allowance, and as some families have as many as 12 children, they earn their living solely based on this income and begging” (interview with a social service expert).

3.8. Criminal history

Depending on the context of local or regional trafficking, the victims’ prior involvement in criminal offences and the registration of the offences in the criminal record system was reported (during one interview with the experts) or not. “....some of the victims had a criminal record for offences committed prior to the trafficking process, most of the victims coming from environments conducive to
committing criminal offences” (expert in the fight against organised crime).

Some victims, even if having a clean criminal record, were well known by the local police for various offences, including begging. As one victim noted: “I have been involved in conflicts at the local bar” (B, 40).

Criminal offences, including begging, were motivated in particular by the need to ensure subsistence (food): “we (the entire family) used to steal from people’s yards, mainly corn” (F, 33 years old). “F” was motivated to steal based on the absolute absence of food within the family.

3.9. Alternatives to begging

Generally, although recognising extreme poverty and lack of education amongst the victims, some experts considered that they should have explored the alternative of identifying a permanent working place, in accordance with the victims’ level of education: “They could undertake jobs as unskilled workers, with various contractors” (expert in the fight against organised crime). In other interviews, experts believed that social marginalization impeded the victims’ social rights and thus limited the victims’ ability to perceive or identify viable options for a satisfying life, according to the victims’ expectations.

For some individuals, some experts considered that begging represents the only life known to the victim, and they practiced it both prior to and after escaping from trafficking.

With respect to minors, no alternatives to exploitation existed, thus these victims were almost fully influenced by their parents’ decisions.

3.10. Other characteristics of victims

The social support network – the number of persons belonging to the individual’s network, who might provide support – is considered in context of three dimensions: emotional support (empathy, concern for the person in need), instrumental support (direct, tangible
support, such as financial support); and informational support (providing information and guidance in order to solve a problem a person is facing, advice).

By analysing the information provided by both the experts and the victims, it can be noted that the victims did not benefit from adequate social support for at least one of the three dimensions mentioned above. Thus, victims that stated that they had no one to turn to in case of difficult circumstances and who were trying to manage on their own (absence of emotional support); that had never benefited from “financial support from their family” (absence of the instrumental support); and/or family members were not able to provide “advice” regarding leaving “for work abroad” (limited informational support).

Hence, the study showed that an emotional and financial support network was limited, solely consisting of the family members. The victims came from environments where daily life is about identifying resources for survival, and the family communication is insufficiently developed or even totally absent. The social function appears to solely be present between the family members, only one victim stating that they spent time with their friends.

Physical appearance - Some experts characterized the victims of trafficking for begging (compared to the victims of other trafficking categories) as having an unpleasant appearance, ragged and dirty clothes. The experts also mentioning the absence of minimal hygiene with certain victims: “...poorly dressed, dirty clothes ...with an unpleasant physical appearance ...” (expert in the fight against organised crime).
4. Actions of trafficking in persons intended for forced begging

Begging is a unique form of exploitation that has existed since antiquity, in which victims receive a negligible amount of money, and the traffickers receive the benefits. This chapter outlines circumstances in which victims interact with traffickers, how victims are trafficked and methodology that traffickers use.

4.1. Trafficking and the victims’ relation with their traffickers / recruiters

To present the modality of trafficking first necessitates an analysis of the relations between the trafficker and the victims. Figure 7 shows several types of relations between the victim and the recruiter, of the total 191 victims in the sample size.
The majority of the victims (43.4%) were recruited by friends or acquaintances, persons with whom they had a minimal prior contact. In the case of this type of relation, the victims knew the recruiter for a specific period of time and they were acquainted with them: “I knew him because he was one of my husband’s acquaintances” (F, 32).

The second largest group of victims (31%) were recruited by “unknown” persons with whom the victims had no relation or prior contact. The first contact between the two parties took place at the moment of trafficking. The majority of the victims recruited by unknown persons were males. The meeting between the victim and recruiter was spontaneous, where they accidentally met, in a context where the victims needed an income and the recruiter was looking for victims to exploit for ‘work’ abroad: “I heard of an opportunity to leave for a job abroad, in France, while visiting a neighbouring town, from a person I have never met before and who probably saw me as a poor fellow and asked me whether I need some money” (B, 40).

However, according to the information provided by experts, it seems that the recruiters and traffickers are extremely familiar with the environments where they sought potential victims, identifying favourable environments and exploiting the victims’ needs: “The traffickers are generally hunting their victims in disadvantaged social environments and promise financial or material rewards” (interview with a social service expert).

The third largest group of victims, were those recruited by neighbours (15%). The two smallest groups in the sample size were those recruited by "other relatives", that is, members of the extended family, such as aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. (7%), but not direct family. The final 3.6% of victims were recruited by “others” - considered as cases either where the recruiter was a close relative or where the victims were not aware who the recruiter was.

In the cases where both the victims and the recruiters were originating from the same primary social groups (family, neighbours or group of friends), the recruiters’ task was easy in convincing the victims to take the work, generally abroad, by advocating a job’s ‘benefits’, as the recruiters knew the victims’ needs and limited social-educational abilities: “The traffickers are targeting the victims directly, knowing that they face financial problems and are aware of their lack of
education and that they are simple-minded” (interview with an expert in the fight against organised crime).

According to the experts, in the cases where the victims had no relation with the recruiter (no family ties nor friendship), they were lured into a vicious cycle, where the recruiter offered ‘friendship’. The recruiter introduces him/herself as a “benevolent person providing unconditional support”, thus easily fooling and deceiving the victims and consequently, this impersonal relation turns into a friendship. The recruiters thus seem to be the providing a solution to the victims’ problems – boyfriends saving women with no source of income, no support and who are solely raising their children; the friend giving a helping hand to adult males looking for a source of income; a stranger with a business ‘offer’, in order to give a helping hand.

The interviews with experts highlighted the potential abusive nature of a recruiter’s methodologies. A particular case in this respect consisted of a man that sold his parents in order for them to be forced into begging.

4.2. Recruiter’s methods and the victims’ responses

The main methods used by recruiters’ networks include deceit through promise of a job abroad or in Romania (for adults) or promising an opportunity to beg abroad (for minors).

Data from the study shows that there seems to be a tendency for adult victims to be approached with ‘job offers’ abroad and for minors, ‘offers’ related to practicing begging. Information from interviews indicated that most adult victims were approached with ‘job offers’ in construction, home-care, house cleaning or agriculture (orange-picking, olive harvesting).

Generally, the victims were promised a job abroad or that they would be supported to beg abroad (most often, this is the case for victims who used to beg in Romania, most of them being disabled persons).

33 Interview with a social service expert.
34 Interview with a social service expert.
Under the circumstances where the victim was already begging in Romania, he/she was promised that he/she shall be supported to beg abroad, but for more money and that the profits would mostly go to the beggar, after paying accommodation and transport costs to the recruiter/trafficker.

When the victims asked for further information concerning the job, the recruiters’ answers were generally vague and expressed in such a way as to solicit agreement by the victim to the ‘offer’. The information given was related to the possibility of earning significant amounts of money, sometimes even mentioning that the transport, accommodation and meals were ensured: “He explained that he would find jobs for them in France, but has failed to exactly tell them the nature of such jobs. He assured them that they would have a paid bus ticket...”; “we would receive a certain monthly amount, accommodation, transport, kindergarten for our children” (F, 32 years old).

![Figure 9 Distribution in numbers of adult victims based on the nature of the offer received at the time of recruitment](image-url)
The study showed that the traffickers are undertaking minimal risks, by targeting vulnerable persons. For recruitment purposes, they focused on persons in distress; such that, due to financial needs, the large amounts of money promised by recruiters are the sole elements considered by the victims when analysing the ‘offer’ of going abroad – no other information, such as the name of the employing company, the working and accommodation conditions, the existence of a contract – were of interest to the victim, compared to the opportunity of such significant earning. “I needed money to repair the house and for a living and I decided to give it a try. I spoke with the villagers who were also going to leave and they also thought it would be fine. I never asked questions about the job or the payment. I thought that it would certainly be better than here, in Romania. While being in S. (the neighbouring town), I heard that people are leaving to work in France. One day, when I went to S., at the market, a stranger told me that if I’m interested to work abroad, in construction, he will help me. I asked who would ensure the transport and when should we leave and he said that he was taking the people over there by car and that we will live in a house until we earn some money and rent a place. And after three days I left. It is true that I never asked too many questions, but I knew that others went as well and I needed the money. I never
thought that something bad might happen. Furthermore, I had nothing to lose; I did not need money for the departure.” (B, 44 years old).

Experts noted during the interviews that it was possible to identify a particular offer related to exploitation of disabled victims, which correlates to the specific treatment and medical needs of the disabled: “manipulation with medical services, procurement of prosthetics and other similar services” (interview with an expert in the fight against organised crime).

Analysing the ‘offer’

Information within small rural communities is generally disseminated through a ‘snowball’ technique, meaning that someone gains information, which they then share with acquaintances, who in turn, share it with others, the circle of persons receiving the information becoming wider and wider. Under such circumstances, the victims self-integrate into the ‘job-hunting’ group, thus transferring the responsibility for additional information regarding the job nature, object and payment terms etc. “I have spoken with other people from villages, who were also going to leave, and I thought it would be fine” (B, 44 years old).

Although many victims stated that they discussed with family members about the offered opportunity of working abroad, most of the time their family members encouraged them to leave and to accept the offer: “I discussed with my father and mother and they were excited by this opportunity of earning some extra money” (F, 29 years old). “Go there, it will be fine!” (expert in the fight against organised crime).

According to some interviews with victims, some family members failed to express a positive or negative opinion regarding the ‘offer’ received or were even against the victim’s departure: “Despite the fact that my family was against my departure, I left, without their approval” (B, 26 years old).

The information from interviews with the experts, indicated a differentiation in exploiting minors, in some cases the recruitment was
either mediated by their own parents\textsuperscript{35} or by their entire family. Extremely young children (younger than 10-12 years) do not have the mental capacity or perception to understand why they are being sent to practice begging (interview with a NGO representative).

The traffickers assume low risks by targeting people originating from disadvantaged environments and with a low education level, such that the probability of the victim having information concerning the potential risks, or of analysing the situation based on prior information and documentation is extremely low. Victims stated that, for example: “Prior to my departure, I talked with my mother and brother, and none of them could tell me whether I should leave for Greece or not, and eventually I left” (F 32 years old); “He did not tell me exactly what work I would be asked to do, somewhere in construction...a few days then passed between the offer and the departure date. I had no idea what was going to happen and never even thought about it. I never thought that someone I know would do this to me” (B 23 years old).

Most of the time, the departure of the victim to the destination took place in a relatively short time after agreeing to the ‘offer’ (generally within the maximum of a few days), during which time the victims were drawn into closer relations with the recruiters and were permanently persuaded: “During this entire time they invited me to their place, telling me that they care for me as if I were their daughter....” (F, 33 years old); “...the day after receiving the begging offer, I left for Spain” (B, 22 years old).

4.3. Exploitation of victims

4.3.1. Exploitation methods

Despite the nature of the ‘offers’ to the victims, when arriving at their destination most victims discover the actual purpose of the ‘offer’, namely coercion to beg. Other victims were told that there was difficulty in identifying jobs and that until an appropriate job was

\textsuperscript{35} As in the “Tandarei” case in Europe, methods of recruitment were diverse: The victims’ families owed money to the traffickers, and in consideration of the amounts due, the traffickers asked for children to beg or thieve abroad; other parents willingly offered their children, asking for part of the money earned by their children from begging activities.
found, they will be forced to beg in order to pay the transport and accommodation-related costs.

The methods used by the traffickers to solicit money from the act of the victim’s begging were extremely diverse as described in the following paragraphs. Victims were placed with written messages (even written by the traffickers) in the language of the country of destination with various messages intended to generate public pity, or various texts written on cardboard, stating that the victim was distressed or removed from Romania based on ethnic reasons etc. Victims were told to have an outstretched hand; to play a musical instrument; to suggest or even display a disability; to sit with their own children - were all methods used by traffickers according to interviews with experts based on the reviewed cases. In some cases, the traffickers taught the victims some words in the relevant country language, in order to impress passers-by. “The victims were taught by the traffickers to beg with boxes, cardboard and to stay away from the police, being monitored during this entire time” (expert in the fight against organised crime). In other cases, victims were taught what to do by other victims, ‘protected’ by the same traffickers.

Begging under the cover of the itinerant sale of newspapers was a method used quite often in countries such as Germany or Austria, where the victims were supposed to have certain newspapers (generally free newspapers) with them all the time and to represent themselves as employees of certain media distribution companies. In order to ensure the credibility of such actions in front of the authorities, the traffickers even provided the victims with badges certifying their capacity as distribution company employee and the victims were taught to claim that they were employees of the companies written on the badges whenever approached by passers-by or authorities.

The phenomenon of street theatre actors,\(^{36}\) generally seen in major cities globally, has gained ground and as this study has revealed, it can involve human trafficking. Traffickers would make victims perform as human statues, whereby the victim enacts a certain character, which should stand still, generally in crowded places, with a box placed in front of the victim in order to collect money from passers-by. “He

\(^{36}\) The term commonly used to describe artists that perform in the street.
**Actions of trafficking in persons intended for forced begging**

*showed me how to paint my face in white, to dress up as a mime and to wait for people’s money*” (B, 23).

Generally, the areas where traffickers place victims are crowded places with a high level of pedestrian traffic, such as store or supermarket entrances, outside schools, churches, train stations, parking places, parks, at important intersections in large cities, tourist areas etc.

**The reactions of victims** upon being forced to beg have been various: some of them accepted the role and started to beg, of course under the traffickers’ strict training and supervision. Others did not want to beg, but were coerced with violence: “I have been beaten from the first day because I was making noise and I did not want to beg, and afterwards they have beaten me on daily basis” (F, 29 years old).

The interviews with experts revealed that the **coercive methods** used by the traffickers against the victims were diverse, from beating, to threats against the victim or of injury to friends or relatives left in Romania, and finally the realisation of such threats. In some cases, on reaching their destination, victims were coerced into begging by means of small rewards offered by the traffickers (for instance cash).

**The time spent on the street** for begging was extremely long, ranging between 8-10 hours, up to even 14-18 hours a day, during which the victims were either permanently supervised by the traffickers or monitored by means of regular visits by the traffickers, once or twice a day, at the same time when the cash was collected.

If the cash amounts were not satisfactory to the traffickers, the victims were continually demanded to collect more money, in order to increase the ‘capture’37. The methods of persuading the victims to collect more money, varied from simple verbal ‘recommendations’ to beatings or threats applied to the victims and their children taken under the traffickers’ ‘care’.

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37 Term used by traffickers with respect to the collected amounts of money, according to DCCO experts.
4.3.2. Constraint on, and abuse of, victims at the trafficking destination

According to the expert interviews, during the first days of exploitation, the traffickers continually supervised the victims. During which, the threats, constraints and abuses were constant, causing the victims’ loss of self-confidence, a state of terror and the consolidation of dominating relations. At the same time, the victims’ freedom of movement was limited, and in some cases their identity documents were also taken away. These actions were confirmed in interviews of two victims.

In the period following the first days of exploitation, in some cases the victims were sent alone to their ‘working’ places, but were still monitored by means of regular visits by the network of traffickers. During this period, even though the victims were allowed to leave the building where they lived, the traffickers used other methods of subjugation and coercion, such as: threats of physical injury to the victim or their family in Romania; death threats, threats of notifying the police regarding the victim’s clandestine or illegal status, total food deprivation; threats of being left alone with no resources to return home. “I was afraid all the time, at night I could not sleep, my heart was beating really fast, I did not know what to do. I had no money; we were supervised all day long. They were threatening to kill us all the time. They were seven and were supervising us all the time, all the time we were transported in cars and we had no one to talk to ... they are extremely dangerous, I was afraid of them and I still am afraid of them because they are pursuing the ones giving statements against them and they are trying to buy silence with money or they are threatening them. I don’t want money but I am afraid to sleep at night, what if they will come for me.” (B 22 years old); “I am still afraid that they will come to my house and hurt me. It is known that I have given a statement to the police.” (B, 40 years old).

Most victims witnessed aggressive actions performed by traffickers against the non-obedient victims. The non-obedient victims were beaten and insulted: “Once I was beaten by C (the trafficker’s wife) and my children were beaten and taken (seized) by the trafficker... at a certain moment I learnt that the trafficker was planning to rape me in
front of my husband and to make me practice prostitution. That is when I decided, based on fear, to run with my children. But, with my husband’s help, who had no idea why I have left, I was caught by the traffickers. They took the younger children and I was threatened with death if I left without telling them.” (F, 33 years old).

According to the expert and victim interviews, in some cases the identification documents were given back to the victims after a few days, the victims being obliged to have such documents on them in order to produce them for the local authorities for identification purposes.

The vulnerable condition of the victims in the countries of destination is exploited by the traffickers in order to ensure the victims’ obedience and in order to attract higher amounts of money from begging. The victims are threatened that they shall be turned in or reported to the local police, thus making the victims afraid of the police: “The victims do not speak the language of the country where they are being exploited and have no money to return to Romania. The traffickers convince them that the police are corrupt and no action would be taken if the victims filed a complaint against the traffickers” (expert in the fight against organised crime).

In the countries where begging is forbidden, the victims were threatened that they would be turned in to the police for enacting a criminal offence. Most victims were taught what to answer when approached by local authorities and not to talk to strangers more than required.

All victims stated that they felt lonely and were experiencing feelings of insecurity due to the fact that they did not speak the language of the country where they were begging. Although some of the victims were able to say a few words, generally intended to invoke pity from the pedestrians, they experienced moments when they wanted to share their condition with the pedestrians, but were unable to communicate due to language barriers.
The picture of abuses suffered by victims forced to beg can be supplemented with quantitative data. According to the data (figure 10), most victims suffered physical abuse (beatings or other physical constraint), emotional abuse and financial indebtedness (the method is common in cases of human trafficking, whereby extremely high costs are claimed by the traffickers for accommodation, transport, food and other services. Such costs continually increase, also subject to interest, and no matter how hard they try, the victims never manage to cover such costs).

There is a small but statistically significant correlation between the duration in which the victim was exploited and the physical abuse suffered by the victims. For 8% of the victims, regardless of the gender, the longer they spent under exploitation by the trafficker, the more physical abuse was suffered.

In reality, the victims were treated as slaves, with no rights whatsoever, they were insufficiently fed, accommodated in unsanitary

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38 Source of data: SIMEV.
conditions, in overcrowded rooms, most of the time with no electric power, running water or toilet. They were forced to hand over all money to the traffickers and humiliated and abused whenever they failed to obey the traffickers.

4.3.3. Related exploitation

Forced begging is also associated with petty theft, performed under the same coercion that traffickers apply to exploit victims for begging. Expert interviews reported that in most cases the victims were also forced to pick-pocket or shoplift, in particular underage victims or male young victims. The traffickers themselves taught the victims how to steal from pedestrians’ pockets or purses without being noticed or received instructions on which goods to be stolen from stores, generally alcohol or cigarettes.

The study also identified that victims forced into begging were, at certain times of the day or night, also forced to practice prostitution for various clients of the same traffickers. The victims were generally forced to perform prostitution in public places such as parks.

4.3.4. Basic needs of the victims

The housing conditions, according to interviews with both the experts and victims, were inhumane and inappropriate. In some cases, the victims lived in rented apartments together with the traffickers, but in most cases, the victims were living in trailers, cellars, disused buses, abandoned houses, tents, abandoned shelters, the building of an old abandoned hospital, or were even sleeping on park benches in locations different to where they were forced to beg. The housing conditions were sometimes beyond description, the victims’ words better reflecting such conditions: “with no electric power, running water, toilet, doors or windows, being forced to hang blankets or whatever we could find, on the windows or door frames.”(F, 32 years old); “At night, several people from Romania used to sleep in a ‘house held by the network, on mattresses or wherever we could find a place” (B, 23 years old).

Regarding meals, there were cases when the victims were fed only once a day, generally in the evening, the food received being low in calories. In other cases the victims did not receive any food, as the
traffickers considered that the victim was responsible for procuring food from passers-by. Thus, victims were also forced to beg for food. Abuse of the victims by the traffickers was also in the form of inadequate clothing for the weather conditions and restricted access to healthcare services: “We used to eat from dump barrows; the children were receiving sandwiches or clothes from pedestrians.” (F, 32 years old);”I felt worse and worse, I was feeling exhausted, coughing, I was cold all the time, but there was no way I could go and see a physician” (B, 44 years old).

4.3.5. The money trail

If, upon their arrival in the country of destination, most victims did not question whether they had been ‘informed’ that they would be forced to beg, nor ask about the money they would have to pay, there are isolated cases where the victims tried to negotiate with the traffickers from the very beginning. However, in most cases, the victims were forced to pay extremely high amounts for transport (from Romania, as well as the daily transport to the begging places), accommodation (even if in unsanitary places where charges were fictitious and the places were illegally occupied), food (which, in most cases, was insufficient). In addition, the traffickers also claimed money for the so-called ‘protection’ provided to the victims while on the street. Consequently, at the end of the day, the victims did not receive any money, and only a few victims were receiving small ‘gifts’, such as a few cents.

The trafficking network collected the cash, once or even twice a day, the victims were thoroughly checked for hidden money. Whenever dissatisfied by the collected amounts, the traffickers applied various methods to make the victims collect more money, including verbal or even physical threats, new training based on changed begging methods, extended ‘working’ hours, or food deprivation penalties for certain periods of time etc.

Most victims had no idea of the amounts they earned, because most of the time the cash was collected directly by the traffickers, from the boxes placed on the ground. However, one of the victims noted that the amounts generated on daily basis by forced begging ranged between EUR 60-70 up to EUR 100. These amounts were also confirmed by en interviewed expert who stated that a victim of forced
Begging might earn an average amount of EUR 50 per day, with the amount earned by a victim during one month ranging between EUR 2500 and 3000. Studies carried out in destination countries (in particular Austria and Switzerland) mention varying estimates of the amount of money earned by beggars from Romania: from EUR 5-15 a day according to some experts up to EUR 100 according to others (cf. Kirchhofer and Lausanne study).

Victims forced to practice petty theft were also not aware of the daily amounts collected, as the profits from the thefts were permanently controlled by the traffickers, the victims being forced to directly hand all stolen goods (wallets, purses etc) to the trafficker.

One victim forced into both begging and prostitution noted that the daily amount received for prostitution was sometimes up to EUR 400, "At night, from older men, I think that I was earning EUR 200-400 or more" (F, 29 years old). Even though the earnings from forced begging were similar or even lower than those generated by forced prostitution, expert interviewees noted that the traffickers could earn from EUR 1000 up to 4000 per month per victim. The more victims a trafficker has and the higher the development level of the country of destination, the higher the traffickers’ earnings.

4.3.6. The period of exploitation of the victim

According to interviews with experts, the period of time during which the victims are trafficked differs depending on the victims’ age and characteristics. Compared to minors or disabled victims, in the case of adult victims (able-bodied), there is a short duration of exploitation up until the moment that the victims become aware of their situation – which is deemed dissatisfying, does not meet their expectations or affects their mental or physical integrity - and they attempt to escape. The period of time that an adult victim was trafficked, ranged between 2 weeks up to one year.

In the case of victims that are young minors (12 years and younger), the exploitation period depends heavily on the capacity of authorities’ intervention for identification purposes. In the absence of proactive identification by authorities, minors endure a longer period of being trafficked, as depending on their age and gender, they are considered as extremely useful to exploit across many areas. For example, young
male victims may additionally be forced to practice theft or blackmail, and young female victims may additionally be forced to work as prostitutes.

In case of teenagers, the duration of trafficking depends on several factors, including: appropriate intervention by authorities; the social-intellectual capacity of victims to understand their exploitation condition; fear of the traffickers; opportunities to escape and notify the local authorities.

In the case of mentally disabled persons, the capacity to understand their situation is limited, thus the subjects hardly ever become aware of their victimisation and consequently escape is delayed. In the case of physically disabled victims, the capacity to respond to their circumstance is also limited, due to their physical limitations.

In some cases the period of time being exploited can be longer or shorter depending on the skill level of the traffickers, constraints on the victims and the traffickers’ supervising methods. (These circumstances are set out in detail under “Exploitation methods” in section 4.3.1).
5. Traffickers’ characteristics

Of the total number of 123 individuals investigated during 2012 for trafficking human beings for begging, only 11 (8.9%) trafficked victims ‘domestically’ within Romanian territory. The persons investigated for domestic trafficking were typically organised in small groups, with none of them belonging to larger organised crime or criminal networks. Regarding organised crime groups involved in trafficking human beings for begging, interviewees of the this study noted that such groups mostly function outside of Romania.

5.1. Internal trafficking

The results presented below have strong limitations from a methodological viewpoint. There is no official statistical data referring to internal trafficking as defined in this research. The quantitative data available refer only to internal trafficking registered in official statistics based on the definition of trafficking from Law 678/2001, and not to the cases of children or adults who find themselves in a situation of vulnerability and who are forced to beg by their own families, situations that this study has included in the category of trafficking for begging, based on the arguments presented in the theoretical framework (see chapter 1.4).

Furthermore, no other official quantitative data was available for confirmation and better understanding of the situation in which children and adults find themselves in situations of vulnerability to exploitation for begging, thus this section is based only on the qualitative data from the interviews with the expert social workers.

Thus, it is understood that the information in this subchapter has an exploratory character, with its validity to be studied in a future scientific methodological framework.

40 Data from DCCO - report on individuals subject to investigations concerning human trafficking.
41 The data concerning the features of domestically exploited victims are based on SIMEV available data on trafficking in persons victims identified between January 2010-December, 2011. The interviews only covered victims who have had external experience exploitation and the experts involved in the interviews had a large experience in external type of trafficking.
However, it was considered that the qualitative information would be useful for those who are interested in understanding begging in general and trafficking for begging in particular, considering that this type of exploitation is significantly present.

Based on information provided by the interviewed experts, the main pretext under which the victims are trafficked domestically (75% of the total victims exploited internally) consists of the promise of helping them to obtain money by begging. Most victims exploited through this method are disabled persons. Only a small number of victims were domestically exploited based on the promise of a job or by being kidnapped. Minors represented a share of 54.8% of the total of domestically trafficked victims. Of these, 47.1% were institutionalised minors.

With respect to the relation between traffickers and victims of trafficking exploited domestically, in the majority of situations prior to exploitation, the two parties did not know each other. However, there are a significant number of cases (35.5%) where the trafficker was a victim’s friend/acquaintance. Social workers encounter an increasing number of cases of families exploiting their own children, relatives or acquaintances that are vulnerable (older or disabled persons). This exploitation is organised in relatively small groups – consisting of related or acquainted families, living in the same locality. Men organise the transport of the victims from the city’s outskirts or neighbouring localities to the central areas of the capital. For the traffickers, generally large families living in poor conditions, forced begging has become a means of survival, where they force their victims to beg in order to earn a living for the whole group. Their income consists of child allowances and the cash obtained from begging activities. Some of these groups used to work on daily basis or to sell scrap iron, but the income from this work amounted to so little, that they could not cover their day-to-day living needs. Thus most of these families have lived their entire life based on the support and benevolence of others, and neither they nor their parents have had a job: "Certain families have been begging for two-to-three generations. We already know them. That is all they know what to do and what they will continue doing" (interview with a social service expert).

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42 Source of data: SIMEV.
These groups have no other criminal activities, and according to some interviewed social workers, the relations within the criminal groups acting in the area may be one of subordination such that some of the groups have to pay part of their earnings to another group. This could explain why, that although significant amounts can be earned through begging in large cities, most of groups begging in this manner continue to live in unhealthy conditions. In such circumstances, when persons in a position of vulnerability are forced to beg by the people that they are in care of, it can be defined as trafficking in persons. According to the social workers, cases involving child exploitation have, under Romanian law, usually been treated as negligence, because negligence is easier to be identified and proven, irrespective of the children’s’ or parents’ allegations (that the child is not supervised, his/her basic needs are not satisfied, can be easily identified). The experience of the interviewed victims demonstrate that exploitation cannot be proven because the children lie about the motives of why they are begging, they cover for their parents, or are not able to understand the implications of their situation.

In the case of vulnerable adults trafficked by these groups, social workers believe that many of them had been living this way for so long that they were already assimilated to begging and could not readjust. However, according to some of the NGO representatives participating in the survey, there were situations when the victims no longer wanted to beg and, in particular, to be beaten: “They were pleading with the centre’s workers not to send them back to their families” (NGO representative).

It can be considered, and was also noted by experts, that the victims’ fear of the traffickers could be a reason that the victims do not fight back, nor notify the authorities. In addition, the fact that the victims are not confident that state authorities will be able to ensure their protection against the traffickers, could also be a factor. On the other hand, victims typically have a low level of education and no access to information, so it is possible that they do not know where to go for help. It is also possible that they are not aware of an alternative to oppose exploitation and ask for assistance that the Romanian state offers to victims of exploitation and trafficking. Also, one of the reasons that victims (that may know about state assistance) do not notify authorities is that they believe that the state wouldn’t be able to
assure their primary needs (shelter, food, clothes), with the small assistance that the state could provide.

Social workers understand that poverty is a main cause of trafficking for these groups. Some of DGASPC’s representatives noted that these groups would be unlikely to give up begging, unless provided with significant amounts of money. In analysing this statement, it should be considered that, for these groups, begging is a safe and profitable method of gaining money, hence for them, gaining equivalent amounts through lawful means would not be possible. State aid and child allowances are not sufficient for a basic living, as the amounts of aid are small and the State does not have the resources required to provide large amounts to all those in distress. Similarly, even if these groups followed training and vocational courses provided by the state and integrated into the labour market, this would still only ensure a minimal income.

Expert interviewees noted that the attempt to train people from these groups and to convince them of the utility of school or professional training courses after a life lived on the streets, can be very difficult. Such attempts at integration work only in the case of children. Here are three examples: “Potentially for those younger than 10 years old, because after the age of 10 – 12, the children become used to this life and the recovery can be very difficult. They have alternatives, but they are not used to taking them - they become accustomed to begging and fail to see or use other options” (interview with a social service expert). “I am not aware of any cases where children intended to give up begging, it gets into their blood, after the age of 8-10 years old they can no longer adjust. For instance, although they are given regular meals at the centre, they are still begging for food. Although, at first, they are thrilled to stay at the centre, after approximately one month they start to feel constrained and, although accommodation is ensured, they prefer to live on the street” (interview with a social service expert). “There are relapsed cases of child begging constantly brought to our attention. Such cases are monitored for a longer period of time. The children do not want to attend school courses. In most cases they refuse social services as there is no financial motivation, they fail to understand the efforts made to assist them, even when provided with required counselling” (interview with a social service expert).
A hypothesis that could be considered in future studies, is that poverty creates a survival mentality, where the expectations and behaviours are orientated towards surviving to the next day. This then would create a perception that social support and policies are not solutions to their problems.

5.2. External trafficking

The fact that most trafficking cases related to forced begging occur abroad, is on one hand, due to the fact that in most Western European countries begging is not a criminal offence, a factor that significantly minimises the risk for the traffickers. On the other hand, the profits gained from begging in certain foreign countries are significantly higher than those obtained in Romania, due to the higher living standards of the population that gives money to beggars. Finally, this kind of trafficking is a new kind of criminality, that the authorities and also the population are not yet familiar with, hence, have not developed awareness nor action to combat it.

Of the total number of persons investigated for external trafficking, 47.9% were part of organised criminal groups (defined as groups formed in a coordinated manner with at least three people\(^\text{43}\)) and 3.1% from criminal groups (group composed of two or more persons, acting in circumstantial situations, without having a predefined purpose\(^\text{44}\)).

The average age of the persons investigated for this criminal offence within Romania was 36 years old. The average age of traffickers acting abroad was slightly higher (older than 38 years). The ratio of men investigated for external trafficking was significantly higher than that of women, unlike the case of domestic trafficking, where the ratio of women to men was equal.

In most cases - except for the Tândârei case (see chapter 5.3), where 78 members of the trafficking group were identified - other organised groups trafficking people for begging are much smaller, with only 3 to 4 members. Most traffickers have a criminal record and have oriented themselves towards this criminal sector. This type of criminal offense

\(^{43}\) Law 39 /2003 regarding the prevention and fighting against organised crime, Art. 7.
\(^{44}\) Law 39/2003, regarding the prevention and fighting against organised crime, Art. 9.
is not the only one perpetrated by the traffickers. In interviews with the victims, DCCO officers and in some of the victims’ statements, it was revealed that the criminal groups are also perpetrating sexual exploitation, involved in drug trafficking or street crimes.

Generally, the traffickers are males, sometimes supported by their wives, concubines, children or other relatives, with ages ranging between 16 and 45 years. Women play an important role in transporting the victims from Romania, because the women are trusted more by border authorities. Women might also play the role of teaching the victims how to beg and of supervising the trafficked women or children. The women also apply physical force to subdue recalcitrant victims. The roles of traffickers within the network are not always clearly defined however, such that the ‘recruiter’ might also be involved in transporting the victims and their ongoing exploitation.

From the interviews with victims and experts, it was noted that victims that had been under the control of the traffickers for a long time would be appointed as supervisors for the newest victims. They were still exploited, but were given the impression of being important in the network with the hope that maybe someday they will do better, or they will receive extra food, a cigarette or another benefit.

The manner in which the victims were subdued, and in certain cases, turned into traffickers’ helpers, was based on fear – the victims were subject to daily threats, were intimated and blackmailed with threats concerning their family members, and the rebellious victims were beaten. Most victims exploited by means of deceit witnessed aggressive actions taken by the traffickers against non-obedient victims.

Some of the interviewed victims (3 out of 8) mentioned that their traffickers were Romanian individuals of Romani origin. The groups were relatively small, consisting of one or two related families of families that were friends; some of the trafficking groups were in contact with other Romani groups performing criminal offenses: “When we arrived in France I was taken to a house where I saw several gypsies and I was left there, both me and the other people brought from Romania .... where I used to live was with a gypsy family, but others used to come visit, saying that they also have people begging for them” (B, 44 years old); “When I arrived there I was
delivered to a gypsy family that was accommodating several people, and they told me that the next day I would have to go beg with the others because no other jobs exist and we have to pay for accommodation and food. I said that I did not want to go there to beg and they told me that I can return [to Romania] if I have the money and, if not, I must go beg, and they even beat me. Other gypsy families were visiting the gypsies where we were living, they were all together and I think they also had some car-related businesses” (B, 40 years old).

The interviewed social workers noted that most of those involved in exploiting children through begging and also subsistence begging were Romani. One DGASPC representative added however that this is only certain Romani categories, because begging is not in accordance with all Romani traditions, for instance those that are coppersmiths or in silk manufacturing. According to the police officers that were interviewed, the organised groups that are mainly operating in begging-related trafficking mostly consist of Romani members.

The over representation of Roma among trafficking victims is shown by other studies on the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. These studies explain the greater risk of victimization in Roma communities through factors such as poverty, social exclusion, discrimination, the lack of formal education and inadequate social assistance systems.

It seems that the large number of Roma persons that beg voluntarily and which become victims of trafficking for forced begging or are involved in criminal groups acting in this area, can be explained not only through the previously mentioned vulnerabilities that increase the risk of trafficking (poverty, lack of formal education, the illusion of a better life abroad, economic difficulties in Romania, limited efficiency of social protection policies), but also through some specific cultural, social and economic factors that make the integration of the Roma population even harder than is the case of other disadvantaged groups.

The importance of these factors on increasing the vulnerability of Roma to trafficking for begging may be the subject of future study.

5.3. The Tăndărei case

The most important case of human trafficking for forced begging that the Romanian authorities investigated was the Tăndărei-based networks, consisting of 78 identified members which operated between 2002 - 2006 in the UK in particular, but also in Spain, France and Italy. It must however, be treated as a one-off case due to the immense size of the operation and not as representative of trafficking for begging. Nevertheless, the analysis of this case is relevant in order to understand the factors that encouraged the development of this particular trafficking network.

All information about this case was provided by the police officers and the DIICOT representative that were involved in the prosecution.

In the Tăndărei case, the network developed around certain influential families or persons within Romani communities, with Romani people talking about the leader of the most important group of traffickers as “young, strong, feared gipsy” or “judge in a Romani court”. The networks expanded around the leading family members.

Data collected during the Tăndărei investigations, show that during the 1990s, some Roma people emigrated to the UK and have now returned to Romania with welfare money from other states and profits from criminal activities, displaying their wealth in the form of expensive clothes and luxury cars. Whilst emigrated, they took their brothers, cousins, relatives and children to collect State allowances for disadvantaged groups (estimated at around GBP 600/child/month – a large amount, compared to their incomes in Romania). Their intention was solely to collect state benefits, as such, they never made efforts to integrate into the country. Furthermore, at the same time that they were receiving State allowances, they begged and committed criminal offences such as pick-pocketing and shoplifting.

Gradually, the network started to exploit other children from poor families, to whom they promised money. Most victims were found in poor Romani communities, such persons being easily manipulated and influenced (used to low living standards, not being aware of their rights, not being able to notify anyone of the abuse). They were promised social benefits from the British state, that their children would be schooled, clothed and well treated, that they would have a
better life and that the parents would also receive part of the benefits. Over time, the network extended its influence, and began to search for vulnerable people from neighbouring towns and counties.

The children were recruited in exchange for a debt to the traffickers, which would be owed by the parents. Recruitment by means of offsetting debts was also applicable in the case of adults that were exploited for begging or to commit crimes.

In order to ensure the trafficking of children, the traffickers also developed their network to involve persons employed at Notary Public offices, which facilitated the traffickers’ ability to obtain or counterfeit the required documents. The traffickers also recruited low profile individuals, with clean criminal records, to be paid solely in order to accompany the children when crossing the border.

The trafficking of children between 8-16 years gave the lowest risks for the network, because the documents were more easily counterfeited (birth certificates were counterfeited by changing the age, the parents’ names or even the childrens’ names) and this category of victims also gave the highest earnings for the traffickers.

The ‘carriers’ (those that transport victims) were also network members and were responsible for facilitating a smooth clearance at the border. The carriers were close acquaintances with the leaders of the trafficking network, from the same locality. The children were transported by network members to Arad, and afterwards dispersed to various buses belonging to local carriers.

Abroad, the trafficking process then continued with other members of the network. The traffickers had connections with criminals in the immigrant community, also recruiting perpetrators of other nationalities – Slovaks, Czechs and Poles, mainly of Romani ethnic descent. They sent minors to beg, to wash car windscreens at intersections or to commit pick-pocketing, shoplifting or thefts from restaurants.

The network’s wide reach could also be explained by the limited intervention by local Romanian authorities. This was facilitated the weak system of checks on unjustified goods (the network members were not registered as having a source of income, yet they or their
relatives held movable property and real estate amounting to hundreds of thousand Euros) and the absence of any investigation concerning the financial wealth displayed by emigrants returning to Romania.

Some interviewed experts believed that the social policies of certain countries have encouraged the growth of migration and, indirectly, human trafficking. One of the interviewees considers that most of the income obtained by Romanian trafficking network members of Romani origin, who have operated in the UK, has come from social benefits from the UK and has been used to build expensive villas and buy luxury cars in Romania.

An expert involved in the prosecution of the network believes that shortcomings vis-à-vis the intervention of British authorities should also be mentioned, due to the fact that most of the trafficked children had been previously picked-up by the British police forces and were registered as “low social danger criminal offenders”. The problem consists of the fact that British authorities have treated them strictly as minors violating the law, and not as potential victims of human trafficking. Should the foreign authorities have performed a more in-depth investigation, the trafficking issue might have been noticed and sanctioned sooner, and the problem would not have increased to such a scale.
6. Escaping from trafficking

For a certain period of time, the victims’ desires to escape fade away, but the desire re-emerges and manages to prevail despite the inhumane and slave-like conditions.

Even if no concrete information was obtained from the interviews with experts concerning the victims’ methods to escape from trafficking, the interviews furnished information on the victims’ motivation, self-perception and identification of the moment for escape. Most victims do not see themselves as victims, and that is the reason why they do not refer to the police or other authorities for support, and they manage to escape from trafficking on their own or supported by family members or third parties. By not perceiving that they are being exploited, they decide to leave the moment they become aware of the impossibility of their current existing social and financial conditions and/or when they realise that their situation is not meeting the expectations initially promised by the trafficker. “The victims did not remain subject to trafficking for a long time, at least not the adults, who became aware soon enough of the deceit and would no longer accept the bad treatment” (expert in the fight against organised crime).

In other cases, an escape and subsequent complaint filed with the authorities, represents the victim’s normal reaction to the trauma suffered and rough treatment applied by the traffickers.

Due to the fact that escaping from trafficking sometimes coincides with the moment when victims are identified as being trafficked, one interviewed expert provided information on the places where such victims are identified, in both cases of domestic and external trafficking, these are typically train stations, parking places, crowded boulevards, etc.

Escaping from trafficking is conditioned by several characteristics: age, gender, the structure of the criminal network, the abuse suffered, the level of education and the knowledge of their rights. “The victims decide to leave and ask for support, after a certain period of time during which they manage to earn the confidence of their exploiters

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46 Interview with an expert in the fight against organised crime.
and are no longer supervised that strictly” (expert in the fight against organised crime.)

Depending on the material, financial and emotional support received by the victims from various actors, but also depending on the structure of the trafficking network and the restrictions applied to victims, the ways in which the victims manage to escape from traffic can be classified as follows:
- escape based on own resources and initiative (running away);
- escape based on family support;
- escape based on strangers’ support;
- escape based on authorities’ support (police through proactive identification);
- escape based on the support received from certain members of the community of origin;
- escape based on NGO support;
- “medical” escape.

Following is a breakdown concerning the actual ways that the interviewed victims escaped from trafficking:
- two victims stated that they were supported by two strangers, one speaking Romanian and the other one apparently being Romanian, and were advised to get out of this circumstance as soon as possible. In one case, the “stranger” himself ensured the accommodation of the victim and of his/her two family members in order to assist the victim to escape for one week, until the victim’s return to Romania;
- another victim stated that he/she was advised and supported by a local police officer who spoke Romanian, in order to escape;
- another victim returned to Romania together with the trafficking network, which intended to move the criminal operations to another country, and by taking the opportunity of the traffickers’ lack of attention, the victim managed to call a relative for support;
- one victim stated that he/she managed to inform his/her family regarding his/her condition, at which moment a local community official from the victim’s place of origin sent money in order for them to return home;

47 An expert has mentioned cases where the victims, due to exhaustion, living conditions and/or malnutrition, were unable to function and were abandoned by the traffickers, or cases where the victims felt sick on the street, at which moment the local healthcare authorities intervened, generating the identification process.
Escaping from trafficking

- another victim exploited the traffickers’ lack of attention and managed to run to the Consulate, applying for the release of his/her travel documents and afterwards returned home on a bus, with the little funds he/she had;
- another victim managed to escape together with two other victims, following the traffickers’ lack of attention, and returned to Romania by bus, paying small amount of money to the bus driver (money that one of the victims had at the time of escape);
- the medical ‘escape’ occurred when due to physical exhaustion and/or malnutrition and dehydration the victim blacked out on the street where he/she was begging and the victim was then identified when arriving at the hospital for medical care.

There is a differentiation in identifying domestically versus externally trafficked Romanian victims, such that, according to a specialist in identification, the identification of the external victims is a little more difficult due to the involvement of several authorities and the information dissemination process being mediated. In the case of domestic trafficking, the victims are identified either following street investigations/operations, or after going to the police by themselves, in order to file complaints against the exploiters.

Causes of trafficking

In an attempt to explain the causes that have generated victimisation and, implicitly, the entire trafficking process, it can be seen that most victims mainly, if not entirely, assign the causes to certain external factors beyond their control. For example, one victim stated: “I was unable to find a job; I had no other solution, I gladly accepted the offer. The traffickers are responsible for fooling us and for exploiting us”.

Only a few victims thought that they could somehow control the circumstance, such as by gathering more information about the people making the ‘offer’, or even about the ‘offer’ itself. Some victims stated that they had no idea regarding the type of the future job and that they failed to ask enough questions in this respect.

The precarious financial situation – with incomes below subsistence level – generates problems even after exploitation, when the victims wish to claim their rights: “…although they have certain rights, they fail to have the economic resources required in order to claim their rights in court” (interview with a expert in the fight against organised crime).
7. Re-trafficking

According to the information available so far, 8% of the victims trafficked for begging become subject to re-trafficking.\(^{48}\) Based on the information from interviews, the triggering factors, on a case-by-case basis, can be classified in two categories: internal and external.

Internal factors contribute to difficulties or even to an inability to socially integrate, thus positioning the victim in a vulnerable context and subsequently susceptible to the same vicious trafficking cycle, that is, being ‘re-trafficked’. With respect to victims originating from environments or families practicing begging even prior to trafficking, due to the lack of education, training or other viable alternatives, victims are not aware of any other models or options of living, and thus end up back on the streets, under the influence of traffickers.

The lack of financial resources is considered by one interviewed expert as one of the reasons why the victims are willingly returning to the streets.

In other cases, even though the observations are not representative for the entire population of victims of human trafficking, such observation can apply to cases of re-trafficking, the ‘traumatic attachment’ being a factor contributing to re-trafficking. This phenomenon implies a condition where the victims feel appreciated and valued by their traffickers, considering the latter as the only persons who can provide such satisfaction.

The external factors are mostly due to particular circumstances, such as the following:

- the failure of authorities to appropriately address a victim’s support and protection needs, was stated in three interviews with social service experts. The interviewees noted the precarious and limited support to the victim - compared to the victim’s needs - as circumstances that do not assist in combating vulnerability. Systemic deficiencies are also mentioned, such as the absence of an appropriate cooperation between institutions, which might generate the omission of certain information and indicators vital for the identification process “The beggars are diverted towards their original locale, although they can be immediately re-victimized, either by being taken over by traffickers, or by returning to the exploiting individuals” (social services expert).

\(^{48}\)According to the re-trafficking indicator, SIMEV.
Re-trafficking

- the traffickers’ influence over the victim, although only mentioned in one interview, is also one of the reasons why the victims are being re-trafficked, following threats received from traffickers;
- the influence of the family or of the environment of origin. Under such circumstances, originating from families that lack education; being from vulnerable environments that cannot provide appropriate models and that are generating the members’ re-victimization is noted: “The victims return to the environments from which they have been taken, or to the families that have exploited them or in the locality of origin, with no resources, no occupation, and this makes them vulnerable” (interview with an NGO representative).

Delivering a consistent and efficient process to help victims of trafficking can lead to a low rate of re-trafficking. A high level of dissemination of information regarding the rights that victims are entitled to, can also condition the success of this process of assistance. The level of training of experts that came into contact with victims is also a precondition of success.

Based on some experts’ opinion, most victims are reluctant to receive assistance in shelters. The reasons for this are due to individual factors but also due to the limitation of services available for them.

From the social workers participating in the study, it was reported that assistance is not sufficient, and that they consider poverty as being the main factor of re-trafficking.
8. The effects of exploitation

The individual’s life experience has an impact on their future, it may generate mental tension and shape the behaviour of how they adapt to others. It could be stated that the individual’s social experience indirectly, as influenced by their mentality, determines the evaluation of their life. Not all negative events experienced by an individual are perceived as a trauma. Traumas consist of reactions of persons who have suffered due to certain stress factors – the ‘trauma’ – with strong effects that have exceeded the person’s ability to cope.

With respect to this issue, it should be mentioned that all victims included in the sample refer to their previous experience as a trauma with major negative effects. Such effects are: changes of emotional responses (increased irascibility, mental instability, lower toleration to frustration and stress, crying easily); changes in interpersonal relations (the victims became more cautious in their relations with others, they no longer trust people, for some they cannot trust even those that are close to them). The interviews with experts showed that the victims had developed anxiety, depression, had become more fearful (fear in particular related to the possibility of being found by their previous exploiters), and had developed sleep disturbances (insomnia, nightmares).

The police officers involved in the investigation of the cases of human trafficking who came into contact with the victims - even though the officers were not experts in social services and victims’ needs assessment - consider that even in the situation of non-visible effects of exploitation, the mental-emotional trauma was extremely high.

Recovery and overcoming trauma

The results of the study showed that the services received by the interviewed victims, within the assistance processes were various: material support, medical assistance, psychological counselling, training for requalification, support for finding a job, family reintegration or support in procuring identity cards.
The effects of exploitation

All of the eight victims that participated in the study are receiving support through the Coordination in Trial Program, implemented by Romanian authorities in order to enhance and empower victims to participate in a trial and to claim their rights and compensation.
9. Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation of the vulnerability of persons who are practicing begging, indicates that proper identification and referral of those victims to adequate assistance could break the chain of this particular type of trafficking. If the beggars could be removed from the streets and assisted in a proper manner, the traffickers would lose their assets and the victims could be assisted to exit the trafficking cycle. The assistance process however must be focussed, as an increasing percentage of victims being re-trafficked for forced begging is evident, as opposed to other forms of exploitation.

The limitations of this study are reduced by the qualitative aspects which give light to victims’ characteristics, methods used for recruitment, threats used for exploitation, as well as information on countries of the victims’ origin, trafficking flows and destination countries.

The heterogeneity of the population falling into this type of trafficking requires a diversity of initiatives to be taken in order to reduce vulnerability to trafficking. Areas such as education, justice and human rights should be taken into consideration when combating trafficking for forced begging.

Prevention measures should be focused to reduce the vulnerability of groups at risk. These changes should start with the basic structures, as systemic changes in education or labour integration of vulnerable persons raises the quality of life and enables a continuation development of programs designed to raise and build capacity and awareness of local authorities. Local initiatives could also target citizens in general with the aim of raising awareness, but also to enable individuals to react to possible cases of trafficking.

From the results of the study based on data and information collected from interviews, the main observations, challenges and recommendations are presented here. However, the measures that should be taken to combat trafficking for begging are not limited to these recommendations.

Observation 1: Most victims came from a poor environment and were marginalised from a socio-economic point of view, resulting in begging and vulnerability to trafficking for forced begging.
**Recommendations:**

- Offering the possibility for school and professional integration into the community/workforce were solutions mentioned by all interviewees, as essential for increasing the victims’ ability for self-support and decreasing the vulnerability of being trafficked;
- Initiating community development programmes, which, at the local level, will lead to the identification of resources necessary for increasing living standards of the persons in need.

**Observation 2:** Punishing and combating trafficking for forced begging needs a thorough approach.

**Recommendations:**

- The increase of penalties applied to traffickers following investigation and proof of trafficking is one of the solutions to combat this type of trafficking. The current penalties set out by Romanian legislation are theoretically considered by most interviewees as harsh enough, but, according to some interviewees, when criminal offenses related to trafficking for forced begging can be documented, only the minimal penalties are issued, leading the traffickers to take risks.
- Punishing begging in all European states would be a measure that could contribute to the decreasing of trafficking for begging. As this would increase the risk for traffickers.
- The permanent presence of police forces on the streets, especially in the places where begging occurs is another measure which the authorities could take to decrease trafficking.

**Observation 3:** There is a low level of awareness and information among people, both in Romania and outside the country, regarding exploitation through begging and as a form of trafficking in persons.

**Recommendations:**

- It is essential to inform people that this type of crime occurs and develops where more money can be earned.
- To target the public information campaigns and the prevention of trafficking in persons for forced begging, to both vulnerable categories and the persons close to them (family, friends, colleagues), as they also lack information, and have a precarious financial situation etc.
Observation 4: Continuing activities related to building capacity and support to victims within prosecution processes.

Recommendations
- To support the victims during their participation in the criminal trial, so they are made aware of the exploitation situation and to testify against the traffickers. According to the Romanian legal proceedings, the victim’s testimony facilitates the prosecution of the crime.
- Ensuring a greater efficiency of protection granted to human trafficking victims, by avoiding their exposure during the criminal trial. Thus, solely the prosecutor should hear the victims and the authorities specialized in their protection. This is the preferred method, than when heard by the judge when the trafficker is present, as in this situation, most victims change their testimony, being intimidated by the trafficker’s presence.

Observation 5: The rate of re-trafficking victims is very high when the victims return to the environment they had left and the traffickers regain influence on them. This is also the case when the social services are inadequate.

Recommendations:
- To increase the number of victims who participate in special programmes, such as the witness protection programme, when a case demonstrates a high risk of re-trafficking the victim.
- Using an adequate method of case risk assessment and where a risk is identified, to make all the necessary actions to prevent the risk, including relocation of the victims.

Observation 6: Adequate training for all specialist actors coming into contact with the victims.

Recommendations:
- Support training and counselling for all personnel in the police system or other structures responsible for public order. The trainings or information should deal directly with begging, but also the hidden criminal side.
- Improving capacity of public institutions to offer assistance services to victims (sufficient number of personnel, financial resources, logistical and material adequate support).
Conclusion and recommendations

➢ Engage NGOs in regards to the expansion of anti-trafficking activities, by assigning funds related to the development of anti-trafficking programs. The interviewed representatives of NGOs noted the scarcity of funds assigned for the assistance activities; problems have also been identified concerning European funds, due to the fact that they do not ensure the opportunity of financing the assistance programs.

➢ Conduct training for specialist workers on this specific type of trafficking with a particular approach on the victims’ needs and trauma as a consequence of trafficking.

**Observation 7:** A number of victims that managed to escape from trafficking did not know where to go in the destination country. Similarly, some authorities in the destination country did not know how to properly assist victims, thus making it harder to identify the victims and to assist them in order to recover.

**Recommendations:**

➢ Enhanced cooperation with institutions in other countries - especially those which are destination countries for Romanian trafficking flows - with the purpose of establishing contact points to facilitate actions to combat trafficking and assist victims.

➢ Periodically inform Romanian embassies regarding the trends of trafficking in persons and characteristics of victims in order for them to be prepared to answer victims’ needs.

➢ Improve proactive identification by setting up mobile teams consisting of representatives from relevant institutions.

➢ Strengthen the capacity of the authorities to react at the slightest sign of trafficking.

**Observation 8:** The particular problem of parents who are involved in trafficking their children, this being difficult to prove and punish.

**Recommendations:**

➢ Increasing the number of the shelters and places intended to assist vulnerable persons. In this context, orphanages or maternal centres. These centres have proved their utility in the reintegration of vulnerable persons and the model could also be adopted for trafficking. In some situations, within these types of centres, victims of trafficking or those that are vulnerable to trafficking are assisted and the centres can be a solution for prevention.
Conclusion and recommendations

- Inclusion of children (identified as being vulnerable to trafficking) in special programmes or day centres, to ensure the children’s basic needs, and for them to learn what a normal and responsible life is.
- Identifying situations where parents’ treatment of their children is more than a case of neglect, and to consider these cases as potential exploitation or trafficking.

Observation 9: Children, the elderly, persons with disabilities or Roma persons are frequently encountered as victims of begging and special attention should be paid to these specific categories.

Recommendations:
- Highlighting vulnerabilities of these categories of people, in the initiatives, measures or actions for combating or preventing trafficking in persons. All these actions should be taken in compliance with human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination principles.
- Strengthening the protection and integration measures for the elderly and persons with disabilities (financial resources, access to specialized shelter, medical services etc).
- The cooperation with public or private institutions for Roma rights should be with the aim of coordinating information regarding the hidden dangers, factors and consequences of trafficking.
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Annex

County of origin for the trafficked victims exploited through forced begging

Counties of destination for forced begging in trafficking

Legend
No. of victims
0
1 - 4
5 - 9
10 - 14
15 - 30

Legend
No. of victims
0
1
2 - 4
5 - 12
13 - 29
30 - 57
