

Countering New forms of Roma Child Trafficking (CONFRONT)

Country Report Romania

Author: Daniela Tarnovschi



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme, European Commission – Directorate General Home Affairs. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission

Executive Summary

The current report analyses a delicate and little investigated topic in Romania – trafficking in person in Roma communities with focus on child trafficking for begging, pickpocketing and sexual exploitation of boys. The report tries to gather together all information available about the topic in the absence of official statistics.

The report examines the profiles of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) and discusses the vulnerabilities of Roma communities to traffic. The study aims to provide empirical knowledge on the mechanisms of recruitment and exploitation of victims in order to inform identification efforts and counter-trafficking responses.

The report is making an effort to advocate for collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity, in the legal framework. This will allow state institutions to improve the design of anti-traffic public policies in Romania, but also to counteract certain discriminatory claims towards Roma from Romania.

Particular attention is devoted to the policy and measures for assistance of victims. The active involvement of Roma organizations and Roma activists in the research through participatory methods aimed to increase their involvement in the counter-trafficking actions and maybe in the future design of counter-trafficking policies. Their involvement helped to achieve a better understanding of multiple risk factors involved, making them more aware and more determined to get involved in counter-trafficking actions in their communities.

The current study is developed in the framework of a EU project CONFRONT... Romanians is a significant source of trafficking victims in Europe. Only in 2012 and 2013 1937 persons, Romanian citizens (adults and children), were identified as victims of trafficking in human beings (THB), 56% (1092) being trafficked throughout Europe. Out of the total victims of THB registered in reported years (2012 and 2013) 34.5% (670) were children and 128 of them were trafficked throughout Europe.

The predominant type of exploitation of child trafficking in 2012 and 2013 is sexual exploitation of girls, followed by forced labor, then begging and pick-pocketing. In the case of adults the number of adults, victims of THB is decreasing since 2010, but the number of children, victims of THB is increasing, almost doubling. Most vulnerable minors to traffic are girls; the most vulnerable age group is 14-17 years old; almost all minors were enrolled in school and were living with their families (mono and bi-parental); were recruited mostly by friends and acquaintances.

Romanian authorities do not collect data disaggregated by ethnicity in this case (but in others they do), so the report provides only expert assessments made with great caution, all of them refusing to provide any numbers. We correlated experts' statements with information from different reports on the topic. In some specific forms of exploitation, such as begging and pickpocketing the share of Roma is considerably higher.

The study looks at three specific forms of child trafficking – for begging, for pickpocketing and for sexual exploitation of boys – and determines the way these crimes affect the Roma as a group at risk.

These three forms of exploitation are analyzed in this report in order to address the lack of information about how the crime manifests itself, the mechanisms of recruitment and of exploitation.

While begging and pickpocketing have been recognized as subsistence strategies for impoverished families, they have only recently been recognized as potential form of trafficking and have been criminalized as such respectively. The third form – trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys –, first time recorded in 2010 in Romania is something so new that more empirical knowledge is needed to improve victim identification and assistance.

The field research was conducted using the method of participatory research. Very little is known about the representation of Roma among trafficking victims, especially from official sources. Still, mass media outlets (Romanian and foreigners) are presenting Roma as being over-represented among victims of THB (and exploiters) and no instance can support or contradict them due to the lack of data. Unfortunately, also due to the lack of data and information about the topic there are no specific measures in the actual counter-traffic strategy.

The study states it clearly that there are no specific culturally ingrained practices that make Roma vulnerable to trafficking, but factors such as poverty, large-scale unemployment and low levels of education, the result of history of social exclusion of Roma, may explain its possible vulnerability to trafficking. Other factors, such as history of physical and sexual abuse, poor education, previous involvement in prostitution, little or lack of support from social services also increase the chance of children falling prey to trafficking exploitation. The findings on profiles of victims, mechanisms of recruitment and exploitation are organized along the three forms of exploitation.

The chapters on Roma child trafficking for **begging** starts with the discussion of child begging as a common phenomenon in Romania due to poverty and lack of response from state authorities. Roma are overrepresented among victim of THB, but also as traffickers (expert assessments) due to poverty, lack of education, lack of perspective, and limited impact of social protection policies. Children are trafficked to Western countries (mainly Germany, Italy, Greece, Spain).

One famous case of trafficking for begging is presented – Tandarei. Children of poor background, not only Roma, from Tandarei and surrounding areas, were trafficked to UK by a network of 78 identified members and made to beg, car window cleaning or pickpocketing. Children were sold by their families or giving to traffickers with the hope that they can make money in UK and help their family back home. The UK police discovered and arrested them and treat them as “low social danger criminal offenders” without investigating more closely. Finally, the network was discovered and together with

Romanian authorities an impressive police action happened in UK, but also in Romania. Unfortunately, for years, local authorities did nothing to prevent or to investigate the situation; so many children became victims of traffickers, but also due to the lack of interest of local authorities.

Children victims of trafficking for **pickpocketing** are extremely difficult to investigate, hence the low number of victims registered by Romanian authorities. Pick-pocketing is frequently associated with begging and it is also a surviving strategy employed by poor families: they encourage their children to steal or sell them to traffickers.

Children get in vulnerable situation (begging and pick-pocketing) due to poverty, poor education linked with poverty, permissive attitude towards begging, disorganized families, violence, child neglect, large families with low income or living on social benefits, development of criminal activities with no or limited intervention from local authorities, lack of community reaction faced with criminal activities.

Very little information exist regarding the sexual exploitation of boys so no real profile of the victims can be made. But this form of child exploitation has the same roots and facilitating factors as begging and pickpocketing, with some specifications: child trafficking for sexual exploitation is considered unacceptable by local communities, and sexual exploitation of boys is hardly considered as a reality. But due to the lack of information and reaction result in less protection of boys by their families.

The report outlines the different recruitments and exploitation strategies applied for each of the three forms within the **child trafficking process**.

In general the recruiter is coming from the same environment or similar to his/her victim. The trafficker, after gathering all necessary information about the family present himself to potential victims as someone very successful, someone to be admired and envied by his victims. They make attacked promises to children or their families, and even sign contracts if necessary (parents selling their children or lending them for a profit). Exploitation of children for begging and pickpocketing happens in public places, crowded areas. If children refuse to perform are beaten and threatened, kept without food etc. in many cases traffickers are the ones teaching children to steal because it is more lucrative to exploit a child in both ways – begging and pickpocketing. Minors were discovered that they were housed in very poor conditions, being fed irregularly, and under tight control.

Little information is available on the mechanisms of recruitment and exploitation of boy victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, as the research found that only few victims were referred, but nothing about their assistance. Unfortunately, very little information was gathered about the involvement of Roma boys, only general information on how paedophiles were trying to kidnap children or about the “lover boy” method used also in trafficking girls and women for sexual exploitation. Italy and Spain were mentioned as destination countries, but information need to be checked further by national authorities.

Special attention of the study is devoted to **protection and assistance** to child victims of trafficking. Children, victims of THB identified abroad are referred to Romanian authorities and their return is arranged according to Coordination Mechanism for Referral and Care of Unaccompanied Children. Still, there are certain gaps in child victim identification process, which prevent children in situation of trafficking and exploitation to gain access to assistance. When returned children are then placed under the General Directorate for Child Assistance and Protection care until their case is analyzed (the family situation, the responsible for trafficking are identified) and a final solution is decided. Still, there are certain difficulties in preventing and protecting the victims of THB of Roma ethnicity because of negative stereotypes Roma communities and Romanian police have about each other. Apart of these, services providers are experiencing problems due to poor funding, lack of infrastructure, of cooperation between social actors involved in child protection and care.

The final chapter of this report is dedicated to exploring possibilities for more active Roma community involvement in the assistance for child victims of trafficking as well as in the prevention of re/trafficking. Unfortunately, all we manage to discover were some ad-hoc practices of local communities with limited impact. Unfortunately, visible Roma NGOs are not involved in the issue, some of them refusing stating that in this way they are avoiding adding a new stigma to Roma minority. Still, the Roma experts we manage to involve during our research acknowledge that it is important to approach the topic and inform Roma communities about the dangers of THB. Some of them stated to NATP that they are willing to take part in counter-trafficking campaigns.

<i>Executive Summary (TBD)</i>	1
1. <i>Introduction</i>	1
1.1. Methodology	2
2. <i>Country Background</i>	5
2.1. Trafficking in human beings (THB): data and trends.....	5
2.2. Children - victims of trafficking	15
2.3. Root causes of trafficking	19
2.4. Institutional Set Up, Legal and Policy Framework.....	21
3. <i>The Roma Child Trafficking Phenomenon</i>	28
3.1. Child trafficking for begging	32
3.2. Child trafficking for pick-pocketing.....	38
3.3. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys.....	40
4. <i>The child victims – multiple vulnerabilities, risk factors and risk of trafficking</i>	44
4.1. Multiple vulnerabilities and intersectionality approach	44
4.2. Multiple vulnerabilities and risk of trafficking	48
5. <i>Child trafficking process</i>	49
5.1. Child trafficking for begging	50
5.2. Child trafficking for pickpocketing	51
5.3. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys.....	52
6. <i>Victims assistance and protection response mechanisms</i>	53
6.1. Identification of victims as a prerequisite to assistance	53
6.2. Protection and assistance	54
7. <i>Elements of effective community involvement in developing more sustainable responses and mechanisms</i>	57
8. <i>Conclusions and recommendations (TBD)</i>	60
9. <i>Annex. List of Expert Interviewees</i>	63

1. Introduction

As it is pointed out in the Report regarding the situation of the trafficking in human beings (THB) for 2012¹ of the National Agency against Trafficking in Person (NATP) trafficking in person is one of the most profitable/lucrative activities of organized crime in EU. According to Europol the profits from this are surpassed only by drug trafficking and arms trafficking.

Romania, no matter the fact that it is a full member of the EU, is very often considered, just-fully, as one of the main source of THB in EU alongside Bulgaria. It is also true that both countries are the poorest ones in EU and THB goes well together with poverty, low level of education, lack of employment, lack of perspectives for the future.

In the framework of the current study the research team visited 5 communities, interviewed homeless persons, talked with children and their parents in schools, talked with children in state care, with medical doctor from one school from a poor neighborhood in Bucharest, conducted interviews with experts, representatives of state institutions (social workers, policeman, Roma local expert in a city-hall²), Roma intellectuals and Roma leaders. It is nothing surprising to find out that THB happens in the poorest communities where domestic violence, child neglect, prostitution, drug or alcohol consumption, unemployment, poor living conditions, lack of education, discrimination are common denominators. We targeted in our research Roma communities, so we went to Roma neighborhoods: some partly segregated; others dispersed (one with high percentage of Neo-Protestant believers); but also in Bucharest.

According to different sources³ Roma are a key risk group to human trafficking across Europe. When asked, the representatives of the Romanian authorities with responsibilities in fighting THB were reluctant to offer an estimation of how many or at least how much of the total trafficked victims are of Roma origins. In the National Strategy against Trafficking in Person for 2006-2010 Roma ethnics were mentioned in one specific objective as a vulnerable group with risk to become victims of THB alongside other vulnerable groups (eg. disabled persons). In the actual National Strategy against Trafficking in Person for 2012-2016 Roma are mentioned as one group with difficulties in accessing the labor market and benefiting from the active

¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the trafficking in human beings (THB) for 2012 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf> consulted on September 15, 2014

² According to the Decision no. 430/2001 through Decision no. 522/2006 the local Roma expert could be employed by local authorities with the task of mediating between local Roma communities and local authorities.

³ Ungureanu R-N. (2013). Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

General Inspectorates of Romanian Police, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Sociological Research Handbook On Child Trafficking. Ed. Alpha MDN.

Gavril I. G., Tamas A. M. (2009). The traffic of children in Romania. Study over the recruitment process. Ed. Alpha MDN.

European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the Silence. Trafficking in Romani Communities. March 2011

GRETA (2012). Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania.

Eurostat (2013). Methodologies and working papers. Trafficking in human beings. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013 ISSN 1977-0375

measures implemented by the National Employment Agency (NEA). It is mentioned in the same paragraph that Romanian Government is developing information programs about the labor market, labor rights, qualifications, etc. There is no mentioned of Roma as a vulnerable group with high risk of becoming victims of THB.

During the drafting of the National Strategy against Trafficking in Person for 2006-2010 the National Agency for Roma (NAR)⁴ was part of the working group, their involvement was assessed as “tokenistic” in the Breaking the Silence (2011)⁵ report. In the actual Strategy 2012-2016 (see the Institutional Set Up, Legal and Policy Framework Chapter) NAR was not invited, nor other Roma NGOs⁶.

The risk of Roma ethnics in becoming victims of THB was not considered and not mentioned in many official documents and reports dedicated to Roma issue or which approached the topic: National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2012-2020 (NRIS) the main governmental policy dedicated to social inclusion of Roma); “Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” (World Bank Report, 2014, prepared to be used in the programming of the EU funds 2014-2020 and the revision of the NRIS); Romanian Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020; draft document of the Operational Program Human Capacity. All these documents present the problems Roma are confronted with advocating for methods of achieving social inclusion, but THB is not something even remotely mentioned. Also, when Roma NGOs are approached about the topic they simply refuse to discuss it. They are motivating their silence by saying that it is not a subject they would like to discuss because it would bring more discrimination and negative attitudes toward Roma communities.

1.1. Methodology

In this context the present research had twofold **objectives**: to gather empirical evidences on the three “new” forms of Roma child trafficking and to make aware and prepare Roma activists/experts to take more active part in the policy debate on trafficking. In this regard we agreed to use the participatory research methods to achieve these goals. Using the chance of involving Roma intellectuals/activists in the process we manage to get them a little closer to the topic, to make them curious and aware about the dangers of THB for their ethnic group, but also to address in a very delicate way a very sensitive topic.

Using participatory research methods (focus-groups, group interviews and semi-structured interviews) and working with Roma leaders/activists/intellectuals we wanted to have at the end the best understanding of the Roma communities they were working with, to address a sensitive topic without the fear that communities would feel stigmatized, but also making Roma communities more aware of the danger of THB and the ways they can protect themselves. We chose to work with Roma

⁴ National Agency for Roma is a specialized body of the central public administration, under the supervision of the General Secretariat of the Government. It was set up in 2004 and continues the activity of the so-called Office for Roma Issues. According to its Rules of Organization and Functioning, the NAR “*elaborates the policy and strategy of the Romanian government in the area of protecting the rights of the Roma*”.

⁵ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the Silence. Trafficking in Romani Communities. March 2011

⁶ In Romania there are quite a number of very strong and visible Roma NGOs activating as important actors of civil society for more than 15 years.

graduated, involved in Roma and non Roma NGOs from the beginning, from the design of the research of communities to the collection and first interpretation of data.

The research was conducted in **two stages**: a preliminary stage and a fieldwork phase. The objectives of the preliminary phase of the research were threefold: i) to gain a general understanding on the extent of child trafficking in the country and the CT institutional frameworks ii) to identify localities with vulnerable Roma communities and iii) to assess the available child support infrastructure in each locality and to identify potential partners – Roma leaders/activists/intellectuals to be involved in further project activities.

The methods used in preliminary stage were literature review, semi-structured interviews with national stakeholders and electronic data collection questionnaires on national statistics.

In the second stage – the fieldwork stage of the research we worked with Roma graduated, involved in Roma and non Roma NGOs. At the beginning of the second stage of the research (April 15, 2014) we organized in Bucharest one training session for young Roma graduates in order to make them more aware about the traffic phenomenon. We were helped by the National Agency against Trafficking in Person. More than 30 participants from different counties of Romania were present; they discussed and were trained in preventing THB. Out of them we selected our future researchers (Roma that graduated social sciences). Together with them we started to develop our research: the hypothesis, the guides for semi-structured interviews, and focus-groups, but also for the guide for participatory observation. We aimed at finding out more about: the way adults/communities get involved in preventing the trafficking in human beings; and what communities know about the trafficking of children, with emphasis on begging, theft and sexual exploitation of boys. We decided what type of subjects we will approach and what kind of instruments we will use in order to collect data. Discussing topics were selected for each group of subjects: social workers, policeman, Roma expert in a town hall ⁷, health mediators, representatives of County Directorate for Child Assistance and Protection, homeless persons, pupils, parents, families that benefit from social assistance programs etc.).

The research team decided the locations based on the certain criteria (see below). Together with the main team (senior researchers) the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews, group-interviews, and focus groups in different locations and with different subjects. Some of the researchers went to schools (where the principle allow them) and presented to children some short films about preventing THB after which, together with the teacher, the students discussed the implications and the dangers of being trafficked.

The three areas were chosen based on the following criteria:

- several localities with concentrated Roma communities;
- documented cases of identified children victims of trafficking⁸;

⁷ According to the Decision no. 430/2001 through Decision no. 522/2006 the local Roma expert could be employed by local authorities with the task of mediating between local Roma communities and local authorities.

⁸ Save the Children, Italy, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). REACT Raising awareness and Empowerment Against Child Trafficking – Study Results in Romania, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons.

Ungureanu R-N. (2013). Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

- developed assistance infrastructure for children at risk or children victims of violence or trafficking;
- a Roma organization or a community member, who was willing to partake in this study.

We choose to work in:

- Calarasi County (Spanțov – small local Roma NGO, and Călărași municipality);
- Bucharest, District 5/Ferentari neighborhood and Gara de Nord (main train station) area;
- Constanța and Cumpăna (Constanta County);

Throughout the research, the team conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with experts, and during the visit in selected communities we manage to make 10 focus groups, 10 group interviews, and 10 semi-structured-interviews (see more information in the Annex). The respondents were: pupils, parents, one family (two parents and their two children) living in extremely poor conditions, homeless persons, children living in a state institution, social workers, medical doctor, policemen, Roma expert, teachers. Also, in this report we used the interviews already made with the representatives of the state institutions (General Inspectorate of Romanian Border Police; General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Centre for International Police Cooperation; General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Institute for Research and Crime Prevention; National Agency against Trafficking in Persons - NATP; Directorate for Child Protection); Roma intellectuals, Roma leaders, representatives of NGOs working in preventing THB (see the table in the Annexes).

During the research we manage to collect data also during informal discussion with different actors more or less involved in the problematic of trafficking of human beings. We also made notes during the training session organized in Bucharest, notes later used in our report (information provided by the NATP expert, by participants, during informal discussions that happened during the break – comments, questions, observations shared by participants in a more informal setting).

2. Country Background

2.1. Trafficking in human beings (THB): data and trends.

According to the US State Department “2013 Trafficking in Person Report”⁹ “Romania is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and women and children subjected to sex trafficking. Romanians represent a significant source of trafficking victims in Europe. Romanian men, women, and children are subjected to forced labor in agriculture, domestic service, hotels, and manufacturing, as well as forced begging and theft in European countries [...]. Men, women, and children from Romania are victims of forced prostitution in European countries, including Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.”

Still, due to the results of the efforts made by the Romanian Government (the report still states that “The Government of Romania does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking”) Romania is considered as a tier 2 country since 2002¹⁰. According to the report the Romanian authorities “continue to identify a large number of victims” and there is a national referral mechanism to ensure that police refer victims to appropriate care. The same report states that “Nevertheless, for a fourth consecutive year, the government did not provide funding to NGOs offering assistance to trafficking victims, and did not offer specialized shelter services in Bucharest for adults and children”. During our research (2013-2014) we managed to identify one Romanian NGO that has a shelter in Bucharest for victims of sex traffic (not financed by the Romanian government).

In Romania all forms of trafficking in persons are prohibited (the Law No. 678/2001) with penalties from 3-to 15 years’ imprisonment. The new Penal Code (enter into force on February 2014) provides some changes concerning the penalties applied for trafficking in persons, and also stipulates that the initial consent of the victim (no matter if the victim is an adult) does not invalidate the situation of trafficking in person.

Romania is not yet a destination country for human trafficking, few such cases being reported over the years by the National Agency against Trafficking in Person (NATP), the main institution responsible for coordinating the anti-trafficking policies and the national referral mechanism. According to the Eurostat report (2013)¹¹ Romania and Bulgaria are the EU states with the highest percentage of victims of THB and suspected traffickers. The same report emphasis the fact that Romania is leading (followed by Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary) in the hierarchy of the EU states with the highest number of countries having victims with specific citizenship.

⁹US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

¹⁰ US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

¹¹ Eurostat (2013) Methodologies and working papers. Trafficking in human beings. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013 ISSN 1977-0375

Table. Distribution of Romanians, victims of external trafficking in human beings

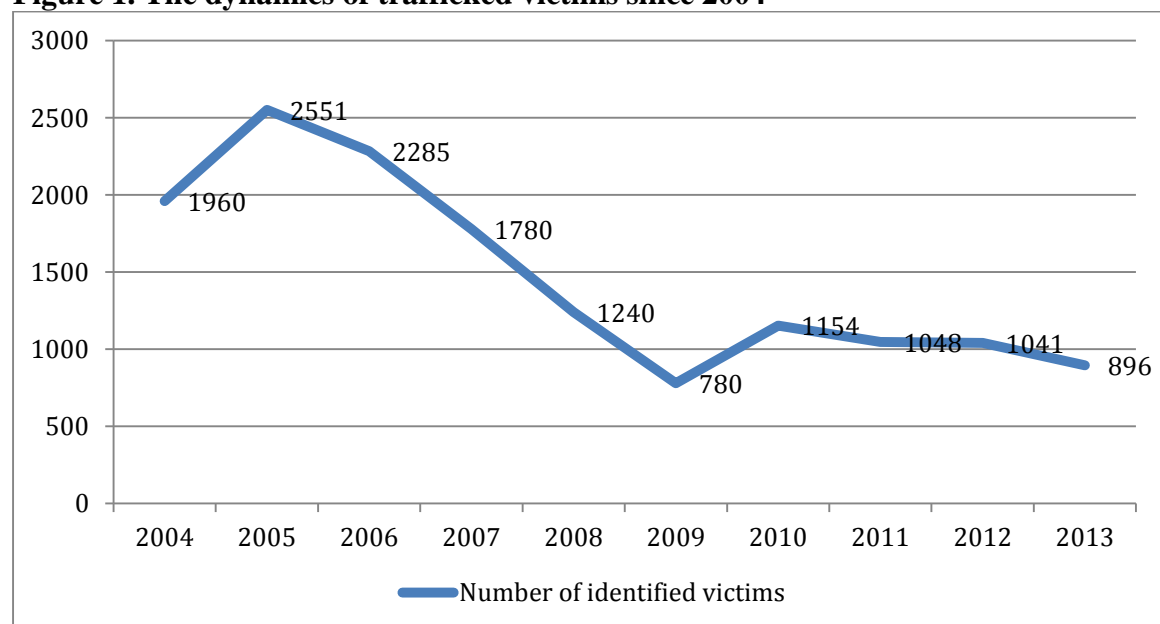
Year	Romanian citizenship identified in (European countries plus Turkey)
2008	17 countries
2009	15 countries
2010	15 countries
2011	22 countries

Note: data for 2008-2010 are from the Eurostat report (2013)¹², the rest are from the annual report of National Agency against Trafficking in Person (2011)

Each year, Romanian authorities are trying to register victims using the formal mechanism for victim identification, making efforts to get closer in registering the real number of victims trafficked. Their efforts started in 2004 and were improved in 2007, the year they started to use the National System of Registration and Monitoring of Trafficked Persons. With the years they become more and more professional in doing their tasks, being also involved in preventing the phenomenon (also due to external pressures and the Romanian accession to the European Union in 2007).

As it can be noticed from the figure no. 1 the number of victims of THB is decreasing over time, with an increase in 2010. One of the reasons for this increase is the economic crisis (which was felt a bit delayed in Romanian, but its impact is still lasting).

Figure 1. The dynamics of trafficked victims since 2004



Note:

Data for 2008 to 2013 are from the Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013¹³ (the document was produced in 2014, March 10, 2014). The document seems to be an annex of a larger document and it looks rather like a presentation than a report. This document comes from the old web page of the NATP here one can find more information presented in a more professional way. The new web page of the National Agency against Trafficking in Person

¹² Eurostat (2013) Methodologies and working papers. Trafficking in human beings. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013 ISSN 1977-0375

¹³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 - <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

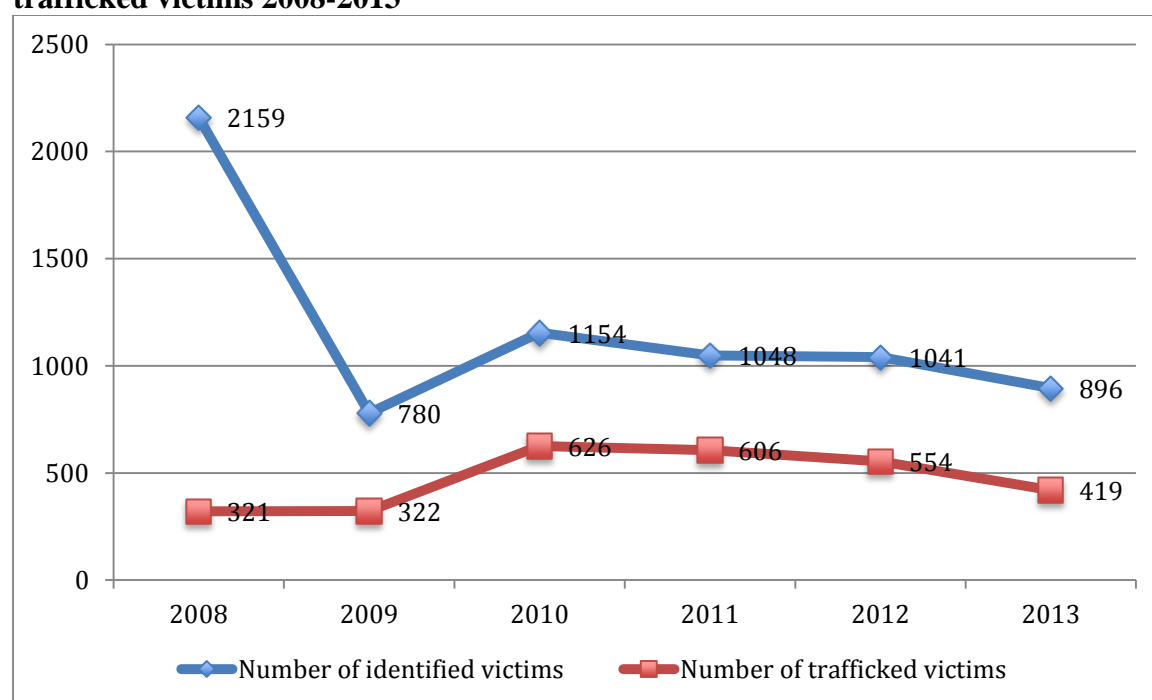
looks better, but very few data and research are available, and data for 2013 is presented in 4 graphs.

The data for 2004-2007 are from the old web page from the NATP report Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010¹⁴.

Observation: During this research we had to find data about the situation of trafficking in human beings. At the beginning of the project we were content with the way the NATP is presenting the data – the old web-page had yearly reports about the situation of trafficking victims since 2007, in some cases even a short presentation for midyear. Unfortunately, in 2014 things changed for the bad. There is no yearly report, just a small document, more like a power-point presentation, with no explanations, no professional comments.

From the figure no. 2 it can be seen that both indicators are on the trend of decreasing, and if at the beginning of the reporting years (starting with 2008 the NATP started to report the indicators in this way) the gap between the number of identified victims and the number of trafficked victims was big (919), then it stabilized since 2009. It shows that Romanian authorities got familiar with the identification mechanism, and increase the efficiency of the structures involved in preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings. Also, it is an indication that they are making efforts to reduce the time between the moment the victim is trafficked and the time he/she is identified, meaning to reduce the time of exploitation. Another aspect worth mentioned refers to the fact that starting with 2012 the numbers of trafficked victims, but also identified victims decreased considerably, raising the hope that Romanian authorities are getting more involved in preventing and stopping the THB. Even the last report of the US Department of State “2013 Trafficking in Person Report”¹⁵ praised the Romanian authorities for their efforts, at the same time encouraging them make more efforts in this direction considering that there is a lot of room for improvement.

Figure 2. The evolution of numbers of identified victims and numbers of trafficked victims 2008-2013



¹⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 - <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

¹⁵US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

Note: Data for 2008 to 2013 are from the Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013¹⁶ (the document was produced in 2014, March 10, 2014). The first NATP document reporting the date this way was the Report regarding the situation of the traffic in human beings for 2012¹⁷. Unfortunately, the following year NATP chose to make public very little data still continuing to report the date in these two groups.

The below definitions are given by the NATP in the Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012¹⁸.

The identified victim of THB is any person aggrieved the authorities have information about that he/she was trafficked or in the process of being trafficked as defined by the 678/2001 Law. He/she was identified by the judicial authorities in the reporting year, but the victim was trafficked or was in the process of being trafficked in the reporting year or in the previous years. (this number is bigger because here are all the victims of THB, some trafficked in the previous year, but identified an year later, or even two years later)

Trafficked victim is any person aggrieved the authorities have information about that he/she was trafficked or in the process of being trafficked as defined by the 678/2001 Law. He/she was identified by the judicial authorities in the reporting year, he victim was trafficked or was in the process of being trafficked in the reporting year. (this is the number of victims of THB trafficked and identified in the same year)

Egg: the total number of identified victims THB in 2012 = victims trafficked in 2012 + victims trafficked in previous years, but identified in 2012

The NATP chose to report this way since 2012 making more visible their efforts of identifying as soon as possible the victims of THB. In this way efforts could be made visible on how quick and efficient authorities are identifying and responding to cases of THB. (the ideal way is to be capable of identifying a victim in the same year he/she is trafficked). It is true that victims of THB could be identified by NGOs, but if this happens in Romania NGOs are informing at least NATP about this.

The data from the below table shows that only in 2008 more men were trafficked than women, but throughout the 2009 - 2013 women were more likely to be trafficked, if the data is reported to the identified cases and not the trafficked ones. Male victims, since 2009, started to be less and less, the highest concentration is when it comes to labor exploitation, and in the case of women in the case of sexual exploitation.

¹⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

¹⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

¹⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

Table 2. Victims of trafficking by sex, 2008-2013

Year	Number of identified victims	Number of trafficked victims	Men	Women	% of women in identified victims
2008	1240	321	626	614	49
2009	780	322	360	420	54
2010	1154	626	504	650	56
2011	1048	606	383	665	63
2012	1041	554	366 (identified) 169 (trafficked)	675 (identified) 385 (trafficked)	65 (identified) 69 (trafficked)
2013	896	419	319 (identified) 94 (trafficked)	577 (identified) 325 (trafficked)	64 (identified) 77 (trafficked)

Note:

In the table data refers to both adults and minors.

data from 2013 are from the Statistical Situation of THB in 2013¹⁹ (the document was produced in 2014, March 10, 2014);

data for 2012 are from the Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012²⁰;

data for 2011 are from the Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011²¹;

data for 2010 are from Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010²²;

data for 2009 are from Assessing the situation of trafficking in person in Romania in 2009²³;

data for 2008 are from Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009²⁴.

Data for 2008-2010 was also compared with Eurostat (2008 - 2010)

Profiles of the victims in 2013

In 2013²⁵ the profile of the victims of THB (419) includes persons with a low level of education: 69% out of trafficked victims in 2013 finished at most 8th grade, 31% were in the process of finishing or finished high-school or vocational school, and only one victim had a bachelor degree. 220 victims came from rural areas and 199 from urban areas. For 227 the recruiter was an acquaintance or a friend, for 117 was someone they did not know, for 28 was the lifetime partner, for 19 was the neighbor, for 12 was a pimp and for 17 some relatives. In 396 cases (94%) the recruiter approached the victim directly with false promises (good job opportunities abroad (153) or in Romania (65), with good earnings from prostitution (112). Out of the total trafficked victims 77% were women (132 adults and 193 minors) and 33% men (86 adults and 8 minors). Sexual exploitation is leading the hierarchy of the types of exploitation (66%), 24% for forced labor, only 15 cases for begging, 7 for pornography and 2 for thefts, the rest were attempts for traffic. Unfortunately, the NATP provided very few data about the situation of victims of THB in 2013 (the annual report is not yet finished at the end of 2014).

¹⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

²⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

²¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

²² National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

²³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

²⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

²⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

Number of identified victims of THB – internal trafficking

Year	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
2012	99	95	266	37	497
2013	65	44	219	16	344

Note: the data are from the Report – Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Romania and Norway, November 2014, Asociatia Pro-Refugiu²⁶. Data was provided by the NATP, still, there are differenced for 2013 and 2012 for the data NATP reported on its own web site.

Number of identified victims of THB – external trafficking

Year	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
2012	249	228	61	6	544
2013	234	253	59	6	552

Note: the data are from the Report – Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Romania and Norway, November 2014, Asociatia Pro-Refugiu²⁷. Data was provided by the NATP, still, there are differenced for 2013 and 2012 for the data NATP reported on its own web site.

From the tables above it can be noticed the following pattern: adults are exploited more abroad (both men and women alike), and children in Romania (much more girls than boys). During the training we organized in Bucharest with Roma graduated

The main destination country in 2013 for adults and minors victims of THB is, after Romania (internal traffic), Germany, with around 40 victims of THB. In second position considering only foreign countries there are Italy and Spain (with numbers of victims between 21-40). The victims of traffic are coming in 2013 from Mures county (more than 40 victims), followed on the second place by Iasi, Bihor, Timis, Dolj, Olt, and Brasov (victims between 21-40).

We cannot pinpoint the main regions of victims for THB because, as one of the officers from the NATP stated “the traffickers are very innovative and willing to escape being caught. So they are changing their recruitment locations frequently, especially is one such location was already under the scrutiny of the police due to reported cases of THB” (Bucharest, October, 2013).

In 2013 the profile of identified victims (896) is very similar with the previous one: most victims are from rural areas, with a very low education level, 66% are adults (299 women and 297 men) and 34% are minors (278 girls and 22 boys). They were recruited with promises of a better job abroad (446) or at home (132), but also with high earnings from prostitution (154). 439 were sexually exploited and 375 trafficked for forced labor, 38 for begging, 11 for pornography, 3 for theft and 30 remained only attempts. In the case of identified victims the main country of destination (other than Romania – internal traffic) was Greece (120 victims), followed by Germany (95 victims), Italy (78), Spain (77), Turkey (39), UK (36), Austria (24), Portugal (22) and France and Nederland each with 17 victims.

- Forms of exploitation:

When it comes to registering the forms of exploitation of victims in THB the Romanian authorities are making the efforts of recording as best as they could using

²⁶ Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

²⁷ Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

the National Integrated System to Monitor and Assess Trafficking in Persons (SIMEV) that became fully operational in 2007. SIMEV is used as the main tool to monitor the assistance provided to victims of trafficking, understand the scale and trends of THB in and from Romania, and disseminate data to all interested institutions and designing new strategies.

The main forms of exploitation of victims of THB recorded are (see below the table): sexual exploitation (the main form according to the statistics starting in 2011); forced labor (the main form of exploitation till 2010 included); attempts (unfortunately there are no details on how the traffickers were planning to exploit their victims); forced begging; pornography; and pickpocketing. Sexual exploitation of boys is a new phenomenon registered by the Romanian authorities for the first time in 2010 (see more information in the chapter dedicated to child trafficked for sexual exploitation of boys).

When it comes to investigate these forms of exploitation Romanian authorities invested their efforts in finding out more about sexual exploitation of women (girls included) dedicating more space in each annual report of NATP, but also to forced labor, another form of exploitation with high number of victims. In 2009 their efforts were focused in producing the study dedicated to analyze the recruitment process of minors, and in 2013 the NATP published, with the financial support of the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union, the report dealing with trafficking for begging. Little information is recorded and presented about pickpocketing or petty thefts as mentioned in the annual reports of NATP.

Table. The main form of THB affecting Romanian citizens in the last years

	2013 ²⁸	2012 ²⁹	2011 ³⁰	2010 ³¹
Sexual exploitation	439	526	506	482
Forced labor	375	410	408	503
Attempts	30	20	32	None
Forced begging	38	48	81	112
Pornography	11	31	11	6
Pick-pocketing	3	6	11	6

Considering the data reported by NATP for 2007, 2008 and 2009 it could be seen that sexual exploitation was the second form of exploitation of victims of THB after forced labor. But in 2011 the trend changed and now the Romanian authorities are fighting this form, that it is in a way more lucrative and more profitable for traffickers, but even more difficult to stop. In the Breaking the silence³² report (2011: 66) report one social worker pointed out very clearly the fact that prostitution is a

²⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

²⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

³⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

³¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

³² European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the silence. Trafficking in Romani Communities, March 2011.

“highly <informal labor sector> with informal but sophisticated protection and dependency schemes”. From prostitution to traffic it is a small step and so, the sex workers can easily become victims of THB. One important aspect that has to be mentioned in order to better understand the phenomenon is that according to the Romanian legislation, prostitution is illegal and punished by law and this has important effects in how often the victims of THB are reporting the trafficking situations.

Table. Number of sexual exploitation victims of THB

Sexual exploitation	2013³³	2012³⁴	2011³⁵	2010³⁶	2009³⁷	2008³⁸	2007³⁹
All victims	439	526	506	482	320	386	724

The Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Child Begging in the EU (2013: 5) commissioned by the European Commission stated in the Introduction chapter that “Child begging is a common sight in cities such as Budapest, Sofia, Paris or Warsaw”. The same statement is true when we are referring to adult begging, especially in Romanian case. From begging in the streets in Romania to begging abroad is it not such a long way. When traffickers intervene and exploit the persons the begging situation became forced begging.

Begging is a very visible activity, but surprisingly, only recently authorities in the EU states started to pay attention with the intention of tackling, analyzing, evaluating and stopping the phenomenon.

From the data provided by the NATP annual reports the number of Romanian citizens identified as being the victims of THB and exploited for begging it is easily spotted the descendent trend. Still, forced begging is mostly an exploitation that happens abroad as it is pointed out in the study Trafficking in Person for Begging – Romania study (2013: 9) of NATP: “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.”

³³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

³⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

³⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

³⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

³⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

³⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

³⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

Table. Number of forced begging exploitation victims of THB

Forced begging	2013⁴⁰	2012⁴¹	2011⁴²	2010⁴³	2009⁴⁴	2008⁴⁵	2007⁴⁶
All victims	38	48	81	112	109	91	146

As it was mentioned previously, the exploitation of victims of THB by making them to commit petty thefts is not well explored yet in Romania. Maybe the number of victims is not high enough to determine the authorities to commit and study the phenomenon or maybe the fact that when it comes to petty thefts the police have a hard time investigating the cases, especially when a minor is involved. During an informal discussion with a NATP representative we found out the problems police and prosecutors are confronted with in trying to follow and prosecute such cases: the minors are not admitting and in such cases they cannot be held responsible; it is difficult to prove that an adult is guiding the children and benefiting from their crimes...

Table. Number of pick-pocketing exploitation victims of THB

Pick-pocketing	2013⁴⁷	2012⁴⁸	2011⁴⁹	2010⁵⁰	2009⁵¹	2008⁵²
All victims	3	6	11	6	?	4

According to all annual reports of NATP (2013-2008) traffickers who recruit and exploit Romanian citizens are overwhelmingly Romanian themselves. The US State Department “2013 Trafficking in Person Report”⁵³ emphasizes the fact that traffickers are “typically seeking victims from the same ethnic group or within their own families”, but no other information are provided to support the statement (the report has this reduce format that does not allow extended presentations). As one representative of the NATP stated, the traffickers exploit victims within Romania

⁴⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

⁴¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

⁴² National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

⁴³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

⁴⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

⁴⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

⁴⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

⁴⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

⁴⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

⁴⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

⁵⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

⁵¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

⁵² National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

⁵³ US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

before transporting them abroad for forced prostitution or labor (see the Annex). Another aspect mentioned was that traffickers are becoming more the more aware about the effort authorities are making in fighting trafficking, so they are changing their locations of recruiting, but also the means of transporting the victims to different countries in Europe.

As it can be noticed from the below table one can easily interpret that Iasi, known as a poor county, is one of the main sources of victims of THB. But in 2010 Bucharest was reported, followed by Bihor, Arad and Timis, all well developed counties, but close to the borders. What is constant is the fact that more the half of the victims are from rural areas (less developed, with less access to employment, social services, information, good schools) and with a lower education. Even the countries of exploitations are varying, traffickers using all their resources and connections in their efforts not to be caught. Of course, they have limited choices, so Germany, Italy, Spain, even Greece are in the hierarchy of destination countries, but the numbers are changing each year.

Table – Main characteristics of the victims of THB

Profile for the total population of victims of THB	2012⁵⁴	2011⁵⁵	2010⁵⁶
Counties – where the victims of THB are recruited more frequently	Iasi Mures Bacau Olt Timis	Iasi Mures Arges Ilfov Timis	Bucuresti Bihor Arad Timis Bistrita Nasaud
Rural area	57%	57%	52%
Main age group within the victims of THB	14-25	18-25 14-17 and 26-40	14-26
External traffic (% of victims exploited abroad from the total identified victims of THB in that year)	71% main destination countries: Germany Italy Spain	72% main destination countries: Spain Germany Italy Greece	74% main destination countries: Spain Italy Czech Republic Cyprus France
Education	65% lower education	56% lower education	Mainly lower education

The cases of identified foreign nationals trafficked into the country are isolated. The annual reports are mentioning two adults in 2013⁵⁷, four victims in 2012⁵⁸ to two cases in 2010⁵⁹ (two women, one from Hungary and the other from Greece).

⁵⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

⁵⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202011.pdf>

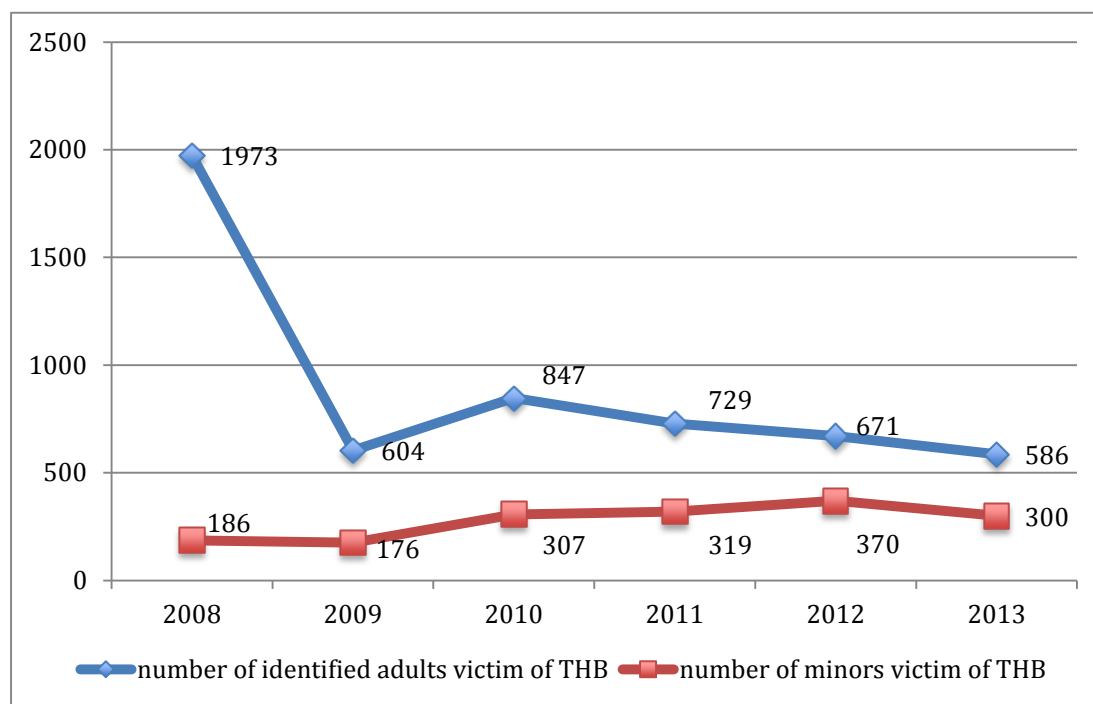
⁵⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

⁵⁷ Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

2.2. Children - victims of trafficking

US State Department “2013 Trafficking in Person Report”⁶⁰ pointed out that “children likely represent at least one-third of Romanian trafficking victims” which is true especially starting with 2010 till present. The figure shows the trends in numbers of victims adults and minors. What can be noticed is that if in the case of adults victims of THB the numbers are getting smaller with time, in the case of minors the numbers are still considerable higher and show the need for a strong intervention of state authorities.

Figure 3. The evolution of the number of victims of THB (data are from NATP annual reports)⁶¹



⁵⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

⁵⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

⁶⁰ US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014

⁶¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

Data for 2008-2010 was also compared with Eurostat (2008 - 2010)

The data from NATP annual report can be noticed that the vast majority of minors are girls. Romanian girls and boys, particularly those whose parents work abroad, are vulnerable to sex trafficking throughout Romania. In the 2012 report of the NATP⁶² it is stated that in the case of sexual exploitation the most vulnerable are women, age 14-25.

Table. Situation of victims of THB adults and minors

Year	Number of identified victims	Number of minors	% of minors	Boys	Girls	% of girls
2008 ⁶³	1240	186	15	23	163	88
2009 ⁶⁴	780	176	23	32	144	82
2010 ⁶⁵	1154	307	27	37	270	88
2011 ⁶⁶	1048	319	30	29	290	91
2012 ⁶⁷	1041	370 (identified)	36 (identified)	43 (identified)	327 (identified)	88 (identified)
		242 (trafficked)	23 (trafficked)	30 (trafficked)	212 (trafficked)	88 (trafficked)
2013 ⁶⁸	896	300 (identified)	33 (identified)	22 (identified)	278 (identified)	93 (identified)
		201 (trafficked)	22 (trafficked)	8 (trafficked)	193 (trafficked)	96 (trafficked)

The representative of the Directorate for the Child Protection (DCP) suggested that when it comes to mass media reports of trafficked children, the numbers are highly exaggerated. This statement was made considering the statistics collected by the Directorate for the Child Protection and NATP.

“The same situation was in France, few years ago. They were signaling so many trafficked children, but when, using official channels, asked them to send us the exact situation, we received nothing, suddenly the problem disappear”.
(representative of the Directorate for the Child Protection)

According to NATP, it is hard to pin point a specific region/county. The main reason is that traffickers (the criminal network) are changing the recruitment locations as soon as they realize that they possibly may be under observation by police. If in previous years more victims of trafficking were from certain counties (Moldova

⁶²National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

⁶³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

⁶⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

⁶⁵National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

⁶⁶National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202011.pdf>

⁶⁷National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

⁶⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

region, most affected by poverty), in very short time (1-2 years) this changed and now the phenomenon moved towards Transylvania (considered not so poor).

“In Ialomita County there are some <hot> spots, but we have no information concerning the ethnicity of trafficked children” (NGO representative)

Ialomita County was also mentioned during the interview by the representative of the Directorate for Child Protection. It was mentioned that since the case (Tandarei case, see more information about this in the chapter dedicated to forced begging, made famous by UK mass media) was presented, experts from UK and France, together with experts from the directorate of social assistance and child protection worked with the community. Also, the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime got involved and started to investigate, stopping the further exploitation of children (Tandarei case).

From the data provided by NATP in its annual reports we cannot identify what kind of exploitation is more frequent in the case of external traffic, but we can say that most vulnerable minors to traffic are the adolescents 14-17. They are trafficked mainly in Romania, but “internal traffic represents, for the victims, the <school> for external one, it is the stepping stone to <advance>. Many of them will be then trafficked abroad if they manage to <graduate> internal traffic, so they can end up in Italy, or Germany, or Spain or Greece being involved in prostitution, begging or pick-pocketing. The older ones could also be victims of forced labor”. (NAPT representative)

Table. Profile for minors victims of THB

	2012 ⁶⁹	2011 ⁷⁰	2010 ⁷¹
Main age group within the victims of THB	14-17	14-17	14-17
Internal versus external traffic	Internal traffic – 82% Main destination counties: Italy Germany Greece	Internal traffic Main destination counties: Spain Italy Germany	Internal traffic 71% Main destination counties: Italy Spain Germany

Unfortunately, little information about the minors, victims of THB is provided by state institutions, no matter our efforts. During the interview at the Directorate for Child Protection we found out that in the first months of 2013 out of 59 trafficked minors (internal traffic) 7 were exploited for forced labor (6 boys and 1 girl), 39 girls, age 14-17 were sexually exploited, were recorded 8 cases of petty crimes (7 boys), the rest being cases of girls, but with no specification of exploitation form.

⁶⁹National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

⁷⁰National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202011.pdf>

⁷¹National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

Number of victims identified according to the forms of exploitation

	Form of exploitation	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
2012	Sexual exploitation	235	9	299	10	309
	Labor exploitation	94	275	14	27	41
	Forced begging	8	27	9	4	13
	Petty thefts	0	1	1	2	3
2013	Sexual exploitation	202	0	246	0	246
	Labor exploitation	73	276	7	19	26
	Forced begging	10	17	9	2	11
	Petty thefts	0	1	1	1	2

Note: the data are from the Report – Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Romania and Norway, November 2014, Asociatia Pro-Refugiu⁷². Data was provided by the NATP, still, there are differenced for 2013 and 2012 for the data NATP reported on its own web site.

Another source of information approached was the media articles. So, browsing for articles with words like “trafficking”, “sexual exploitation” at the end of 2013 (using the Google browsing we selected all article published from 2012 and 2013 in national and local newspapers) the results are: Teleorman and Dambovită counties (girls); Bucharest (girls), District 1; Bacău county (girls); Constanța county (girls); Resita (boys sex and porn); Vaslui (2 girls); Barlad (1 girl); Ilfov and Călărași (no number, no town); Bucharest (11 year old girl); Ploiești (girls, no number); Olt (external traffic, sex and begging, 200 victims, no number regarding how many children). These data should not be considered before the NATP data because they are scattered along a period of two years. Also, in Romania, more and more often, state authorities involved in the issue of fighting of trafficking are more and more careful of protecting the identity of the victims, especially in the case of minors.

Save the Children Romania (2014)⁷³ made a recent research in Bucharest that showed that out of 701 young people and children living on the streets for 58% this is the permanent solution. Out of the total 701 young people (children included) identified for the research 58% are boys, with an average age of 21 (17 for those living temporary on the streets). From the entire sample 41% are minors; 7% are under 7 years old, 19% between 8-13, 19% between 14-18, 23% are between 19-25 and the rest (32%) are above 26 years old till 35. Unfortunately the number of children living in the streets of Bucharest is underestimated, as the report clearly states, about 100 children, under of age of 5 were not registered in the database (they were not been able to be properly interviewed). Out of the total number (701) 56% declared Roma as their ethnicity, and 42% Romanians.

The study reveals the fact the most children under 7 (around 100 identified during the research) were used by an adult (in general a relative) for begging. Begging is by far the main source of income for these persons: 61% of the ones living permanently in the streets stated that they are begging. The second means of making a living is waste collection, 33% of them choosing this option; it is followed by daily works (27%). Out of the total of persons living permanently on the streets 21% admit that they are stealing things (petty thefts); 24% are asking for money to provide parking spaces.

⁷² Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

⁷³ Save the Children Romania (2014). Evaluation of “homeless children and youth” phenomenon (Evaluarea fenomenului “copiii si tinerii strazii”), consulted on September 15, 2014

Only 6% are practicing prostitution of the total number (14% of women from the sample, and less than 1% of men/boys). When asked if they are giving their money to others 34% admit that, 13% of those are doing it because they are made to, but, as the report pointed out, because the question is addressing a very delicate issue, the number is much more higher, most interviewees, children/minors, admitting that otherwise they would be molested by adults.

2.3. Root causes of trafficking

It is not new to state the poverty, social exclusion, spatial segregation, low or lack of education and illiteracy, ethnic and gender discrimination are key factors of vulnerability that put particular groups at higher risk of trafficking⁷⁴. These are the main causes that can explain some estimations made by different experts and reports⁷⁵ that Roma children are overrepresented in the total of children victims of THB (see also the finding of our field research presented in the chapter dedicated to Roma Child Trafficking Phenomenon).

According to the last Census (November 2011) the number of Romanian citizens that declared themselves as Roma was 621,573⁷⁶. This represents 3.3% out of the total 18,884,831 from whom the ethnicity was registered (the total population of Romania is 20,121,641 according to the 2011 census, but for 1,236,810 their ethnic belonging could not be registered because it was not declared). According to “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” (COM 2011, 173 from April 5th 2011) the number of Roma in Romania (the average estimation) is 1,850,000, considering a minimum of 1,200,000 and a maximum of 2,500,000. The last research that aimed at identifying, using snowball method, the total number of Roma from Romania is from 1998 (Research Institute for Quality of Life) and the results were: 1,588,552 persons were hetero-identified as Roma, among them 65.3% self-identified as Roma.

The *Report on poverty and social inclusion in Romania in 2010*, carried out by the Ministry of Labor, revealed that more than 1,110,000 Romanians lived in absolute poverty and that 3,683,000 were experiencing extreme poverty, a total of 4,793,000 (25 per cent of entire Romanian population). The highest poverty rates were registered

⁷⁴ Gavril I. G., Tamas A. M. (2009). The traffic of children in Romania. Study over the recruitment process. Ed. Alpha MDN.

Ungureanu R-N. (2013). Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>;

⁷⁵ Gavril I. G., Tamas A. M. (2009). The traffic of children in Romania. Study over the recruitment process. Ed. Alpha MDN.

Ungureanu R-N. (2013). Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the silence. Trafficking in Roma Communities, March 2011.

The representative of one NGO providing services for victims of THB, see in the Annex.

⁷⁶ National Institute of Statistic, The Census of Population and Dwellings, <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>, consulted on September 15, 2014

among the Roma – 31.4% higher than the national rate. Poverty rates among the Roma are estimated to far exceed national averages, with mortality rates serving as the most widely cited indicators of poor living conditions.

Illiteracy and early school drop-out affect Roma children more than the majority (13.8 percent of the total Roma households with at least one child age between 6 and 16 declared that their children do not go to school). Roma students continued to be subjected to discriminatory treatment within the educational system in Romania. 25% of Roma adults are illiterate, and 49% attended a maximum of 4 years of school, not reaching the standards for accessing qualification courses and getting a stable job⁷⁷. According to the National Report regarding Roma Inclusion in Early Child Development Services (Open Society Foundations, Roma Education Fund and UNICEF, 2010) 60% of children enrolled in special education system or in segregated schools are Roma children. Unfortunately, in Romania, no information on the wrongful placement of Roma children in special education is available. In 2010, a study commissioned by Romani Criss on a sample of schools revealed that more than 60 percent of Roma children enrolled in school in the first four grades were studying in segregated classes; and more than 50 percent of Roma students enrolled in school in the next four grades were in segregated classes. School segregation is more widespread in rural areas⁷⁸ (Surdu, 2011: 95).

In 2011, the unemployment rate among the Roma was 48.6% and among the majority, 7.4%. Roma are more likely to work in the informal economy and work mainly in agriculture, construction and industry (mostly in unskilled jobs). They also face discrimination in accessing jobs. The recent study of Soros Foundation Romania⁷⁹ has shown that: 10% of respondents worked continuously over the previous two years, 6% worked periodically, for long periods of time, 32% worked sporadically and 52% had not worked at all during the previous two years (data was collected according to the Labor Force Survey indicators, so it reflects the situation of people that worked with contracts and without, for themselves, their business or household, for money or other goods etc.).

Mortality and morbidity are significantly higher among the Roma than in the general population (prevalence of TB, HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis is disproportionately higher among the Roma). The poor living conditions frequently lead to the lack of vitamins, malnutrition, anemia, dystonia and rickets. Life expectancy for Roma is 63-64 years as opposed to 70 for ethnic Romanians; infant mortality is four times higher; over 40% of Roma children in Romania are malnourished. Only half of Roma have health insurance and full access to health services (in 2009, 97% of Romanian citizens have access to healthcare).

A significant proportion of Roma face a range of housing problems: lack of housing; poor living conditions; lack of identity and property documents etc. Due to low

⁷⁷ Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). "The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration", Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

⁷⁸ Surdu, L. (coord.) (2011). Roma School Participation, Non-Attendance and Discrimination in Romania (Participarea, absenteism școlar și experiența discriminării romilor din România). București: Vanemonde

⁷⁹ Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). "The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration", Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

standards of living, some Roma have lost their rental contracts with local authorities, or they have abandoned them not being able to cover utility costs. Two thirds (67%) live in segregated communities of great ethnic homogeneity and isolated from other communities⁸⁰.

Ethnic discrimination faced by Roma has decreased in the last 10 years. In 2011 34% of Roma respondents from the sample (Soros Foundation Romania research) declared that they felt discriminated in the previous 12 months⁸¹. Still 42% of Roma that participated in our research reported facing discrimination during job interviews. Moreover, the present economic crisis and racist rhetoric by officials (and mass media) may be diminishing the level of tolerance of Romanian society.

2.4. Institutional Set Up, Legal and Policy Framework

- Institutional Set Up

On May 2006 through the Government Decision No. 1584/2005 of 8 December 2005 the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons ("NATP") was set up. It was created with the intention to act as a specialized public administration body with legal personality and replaced the former National Office on Prevention of Trafficking in Persons. The former Office was remained and its responsibilities were extended to cover other fields of action against trafficking in addition to prevention and monitoring of assistance provided to victims. The NATP is functioning under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The NATP has the responsibilities to: co-ordinate, evaluate and oversee national policies in the field of combating trafficking and the measures taken for the protection of and assistance to victims. The Agency has also the task in drafting the national strategies in the field and coordinates their implementation by public institutions and NGOs. The NATP developed the National Integrated System to Monitor and Assess Trafficking in Persons (SIMEV) that became fully operational in January 2007. With this help NATP collects, processes and analyses data by managing the national integrated system to monitor and assess THB. NATP also monitor the functioning of the National Identification and Referral Mechanism (NIRM) and acts as the national contact point for international organizations working in the field of action against trafficking.

SIMEV can be accessed only by permitted user within NATP, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Coordination Office, NATP Regional Centers, as well as to certain users within the Offices to Combat Organized Crime and within the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Border Police. The system collects data also from NGOs, Directorate for Child Protection (General Directorate for Child Social Assistance and Protection - GDCSAP), and County School Inspectorate.

Romania has an equivalent rapporteur mechanism linked to National Mechanism for Identification and Referral of victims of trafficking in persons (MNR). In the process of identification of victims different institutions are involved: Prosecutor's office,

⁸⁰ Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). "The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration", Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania..

⁸¹ Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). "The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration", Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NATP), NATP Regional Centers, General Direction for Child Protection, international organizations, General Inspectorate for Immigration, Labor Inspectors, other law enforcement agencies, diplomatic mission and consulates, TelVerde (hotlines), NGOs, other foreign institutions. The National Integrated System for Monitoring and Assessing Victims of Trafficking in Persons could be accessed only by professionals from NATP, organized crime units and border police have access to input data regarding victims of trafficking in persons.

In the Report – Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Romania and Norway, November 2014, Asociatia Pro-Refugiu emphasized the fact that there are cases when foreign NGOs helping the victims of THB prefer to refer the victims (with Romanian citizenship) directly to Romanian NGOs. We could not find out if Romanian NGOs offering services to victims of THB are not reporting all cases to NATP, but this is unlikely to happen.

According to the GRETA Report (2012)⁸² before the creation of the National Identification and Referral Mechanism (NIRM) in 2007, the identification of victims in Romania was made on a case-by-case basis, without any formal procedure to be followed by the relevant actors. This identification was more reactive than proactive, relying mainly on the self-reporting of the victim and on the efficiency of the institutions or NGOs which might have come across a victim of trafficking.

“The NATP has 15 regional centers (one for each court of appeal district) which monitor the implementation of national policies against THB at local level and support the Agency in designing preventive measures and assessing the situation of victims of trafficking at local level with a view to identifying means of specialized assistance. These regional centers also play the role of intermediary between law enforcement agencies and assistance providers in the National Identification and Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking” (GRETA Report 2012: 12⁸³).

The Inter-ministerial Working Group for Co-ordination and Evaluation of the Prevention Activities against Trafficking in Persons created by Government Decision No. 299/2003 was subsequently renamed as the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Combating Trafficking in Persons (IWGCTP). Currently, the following institutions are members of the working group: Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Administration and Interior; Public Ministry (Prosecutor General’s Office); Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education..

The above state institutions took part in drafting of the National Strategy against Trafficking in Person 2012-2016 together with several NGOs: Save the Children Romania; ADPARE – Association for the Development of Alternative Practices for Education and Reintegration; Caritas Association Bucharest; The Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania; Romanian Center for Missing Children and

⁸² Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

⁸³ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

Sexually Exploited Children – FOCUS, Terre des Hommes Association, Ratiu Center for Democracy, International Organization for Migration – Romanian Mission.

- Protection and assistance to victims

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)⁸⁴ is a set of measures and actions taken in coordination with the state institutions and various nongovernmental organizations, 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.

When a child victim is identified, irrespective of his/her country of origin, the representative of the General Directorate for Child Social Assistance and Protection (GDSCAP) or the representative of the Service for the child victim of abuse, negligence and trafficking in persons shall be notified to take special measures for his/her protection according to the National Identification and Referral Mechanism (Order 335/2007). 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).

GDSCAP has the responsibility to ensure that the strategy for social assistance in the field of protection provided to children and families, single, handicapped or needy people are implemented throughout each counties and districts of Bucharest. In cases where the victim is a foreign child, he/she shall be entitled without discrimination to the same support and protection measures specific to all children victims of trafficking.

According to the National Identification and Referral Mechanism, the main state institutions trained for the identification, referral, support and monitoring of a child victim are the following: General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (GIRP) – through its specialized structure for combating organized crime (DGCCO) and NATP; General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection and General Inspectorate for Immigrants in cases involving foreign child victims.

The way the Romanian institutions are functioning is well described in the NATP Sociological Research Handbook on Child Trafficking (2009: 31, 32): “General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (GIRP), and Inspectorate General of Border Police get in contact with GDSCAP representative dealing with child abuse, negligence and trafficking and the NATP Regional Centre representative to assess the victim’s needs for assistance and to maintain contact with the victim. The DGASPC representative dealing with child abuse, negligence and trafficking shall ensure the case referral to a specialized child assistance center and maintain contact with the inter-institutional team partners. The NATP Regional Centre representative

⁸⁴ Order no. 335/2007 for approval of the National Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking Identification and Referral.

shall maintain constant contact with the DGASPC representative in respect of monitoring the case". In the case when the unaccompanied minor is foreign the General Inspectorate for Immigration is involved, as well as national and international organizations responsible for child protection in order to establish the judicial status applicable to children according to the Government Emergency Order 194/2002 provisions regarding aliens' conditions in Romania.

In Romania, NGOs play a key role in the prevention, the protection and assistance to victims of THB. Romanian authorities rely on the services provided by NGOs (victim assistance), but they are offering no funding/grants. During our interviews with these NGOs they told us that their funds are from foreign donors and it is difficult to find adequate funding to continue providing quality services to victims of THB.

"The Romanian Government does not fund/support services offered by NGOs (shelters, campaigns)" (NGO representative).

"There are problems when it comes to offer services to victims of traffic. There is a limited number of places in shelters, and many of them have a very low level of education (adults) and because of that it is very difficult to integrate them into the labor market". (NGO representative)

In the case of services offered by state institutions to victims of THB, the US State Department "2013 Trafficking in Person Report"⁸⁵ report states that in 2012 there were no specialized shelter services in Bucharest for adults and children (in 2013, during our research we have identified one). The same report signal the fact that the quality of the victim services ("ensuring that psychological care, rehabilitation, and other victim assistance provide substantive care") needs to be improved, meaning that they were not very convinced by the qualities of the services offered to victims of THB.

The main problems of the institutional settings when it comes to fight against THB and offer protection and services to victims of THB are presented in the document of the National Strategy against trafficking in person for 2012-2016 (approved by the Governmental Decision 1142 from November 2012), being almost the same as presented in GRETA Report (2012)⁸⁶:

"1. how trafficking is perceived by the public and mass media – Mass media is more interested in sensational facts and it is prone to present incomplete facts perpetuating negative stereotypes about the profile of the victims. The public is not informed and not made aware about the danger of trafficking because of the poor communication between the public and state authorities, with no help from mass media.

2. the increase vulnerability to trafficking due to financial difficulties for certain persons – The poor living conditions and lack of real opportunities in finding a better future generate lack of trust in one's future. The most expose to this risk are the minors, especially those from poor families, large ones, with low income, low education and little opportunity in finding jobs.

⁸⁵US State Department (2013). "2013 Trafficking in Person Report" <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

⁸⁶ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

3. limited number of services specialized in offering assistance to victims of traffic and disparities in their organization – As was mentioned in the US State Department “2013 Trafficking in Person Report”⁸⁷ Romania lack the necessary number of specialized centers for victims of traffic, and the institutions that have the responsibilities in offering counseling to victims are the ones offering the same services to former offenders, making hard or even impossible for victims of traffic to access such services due to fear.
4. the inefficient functioning of services for child protection, victims of traffic and the deficiencies in inter-institutional cooperation of the institutions responsible for preventing traffic in minors – The transit centers for protection and assistance of children victims of traffic do not have the capacity to respond to the need due to the lack of funding, their tasks being taken over by centers for abused children, but with no specialized services for victims of traffic.
5. reduced capacity of implementing the National mechanism of identification and referral of victims - The lack of standards for risk evaluation, lack of standards for assisted repatriation are delaying the identification of the best measures of protection and assistance. Also, the procedures for identifying the minors, victims of the trafficking in person are still insufficiently known by the institutions responsible with their implementation.
6. limited capacity of state authorities to evaluate, anticipate and respond to traffic activities – The poor funding of human resources, poor training and poor endowment with technology limits the innovation and initiative of the investigators dealing with cases of human traffic.
7. difficulties in collecting and disseminating data about human traffic to all responsible authorities responsible with implementing policies for fighting traffic in human being.
8. lack of reporting or incomplete or late reporting from the institutions with responsibilities in preventing trafficking in person.
9. lack of monitoring mechanism not only in referring the number of cases, but also to evaluate the qualities of interventions, being capable and having enough authority to make evaluations and recommendations regarding the public policies against traffic in person.
10. insufficient funds for activities against traffic in person.
11. the increase number of victims of traffic with Romanian citizenship in other states”.

⁸⁷US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

- Romanian legislation

According to the GRETA Report (2012: 9)⁸⁸ “At the international level, in addition to the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Convention, Romania is Party to the United Nations (UN) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, ratified on 4 December 2002. Romania is also Party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the ILO Convention for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. Further, Romania has acceded to a number of Council of Europe conventions in the criminal field which are relevant to action against THB”.

Article 11(2) of the Constitution of Romania states that "treaties ratified by Parliament, in conformity with the law, are part of national law", while Article 20(2) provides that in case of any inconsistency between human rights treaties to which Romania is a party and national laws, the human rights treaties shall take precedence, unless the Romanian Constitution or laws contain more favorable provisions.

The Law 678/2001 regarding the combating and prevention of trafficking in persons states the definition of trafficking in persons and minors in compliance with the regulations of the additional Palermo Protocols to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime:

“Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbors 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”⁸⁹

In Romanian legislation, the crime of trafficking is defined as:

“Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbors 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”⁹⁰.

Also, the crime of trafficking in minors is defined as:

“Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbors 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

⁸⁸ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

⁸⁹ Art.12, Law. No. 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons, with all further amendments.

⁹⁰ Article 12 of the Law. No 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons.

imprisonment and denial of a number of rights”⁹¹.

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 exploitation⁹².

As a general overview it can be stated that the Romanian national legislation on human trafficking is comprehensive and sets out the national strategy to combat and prevent this criminal offense. However, the GRETA Report (2012: 17)⁹³ “NGOs working in the field of action against THB have asked for a clearer status of the victim of THB, in particular because in practice the protection and assistance to victims depends too much on their participation in criminal proceedings”.

Also, GRETA Report (2012: 18)⁹⁴ “considers that the Romanian authorities should adapt the relevant secondary legislation, including the provisions of the National Identification and Referral Mechanism, in order to ensure that the legal definition of victim of THB, and its application in practice, are fully in line with the definition set out in the Anti-Trafficking Convention. The authorities should also notify all the parties concerned of the content of the definition in the Anti-Trafficking Law”.

⁹¹ Article 13 of the Law. No 678/2001 regarding prevention and combating trafficking in persons.

⁹² 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.

⁹³ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

⁹⁴ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

3. The Roma Child Trafficking Phenomenon

- Challenges in data collection.

There are no reliable statistics disaggregated by ethnicity on the occurrence of THB in Romania. Data disaggregated by ethnicity is not gathered with respect to trafficked persons in Romania. Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in Persons – NATP does not include ethnicity as an indicator in its database, although NATP’s database includes many indicators⁹⁵.

The representatives of Romanian institutions during numerous public debates motivated their refuse to collect ethnic disaggregated data in general saying that the law prohibits it. In the case of human trafficking (a very difficult phenomenon to approach and discuss) ethnic data collection among trafficked persons is even more sensitive. In this case relevant agencies in the field have even more ground to refuse its collection. Still, Romania has the legislation that would allow the collection of such data and there are, to our knowledge, state institutions (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National Employment Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Managing Authorities of European Funds) that are collecting ethnic disaggregated data.

“We cannot collect data about ethnic background of children because, from the child point of view, it could be considered as discrimination. All children are equals. There are other states that do not collect data about ethnic background of children because it is a delicate issue. All children have the same rights”. The representative of the Directorate for Child Protection

Many of the state institutions involved in preventing and fighting trafficking in persons are reluctant to approach the subject – human traffic, especially when it comes to Roma ethnics. The General Inspectorate of Romanian Border Police, and the General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Centre for International Police Cooperation refused to be interviewed. They preferred to send their answers in writing (nothing more than to quote some articles from laws). The General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Institute for Research and Crime Prevention declined their involvement in the prevention and fighting of human trafficking. They stated, during our meeting (they were willing to receive us for a discussion about the topic) that since 2009 this is the domain of NATP. The General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Directorate for Combating Organized Crime, an institution with clear responsibilities in fighting the trafficking in humans, refused to answer to our questions or to receive us to do an interview. They stated that all information, all data regarding their activities are in the NATP annual reports..

- Roma as victims of THB

The GRETA Report (2012: 7, point 106)⁹⁶ appreciates that Romanian authorities and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations active in the field of combating THB made “substantial efforts”. But there still is a great need “to take measures to combat stereotypes and prejudices towards victims of trafficking, in

⁹⁵ Interview with the representatives of NAATP, Bucharest, November 12, 2013.

⁹⁶ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

particular women and Roma”. These efforts should be part of “a long-term approach aimed at tackling the root causes of trafficking, especially through fostering access to education and jobs for vulnerable groups”.

In the same report (point 105) it is stated, mentioning the Romanian National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons for 2006-2010, that “among the problems encountered by the Roma population and which should be tackled as a form of prevention of THB is the issue of birth certificates⁹⁷”. The solution suggested that the birth certificate shall be issued free of charge. These are not the only two places where Roma are mentioned as being vulnerable to THB. GRETA Report also considers existing “entrenched negative attitudes and prejudices vis-à-vis victims of trafficking, including those of Roma origin” (point 8) that need to be combated.

The same report citing European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need report, *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities* (2011) states that “only a low number of trafficked members of the Roma population benefit from assistance in Romania, one of the explanations being that they do not trust the officials responsible for granting assistance and prefer to avoid any contact with them”.

Since the beginning of its activity (in 2006) NATP started to organized anti-trafficking campaigns, and targeted also Roma communities. For the first National Strategy against Trafficking in Person 2006-2010 the Ministry of Interior (NATP is a structure under the Ministry of Interior) organized public consultations and invited NGOs active in the field and Roma NGOs. According to one interviewee the representative of the Roma NGO (part of the working group for the design of the strategy) refused the collection of ethnic disaggregated data fearing the negative stigmatization and discrimination of Roma (in fact it was the representative of the National Agency for Roma).

“I do not know the problem (the traffic of Roma children) as a phenomenon, I’ve never heard of 100 cases, but I have to admit there is a problem”. (Roma intellectual)

“State institutions do not differentiate children (trafficked) based on their ethnic belonging. But NATP includes Roma between most vulnerable categories to traffic.” (NGO representative)

”It is not a popular topic to discuss. (...) We are not ready to approach the problem of traffic in Roma communities. And we are not ready to approach this issue when it comes to the term <Roma>”. We are talking about traffic, but when it comes to do something, specific, we cannot do. It is much more easy to talk about early marriages then traffic (the interviewee refers to the fact that even early marriages should be considered traffic and treated accordingly)”. (Roma intellectual)

⁹⁷ At the beginning of 2001 the Romanian Government acknowledged in the “Governmental Strategy for Improving the Situation of Roma” 2001-2011 that lack of identity documents was a problem Roma communities in Romania were confronted with. The joined efforts of NGOs and Romanian Government solved the problem for almost all Roma (end of 2011). Still, in 2014 there are still few cases of children that were not recorded by their parents and not have a birth certificate.

“We are in a context in which criminality is associated with Roma ethnicity, and I do not believe that Roma leaders have the courage to do something targeted and planned”. (Roma intellectual)

“They are (state authorities) reluctant to label the actions of crime, perhaps not to generalize”. (Roma intellectual)

In few researches coordinated by NATP there are some references (experts were cited) about the fact that: Roma children are more frequent victims of the THB (they are begging together with their parents) (Trafficking in Children in Romania – Study on the recruiting process, 2009: 65); and how some criminal networks came to life and then exploited (begging) the poor people and their children from that communities (Study on begging in relation to human trafficking, 2013: 66-69).

But there are widespread perceptions that Roma are affected by THB and that Roma are significantly overrepresented among trafficked persons in some countries, Romania leading in the hierarchy. Still, the lack of data is considered by the Roma intellectuals/leaders as a downfall.

“There are no information, no data, no cases”. “If we do not have data, we do not have the phenomenon”. (Roma intellectual)

The researchers that worked for the report *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities* (2011: 11)⁹⁸ managed to get estimations concerning the representation of Roma by trafficking purpose. So, service providers estimated that 15% of victims of THB trafficked for sexual exploitation are of Roma origins; 50% in the case of forced labor according to the police estimations. In the report it is also mentioned that Roma are present in the case of forced begging, petty crimes and debt bondages.

Also, the *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities* (2011: 32)⁹⁹ report mentioned the NATP’s contribution to the 2009 US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report where it is stated that “most of the perpetrators come from Roma families or criminal groups.”. It seems that with time the state institutions decided not to approach the subject anymore and not to make any estimations.

The same report (2011: 35) mentioned that an NGO service provider from Bucharest stated that it had assisted 29 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity from 2008 to 2010, 15 of whom were trafficked for sexual exploitation, 11 for begging, and 3 for forced labor, all of them which represented 15% of the total number of assisted persons. Also, the Organized Crime Squad from Iasi stated that they encountered a low number of Roma among victims of THB for sexual exploitation, but many for begging and petty crimes, but also for forced labor.

⁹⁸ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities*

⁹⁹ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities*

The Background Research Report – Trafficking for the Purpose of Exploitation through Begging (2013: 39)¹⁰⁰ states that “a small minority of this population are involved in trafficking for the purposes of exploitation through begging, both as trafficked persons and sometimes also as perpetrators. Nevertheless, as one interviewee for this research commented, the ethnicity of the potential victim is generally not relevant to the exploiter or trafficker, but rather the opportunity to take advantage of situations and circumstances of vulnerability. These vulnerabilities may be found among some people of Roma ethnicity, though not exclusively”.

The lack of disaggregated data by ethnicity has negative effects on policy development, but not only. Many times Romanian authorities were accused that many Roma children are trafficked in Western countries, but the lack of data and clear evidence left them with no possibility to respond or defend themselves. This lack of disaggregated data by ethnicity is not affecting the combating THB, but also all the measures and policies that are meant to improve the situation of Roma communities in Romania. The lack of official data (the 2011 Census was a failure in gathering data – they failed to register around 1,000,000 households) about the number of Roma and about their problems is still hindering the way public policies are designed, implemented, but mostly monitored.

- Vulnerabilities of Roma communities to THB

At present we could not find out specific names or locations from where most Roma victims of THB came from (there are certain documented cases, but this does not mean that the situations remained the same and the traffickers were not caught by the police). But, based on the our documentation (NATP reports, other reports already cited here, the knowledge of Roma situation, the interviews made with representatives of institutions involved in fighting the trafficking, but also with the representatives of several NGOs providing services for victims of THB we can provide the profile of the most vulnerable Roma communities to the human trafficking. More likely victims of THB of Roma ethnicity may come from very poor Roma community, with little or none hope for employment, living on state support (minimum income guarantee and child support), spatial segregated, from urban but also rural areas, with low level of education of adults, but also of children that face segregation in school, with limited access to social services, discriminated and marginalized.

There are cases, according to the experts interviewed (experts assessment - representatives of NATP, but also Roma intellectuals interviewed during informal discussions), when a very traditional, compact and poor Roma community, that had very strict rules, became a trafficked community from the economic reasons. The traffic just became an acceptable way of living, the women being trafficked by their own families (husband, father, brother). The representative of the DCP considered that trafficked Roma children come from traditional, but also non-traditional Roma communities¹⁰¹, poor, but not so much “each case is different”.

¹⁰⁰ Healy C., Piotrowicz R., (2013). Background Research Report – Trafficking for the Purpose of Exploitation through Begging. The report was produced in the framework of the project Strengthening the Fight Against Forced Begging: A Multidisciplinary Approach, HOME/2011/SEC/AG/THB/4000002192.

¹⁰¹ In Romania there is the distinction between: Roma (Romanian citizenship) living in traditional communities, respecting their traditions, rules and norms, traditional way of dressing, fixed roles of male and females in the community, trying to preserve their culture and their group, their traditional trades, respect the Romanised, the set of rules, values and traditions. It is not mandatory to use Romany language; and non-traditional Roma; and Roma

According to the study of NATP Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study (2013: 39) some experts estimated that most victims belong to Roma ethnic group, depending on the local or regional characteristics, but others stated that there is impossible to estimate the statistical ratio of certain ethnicity when it comes to victims of THB. The conclusion of the study is that ethnic affiliation is not a vulnerability per se, but its association with certain socio-economic characteristics “*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”).

3.1. Child trafficking for begging

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of child begging is quite common in Romania in big cities. Children are begging by themselves in the streets, in the public transportation (busses, trams, metro), even in trains. Nobody could say how many are alone or an adult is supervision them from distance. There are cases where they are used by their parents for begging, and it is fair to say that not in all cases they are aggressed by their parents. There is no doubt that children begging in the streets or children used by their parents as “props” for begging could be seen as a form of exploitation of children and should be addressed by authorities.

The Background Research Report – Trafficking for the Purpose of Exploitation through Begging¹⁰² emphasis that “The involvement of parents in child begging should therefore be examined with caution, on a case-by-case basis, in order to draw a clear line between exploitation and basic survival, or lack of effective access to social security, childcare and education.” (2013: 34). The report is citing another report made by Save the Children Albania 2007 that states that before labeling families as exploiters of their own children, cautions should be taken, considering the situation of the family. There is a fine line that separates child exploitation and surviving and it is very difficult to clearly state what should be punished or not.

The same report emphasis the fact that “it is necessary to distinguish between children in a street situation who beg as a means of subsistence and children who are exploited and/or trafficked. In addition, although children in a street situation may not be in the course of being exploited at the time of identification, they are in a position of personal and circumstantial vulnerability to being exploited in the future, due to their lack of guardian and due to their continued presence on the streets” (2013: 40).

The above mentioned research emphasis the fact not all children (Roma or not) begging are the victims of traffic. Romania is a country where the begging is still something very common (unfortunately) no matter if adults or minors are involved in. There are cases where the poverty is so hard that parents are sending their children to beg (and the children are doing it considering it as a normal activity, abandoning school, staying in the crowded streets or in public transportation no matter the

(Romanian citizenship) living outside of these communities, with little emphasis on tradition, rules and norms (Romanipedi – the traditional Roma way of life).

¹⁰² Healy C., Piotrowicz R., (2013). Background Research Report – Trafficking for the Purpose of Exploitation through Begging. The report was produced in the framework of the project Strengthening the Fight Against Forced Begging: A Multidisciplinary Approach, HOME/2011/SEC/AG/THB/4000002192.

weather). Unfortunately, the state authorities are not very present in dealing with the issue and few children are helped and succeed in escaping the poverty.

“Many Roma children are exploited (work, pickpocketing and begging). Their parents are exploiting them, making them work, but in the same town” (so this could not be considered traffic). (NGO representative)

The NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013: 12) starts presenting the three forms of begging: voluntary begging; secondly, exploitation of voluntary begging; and finally, trafficking in persons with the purpose of exploitation through forced begging. The report states that out of all forms of THB forced begging is most visible because it happens in public crowded places and in many places it is tolerated due to certain attitudes.

The main causes leading to THB are (according to the above mentioned report, 2013: 17): marginalization; social exclusion; poverty; traumatizing experiences; lack of low level of educating; family dysfunctions; lack of family (the victim came from an institutionalized system of child protection); lack of employment; ethnic background. To all of these other general factors could be added like the opening of borders, big differences between the levels of living in Western countries compared with the one victims are coming, deficits in the system of social protection.

Minors are the most exposed victims and very vulnerable of being trafficked for begging and petty thefts. They can come from urban or rural areas (statistical data shows no pattern in this field), characterized by extreme poverty. Statistics shows (data from 2011 and 2012) that these minors could come from families with both parents (22 cases), then only one parent (8 cases), with no parents at all (8 cases) (Ungureanu, 2013: 38¹⁰³).

According to the same study on begging coordinated by NATP¹⁰⁴ (Ungureanu 2013: 67) the police officer interviewed declared, “organized groups acting mainly in the field of trafficking for begging, are in most cases, groups of Roma ethnics”. The Report of European Roma Rights Centre *Breaking the silence of Roma trafficking - Trafficking affecting Romani communities in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia*¹⁰⁵ mentions also the overrepresentation of Roma among the victims or traffickers active in the exploitation by begging.

The report (Ungureanu, 2013) considers as main causes for the large number of people of Roma ethnicity begging (voluntary) or involved in exploiting and trafficking for begging poverty, lack of education, illusion of getting a better life going abroad, economic problems Romanian economy is facing, and the limited impact of social protection policies. These are considered by the authors as general factors involved in increasing the risk of one person to become a victim or involved in traffic (Ungureanu, 2013).

¹⁰³ Ungureanu R.N (2013) Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study (2013: 39). National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

¹⁰⁴ Ungureanu R.N (2013) Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study (2013: 39). National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

¹⁰⁵ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the silence. Trafficking in Romani Communities, March 2011

The same report (Ungureanu, 2013:42) states that “In the cases involving minors, they had no other option except begging because they were influenced by their parents” and “in certain cases, the only source of income for the family is the children’s allowance and begging”.

“In Roma community (traditional one) the father is the one that decides the future of his children (if they would be or not trafficked)” (Roma intellectual).

The statistics from the NATP annual reports show that in spite of efforts made by the Romanian authorities to control and reduce the THB for the purpose of forced begging the numbers when it comes to minors are not going down. Unfortunately, as it was stated in the NATP reports, THB for forced begging is more lucrative if it happens abroad. So, even if we do not have the numbers of children trafficked abroad for the purpose of forced begging we can imagine that the numbers are not small. Unfortunately, the numbers are not disaggregated on ethnicity. The bellow table shows that the number of minors identified as victims of forced begging is varying not much, quite a different situation in the case of adult victims.

Table. Evolution of number of victims of forced begging

Forced begging	2013¹⁰⁶	2012¹⁰⁷	2011¹⁰⁸	2010¹⁰⁹	2009¹¹⁰	2008¹¹¹
Minors	11 (9 girls)	13 (9 girls)	21	19	?	10
All victims	38	48	81	112	109	91

During our field research we manage to find out from our interviewees that child trafficking for forced begging is common among most Roma poor communities in Romania. The phenomenon is present in all communities where the qualitative research was conducted, to varying degrees, defined by the respondents from few cases to a major community problem. According to our respondents, the root cause of the problem is poverty. In fact, several subjects underline that protecting children is a traditional Roma custom, but social-economic conditions are hindering families from behaving accordingly. However, these types of statements should be considered with caution because we also encountered mixed perceptions of begging.

The attitudes towards begging are much more permissive if it is seen as the only way to make a living. One child, boy, 13 years old said to the interviewer: „In the situation when one needs to beg because one has no money... it is not that bad”. An adult explained that „they are not stealing or killing... they are only begging”. During a group interview, children openly talked about a known case from the neighborhood: „Yes, we know. There are those children from Block 36, which are taken by their

¹⁰⁶ Asociația ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

¹⁰⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

¹¹⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

¹¹¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

mother to begging in Drumul Taberei [market in Bucharest]”. The children are not seeing something wrong in the begging, but they disapprove that „the mother buys whatever she wants for herself and the children starve”. They see it as a sign of divine justice that „once an addict beat her, because she bought coffee for herself and children were asking for food, and he [the addict] was angry.”

Under these circumstances of ambiguous ethics, it is often that the family itself is forcing children into begging, and begging becomes the only trade that family can make to support itself. There were various situations where families are using children for begging:

- there are parents with small income (or any) that use their children for begging. Toddlers and smaller children are begging with their mother but other are sent to collect on their own.
- older brothers are making their younger siblings beg (or even pick-pocket or do small jobs)
- children left in the care of relatives (grandparents, uncles, aunts etc.) or other people are particularly vulnerable

We noticed during our field research, but also during our extensive work in Roma communities during the years that this type of permissive attitude towards begging, especially when it involves children, is less encountered in more traditional communities, or in those that recently converted to Neo-Protestantism – cases where whole community renounced the traditional Christian-Orthodox practice for Neo-Protestant ones.

The problem becomes systemic when criminal networks sense the lucrative potential of children exploitation and act on it. From the reports of police agents, social workers and even community members, we could see a pattern where criminal groups are literally buying children from their families and integrate them in begging networks, at home, in a different locality or abroad. The collected cases do not allow for an evaluation of the dimension of the phenomenon or the trafficking routes. Countries like Spain and France were mentioned once or twice but we suspect that the destinations are more divers.

Begging may take various forms, and in many occasions doing small chores is closely associated to it. During the discussions with the stakeholders, situations like „window-cleaning” or „parking” were mentioned in the same context as begging, i.e. doing something for a living. „Window-cleaning” is done in urban areas, at crossroads. While cars are waiting for the green light, children offer the service of window cleaning, which is in fact a form of begging. „Parking” happens in crowded urban areas, where adults and children alike are „reserving” parking spots and offering them to car drivers for a fee. „Parking” tends to become an industry closely controlled by criminal elements because of potentially high revenues. Some respondents, both adults and children, mentioned „willingly begging”, meaning that the person involved is doing it out of her own choice.

- Tandarei case

Tandarei case was very much discussed and presented by mass media, especially from UK. According to NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013) children were trafficked not only to UK, but also to Spain, Italy and France. But, as it is pointed out in the report

“the case should be considered as such, and not at all representative for the phenomenon of begging, being the only one so extensive signaled till present” (Ungureanu, 2013: 67).

Tandarei is a small town of 13,219 inhabitants in the Ialomita county (one county that is present many times in the NATP annual reports as being the origins for victims of THB). According to the 2011 Census 65.47% of its inhabitants are ethnic Romanian, 10.86% are Roma for the rest the ethnic background is not known (in Romania, due to historical reasons, Roma tend not to declare their ethnicity at census).

This is the town from where came the 78 identified members of the criminal network that trafficked people between 2002 - 2006 in the UK in particular, but also in Spain, France and Italy. As the NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013; 70) states this case must “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.”

As police discovered, the network enveloped around certain influential families or persons within Roma communities. During the 90s, some Roma from these families emigrated to UK and then came back with welfare money, but also from criminal activities. They managed to help their relatives to emigrate as well, together with their children with the purpose to collect state benefits for vulnerable groups. In the mean time they begged and did some petty thefts. In time they started to exploit children from poor families from Tandarei, brought in UK with a promise to make money and send it to their families. Being a lucrative and profitable activity the members of the criminal network started to look for children in other poor neighboring towns.

In order to be allowed to cross the Romanian border with minors that were not their family, the criminal network sought support with persons working in a public notary office that helped them to get the necessary counterfeit documents. They also used certain individuals, with no criminal record, to accompany the children abroad.

The lowest risk for them was to traffic children aged 8 to 16 with counterfeited documents (birth certificates where they changed the name of the parents). The children were brought to Western countries by busses and both the transport and living the country were controlled by members of the network from city of Arad (Arad County).

In time the criminal network started to recruit members of different nationalities (Slovaks, Czechs and Poles, mainly of Roma ethnicity). The network controlled the minors that were sent to beg, car window-cleaning, or pick-pocketing. For years Romanian authorities did nothing to stop the network. The report (Ungureanu, 2013) is mentioning that this attitude was due to the weak system of register the incomes (for tax collection).

”Prosecutors from Romania's Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT) said the gang arranged the transport and bogus documents to get the children to Britain and then held them hostage in a series of safe houses run by the gangs.

Some were taught how to steal money from shops and restaurants while others were given instructions in burglary while under constant supervision by a gang member, court documents show.

A police spokesman said: "The children were told their families would be at risk if they tried to flee, and families were told the children would be harmed if they made a complaint to authorities."¹¹²

"legal contracts are signed between a family selling a child and the trafficker taking control of the youngster. 'It is a formal business arrangement. A trafficker will pay £20,000 for each child because of the huge sums he can get back. He arranges for the child to go for a "holiday" with relatives in England. 'They are smuggled into your country as a visitor and stay in the homes of trafficking gangs in Slough, London, Manchester or any of the big cities. 'The children may be given a false name and bogus birth certificate. Many are moved around the country frequently, using the bogus identity papers to make multiple claims for child benefit¹¹³.

The NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013: 67) pointed out that there were some problems in dealing with this case. UK police previously arrested some of the trafficked children for petty crimes, registering them as "low social danger criminal offenders", but they did not consider the possibility that those minors were the victims of 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".

Romanian authorities are also responsible because, as the report pointed out, it was a case of "limited intervention by local Romanian authorities" (Ungureanu, 2013: 66): "weak system of checks on unjustified goods" and "the absence of any investigation concerning the financial wealth displayed by emigrants returning to Romania".

A very recent articles (September 24 and 25, 2014¹¹⁴) states that tens of Romanian children were saved out of traffic during the operation named "Arhimede" and conducted by Europol. During the operation 1,027 persons were arrested and accused of THB and illegal drugs. The police confiscated huge amounts of drugs and saved 30 Romanian children that other would have been sent to foreign countries to be exploited by forced begging or forced labor. "Arhimede" operation focused on 9 areas of crimes enlisted in European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats with the aim at destructing organized crimes and their infrastructure across Europe. The operation consisted in at least 300 individual actions in airports, borders and ports across Europe, but also Australia, and Columbia. The police operation was not focused on human trafficking, but targeted many other criminal activities (drug trafficking, counterfeit drugs, prostitution, slavery). Nothing related to this case is

¹¹² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/romania/8027694/Romanian-gipsy-gang-snatched-200-children-from-homes-to-use-them-as-beggars.html>, consulted on February 11, 2014.

¹¹³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1290072/The-Romanian-gipsy-teenage-daughter-sent-beg-Britain-s-streets.html?ito=feeds-newsxml> consulted on February 11, 2014.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/organised-crime-networks-targeted-huge-law-enforcement-operation-europe>; <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/diicot-a-retinut-13-persoane-si-a-identificat-37-de-victimite-in-cadrul-operatiunii-arhimede-13341391>; http://www.realitatea.net/diicot-a-retinut-13-persoane-si-a-identificat-37-de-victimite-in-cadrul-operatiunii-arhimede_1532684.html; <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-18179271-operatiunea-arhimede-europol-puternica-lovitura-infractionalitatii-organizate-arestand-pest-1-000-suspecti-salvand-30-copii-romani.htm>; consulted on November 20, 2014.

present on the website of the NATP.

3.2. Child trafficking for pick-pocketing

“When it comes to registered (and discovered/identified) victims of pick-pocketing it is very hard because children are not accountable for their crime, and catching the traffickers is difficult, before the police manage to arrest them they manage to escape, leaving the children behind” (NAPT representative).

So, very little it is written and analyzed about this form of exploitation of THB. Even the statistics are curious, or it is due to the way the Romanian authorities are used to report data. It is true that the statement of the NATP representative clearly reflects the lack of or the limited dimension of the recorded cases, but also the lack of communication between the NATP and the Directorate for Child Protection. According to the data provided by the last mentioned institution, the number of minors was 8 for the first half of 2013, but NATP reported only 3 victims (minors and adults together) for the total year of 2013, as it is reflected in the table below.

Also, many reports state that pick-pocketing is well associated with forced begging as it can be seen very well in Tandarei case presented above in the section dedicated to children trafficked for forced begging.

Table. Evolution of number of victims of picks pocketing

Pick-pocketing	2013	2012 ¹¹⁵	2011 ¹¹⁶	2010 ¹¹⁷	2008 ¹¹⁸
Minors	8 ¹¹⁹ (first 6 months of 2013, only internal traffic) 2 (according to NATP data ¹²⁰)	3	2		
All victims	3 ¹²¹	6	11	6	4

According to the information gathered during our field research we can state that there are similarities between patterns in pick-pocketing and the ones in begging (forced begging), but with two major differences. The similarities are: pick-pocketing is common among certain Roma poor, segregated communities in Romania and the phenomenon is present in all communities where the qualitative research was conducted, to varying degrees.

¹¹⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

¹¹⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

¹¹⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

¹¹⁸ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

¹¹⁹ Interview at the Directorate for Child Protection on November 29, 2013.

¹²⁰ Asociația ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

¹²¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

Still, the differences are: first, pick-pocketing or other forms of theft are not openly considered acceptable, not even as a matter of subsistence; and second, pick-pocketing is not always associated with poverty. In some cases, theft is an important source of income and becomes a lucrative family trade („[a certain family] made a fortune from stealing abroad and they took the children to work with them there” – comments of people interviewed during the field research).

Involving children in pick-pocketing follows the same two main routes as begging:

- the family takes them to stealing, as a manner of living (not traffic);
- criminal networks force children to steal. The children arrive in the care of criminal networks either by being sold by their families or in some cases abducted.

A failed abduction situation was described by one of our interviewees (adult female): „In a park nearby Obor [large market in Bucharest], they’ve stalled a boy. They’ve shaved his head and changed his clothes. The missing boy was reported and the criminal thought to this strategy to change his appearance [...] the park guardian didn’t do anything, and the Police didn’t answered to the call of my sister. My sister recognized the boy, because she sold him a soda before being shaved”. In this case, the boy was saved by his family, who was quickly called. But the story underlines the fact that such situations are not unusual, that there are children abducted and never found, and that, at least in some cases, police response is not adequate. Still, this is a story provided by someone and no other information from other sources was collected (our research focused mainly on making communities more aware about the dangers of THB then to collect and verify information about certain cases). Still, this story could be a hint of what could be used as recruitment strategies for pickpocketing that police should investigate.

Pick-pocketing is riskier but more lucrative. This is why it tends to transform in criminal activity. In two different communities our subjects reported stories about adults making a living from theft abroad (countries not mentioned), then coming back home to recruit children for the trade. In both cases, they’ve started with children of poor relatives and extended to other poor families in the community as well. Families handled children in exchange of money.

Synthesizing the input from various stakeholders interviewed, we can draw the profile of most important factors that lead to children being put in vulnerable situations (begging, forced begging and pick-pocketing):

- poverty (not entirely responsible for some cases of petty thefts as discussed above);
- poor stock education, closely linked to poverty, as expected;
- permissive attitude towards begging present in the community;
- disorganized families, violence, neglect of the children;
- large families, with many children;
- development of criminal activities in the community without prompt intervention from the authorities.

When criminal networks start to recruit children, if there is no intervention, after a while this situation is starting to be seen as „normal” and more poor families are tempted to enroll their children. A teacher from rural area told our interviewer:

„I would call the Police but in many cases the Police is hand-in-hand with the criminal. If the Police would act, the phenomenon would not be present”

Our research included a component targeting street children and homeless persons in Bucharest. Twenty individual and group interviews shed some light on this world which has its own rules and order. All the above mentioned issues, which are referring to poor communities, but in the classic sense of the world, are multiplied when we deal with the „grey world” of people living on the streets. Here, the trafficking is well organized, the smugglers know well the areas and vulnerabilities of the people in this situation. Often, these trafficking groups draw children from poor rural communities. Children born on the streets have little chance of another life but one if trafficking – begging, theft, even more serious crimes such as dealing in drugs or robbery. Drug consumption and incidence of HIV/SIDA are high.

Most children in such situation came from disorganized families, have a history of abuses, are not going to school and know no other life. The response of the authorities is incomplete. Children saved from trafficking networks are brought to shelters by Police but most often they run away and return to the life on the streets.

3.3. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys

Little is known about this subject. According to NATP representative, this form of exploitation is new, recorded (statistically, see the table below) as such in the last three years – cases were signaled to NATP. Victims are trafficked abroad.

As it can be deduced from the lack of information and cases there are no references that would allow us to make a profile of boys that can become victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. The data provided by NATP in its annual reports are recording some - 8 cases in 2012 and 14 in 2010 (with the specification that the minors were exploited with predilection in Romania), nothing is mentioned in the 2011 or previous to 2010. Little such information can come from mass media, but this is not a reliable source of data when it comes to victims of THB because mass media is always on the run for catching the most sensational information and in the process data could be altered. Some such cases reported by mass media presented the cases of some boys (the ethnicity was not mentioned) discovered of being sexually exploited by adults or cases of adults trialed for sexually exploiting children (boys included). Unfortunately, we have no information about this kind of exploitation related to Roma ethnicity.

Table. Evolution of number of victims of sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation	2013¹²²	2012¹²³	2011¹²⁴	2010¹²⁵	2009¹²⁶	2008+2007¹²⁷
Boys	0	8	255	14		138
Girls	246	271		212	144	
All victims	448	526	506	482	320	724

“In Italy and Spain there are groups of persons that want boys/children and they, using certain networks, are placing special requests with traffickers. The victims are recruited, mostly, from orphanages and they are recruited with the promise for a better life <you can earn money, you can have a better life>. The boys are then cross the border using fake documents (even bribing the border police). If the minor is <successful> in pleasing his clients is kept for this form of exploitation, if not he is send to beg in the streets”. (NAAPT representative)

“If at the age 14-16 boys are exploited for work, sooner in their lives they are exploited for sex, at 8-12 years old, when they are most vulnerable”.

“there are a big number of Roma children homeless in urban areas, boys do get involve in prostitution”

During our field research we discovered that the roots and facilitating factors of sexual exploitation are the same as in the cases of begging and pick-pocketing (see above). But there are some specificities of child trafficking for sexual exploitation that were revealed by our research.

First, child trafficking for sexual exploitation is firmly rejected as wrong by all subjects. It is considered unacceptable even when it is the only source of income. People involved in the trade are both feared and despised, even when they still reside in the community. The research shows that many respondents, at the beginning of the discussion, associate trafficking exclusively with prostitution, considering the other forms as „labor”. Second, there are important difference in attitude between sexual exploitation of girls and boys. While sexual exploitation of girls is widely recognized and discussed, the situation of boys is blurry. According to some respondents, such cases simply do not even exist. Others are acknowledging that there are pedophiles that tempt boys, but do not consider trafficking of boys as being an issue.

This attitude is also present in the habits of children. When asked about their behavior online, most girls are saying that they do not accept unknown „friends” on social

¹²² Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

¹²³ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

¹²⁴ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202011.pdf>

¹²⁵ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

¹²⁶ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

¹²⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014 http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

networks, while most boys are likely to accept anybody (boy, 13 years old: „I, madam, accept everybody. I talk to the strangers, there’s nothing wrong”). This behavior is extended outside the virtual networks. „We are not afraid, we are boys, the strangers can’t do us no harm”, said one 14 years old boy during a group interview, being supported by both boys and girls. In another interview, a similar statement: „Boys have power and they can defend themselves, but girls can’t fight a trafficker”.

In the case of girls, it is widely spread the „lover boy” method: girl falls in love, girl follows lover abroad, and girl is trafficked into prostitution. The case of a 14 years old victim is storied by a relative: „she lived with him [as a couple] for three years, they have a children together... but they decided to go to Spain, called by his sister, to find work in a restaurant’s kitchen. There, he dropped her, he took some money from the restaurant owner so she will dance and have sex with the clients. His sister was involved in trafficking, she provided girls for the owner.” This particular story was not as bad as it could, because the victim pleaded with the owner and the latest allowed her to work in the kitchen instead. After four years, she still works there. But the woman involved in trafficking is also in the same trade, four years later.

Community members tend to put the blame on the poverty and lack of opportunities. „If the girls would find jobs, they would stay in their country. I have heard of girls going to pick strawberries and there one or another forced them and now they are prostitutes”. This type of approach, which was common in many communities, reveals an implicit and dangerous blaming of girls: they leave of their own choice, and at some point they chose or are forced into prostitution. Such perceptions shared by many members of different communities are diminishing the role of criminal networks and, to some extent, helps protecting these networks.

The same mechanism of blaming the victim may lead to a vicious spiral that draws the victim. Once a girl gets the stamp „unclean”, „easy” or „prostitute”, it is hard for her to find a different life, even if she remains in the community. During a group interview, eight grade children were talking about a girl of the same age: „there is that girl, she married with this guy... I mean, she ran away with him. Then he dumped her and now she is going with other guys because she wants to get married. But none wants her. She is now taking drugs and other men are undressing her on the block’s entrance”.

In the case of boys, we didn’t pick up similar stories. A police agent told our interviewer that he knows cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation of both girls and boys, but he refused to offer any details. But he also confirmed the „lover boy” method („sometimes the trafficker offer safety and protection to the victim for a while, until he lures her to follow him”), hinting that it is used in the case of boys as well.

Other subjects are aware and recognize the issue of pedophilia. „Now I’ve heard there are these retards that are attacking or aggressing boys. I don’t understand it. Some are coming in front of the block and promise candy and clothes to the boys, then they start touching them. I’ve talked with several neighbors that went out to walk the dog [as I do] and we followed what these bastards were doing to the boys. Then, we called the police. Now the block is visited daily by a police car. Those individuals are not showing up but I still watch what’s happening to the children in front of the block.” In

other cases, people reacted to such situation, showing anger and strong rejection towards pedophilia. But they are less likely to acknowledge the existence of networks of trafficking in boys.

A 13 years old boy tells his story: „I am afraid, I was followed by a guy. He caught me on the stairs between floors; he touched me and said he wants to make some pictures with me. I was very afraid but I managed to run away. Then he caught me again another time but a neighbor got out and he fled. Since then, my uncle stays on the stairs and waits for him. I haven't seen him since. My uncle said I was too cute and he wanted to make pictures with me". In this case, neither the family nor the neighbor called the police. The community reacted, but didn't took into consideration that it may be more than one „bastard" making troubles.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is widely acknowledge as a problem and in all communities visited there were information campaigns run by school and police to educate the children and their families. The immediate result of these prevention measures is that people are more knowledgeable about the threat. It is not clear what the impact in terms of reducing the phenomenon is, if any.

4. The child victims – multiple vulnerabilities, risk factors and risk of trafficking

This chapter aims to provide a better understanding of the situation of child victims of trafficking for the purposes of begging, pickpocketing and sexual exploitation among the Roma communities examining the multiple factors of vulnerabilities that put children at risk of being sold and trafficked both internally and abroad. These include socio-economic factors, the family environment and cultural practices and more importantly the interconnection between them. The factors have been identified using the previous researches (Breaking the Silence, Trafficking in Romani Communities 2011¹²⁸, Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study, 2013, Trafficking in Children in Romania, 2009, NATP annual reports, GRETA Report 2012¹²⁹), but also the field research conducted by the team.

4.1. Multiple vulnerabilities and intersectionality approach

Children at risk of becoming victims or being drawn into begging, pickpocketing or sexual exploitation could become very easily victims of THB abroad for the same purpose (more lucrative and providing more income for the traffickers). These children face many risks that are linked together like in a spider-web, or, more known, the circle of poverty that is so hard to escape from.

Vulnerability factors are significantly worsened in the case of Roma due to, on the one hand, the failure of national social systems to reduce and eliminate the vulnerable situation in Roma communities (mainly due to the lack of interest from the political part for the Roma issue), and on the other, barriers (discrimination is the main one) preventing Roma from accessing public services such as schools, health services, employment services and other social services¹³⁰.

Breaking the silence (2011: 41) report signal that most frequent factors that increase the vulnerability of people to become victim of THB are: poverty and social exclusion; limited or lack of education and illiteracy; growing up in State care; being indebted to usurers and family environments in which violence and/or drug abuse were present. They add also the gender and ethnic discrimination.

In the NATP report Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study (Ungureanu, 2013) other factors are considered that have an influence in making children easy targets for becoming victims of THB. So, from the psychological and physical point of view, minors are more fragile, they have a reduced capacity to evaluate and anticipate the actions of aggressors plus the immaturity in assessing people and situation (they are more naïve), no matter if they grew up in a family or on the streets. The 2011 NATP annual report stressed also other factors: migration of parents for work; use of illegal drugs; peers; depression; lack or deficit of self-esteem; the desire for independence; lack of family support; inclination toward juvenile delinquency, lack of supervision by parents of minors.

¹²⁸ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities

¹²⁹ Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

¹³⁰ European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities

The NATP report *Trafficking in Children in Romania* (2009: 49) states that, according to experts evaluations Roma children are exposed to a higher risk of being trafficked due to a number of socio- economic and demographic factors are contributing to this: greater mobility of Roma families; high birth rate; higher rate of poverty; higher rate of school-drop out.

“One representative stated that most children exploited for begging come from Roma families and are very young with little chances to break out of this situation. Very often Roma families are denied access to state social protection as they do not have identity papers, which make social interventions in cases of child abuse or criminal activities more difficult.” (2009: 49)

The World Bank Report from 2014 “Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” (prepared with the purpose to be used in the programming of the EU funds 2014-2020) (2014: 10) presents the “socioeconomic exclusion of the Romanian Roma as the result of multiple interacting factors that result in a stark inequality of opportunities, starting early in life”. Also, the same report states clearly that “even when important background characteristics are held constant, merely ‘being a Roma’ remains a key determinant of living in poverty” (2014: 6).

- family poverty and unemployment

In the NATP report *Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study* (Ungureanu, 2013: 34) it is clearly pointed out, as the result of interviews with both experts and victims, that most victims of THB are having “*“a life lived at the limits of existence”*, characterized by extreme poverty and amplified by the absence of a permanent working place”.

When we are referring to Roma the conditions are not far from what the victims of THB (no reference to their ethnicity was made in the NATP report). Roma, due to lack education, official qualification, and discrimination tend to have low and irregular incomes earned from work and so many Roma households end up relying on child allowances and on irregular and low-level streams of informal income. In some cases, school-aged children are expected to contribute to the family income. But in numerous families, child allowance and maybe minimum income guarantee (state benefit designed for poor families without income) still fails to meet the daily needs of the entire family. According to the World Bank Report from 2014 (2014: 9) the rate of Romanian Roma households facing severe material deprivation is alarmingly high (90%) and this has to be considered together with the fact that almost half of Roma households in Romania have very low work intensity.

A significant proportion of Roma face a range of housing problems: lack of housing; poor living conditions; lack of identity and property documents etc. Due to low standards of living, some Roma have lost their rental contracts with local authorities, or they have abandoned them not being able to cover utility costs. Two thirds (67%) live in segregated communities of great ethnic homogeneity and isolated from other communities¹³¹. The situation of housing of the Roma minority in Romania in 2011

¹³¹ Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

could be characterizes as such: lack of basic amenities, overcrowded spaces, spatial segregation, high risk of eviction characterize the housing situation of many Roma.

- Unemployment and lack of prospects

According to the World Bank Report from 2014 “Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” (2014: 65) Roma men and women are employed even far less often than men and women of other ethnic groups. Labor force participation of working-age Roma (57% among men and 34% among women) is lower than that of non-Roma neighbors (67% among men and 42% among women). Employment rates among Roma are very low. The study of Soros Foundation Romania¹³² from 2011 shows that overall employment rate among Roma was only 36%, while 36% were looking for a job, and 28% were inactive. Also, Romanian Roma also face higher unemployment rates, meaning that many of them are looking for work without being able to find it. Moreover, among those who are employed, jobs for the most part are unstable and informal. 10% of respondents worked continuously over the previous two years, 6% worked periodically, for long periods of time, 32% worked sporadically and 52% had not worked at all during the previous two years. The situation didn’t change much from 2011: most Roma are still the most vulnerable in accessing the labor market - low level of education, lack of formal qualification, discrimination in employment and access to employment, while a considerable proportion of Roma are still not involved in formal economy. Plus, Roma are confronted with discrimination when trying to access the labor market.

This lack of employment, but also the perspectives of getting one are the main reasons Roma decide to go abroad for work, ignoring the warnings of possible exploitation abroad.

- Level of education - Access to education and risk of dropping out

Illiteracy and early school drop-out affect Roma children more than the majority (13.8 percent of the total Roma households with at least one child age between 6 and 16 declared that their children do not go to school) and Roma students continued to be subjected to discriminatory treatment within the educational system in Romania¹³³.

The regional UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma survey (2011) reveals a high level of classroom-level segregation among Roma. The data shows that nearly a quarter of Roma children currently attending basic education are in classes where most of the children are Roma. Among their non-Roma neighbors, who were also interviewed, only 9% are in classes with mostly Roma children¹³⁴ (2014: 37). The study of Soros Foundation Romania¹³⁵ from 2011 revealed that 25% of Roma adults are illiterate, and 49% attended a maximum of 4 years of school, not reaching the

¹³²Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

¹³³Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

¹³⁴World Bank Report (2014). “Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/romania/OutputEN.pdf>, consulted on June 13, 2014.

¹³⁵Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

standards for accessing qualification courses and getting a stable job.

- Migration for labor

As mentioned above, the lack of perspectives in getting a job coupled with poverty and discrimination in accessing the labor market makes Roma to look for work abroad. They are relying heavily on networks of relatives and friends gathering little information before living. With little knowledge about the country they manage to get in, with no knowledge of a language that would allow them to communicate, Roma are easily tricked and could end up in exploitation situations, even trafficked. The study of Soros Foundation Romania¹³⁶ from 2011 shows that the intention of work related migration is concentrated on the level of young population - 26% of the respondents, with ages between 16 and 18 years, are considering the possibility to leave Romania in the near future.

- Discrimination

According to the World Bank Report from 2014 “Summary Report Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” (2014: 21) more than a quarter of Roma answered that they had experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity in 2011. During the same research Roma households report experiencing the highest levels of discrimination when looking to buy or rent property (31%) or when looking for paid work (30%).

- Inability to access social assistance

The “Summary Report Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” (2014: 21) pointed out, as a result of focus-groups and individual interviews that discriminatory practices toward Roma patients are manifested in hospitals “avoiding physical contact with the patients; non-involvement of the patients and of their family in choosing the treatment; omission of the explanations concerning the risks of administering a certain type of treatment; using aggressive procedures.

Also, due to financial restraints, but also due to the distribution of funds towards so-called middle class from one municipality (according to some mayors “Roma are cheap to buy during the election, so that is why we have to use our resources carefully and direct them towards the tax payers”), the service providers lack the necessary resources to meet the needs of Roma communities for improved service delivery. To this we have to add also the lack understanding of the local context of Roma communities from the part of service providers and the result leads to the undermining of the quality of services. In these cases Roma are not benefiting from the healthcare services as it should, nor from the support and supervision of social workers and school mediators.

- Being subjected to violence early in life whether in an institution or at home

The Breaking the silence (2011) report signals that violence and substance abuse increase vulnerability to trafficking. The NATP annual reports state, based on analysis of statistical data, that two-parent family appears to be the main type of family of origin for child victims or minors, followed closely by single parent families. Surprisingly is the fact that not so many cases of children from the state protection system are recorded as victims of THB as pointed out in NATP annual reports cited

¹³⁶Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

above.

The Trafficking in Children in Romania (2009: 52) report emphasizes the fact that violence in the home, emotional, physical or even sexual, is viewed as a main feature that makes children prone to recruitment, regardless of their economic or social means. An abusive family environment prepares the ground for various but constant forms of abuse children have to suffer while trafficked. Moreover, it is estimated that there is a strong connection between an individual's likelihood to trafficking and his/her status as an observer or object of domestic violence. During our field research some of our subjects told stories about abusive and violent behavior from their parents or members of extended family towards them, even drug abuse. In cases like that the minor is getting used to violence and starts to consider it as part of life, being at high risk of becoming the victim of THB.

- Previous experience in prostitution or/and drug consumption

With regard to trafficking for sexual exploitation in particular, previous experience in prostitution has been reported to be of relevance. In the 2011 NATP annual report¹³⁷ it is stated that minors, victims of THB sexually exploited abroad were already involved in practicing prostitution in Romania, so they accepted the offers to live the country and practice prostitution abroad for better financial gains. They were lured by the prospective of earning a lot of money, being also unaware about the exploitations, humiliations, and extremely poor conditions they would face.

4.2. Multiple vulnerabilities and risk of trafficking

Analyzing previous reports and considering the information found during our field research we cannot conclude that there is a unique vulnerability factor specific for Roma ethnics, or that traffic is a "cultural practice" specific to Roma. Quite contrary, Roma are more vulnerable to traffic than other ethnic groups due to ethnic discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, lack of low level of education, high level of unemployment and limited access to social services. The above discussed factors of vulnerability as domestic violence, school drop out, homeless, complicity of family members in trafficking their children, all of these are similar when analyzing the situation of other marginalized and vulnerable groups across the globe.

¹³⁷ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

5. *Child trafficking process*

The general mechanism for recruitment of children¹³⁸: the recruiter is coming, more frequent, from the same environment or similar as his/her victim. They are preying their victims – gather information about the family, especially about its problems (financial, emotional), about the child's friends. The recruiters present themselves to their potential victims very successful persons, convincing the children to admire them. Then they start making very attractive promises (a lot of money, very comfortable life) to children or to their family. Most often, recruiters are part of the trafficking network. In the 2010 NATP annual report¹³⁹ it is signaled the fact that children are much more easily manipulated in doing certain actions and they do not ask explanations regarding the result and the object of their actions, which is much easier for recruiters.

In some cases the parents are involved in the traffic of their own children. They agree to lend or sell their children. There are cases when parents gave the written agreement necessary so the child is crossing the Romanian border without his/her parents. In the *Trafficking in Children in Romania – Study on the recruiting process* (2009: 64) it is mentioned by the experts interviewed that “Roma families with many children, due to poverty, they send their children to beg in order to help support the family”, but no specific town/village is mentioned.

“In some cases the family is involved in recruitment, the parents, the brothers, they are sending their children to beg, to make money, but it is out of despair, due to poverty” (NGO representative).

“Belonging to an ethnic group is not a vulnerability. The traffickers enter the poor communities and the family agrees to give the child, or even to accompany it in order to make some money” (NAPT representative).

In the table below we manage to get together information (2010-2012) available about the process of recruiting minors for THB, who was the recruiter and the most frequent reasons used. All this information came from the NATP database SIMEV.

¹³⁸ General Inspectorate of Romanian Police and NATP (2009). Trafficking of children in Romania – The study of the recruitment process (Traficul de copii in Romania – Studiu asupra procesului de recrutare). Bucharest

¹³⁹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

Table. The recruitment process

Year	2012 ¹⁴⁰	2011 ¹⁴¹	2010 ¹⁴²
The recruiter	The recruitment for traffic was done more frequently 57% by friends and acquaintances of minors, showing the high influence of false promises coming from persons that are posing as someone close or even a friend.	Most frequent minors were recruited by persons they knew directly or friends from their circle of friends.	Minors were recruited by being directly approached by the recruiter in 93% of cases. In 58% of cases the recruiter belonged to the closed circle of friends or acquaintances of minor, and in 23% of cases the recruiter was somebody unknown. In the recruitment process there were cases where relatives of the minor or a neighbour were involved or acted as a recruiter.
The reasons	Most frequent most minors were tricked into traffic with the promiss of better conditions of practicing prostitution or with promises of better jobs in Romania or abroad.	Most frequent the recruiter promised them better jobs or better conditions (also better earnings) for practicing prostitution. For the second group, the recruiters selected their victims from the ones that were already practicing prostitution in Romania.	34% of minors victims of THB accepted the offer for practicing prostitution, 33% were recruited with the promise of a better job in Romania or abroad. There were cases where minors were tricked with promises of marriages of convenience, or trips, or begging.

5.1. Child trafficking for begging

Trafficking for begging is the third form of exploitation (according to NATP data) and it is very profitable outside Romania. Traffickers are usually persons with prior convictions and they act in organized groups. Victims (begging and pickpocketing) are making considerable amount of money each day, but this are collected by traffickers and in the case of minors they can be kept in traffic longer then adults (that have better chances to escape the traffic situation) (Ungureanu, 2013).

The Trafficking in Children in Romania (NATP, 2009) offers us some documented information about the process of trafficking for begging in minors. Unfortunately, the data used in the study are from 2008, still some patterns remain the same. According to the study half of the victims were recruited by acquaintances and friends, and in 35% of cases by an unknown person. In 5 cases the traffickers was a close relative, in 6 a relative, and in 8 a lover or the husband.

According to Ungureanu (2013) (the research report was produces using the SIMEV database and 28 interviews with victims and professionals working with victims of THB) children are made to beg in crowded areas – shop entrances, supermarkets,

¹⁴⁰ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202012.pdf>

¹⁴¹ National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victim%202011.pdf>

¹⁴² National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014 <http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

schools, churches, railway stations, crowded markets, touristic attractions. The ones that refuse to beg are beaten, threatened (their lives or the lives of their family at home), kept without food etc. Some of them declared that they were forced to watch how others were tortured/beaten for not obeying the traffickers. Children have to stay on the streets to beg from 8 to 14, even 18 hours a day and they are closely monitored. From begging to pick pocketing is not a long road. According to the same report children and young male adults are forced to pickpockets and stole from shops, the traffickers taught them how to do and what to take. In some cases, they were forced to prostitute themselves for different clients provided by traffickers.

Minors were housed in very poor conditions: rented apartments together with their traffickers, caravans, deserted houses, even in parks. Some of them stated that they received food once a day, mostly in the evening. Some traffickers, according to their victims, considered that it was not their responsibility to feed their victims. In the cases of minors the period of exploitation, according to NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013) depends much on authorities' capacity to intervene.

“The victims of trafficking for begging are housed together, 15-20 persons in the same small apartment, with no freedom of movement. They are constantly monitored. Begging is, after sexual exploitation of girls/women, the most profitable <business>, especially when it comes to external traffic. The children, the persons with handicapped, women with small babies are positioned in touristic places. They are also closely monitored and their income is collected twice a day by traffickers.” (NAPT representative)

One good example of how victims are recruited, trafficked and exploited could be seen in Tandarei case (presented in the subchapter 3.1. Child trafficking for begging).

5.2. Child trafficking for pickpocketing

The identification of children victims of trafficked for pickpocketing is difficult:

“When it comes to registered (and discovered/identified) victims of pickpocketing it is very hard because children are not accountable for their crime, and catching the traffickers is difficult, before the police manage to arrest them they manage to escape, leaving the children behind” (NAPT representative).

Also, it is difficult, almost impossible to prove the involvement of parents in the exploitation of their own children, when such cases happened. In most of these cases children do not consider that they were victims of their families. As in the case of begging (the two forms of exploitation are going very well together – minors could be involved in begging, but also in pickpocketing) the minors are happy, even proud, to help their families and provide some additional income.

During our field research we found out about a case of a minor being abducted by traffickers and put to do petty thefts. Also, the NATP report (Ungureanu, 2013) signals the fact that also forced begging (not only voluntary one) is associated with forced pickpocketing, both performed under the same coercion that traffickers apply to exploit victims for begging. The traffickers taught the victims how to steal and which items. The children are manipulated into stealing using emotional blackmail or by force, or both. Due to limited number of cases reported (see the statistics presented

in the subchapter 3.2. Child trafficking for pickpocketing) the Romanian authorities do not have a well-established response and cases are not well researched.

5.3. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys

It is difficult to provide information on recruitments strategies and methods of exploitation of Roma boys victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. There are no data and during our field research we were not able to find and document such cases due to stigma associated with in Roma communities (for some of our respondents, such cases do not even exist). What we could find was some stories about pedophiles trying to kidnap children/boys (alluring children with candies and toys) with the intention to exploit them sexually. One policeman interviewed offered his opinion about the subject pointing out that the “lover boy” method of recruiting girls is working also when it comes to boys. Unfortunately, all stories collected were about internal traffic and nothing was discussed about the external one. Still, as we mentioned above, the aim of our research was on making communities more aware about the dangers of THB then to collect and verify information about certain cases, so these should be considered as stories that need further investigation.

Even about minors in general very little is known about the subject. According to NAPT representative, this form of exploitation is new, recorded (statistically) as such in the last three years – cases were signaled to NATP (see the table with the data in the section above 3.3). Victims are trafficked abroad.

“In Italy and Spain there are groups of persons that want boys/children and they, using certain networks, are placing special requests with traffickers. The victims are recruited, mostly, from orphanages and they are recruited with the promise for a better life <you can earn money, you can have a better life>. The boys are then cross the border using fake documents (even bribing the border police). If the minor is <successful> in pleasing his clients is kept for this form of exploitation, if not he is send to beg in the streets”. (NAPT representative)

The Trafficking in Person for Begging - Romania Study (Ungureanu, 2013: 54) points out that in some cases “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”.

6. Victims assistance and protection response mechanisms

6.1. Identification of victims as a prerequisite to assistance

While this chapter is focused on assistance and protection of Roma child victims of trafficking, it is important to note that access to assistance is available only after effective victim identification. This study established several significant gaps in the child victim identification process, which prevent children in situation of trafficking and exploitation to gain access to assistance.

In this chapter we can provide information about the assistance and protection of minors in Romania, with little hints about Roma children victims of THB due to the lack of data and the reluctance of Romanian authorities to talk about the subject declaring that:

“for us, all children are the same and we offer them the same protection and care. We do not discriminate and we do not treat them differently because of terror different ethnic background. This will be discrimination.” (the representative of the Directorate for Child Protection)

Going back to analyze Tandarei case it can be noticed that Romanian law enforcement authorities were passive to what happened there for a number of years during which many children, Roma or not were trafficked and exploited in different Western countries. The local police didn't want to get involved and didn't consider that it was necessary to find out how traffickers (of Roma ethnicity) manage to have such incomes in such a short time. It took the involvement of the UK police and the joint efforts with the Romania's Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism to determine the involvement of the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism in investigating the case and discovering the criminal network. An earlier intervention from the local police would have signal something to the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism Unit and the lives of many children would have been spared by the nightmare of being a victim of THB.

In the Breaking the silence report (2011: 60) the same inactivity of police in effectively investigating THB, especially in relation to Roma is mentioned, using the same example – Tandarei case. In the Tandarei case, and not only, the limited resources of the social assistance services (and in some cases their lack of interest for Roma communities) make the situation even more difficult for the victims or possible victims – they have to approach the police and signal the case of traffic. In the case of Roma, the relation between Roma communities and Romanian police is not a good one, due to negative stereotypes both groups have about each other. During the years some NGOs tried to change this mentality of the Romanian police, even convinced the Ministry of Internal Affairs to employ Roma as police officers. Still, there is a long way to go before establishing a trustful relation between Roma communities and Romanian police. Due to this situation it is even harder to Roma victims to contact the local police and signal the traffic situation.

The Trafficking in Person for Begging – Romania Study (Ungureanu, 2013: 56) emphasis the fact that the intervention of local authorities in identifying the case of traffic is crucial especially for minors, because in the absence of such intervention

“minors endure a longer period of being trafficked”. Minors, depending on their age, back-ground, level of education, fear of traffickers, time spent in traffic and other factors could have or not the capacity to understand their situation as exploitation, so their capacity of signaling the situation to authorities is much more limited than in the case of adults.

6.2. Protection and assistance

Due to the National Identification and Referral Mechanism, when a child is identified as being a victim of THB, irrespective of his/her country of origin, the General Directorate for Child Assistance and Protection (GDCAP) or Service for the child victim of abuse, negligence and trafficking in persons are notified to take special measures for his/her protection. The GDCAP is responsible for the implementation of the strategy of social assistance provided to children, adults and entire families. Even the foreign child, victim of THB is entitled to the same support and protection as all Romanian children.

The representative of the Directorate for Child Protection mentioned that there are problems concerning the cooperation between states when it comes to signal the presence of unaccompanied minors on their territory. Not all the time there is a good coordination between Romanian authorities (that declared that they have all the necessary procedures in place) and their counterparts from other countries.

In supporting this claim made by the representative of the Directorate for Child Protection (DCP) are the discussions during one conference held in Bucharest (“Strengthening the fight against forced begging: a multidisciplinary approach”¹⁴³). The Romanian prosecutors from the Directorate for Combating Organized Crime from different counties mentioned the problems that exist regarding the coordination mechanism for returning children, victims of traffic. Italy and France were the countries mentioned with whom Romanian authorities have problems in returning the minors, victims of traffic.

According to the representative of the Directorate for Child Protection, the Romanian authorities are prepared (they have all the necessary procedures) to repatriate all unaccompanied minors discovered in other countries (not all these minors are victims of traffic). The children, suspected of being victims of traffic, are tacking over by the General Directorate of Child Assistance and Protection (presented in each county) that is working closely with the local police (where the family of the minor reside). The local police, together with the social worker are in charge of doing preliminary research to find out if the minor, once back to his/her family, is still in danger of being trafficked (if the family is involved in traffic, or if someone close to the family is endangering the child etc.). They are the one that decide it is safe for the minor to return home to his/her family. Otherwise, the minor is hosted in the GDCAP facilities and later send to a foster family. In all this process the representative of NATP is informed and he/she has to monitor the case.

¹⁴³ the project implemented by Romanian authorities – Public Ministry, Ministry of Interior, General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police and Belgian Federal Prosecutor’s Office, Federal Ministry of Interior, Austria, Ministry of Justice and Liberties, France. The project was financed by DG Home Affairs, intended to establish partnership amongst prosecutors, police and civil society, with the aim of exchanging good practices on human trafficking with the focus on forced begging. The conference was attended also by the representative of the Italian Embassy in Bucharest, Ministry of Interior, Poland, North Holland Office, Prosecutor from Spain, Liaison officer from Czech Republic, National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Bulgaria).

Still, the services provided to all Romanian children, no matter their ethnicity (as stated by the representative of the Directorate for Child Protection) are having some problems reflected not only in international reports (US Department of State 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report; GRETA Report 2012, Breaking the silence 2011), but also in researches coordinated by the NATP (Trafficking in Children in Romania, 2009) and in the National Strategy against Trafficking in Person for 2012-2016 (see the subchapter 2.4. Institutional Set Up, Legal and Policy Framework).

In the Trafficking in Children in Romania (2009) report it is highlighted the existence of various shortcomings regarding institutional or social support, lack of infrastructure, of cooperation between social protection actors, limited resources available to communities and regions. To all of these, experts added the lack of social support networks, social protection systems and specialized/trained human resources. Due to financial constraints the number of social workers and psychologists in certain regions, especially in rural areas, is low, so their efforts toward victims of THB or prevention of traffic are scattered and limited.

When it comes to offer support to Roma victims of THB Breaking the silence (2011) points out that the number of Roma benefiting from assistance in Romania is low, the explanation being that lack of trust Roma have in Romanian authorities (even higher than Romanians have, which, according to researches, is pretty low compared with other countries). According to GRETA Report 2012 (no. 143) the lack of trust in the system of social assistance is more general when it comes to victims of THB, no matter their ethnic background. Also, it is mentioned that there are cases of victims that prefer to receive assistance in the countries they were discovered, or the foreign NGOs prefer to refer their victims directly to Romanian NGOs, avoiding contacting Romanian authorities (see the tables with the number of assisted victims by authorities and by NGOs).

Table. Victims – Romanian citizens – assisted in 2012 and 2013¹⁴⁴

	Institutions/NGOs	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
2012	NATP (identified and referred)	348	323	327	43	1041
	General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection	38	12	82	17	149
	NGOs	94	28	41	16	178
2013	NATP (identified and referred)	299	297	278	22	896
	General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection	38	8	107	13	166
	NGOs	134	21	29	9	193

Note: It is important to consider that NATP has only the responsibility to identify and refer victims of THB to institutions and NGOs that are offering social services.

As it is mentioned even in the National Strategy against Trafficking in Person for 2012-2016 victims of THB are confronted, in their process of reintegration, with the prejudice and negative stereotypes existing in the Romanian society, especially in the case of those that were sexually exploited or of Roma origin (as mentioned in the GRETA Report 2012). The same report mentioned that NGOs are struggling to find

¹⁴⁴ Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

employment for the victims of THB, but their success depends very much on their ability to hide from the future employer the past of the victim. In the case of minors, their reintegration into the school system is even harder.

Still, the GRETA Report 2012 assessed that in the field of prevention NATP together with national and international NGOs made significant progresses. Also, during our research, NATP representatives were very much interested in working with young educated Roma that could help them deliver the anti-traffic messages in their communities. So, after the meeting we organized that was attended by more than 30 young educated Roma we provided the lists with their contacts (the participants agreed upon this) in the hope of future collaborations. Some participants had a bachelor degree in law, others in social work, other in social science, so they were very much interested by the topic and willing to conduct anti-traffic campaigns.

7. Elements of effective community involvement in developing more sustainable responses and mechanisms

It is important to know that in Romania there are some strong and visible Roma NGOs, very much involved in implementing EU funds, but also in the process of drafting public policies. When needed their voice is strong, and despite their differences, in important moments they find the resources to get united and have a common voice. In the Introduction it was already discussed the fact that Roma NGOs have no voice in the anti-traffic debate, and public policies development, but by choice (fear of negative stigmatization). Also, very little is done by state institutions to involve them in anti-traffic activities. The aim of our project is to help them get together: gathering educated young Roma and making them interested in the topic; facilitating the meeting between them and the representatives of NATP; providing NATP and encouraging them to use these people for their future anti-traffic campaigners; working with selected Roma communities and making them aware about the dangers of THB.

“The prevention should be done at the level of each community. We would like to strengthen our relations with communities, with local public authorities. The last ones are responsible for collecting data about the traffic (the danger of) and some of them are not doing a good job, and they should be sanctioned for this. The social worker should know the situations for each family (with problems)”.
The representative of Directorate of Child Protection

Still, there are many problems as already described when referring to assistance and re-integration of victims of THB, but also when it comes to preventions. More benefits could result if local communities get involved in preventing the THB. If so, less children will become victims of THB. If children together with their parents are informed, if real stories of children victims of THB are told, how they were living under exploitation, how hard was for them to return home. It is true that information campaigns are run in schools to educate children and their families, but when we refer to poor families, with children that do not go to school, we see the gap exactly where the people at high risk of being trafficked are.

During our field work we manage to observe that there is little or no involvement in preventing the traffic in visited communities (rural and urban areas). Trafficking for sexual exploitation is widely acknowledged as a problem and in all communities visited there were information campaigns run by school and police to educate the children and their families. The immediate result of these prevention measures is that people are more knowledgeable about the threat. It is not clear what the impact in terms of reducing the phenomenon is, if any.

Also, another important aspect that should be considered is that according to the policy of the Directorate for Child Protection efforts are made to return the child (victim or potential victim of THB) back to his/her family. But this means that the police together with the social worker manage to find out all the necessary information that could allow them to draw the conclusion that the child's family was not involved in the trafficking process. The limited resources involved for social assistance of poor families, the lack of qualified and motivated social workers are making very difficult the process of providing the return child with a safe and

monitored environment. To that we can add also the negative stereotypes Roma are confronted with reflected in the attitudes social workers have toward Roma families.

In Romania, we cannot talk about successful model of community involvement in preventing the traffic, but rather of disparate local successes, some of them supported by NGOs. NATP and other NGOs (national and international) have organized for years prevention campaigns (national, regional and local). These campaigns used information campaigns using different channels of communication: mass media (short movies, animated movies for children), social media, posters, theatre play, direct information in schools (targeting students and their teachers) etc.

Unfortunately, in Romania social workers are receive standards for their work from various public institutions, but are employed and paid by the local council. In some communities we were able to find out about ad-hoc networks of practices, including various stakeholders (social assistance, mediator, school, police) that facilitate early intervention or remedy. These ad-hoc interventions have no procedures, come from individual initiatives and are organized in an informal way. There are no rules of informing the community or how the exchange of information should happened. In general, we discovered that parents, during parents meetings at school or during other local meetings exchange information regarding the possible dangers for their children and how to keep them safe. Still, this domain of ad-hoc good practices in preventing the trafficking in human beings needs to be further investigated in order to find out more good practices that could be used by communities and state authorities. Unfortunately, in the communities we visited this type of cooperation is rather the exception. In order to scale up such examples, **clear and efficient protocols of communication** between these institutions are necessary in this area.

A good example was one meeting we had in school with parents during which we were invited to present and then speak about the risk of trafficking in human beings. At one moment a person entered the class and we observed that the discussion we had stopped and parents became more reluctant to express opinions regarding the subject. After few minutes that person left the room (because it was not what he was looking for) and we found out that he was a trafficker (or considered to be by many parents). We asked about and we were told that they knew from other parents that he was involved in trafficking young women for prostitution in Spain. They also said that they were careful with their daughters telling them about the dangers of being exploited, even trafficked by men posing as lover-boys.

In mid April 2014 we organized one training program for young Roma graduates in order to make them more aware about the traffic phenomenon. We invited to help us with the training one expert from NATP. At the end of the training we asked our participants if they are willing to cooperate in the future with the NATP and if they agree to give to NATP their contact details. Everybody agreed and we encouraged the NATP representative to consider these young Roma as future partners in disseminating anti-traffic messages in their communities.

One important aspect that has to be considered when talking about the community involvement in preventing the THB is that when it comes to begging and pick-pocketing serious obstacles arise. Begging especially, but also pic-pocketing are surviving strategies of the poorest, deprived and marginalized. As long as nothing is

done (or very little) to improve the lives of these people, their children, but also adults, will continue to be at high risk of becoming victims of THB. Also, due to poverty many community members are accepting begging and even theft as acceptable behavior in some circumstances, minors included. In the last years, there several raising awareness campaigns were implemented, directly to sexual exploitation, with some success. It is necessary to continue and expand the **raising awareness** activities to include all form of THB and to reach more people.

From our field research we can state that communities become powerless when trafficking networks become active. Rarely community members would stand up against such networks. They tend to avoid them and accept them as the unchallengeable evil. In Tandarei case, not even the state institutions intervened for years.

8. *Conclusions and recommendations (TBD)*

No data, no cases, no problem?

1. Since 2007 Romania is a full member of the European Union, but, unfortunately, remains one of the main sources of trafficking in human beings in EU alongside Bulgaria. Still, the 2013 was the year when counter-trafficking actions and measures paid off, Romanian authorities recording the lowest number of victims of THB since the economic crisis, a decrease of 145 compared with previous year. The downside is that in the last two years (2012 and 2013) one third of the victims of THB are minors.

Rec: Romanian authorities should consider allocating more resources in their fight against trafficking in human beings.

2. The National Strategy against trafficking in person 2012-2016 states that mass media is perpetuating negative stereotypes about the profile of the victims of THB (and traffickers alike) due to the lack of communication between the public and state authorities. Still, the National Agency against Trafficking in Person (NATP) continues to present data from SIMEV (National Integrated System to Monitor and Assess Trafficking in Person) in unprofessional and unstandardized way, difficult to understand and interpret.

Rec: NATP could present data respecting the principles promoted by Open Governmental Data, presenting their statistical information in standardized, transparent and freely access way. Romania signed the Partnership for Open Governance in 2011 and has an action plan for implementing OGP principles.

3. There are still problems related to limited number of specialized services offering assistance to victims of THB and disparities in their organization. NGOs are providing services to more victims of THB then state institutions, and this without receiving any financial support from the Romanian authorities.

Rec. Romanian government could design a funding scheme for NGOs offering assistance to victims of THB.

4. Romanian authorities are not investing enough resources in combating negative stereotypes and prejudices towards victims of THB, particularly women and Roma.

Rec. More efforts should be focused on activities combating negative stereotypes and prejudices towards victims of THB, especially very vulnerable ones (women and Roma).

5. Begging and children begging (not only trafficking for begging) is still widespread phenomenon in Romania. Little is done to find out more about the issue (how these people could be helped, what could be done to stop it).

Rec. More resources should be directed towards investigating and finding solutions to stop begging.

6. The involvement of minors in pick pocketing, the exploitation and trafficking of minors for petty thefts are phenomenon little investigated, and hence Romanian authorities have little or no solution to help the minors involved.

Rec. More resources should be directed towards investigating and finding solutions to protect the victims of these forms of exploitation.

7. “Tandarei” case¹⁴⁵ proved that local authorities show little or no interest for the situation of vulnerable groups. Their involvement should have prevented the rise and development of such large and successful criminal network.

Rec. Local authorities should be more involvement in helping vulnerable groups, and have pro-active measures in preventing the cases of child exploitation and child trafficking.

8. There are very little information about trafficking of boys for sexual exploitation. There are also the misconceptions at the level of general public that only girls could become victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, so many boys could become easily victims of traffickers due to the lack of information and close supervision.

Rec. More information should be gathered in order to have the possibility to better design anti-exploitation and anti-trafficking campaigns.

9. No data, no problem?

When it come to register the ethnicity of victims of THB Romanian authorities declare that Romanian legislation does not allow it. Still, Romania has the legislation that allows the collection of ethnic disaggregated data for statistical purpose and many state institutions are collecting such data.

In the absence of ethnic disaggregated data:

- the profile of the victims of THB is incomplete;
- there is no knowledge if specific anti-trafficking measures are necessary;
- there is no knowledge if specific/targeted services are necessary;
- there is no reliable data to challenge the allegation mass media (Romanian and foreigner) makes about the ethnic profile of victims of THB;
- Roma NGOs are not enough involved in anti-trafficking measures –the design of anti-trafficking strategy and anti-trafficking campaigns and services provided to victims.

Rec. State institutions should collect and report ethnic disaggregated data for statistical purpose, under the legal framework of data protection. With the help

¹⁴⁵ A large and well organized criminal network involved in trafficking of children in Western countries with the purpose of exploiting them for begging and pick pocketing – section 3.1

of reliable data the state institutions together with the representatives of civil society could better design the National Strategy against trafficking in person.

10. There is little or no involvement of local communities (Roma are no exception) in preventing THB.

Rec. National and local authorities should consider local communities as their strongest allies in their fight against THB and efforts should be directed towards activating and involving them in the process.

9. Annex. List of Expert Interviewees

Interviewee	Department	Method	Region
	10 Semi-structured (SI) interviews with experts		
Senior Expert	Directorate for Child Protection	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	National Agency against Trafficking in Person (NATP)	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	General Inspectorate of Romanian Border Police	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Centre for International Police Cooperation	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	General Inspectorate of Romanian Police - Institute for Research and Crime Prevention	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	3 Roma intellectuals	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	Representative of NGO providing services for victims of THB	SI	Cluj-Napoca
Senior Expert	Representative of NGO involved in anti-traffic campaigns	SI	Bucharest
Senior Expert	Representative of NGO providing services to homeless persons	SI	Bucharest
	Interviews, focus-groups, and group-interviews realized in the selected communities		
	10 Focus-Group (FG)		
Senior Expert (Roma)	Social workers at Cumpana municipality	1 FG	Cumpana, Constanta
Expert (Roma)	2 groups of students (13-16 year old)	2 FG	Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	2 groups of students (13-18 year old)	2 FG	Spantov, Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	1 group of students (12 years old)	1 FG	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	3 groups of children (10-14 and 14-19 years old) in one of the GDCAP facilities for children	3 FG	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	adults, in school, after the parents meeting with the teacher	1 FG	Bucharest
	10 Group-Interview (GI)		
Expert (Roma)	5 men and 1 woman homeless (individual interviews)	1 GI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	3 teachers, in school	1 GI	Spantov, Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	7 groups of men and women, begging, prostitution, parking cars etc.	7 GI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	adults, in school, after the parents meeting with the teacher	1 GI	Spantov, Calarasi
	20 Semi-structured interviews		
Expert (Roma)	Woman, parent, during her visit to school	SI	Constanta
Expert (Roma)	Woman, parent, during her visit to school	SI	Constanta
Expert (Roma)	Woman, parent, during her visit to school	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Woman, parent, during her visit to school	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Teacher	SI	Spantov, Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	Roma health mediator	SI	Spantov, Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	Social worker	SI	Spantov, Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	Social worker at the General Directorate of Child Assistance and Protection (GDCAP), District 5	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Policeman	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Roma local expert at District 5 city-hall	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Medical doctor in one school	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	NGO providing services for homeless people	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	Psychologist in one of the General Directorate for Child Assistance and Protection (GDCAP) facilities for	SI	Bucharest

	children		
Expert (Roma)	Therapist and instructor in one of the GDCAP facilities for children	SI	Bucharest
Expert (Roma)	4 adults, in school, after the parents meeting with the teacher	SI	Calarasi
Expert (Roma)	2 adults, after the parents meeting with the teacher	SI	Spantov, Calarasi

Bibliography:

Asociatia ProRefugiu, Pro Sentret Organization (2014). Report Support Services for Victims of Human Trafficking In Romania and Norway.

European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need (2011). Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities

Eurostat (2013) Methodologies and working papers. Trafficking in human beings. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013 ISSN 1977-0375

Gavril I. G., Tamas A. M. (2009). The traffic of children in Romania. Study over the recruitment process. Ed. Alpha MDN.

General Inspectorates of Romanian Police, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Sociological Research Handbook On Child Trafficking. Ed. Alpha MDN.

GRETA (2012). Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania.

Healy C., Piotrowicz R., (2013). Background Research Report – Trafficking for the Purpose of Exploitation through Begging. The report was produced in the framework of the project Strengthening the Fight Against Forced Begging: A Multidisciplinary Approach, HOME/2011/SEC/AG/THB/4000002192.

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2009). Social phenomenon of THB – qualitative and quantitative analysis for 2008 and the first two months of 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014
http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza_cantitativa_2008.pdf

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2010). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2009, consulted on September 15, 2014
<http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202009.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). Assessing the situation of human trafficking in Romania in 2010, consulted on September 15, 2014
<http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/evaluare%202010.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2012). Annual evaluation regarding the situation of THB 2011, consulted on September 15, 2014
<http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202011.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2013). Report regarding the situation of the THN for 2012, consulted on September 15, 2014
<http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/analiza%20victime%202012.pdf>

National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2014). Statistical Situation of Trafficked victims in persons in 2013, consulted on September 15, 2014
<http://teste.mixfabrik.ro/aitp/docs/studii/GRAFICE%202013.pdf>

National Institute of Statistic, The Census of Population and Dwellings, <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>, consulted on September 15, 2014

Preoteasa A., Serban M., Tarnovschi D. (2012). “The Roma situation in Romania, 2011. Between social inclusion and migration”, Soros Foundation Romania, 2011. The data were collected for a representative sample of self-identified Roma from Romania.

Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Strasbourg, 31 May 2012

Save the Children Romania (2014). Evaluation of ”homeless children and youth” phenomenon (Evaluarea fenomenului “copiii si tinerii strazii”), consulted on September 15, 2014

Save the Children, Italy, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (2011). REACT Raising awareness and Empowerment Against Child Trafficking – Study Results in Romania, National Agency against Trafficking in Persons.

Surdu, L. (coord.) (2011). Roma School Participation, Non-Attendance and Discrimination in Romania (Participarea, absenteism școlar și experiența discriminării romilor din România). București: Vanemonde

Ungureanu R-N. (2013). Trafficking in Persons for Begging – Romania Study. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons

US State Department (2013). “2013 Trafficking in Person Report” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/> consulted on October 15, 2014.

World Bank Report (2014). “Achieving Roma Inclusion in Romania” <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/romania/OutputEN.pdf>, consulted on June 13, 2014.