



International  
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## Child Trafficking - The People Involved

A synthesis of findings from Albania,  
Moldova, Romania and Ukraine

**IPEC**  
International  
Programme on  
the Elimination  
of Child Labour

**2005**

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Moldova, Romania and Ukraine*

**June Kane**

for the International Programme  
on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)  
of the International Labour Office (ILO)

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## Executive Summary

The present report was originally intended as a synthesis of the results of the surveys in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. It became clear, however, that the results offered an opportunity to present and analyse child trafficking in these countries from a different angle. The report consequently focuses on the people involved in trafficking: the children, their parents and families, close acquaintances including friends and neighbours, traffickers, exploiters, and the many people who – no matter how small their contribution – aid and abet trafficking. These include the recruiters, transporters, logistical personnel, providers of forged or illicitly obtained documentation, information providers, accommodation providers, bodyguards and guides who all play a part in making trafficking happen. They also include the ‘lazy’ border guards, corrupt law enforcement personnel and ‘unknown’ consular or visa office staff who do not ask the right questions or who do not respond appropriately when they know the answers given are untrue.

The people involved in ‘anti-trafficking’ work also have a place in this report, through a summary of the actions of governments, NGOs, international organizations and others, complemented by brief comments on some possible future directions these bodies might consider.

**Chapter 1** of the report gives a brief introduction to the methodology of the surveys and an overview of the context in which trafficking occurs in this subregion. Trafficking in children is a serious problem facing many of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans, countries that have been badly hit by the fall-out of economic restructuring, social dislocation and conflict. The poverty, family dysfunction, crime and corruption, and desperation for a better life that have resulted make children and their families vulnerable to exploitation of many kinds, including trafficking. Tackling the social development issues underlying this vulnerability is an enormous task but is fundamental to confronting and ending child trafficking.

**Chapter 2** looks at the profiles of children who are trafficked or at risk of being trafficked, and their parents. Most of the child victims of trafficking from this subregion are teenagers, on the threshold of adulthood, working age and independence. Younger children are also found among the victims of trafficking, however. Children as young as 11 or 12 may be sent into labour and fall victim to traffickers. There is a differentiated ‘market’ for younger children, often trafficked into begging



either alongside their parents or as part of a group of children put to beg on the streets with a 'handler'. The young age of these children is precisely why they are exploited in begging.

The rapid assessment surveys in all four countries clearly showed that most of the children are from socially vulnerable families. In general, the families are poor or, where they are not, are large families with high demands on disposable income. Older children from such families come to see migration, even if illegal, as the only way to improve their lot. They may also be persuaded to leave the country, or indeed be coerced, by families expecting them to contribute to the family income. Children seeking to find work abroad are highly vulnerable to trafficking.

The economic problems that families face alter the dynamics of the parent/child relationship. Parents are often no longer able to provide for their children and members of the extended family may become more involved in the child's life decisions. Friends and acquaintances also become more influential, as do independent sources of information such as magazines and television. In relation to trafficking of children from this subregion, parents, family members and the complex relationships among them and between them and the child at risk of trafficking are of the utmost significance.

Where families are poor or where family size or structure puts strains on disposable income, there are often tensions between adult family members and between parents and children. Tense family relationships may include specific problems such as domestic violence, parental alcoholism or substance abuse, and sexual violence. What is commonly known as the 'dysfunctional family' may typically also be a single-parent or restructured family, with a stepparent or a boy/girlfriend replacing one parent. In some cases, both parents may be absent and the child may be in the custody of relatives, typically grandparents, who do not have the means or sometimes the inclination to care for the child.

Education – or rather lack of it – is also an important factor in the vulnerability of children to trafficking. The rapid assessment surveys show that most of the children who had been trafficked or were at risk of trafficking had not entered school, had dropped out of school or attended irregularly and were therefore failing students (sometimes called 'hidden drop-outs'). Many of the children, moreover, had parents who were unschooled and who consequently did not take their children's education seriously or believed they would learn more by working.

Throughout the region, children who are not in school are most likely to be engaged in some form of income-earning activity, often in the informal sector. The years of transition in the region have given rise to a large shadow economy in which child labour is widely exploited and additionally there are sectors in which children traditionally have worked alongside adult family members, for example in agriculture or street-based trades. The rise in crime has drawn in adolescents in

particular as adult criminals have sought out children to sell or courier drugs, engage in commercial sexual transactions, commit theft or other petty crimes in the knowledge that, if caught, children are less likely to be harshly pursued by the law. Child labour is a determinant indicator of vulnerability to trafficking, as working children look upon moving abroad to work as 'progress'. Many children therefore seek out people who can help them to find work or to migrate. In this way they are easy prey for traffickers.

Even if children seem to migrate into work 'willingly', they generally have no or little idea of the conditions under which they will be obliged to work and live. Children who are trafficked describe the enormous gulf between their expectations of life and work abroad, and the promises made to them, and the reality they faced when they arrived in the country of destination.

Indeed, the surveys all show that, when the children finally return from their trafficking episode, they have rarely 'profited' from the experience. The hopes and aspirations of earning money to improve their lives and the living conditions of their families are almost never met. Often they return with nothing at all to conditions that have not changed in their absence. Additionally, they may return to families or communities that reject them for the work they have done. On the streets, institutionalized or living with people they do not relate to, these children are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked again.

To the extent that parents and family members may allow or send a child abroad to work in complete ignorance of the nature of that work or the impact on the child, then it is unjust to say unequivocally that families traffic their own children. The reality is more complex. Between the unknowing parent and the person who deliberately sets out to profit from trafficking another human being, there is a wide range of people who have an idea that they are contributing to something that is clearly illegal and potentially harmful to another person, but who put this aside in favour of personal profit or just prefer not to think about it too much – in this category fall the many friends and family members who urge children and families to approach transport agents and guides. This may be in the genuine belief that there are opportunities abroad that can benefit the child and family or it may be because the 'recruiter' stands to make a profit from providing the child to a trafficker and is fully aware of what this means.

**Chapter 3** therefore focuses on the traffickers and intermediaries involved in trafficking. In every country, there will be a veritable army of people involved in trafficking a child. The 'services' provided to facilitate trafficking include: arranging transport and required documents; providing transport or counterfeiting documents; acting as a guide to children crossing borders on foot, or as a 'chaperone' accompanying children on their journey; providing information of many kinds at various stages of the process (for example on which borders are easiest to cross at any given time); arranging other logistics such as bribing guards or officials;

liaising between the various parties, including ‘employers’ and ‘clients’; supervising the children while they work, particularly if that work is on the streets; acting as ‘bodyguards’ not to protect children but to ensure that they do not run away; and providing accommodation and/or food.

**Chapter 4** of the report looks at what is often called the ‘demand’ side of the trafficking equation, but questions whether this analogy is wholly correct in the context of child trafficking where, although there are some specific sectors in which trafficked children are the desired ‘product’ for which there is clear ‘demand’, there are also obvious sectors – for example in the case of children forced into begging – where there is no consumer demand but only an opportunity for an exploiter to profit (sometimes also called ‘derived demand’). Although the rapid assessment surveys did not profile the people who exploited the children surveyed, details of the work the children did and the conditions under which they laboured help to paint a picture of the nature of the exploitation and those who oversee it.

**Chapter 5** of the report gives details of actions designed to counter child trafficking in the four countries. It summarizes the major initiatives identified by researchers during the rapid assessment exercise as well as some preliminary suggestions on important gaps that need to be filled, in particular the need for more empirical, child-focused research; the regular re-assessment of the impact of policy and programming; enhanced cooperation with and from ‘receiving’ countries; and development and support to organizations to focus on child trafficking and in particular support to children who return.

Finally, **Chapter 6** gives in more detail an account of the recommendations developed as part of the research done during the rapid assessment exercise. The report is completed with a brief bibliography. More detailed bibliographies are included in each of the rapid assessment survey reports, available from ILO-IPEC.

## Chapter 1:

# Child trafficking in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine

## 1.1 Introduction

Much has been written in the past few years about the trafficking of children from Eastern Europe. The recent history of this region has been documented and dissected; the changes the region has gone through and the impact of these changes on individual countries' economies, social and political structures and populations have been analysed in some detail.

It is clear that trafficking in children is a serious problem facing many of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans in particular, since these are the countries that have been particularly badly hit by the fall-out of economic restructuring, social dislocation and conflict. The poverty, family dysfunction, crime and corruption, and desperation for a better life that have resulted make children and their families vulnerable to exploitation of many kinds, including trafficking. Tackling the social development issues underlying this vulnerability is an enormous task but is fundamental to confronting and ending child trafficking and, indeed, the trafficking of adults into labour and sexual exploitation, as well as the concomitant people smuggling and illegal migration that are seen by most western governments as a serious threat to security and stability. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that, in 1998, 11.5 per cent of the world's refugees, internally displaced people and others of concern to UNHCR (for example separated children seeking asylum) – a total of almost 2.5 million people – were located in Western Europe. At any one time, there may be up to 100,000 separated children living in Western Europe alone, a significant proportion of these from other European states. Among them will be many who have been trafficked.<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of schools of thought about how trafficking should be approached. Some argue that it is overwhelmingly a human rights issue and that attitude change lies at the heart of any solution. Others say that it is a law enforcement problem and can only be effectively addressed through legal provisions and effective policing. Arguments focusing on gender politics, social development and good governance, regional security and realignments, are all advanced as reasons for approaching the task of combating trafficking in a certain way and through distinct policy or programming options.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR: *Managing migration in the wider Europe*, (Council of Europe seminar presentation, Strasbourg, October 1998). This figure does not, of course, include the many children who are trafficked to countries other than those in Western Europe, including Russia, other countries in the subregion and further afield, for example Turkey and Israel.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), not surprisingly, emphasizes the relationship between trafficking and forced and bonded labour, child labour and labour market mechanisms including demand and supply. But the ILO also underlines the human rights goals of anti-trafficking measures; the gendered nature of trafficking and the different way it involves men and women, girls and boys; and the central role of decent work and labour standards in any social development actions.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has incorporated all of these approaches in its work over the past decade. Through innovative, phased programming in more than 45 countries, IPEC has explored the trafficking of children and women through research and data collection; piloted programmatic options for combating trafficking, protecting those vulnerable to it and supporting victims; and worked with governments, employers' and workers' groups, other UN agencies and civil society agents such as NGOs, media professionals and academic institutions, to develop policy and programme responses.

IPEC's anti-trafficking work is articulated within the framework of the ILO's core conventions and in particular the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182), which includes the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour as among the worst forms of child labour. The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138) is also central to efforts to effective action against child labour, so closely linked to the exploitation that is at the heart of trafficking. IPEC provides technical expertise to member States as they develop their policies and plans to eliminate child labour, beginning with the worst forms, and as they move towards the development of National Plans of Action and Time-Bound Programmes against child labour.

In 2003 and 2004, IPEC undertook rapid assessment research in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine on the trafficking of children for sexual and labour exploitation. The resulting surveys (each available separately from IPEC) were a central element of the first phase of IPEC's anti-trafficking programme in this subregion. The second phase, started in 2004, aims to build on the information provided by these surveys, along with valuable lessons learned in IPEC's subregional trafficking programmes in West and Central Africa, Central America, the Mekong region and South Asia, to begin programme activities tailored to the needs of the subregion.

## 1.2 Focusing on the people involved

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The present report was originally intended as a synthesis of the results of the rapid assessment surveys in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. It became clear, however, that the results of the surveys offered an opportunity to present and analyse child trafficking in these countries from a different angle.

Rapid assessment methodology has a number of inherent weaknesses. It is neither empirical nor comprehensive. It is not based on rigorous sampling. It relies upon sometimes unreliable first-hand reports and attempts to balance this with more reliable but more distanced second-hand testimony and literature review. In the presentation of the findings, these weaknesses are taken into account and readers are reminded that the results are to be taken as preliminary and indicative only.

However, rapid assessment methodology also has a number of undoubted strengths, often not fully recognized. Foremost among these is that it is based on the experiences – both personal and related – of people who are or have been involved in trafficking either as victims or perpetrators, or who have lived and worked with victims and groups at risk. Their testimonies are at the root of understanding how trafficking works, and the impact it has on individuals, families and communities. Importantly, their testimonies are also the most valuable source of ideas for how effective, targeted anti-trafficking measures can be designed and implemented.

This report attempts to build on the strengths of the rapid assessment methodology and to take a new approach that focuses specifically on the people involved in trafficking: the children, their parents and families, close acquaintances including friends and neighbours, traffickers, exploiters, and the veritable army of people who – no matter how small their contribution – aid and abet trafficking. These include the recruiters, transporters, logistical personnel, providers of forged or illicitly obtained documentation, information providers, accommodation providers, bodyguards and guides who all play a part in making trafficking happen. They also include the ‘lazy’ border guards, corrupt law enforcement personnel and ‘unknown’ consular or visa office staff who do not ask the right questions or who do not respond appropriately when they know the answers given are untrue.

Re-visiting the results of the rapid assessment surveys in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine with a view to sifting out even isolated references to these people allows a full picture of the trafficking process to be drawn out, and provides an opportunity for reflection on how actions can be developed to directly target these individuals. The analysis is complemented with a re-reading of current texts on trafficking in this subregion with a view to sifting out other, often passing mentions of the many people involved in trafficking.

The people involved in ‘anti-trafficking’ work also have a place in this report, through a summary of the actions of governments, NGOs, international organizations and others, complemented by brief comments on some possible future directions these bodies might consider.

### 1.3 Note on the survey samples

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The four rapid assessment surveys included questionnaire surveys of both trafficked children and children deemed, on the basis of profiling of trafficked children, to be at risk of trafficking. Each exercise also included discussions with the children, semi-structured interviews with parents of children who had been trafficked or are at risk, semi-structured interviews with 'key informants' and in some instances focus group meetings.

In **Albania**, 61 trafficked children and 22 children at risk were surveyed (total: 83 children). In both instances, there were more boys than girls among the surveyed children. The research was undertaken in Tirana, Vlora, Elbasan and Korça. Interviews were conducted with five parents of trafficked children, 10 parents of children who had returned after being trafficked and 10 parents of children at risk, plus eight key informants.

In **Moldova**, 60 children who had exited trafficking and 20 who had not been trafficked but were at risk were surveyed (total: 80 children). Ten parents of children who had exited trafficking were interviewed, as were five parents of children still victims of trafficking and 10 parents of children at risk. The research was carried out in 34 rural and urban centres in the following regions: Anenii Noi, Balti, Chisinau, Criuleni, Glodeni, Ialoveni, Lapusna, Orhei, Singerei, Straseni, Telenesti, Tighina, Tiraspol and Ungheni.

In **Romania**, the survey was carried out in four counties: Iasi, Suceava, Arges and Bucharest. Seventy-six children were surveyed, comprising 55 children released from trafficking and 21 children from communities exposed to trafficking, and therefore at risk (total: 76 children). Ten parents of children released from trafficking were also interviewed, as were four parents of trafficked children and eight parents of children at risk, along with five key informants.

In **Ukraine**, 60 trafficked children and 20 children at risk were surveyed (total: 80 children). There were 10 semi-structured interviews with parents of trafficked children and five interviews with parents in this category, and 10 semi-structured interviews with parents of children at risk. Sixteen key informants provided input to the research. The research was carried out in Kiev, Chernivtsi, Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts (regions).

### 1.4 Brief overview of the context in which trafficking occurs in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine

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The fall of communism, the dismantling of the Soviet bloc and the realignment of the states of Eastern and Central Europe heralded the period known as 'the transition'. The transition years brought considerable social challenges as the

structures of the communist state disappeared but were often not replaced. People who had been guaranteed jobs for life – even if poorly paid and offering little hope of advancement – now found themselves competing in a limited and highly selective job market. Without appropriate skills, lacking education and training, often in the wrong place at the wrong time, many workers found themselves unemployed and with little hope of finding employment in their hometown or even country. Large numbers of these work-seekers have looked to other countries for the opportunities lacking at home. One theory of trafficking suggests that it is the ‘commodification of migration’ – in which people and organizations are able to make a profit from people’s desire to move and the processes involved when they do move – that underpins trafficking and the exploitation and corruption that are at its heart.<sup>2</sup>

Along with adult migrants – both legal and illegal – seeking a way of earning money outside their own country, are significant numbers of minors also looking for work both to improve their own lives or to contribute to their families. Sometimes these children may travel with their family, again either legally or illegally, but often they are alone. Moldova, Romania and Ukraine are among the most frequent countries of origin of unaccompanied minors arriving in the states of the European Union.<sup>3</sup> This readiness to leave home to find work or just to go in search of a better life is central to the success of those who recruit children into trafficking, either before they leave home or after they have arrived in a third country.<sup>4</sup>

The structural adjustment regime imposed by international financial institutions and conflict in the region served to deepen this social, political and economic quagmire. Funds for social services became scarce and many basic services were and still are underfunded and subject to market pressures. Education that had been weak but nevertheless accessible to all children became diversified and stratified, with good schools attracting the best staff and meagre resources being directed to a small number of schools, while the state system in general was short of funds, teachers poorly paid and children and families often faced with charges for books, facilities and staff top-up fees that negated the benefits of ‘free’ education. Recreational opportunities such as after-school clubs and sports organizations, once a staple of state control over children and young people’s interests and information, were abandoned but not replaced, and children and families had to find ways to occupy children’s leisure time. As a result, for many children ‘the street’ became

<sup>2</sup> IOM: *Migrant trafficking and human smuggling in Europe*, (IOM, Geneva, 2000), p.26.

<sup>3</sup> IOM: *Trafficking in unaccompanied minors for sexual exploitation in the European Union*, (European Commission *STOP Programme*, Brussels, May 2001), p.9.

<sup>4</sup> A reminder that any person under the age of 18 who is exploited following relocation, even if coercion or force is not used to encourage the child to relocate (ie the child moves ‘willingly’), is considered to be a victim of trafficking under international law. Many unaccompanied minors who have initiated their own travel therefore become trafficking victims by the nature of their relocation and exploitation.



a primary socializing force, along with television and increasingly the Internet and other externally-generated information sources.

**Albania** emerged from seclusion in the early 1990s and, over the succeeding decade, experienced huge political, economic and social transformation. Throughout its transition, the country faced extreme unemployment and lack of job opportunities, decreased access to basic social services including education and health, and massive emigration and immigration and their consequences. Large numbers of Albanians responded by seeking work abroad: the number of emigrant workers grew from 100,000 in 1991 to 428,000 in 1996, while the domestic workforce declined from 1.57 million to 1.27 million over the same period. Internal migration was also substantial, concentrating the population in the central part of the country near the coast. This significant people movement, spontaneous and uncontrolled, engendered serious economic and social problems. Public services were stretched to the limits. At the same time, the material life of many migrants did not improve, although many justify their decision to relocate on the basis that it is better to be poor in a big city than in a remote village because the chances of benefiting from health and education services are higher.

A year 2000 United Nations study found that “almost a third of young adults [in Albania] have spent some time employed in another country since 1991, indicating a much higher than average rate of ‘out-migration’. Of those who migrated, only eight per cent did so with a partner, yet 41 per cent migrated with their children, suggesting that families in Albania continue to be disrupted by the process of migration”.<sup>5</sup>

By 2001, 77.3 per cent of the labour force was employed, with 50.5 per cent of the employed population working in agriculture. An unemployment rate of 22.7 per cent is the highest in the region, with levels reaching more than 40 per cent in some districts. There are also regional disparities in basic services, reflected in living conditions: only 15 per cent of households in rural areas have running water, while 20 per cent have no water supply at all. This economic inequality, added to already limited opportunities to improve quality of life, increases the desperation of people to seek out a living at all costs, including by allowing or sending children to work at home and abroad.

This is even more true in the light of a weakened education system. Despite efforts to improve the quality of teaching and reduce drop-outs, the education system continues to face a number of challenges. Many schools, especially in rural areas, are in poor condition with little heating, lighting and facilities. There are not enough teachers with even basic qualifications. There has been a substantial fall in

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<sup>5</sup> Reproductive and family health-related issues in Albania (UN, Tirana, 2000), quoted in *Trafficking in human being in South-Eastern Europe*, (UNDP, Geneva, 2003), p. 34.

school enrolment since the 1990s; by 2000 it was at 90 per cent. 'Hidden drop-outs' are also a significant characteristic of schooling in Albania: large numbers of children – up to one-third of the total number of children attending primary school in some regions – attend school but do not progress in their studies. Many of these children have family problems, do not attend regularly, or have emigrated with their families and returned unable or unwilling to re-enter school.

Education is, in any case, not seen by most Albanian families as a necessary prerequisite to material well-being. While Albanian families are known for maintaining traditional values and strong family relations, parents often believe that work is educational and useful for children, more likely to prepare them to secure an income in the future. As a result, child labour is widespread. Increasingly, however, the trend has been towards the worst forms of child labour, with many children working on the streets and in illegal activities such as begging, drug peddling and prostitution. The large shadow economy that developed through the 1990s is known to exploit child labour and the number of children living and working on the streets of the main cities is increasing.

In all four cities surveyed (Tirana, Vlora, Elbasan and Korça), there is a visible presence of Roma and Gypsy<sup>6</sup> communities. Some 120,000 Roma people live in Albania; the number of Gypsies is probably higher. These groups suffer not only social discrimination but also a high level of illiteracy, poor health conditions and a lack of employment opportunities. Their children make up the most marginalized and maltreated group. They are often put to work alongside their parents and on the streets, and are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.

By the early 1990s, the city of Berat, in the south of Albania, had emerged as a major trafficking centre, while Vlora, with its Adriatic seaport, had become the centre of speedboat operations taking girls in particular across the short sea passage to Italy. In both cities, powerful Albanian gangs were known to operate.<sup>7</sup> Albanian trafficking gangs are reputed to be particularly violent. There is also evidence that Albanian children are trafficked for adoption and organ transplant. In 2001 there were some 6,000 Albanian children in Italian orphanages and 1,000 – 2,000 in orphanages in Greece.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The use of the term 'Gypsy' is not standardized throughout the region and in some places may be seen as discriminatory. In some countries, to avoid confusion, the term 'Egyptians' is used. However this clearly is even more confusing for the general reader, who would consider this to refer to a national of Egypt. In this report, for ease of exposition, the term 'Gypsy' is used generically and has no pejorative or discriminatory connotations whatsoever.

<sup>7</sup> D. Renton: *Child trafficking in Albania*, (Save the Children, Tirana, 2001), p.17.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs presentation to the governmental conference on trafficking: *All Together Against Child Trafficking*, (Tirana, November 2001).

The Ministry of Public Order reports that, between 1992 and 2002, an estimated 4,000 children were trafficked, mainly to neighbouring countries for labour and sexual exploitation, for begging or into slavery.<sup>9</sup> Albania is not only a country of origin but also a transit country for women in particular trafficked from Russia, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria and other countries. Among these 'women' there are probably girls below the age of 18. However, the Albanian police say that their actions in 2001/2002 halted all illegal migration from Albania and the transit of migrants through the country.<sup>10</sup> They say they severed the infamous speedboat routes from the ports of Durres and Vlora across the Adriatic Sea to Italy ('Operation Eagle'). Local organizations report that that the most commonly used routes are now mountain routes through Pogradec and Oher to Macedonia, through Korça and Kapshtice or through Gjirokastra and Kakavije to Greece and via Shkoder to Montenegro. These 'green borders' have also meant that traffickers often now provide their victims with legal documents obtained illegally, or forged documents, especially Schengen visas bought in Albania. This allows air transport via Greece to countries of the Schengen Area. There are reports that,<sup>11</sup> in the wake of the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997 and consequent economic crisis, many former traffickers have turned to other, more profitable businesses including drug trafficking or are trying to establish legitimate businesses in Albania in order to launder drug money. There have been numerous killings of traffickers as a result of gang rivalries. This may also partly explain a perceived small decrease in the number of trafficking victims overall.

In **Moldova**, the growth of crime among minors is a cause for concern. Some 55-60 per cent of minors committing crimes are known to have been left in the care of grandparents or distant relatives when their parents left the country. Additionally, the impoverishment of society has significantly changed perceptions of Moldovan women, to the point where prostitution has become an occupation regarded with less and less prejudice. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that some 64 per cent of young women originating from Eastern Europe and repatriated from Kosovo (where trafficking has reached high levels) are of Moldovan origin. The flows of women and girls (generally between 13 and 18) into prostitution in western Europe and other countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union make up a significant proportion of Moldovans seeking work or being sent to work outside their country.

Since citizens became able to travel freely beyond national borders in 1992, between 600,000 and one million Moldovans have left to find work abroad, many of them illegally, pushed by economic hardship and falls in production, severe

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<sup>9</sup> National Anti-Trafficking Strategy for Albania, (Tirana, December 2001).

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, UNOHCHR & ISCE/ODIHR: Trafficking in human beings in South-Eastern Europe 2003 update], (UNDP, Geneva, 2003), p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Child trafficking in Albania, op.cit., p. 17.

unemployment, deteriorating social services and the collapse of the education system. The trafficking in human beings that often accompanies illegal migration has become a common and even tolerated activity, considered by some as an acceptable risk to avoid living in poverty. Children living in poor regions (rural areas or urban suburbs), and those living in institutions or in dysfunctional families who have a low level of education and want to earn money at any price, are particularly vulnerable to being tempted or forced to work abroad. In 2000, half the children in rural schools had at least one parent who had left to find a job abroad.

In 2002, just over half of the population (53.4 per cent) had incomes of less than half the minimum cost of living. Among the poorest sectors of the population are people with a low level of education, unskilled workers, large or single-parent families, farmers who do not own land and the unemployed. Some 88 per cent of households in 2002 had a disposable income lower than the monthly minimum standard of living. For rural families, some 30 per cent of income was in the form of food obtained from their own farms, and the lack of liquid cash meant they were unable to cover additional expenses related to education and healthcare.

Children in Moldova have traditionally been involved in the family's economic activities, especially in rural areas. Children of 12 and 13 years of age work alongside adults in agricultural work or as street or market sellers. Difficult economic conditions have exacerbated this and many families will put the oldest child to work in order to ensure the survival of the rest.

Large numbers of children are also exploited in begging, an activity generally controlled in Moldova by representatives of the Roma community. Children whose parents are working abroad and who are left in the care of relatives, neighbours or acquaintances, are recruited to beg or sometimes to commit crimes. The children are often undernourished, uneducated or thrown onto the streets and are at high risk of both exploitation and trafficking. Children with physical handicaps are particularly sought for exploitation in begging and there are reports of children being mutilated in order to beg. Many children forced into begging are moved within the country.

Although Moldovan law guarantees free and compulsory education for children between the ages of five and 16, the number of unschooled children is growing. Some 11 per cent of children of school age have never attended school at all. The enrolment rate in post-compulsory education is also low, amounting to just 43 per cent of young people between the ages of 16 and 22. The rate of school enrolment is falling – by almost 10 per cent between the academic years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 alone. Of the children who do go to school, only 80 per cent attend regularly and many children drop out of school early to start work.

While children are increasingly not receiving a formal education, they are exposed to other sources of information. The media in Moldova persistently show

life in the West as ‘better’ and children are not surprisingly lured by the prospect of a standard of living their parents cannot offer them. Parents lose their influence over children and the children increasingly look for ways to get the things they want by themselves, putting themselves at risk of being recruited into criminal activities or trafficking.

The use and abuse of alcohol also have deep roots in Moldovan society. Alcohol is cheap and accessible. In 2003 more than 55,000 people suffering from alcohol abuse were registered at the National Drug Centre and every year some 140,000 people are arrested for excessive alcohol consumption. Drunken parents and the family violence that often results are another reason children leave home and may seek a way to leave the country or move.

The Department of Statistics reports that, in 2003, some 400,000 Moldovan citizens were working abroad. Commentators suggest that this underestimates the size of the phenomenon and that the actual number is probably between 600,000 and one million people. Many of these are living abroad illegally and thus become easy prey for criminal networks, including those involved in trafficking. The Ministry of Affairs notes that girls under the age of 18 are trafficked for sexual exploitation primarily to: Russia and Ukraine; Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro; Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel and the Arab Emirates; Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland; and Italy, France, Portugal, Germany and the United Kingdom. Children are more generally trafficked to the first three groups of countries. It is reported that new trafficking channels are opening up for children, old people and disabled people, especially to Russia.<sup>12</sup>

Trafficking of children from **Romania** has been an issue since the early 1990s, but then it was the illegal adoption of hundreds of Romanian children and their removal to third countries that hit the headlines. A moratorium on international adoptions was imposed in October 2001 and the government’s strategy for child protection has as one of its aims decreasing the number of children in residential care institutions. By early 2004, however, there were still more than 43,000 children living in residential institutions in Romania, just under one per cent of the child population. In addition, around 40,000 children were in foster families; 60 per cent of these were in the care of relatives and around 30 per cent were looked after by professional caregivers.

One of the results of institutionalization of children is that the children emerge with few skills for an independent life. Without training appropriate to their age, these children are at high risk of exploitation.

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<sup>12</sup> Trafficking human beings in South Eastern Europe, op.cit., p.73.

While the trafficking of children for adoption was at the forefront of international attention, Romania was also experiencing a rapid increase in emigration in the wake of economic collapse. Open borders and already operating criminal routes and networks were increasingly used for illicit people movement, alongside massive regular migration. Between 1992 and 2002, the population of Romania fell by approximately 1 million, or 4.2 per cent. This is in part a result of a falling birth rate and increased mortality rate, but it also reflects significant external migration. Since 2002, Romanian citizens have been able to travel without restriction to some European Union countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain – Romanian citizens still need a visa to travel to the UK). Moldovan citizens are also entitled to Romanian nationality and so take advantage of this to apply for Romanian passports for travel to the Schengen Area.

In the same period, economic, political and social transformations brought about increasing disparities between different segments of the population, and the poverty rate reached 44 per cent in 2000 from just seven per cent a decade earlier.

Poverty mainly affects large households where one or both parents are unemployed, people with a low education level, those engaged in agricultural activities and the rural population in general, households where the main provider is self-employed, families with more than three children, elderly women living alone, and members of Roma communities. After an increase in unemployment between 1991 and 1999, unemployment has been falling.

School drop-out rates have also been falling and the gross enrolment rate in compulsory education was 97 per cent in 2001/2002. However, budgetary resources are still lagging behind needs for education and there are increasing disparities in the system. The enrolment rate for Roma children is much lower than the average. It is estimated that almost 30 per cent of Roma children between the ages of seven and nine and 17.2 per cent of 10-16 year-olds have never attended school.

The first four years of the twenty-first century have also been characterized by an increase in the number of disabled children. By the end of 2001, there were 58,688 disabled children in Romania, and 1,058 of these were living in specialized residential care institutions. These children and their families face social rejection, a lack of specialized services and insufficient financial support. There is evidence that disabled children are becoming victims of external trafficking, particularly for begging.

Begging in transport hubs, supermarkets, car parks and other crowded public places is also a characteristic of child labour within Romania itself. Children will sing or tell stories about the dramatic situation of their families. Sometimes they will have younger siblings with them, as young as two or three, or puppies. The dangers of begging are obvious but children also risk being lured or coerced into

begging in other countries. Children in labour in Romania are also engaged in washing cars at intersections or parking areas, selling low-priced items such as newspapers, maps, car deodorants, selling fruit and vegetables in the market alongside parents, often illegally, loading and unloading trucks in supermarkets, warehouses and construction sites, collecting scrap iron, glass or paper in garbage dumps and abandoned construction sites, and in domestic labour in the households of families to whom the child's parents may be indebted.

Roma children are especially likely to enter child labour because their parents have little interest in their schooling. They may work alongside their parents or alone, and may also have to look after younger siblings.

In 2003/4, the Romanian Border Police identified 41 trafficking networks in operation. All were trafficking women into nightclubs in the guise of legitimate tourism to the Schengen area (often 'women' includes girls below the age of 18). Since 2002, there has been an increase in Romanian nationals trafficking disabled people into begging. Romania is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking victims. Women and girls mainly are trafficked to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, Greece, Italy and Turkey for commercial sexual exploitation. Located between the former Soviet bloc and the countries that suffered the effects of transition and war in the Balkans, Romania is a transit country, and it is the destination or transit country for many Moldovans and, more rarely, Ukrainians trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation. Ukrainians, Moldovans and Romanians are trafficked or on-trafficked from Romania often first to Serbia and Montenegro and then to other Balkan or Western European countries. Victims have also been found in Turkey, Canada, Cambodia, South Africa and Japan.

There is increasing alarm about internal trafficking in Romania, mostly of women into prostitution but also of children for labour exploitation. Trafficking into commercial sexual exploitation tends over time to pull in adolescent girls as the market demands younger victims. The Romanian police cite evidence of the growing involvement of the Roma community in human trafficking; the number of Roma pimps is said to have increased by 14 per cent in 2002.<sup>13</sup>

In **Ukraine**, the collapse of the Soviet system led to a radical reconstruction of the social base of Ukrainian society and to a phenomenon known as *social anomie*, where existing social norms have disappeared but not yet been replaced by new norms. The often undesirable, even deviant social movements characteristic of this anomie include trafficking in human beings, including children. Unemployment in Ukraine was measured at 11.1 per cent of the economically active population in 2001, with higher rates in the *oblasts* covered by the IPEC rapid assessment survey (11.9 per cent in Kiev, 11.8 per cent in Kharkiv, 13.3 per cent in Kherson and 18.4 per

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<sup>13</sup> Trafficking in human beings in South Eastern Europe, op.cit., p. 92.

cent in Chernivtsi, the highest rate in the country). Unemployment and consequent family poverty are major reasons why children look for or are obliged to find ways to supplement family income. By 2002, 69 per cent of children in rural areas and 52 per cent of children in urban areas said they were motivated to work in order to support their families.<sup>14</sup>

A significant majority of the population is either at or below the poverty line: in 2001, 27.2 per cent of people lived below the poverty line. Wages or salary from primary employment is not the main source of income for the majority of people in the four *oblasts* surveyed: pensions, social benefits and assistance are often the only regular income and these are extremely low. It is not surprising that many families do not rise above these challenges and become dysfunctional. Parental alcoholism, drug addiction and aggression, family violence and criminal activity increase the likelihood that children will leave or be thrown out of home or spend more time on the streets. Family break-ups result in families with only one parent or a stepparent, again increasing the likelihood that children will leave, be ejected or be put to work. Between 1991 and 2000, the number of 'social orphans' in Ukraine rose from 1,800 to 6,000 as children were removed from parental care by the courts. By 1999, almost 20,000 children were left without parental care and the child population of public boarding institutions had grown to almost 100,000.

Families are unable to pay to put their children in kindergarten and many pre-school-age children are left without care. This also affects their ability to adapt to regular school when the time comes, and school drop-out rates and poor performance are high. Children's attitudes to schooling are generally negative, influenced by their lack of success, the meagre social role that school fulfils and the imperative to get out and start work at all costs. The number of children in schools of general education fell significantly between the school year 2000/2001 and the following year 2001/2002, from 1,372 per 10,000 to 1,347 per 10,000. The number of vocational institutions fell by 24 per cent in 2001 and the number of students also fell, by 18 per cent. Class sizes have grown as the number of teachers has fallen and the pupil:teacher ratio has deteriorated.

The quality of life of children and young people, and their expectations of future possibilities, has seriously declined. As a result, many turn to petty crime. The State Committee for Statistics reported that, by the end of 2001, 37,000 teenagers were on the files of the criminal militia departments. Ten thousand of these came from single-parent families and 1,900 more were living in orphanages or shelters. The authorities note that many of these children come from homes where the parents deliberately chose not to send their children to school. In 2002, additionally, 25,000 homeless children and 10,000 children engaged in begging were detained by

<sup>14</sup> Research undertaken by the Centre for Social Expertise and Forecasts of the Institute of Sociology at the Ukraine Academy of Sciences.



the authorities. More than 6,000 adults were held for involving teenagers in unlawful acts or for encouraging them to drink, abuse drugs or otherwise engage in abuses that might lead them to addiction or intoxication. Drug addiction is a serious problem in Ukraine; between 1998 and 2003, the number of minors registered as drug-dependent in general secondary schools doubled.<sup>15</sup>

Ukraine is not only a source of trafficking victims but also an important transit route for trafficking victims from other countries in the region. Ukraine has a history of large-scale irregular migration through the country since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the liberalization of procedures governing entry and exit, and the still largely undemarcated borders along the north-east of the country mean that effective border control remains a challenge.<sup>16</sup> In just one year, for example, between 1996 and 1997, the number of people apprehended crossing the so-called 'green border' more than doubled.

In summary, the social and economic factors that make children in this subregion vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking are:

- Poverty and unemployment
- Lack of social safety nets
- Social anomie including crime and corruption
- Threatened family structures including absent parents, single-parent households, large families, remarriage
- Concomitant lifestyle hazards such as alcohol, violence and drugs
- Low education levels, school drop-out and low enrolment
- Early entry into child labour
- Lack of hope, unmet aspirations, desperation to earn enough to survive
- Life and work on the streets, unbalanced or lack of information and defective socialization
- Institutionalization
- Marginalization on the basis of ethnicity (Roma, Gypsies) or disability
- Migration for work and particularly irregular migration
- Existence of established routes for drug trafficking and contraband
- Newly open or still poorly controlled borders
- A climate of social tolerance of exploitation and trafficking
- Expansion of organized crime.

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<sup>15</sup> The sources of these data, and others used in this section, are to be found detailed in the original reports on which this synthesis is based. See the Bibliography.

<sup>16</sup> Migrant trafficking and human smuggling in Europe, op. cit., p. 339.

## Chapter 2:

# Children and their families

## 2.1 Children

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### 2.1.1 The age of the children

Most of the child victims of trafficking from this subregion are teenagers, on the threshold of adulthood, working age and independence. Younger children are also found among the victims of trafficking, however. Children as young as 11 or 12 may be sent into labour and fall victim to traffickers.

- Boys are more likely than girls to be trafficked from Albania and generally into exploitative labour. They are aged between 11 and 16 years.
- The survey in Moldova indicated that boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 18 were most likely to be trafficked, with the majority of these children 15 years or older. Most of the girls are post-pubertal (over the age of 13) and are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation.
- In Romania, the children surveyed were generally between the ages of 14 and 17 when they exited trafficking, suggesting that children may be somewhat younger when they are first trafficked. The girls were trafficked mostly into sexual exploitation and the boys for labour, begging or involvement in illegal activities.
- The survey in Ukraine also suggested that girls are most likely to end up in sexual exploitation, with boys being used as cheap labour or to peddle drugs. The children trafficked are generally between 13 and 18 years of age.

There is a differentiated 'market' for younger children, trafficked into begging either alongside their parents or as part of a group of children put to beg on the streets with a 'handler'. The young age of these children is precisely why they are exploited in begging. Alongside puppies and disabled children also victims of trafficking, these children are treated as little more than a 'sympathy ploy' by unscrupulous people who use them to earn money for themselves. The Ukraine survey cites the testimony of children exploited in begging who said they went to work with their parents, usually their mother, but were then separated and forced to work with other people. In this way both the mother and child were reluctant to leave the 'boss' because they feared losing each other.

## 2.1.2 Poverty and deprivation

The rapid assessment surveys in all four countries clearly showed that most of the children are from socially vulnerable families. In general, the families are poor or, where they are not, are large families with high demands on disposable income. Older children from such families come to see migration, even if illegal, as the only way to improve their lot. They may also be persuaded to leave the country, or indeed be coerced, by families expecting them to contribute to the family income. Children seeking to find work abroad are highly vulnerable to trafficking.

- Of 61 children surveyed in Albania, 20 did not have enough food, 27 only sometimes had enough and 14 often did not have enough. The lack of even basic necessities because of family poverty was one of the main push factors behind the trafficking of children in this country. The children were said to have to mature earlier and to take family responsibilities on their shoulders at a young age. Many therefore start work, washing car windows at traffic junctions, selling small items, shining shoes and in other street-based informal work. This puts them at great risk of being recruited into the same work in another country where, they are told, they can earn more money. The children of Gypsies make up the most marginalized and maltreated group in Albania, and are easily targeted by traffickers.

### Sokol, from Albania

Sokol was born and raised in Korça, Albania. He is 10 years old and lives with his mother, his 12 year-old half-sister and two younger half-brothers aged six and eighteen months. The family is among the poorest in the area and faces deep economic and social hardship. All the children have been born out of wedlock; their mother does not know who their fathers are. She is unemployed. Although Sokol has been trafficked four times to Greece, he thinks this is quite normal. Most of his peers are trapped in the same cycle. “You don’t earn much money here,” he says. While in Albania, he spends most of his time begging on the streets. He has never attended school.

- In Moldova, the push for children to start work early to contribute to the family finances is also considerable. Additionally, the lack of employment opportunities for both working-aged children and adults is a significant element in their seeking to migrate for work. In a survey of 800 children and young people below the age of 20, 80 per cent said they wanted to work abroad: “I don’t care, anything is fine for me; I just want to earn money”. Children left behind when one or more parents migrate (legally or illegally) for work, even where the family is not desperately poor, come to believe that migration, even illegal, is a way to improve

their life. Of the 10 reasons given by children as motivating them to consider leaving the country, six related to the family's financial situation and their own expectations of having a decent living standard now and in the future. When asked whether, in the year before they were recruited by traffickers, they had been hungry, only 11 of 60 children surveyed in Moldova said 'no'. Twenty of the children said they had often been hungry and 28 children that they had sometimes been hungry. Thirty of the children had often not had clothes and shoes; 25 children had sometimes been without these basic items and only four children said they had always had clothes and shoes.

- The children in Romania also faced problems of basic nutrition and clothing. Sixty per cent of the children were inadequately fed while 74 per cent did not have adequate clothing. In general, however, the children surveyed did not come from extremely poor families although most of them were from families with at least three children. Rather, the children came from families with few prospects, often because the parents were unable to work because they were not schooled or because the town offered few employment opportunities. Many of the parents surveyed came from Roma communities and said their ethnic origin was a major obstacle to their finding a job. Social stigma and its impact on employment opportunities was also a factor increasing the vulnerability of disabled children, since they and their families face not only discrimination in employment but also a lack of specialized services and financial support. Such children are increasingly pulled into trafficking for begging.
- In Ukraine, the surveyed children said that the main reason why they set out to find work was "a passionate desire to improve their material status and the well-being of their family". As children move into adolescence and also desire to be self-sufficient, independent and to see the world, they are particularly vulnerable to being recruited by traffickers. When there are few resources at home, these children look abroad for work; two-thirds of the surveyed children said they had themselves looked to relocate in order to earn money.

### 2.1.3 Problems at home

Where families are poor or where family size or structure puts strains on disposable income, there are often tensions between adult family members and between parents and children. Tense family relationships may be undefined but may also include specific problems such as domestic violence, parental alcoholism or substance abuse, and sexual violence. NGOs from the subregion note that there is little public understanding of the impact and destructive force of domestic violence and family conflict and governments have been slow to move to actively combat these through zero tolerance policies, public awareness campaigns or revised legislation.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Personal interviews by the author with NGO representatives from the region during a meeting at the European Commission in Brussels, September 2004.

What is commonly known as the ‘dysfunctional family’ may typically also be a single-parent or restructured family, with a stepparent or a boy/girlfriend replacing one parent. In some cases, both parents may be absent – dead, working abroad or simply missing from the child’s life – and the child may be in the custody of relatives, typically grandparents, who do not have the means or sometimes the inclination to care for the child.

- In Albania, most of the trafficked children came from households characterized by social dysfunction, including alcoholism, health problems or domestic violence. Often their parents had no education (and so did not see the value of educating their children), were divorced or had remarried. In many households, extended family members also lived with the family. The children surveyed had often left home because of violence in the home; they would live on the streets, with other relatives or move directly to seek work in another town or country to support themselves. Where other social problems are present – incest, a mother in prostitution, a father with a criminal history – poverty and unemployment are greatly exacerbated.
- Children from Moldova said they saw no alternative but to leave a home where there was violence or sexual abuse. They cited ‘family relations’ as one factor in their decision to take up offers of work abroad. Many children live with grandparents, often because their parents have gone abroad to work, and these children are particularly vulnerable to persuasion to take the same route. Children surveyed in Moldova blamed their parents for not being able to give them a better life and said they preferred to go abroad “where people live a better life and earn a lot of money”. Difficult economic situations were often linked to regular alcohol abuse by one parent or both; it meant that they were unable to find stable work and any money they did earn was used to buy alcohol. As a result, the children often live in miserable conditions without light, heat or gas. Some trafficked children surveyed, however, said they had good family relationships, however these children came from large families or families where some members were ill or disabled, so that the child felt compelled to leave to earn money.

### Alexandru, from Moldova

At the age of 12, Alexandru was abducted by a Roma family and taken to their house. They forced him to work with some other boys and girls aged between 12 and 15. Alexandru managed to escape from the Roma family but continued to leave home occasionally because of the physical abuse his father inflicted upon him but also because of frequent family disputes. Alexandru’s father told interviewers that his son was a ‘bandit’, ‘criminal’ and ‘bad child’. Alexandru said he would like to go to work anywhere, even abroad, rather than stay at home.

- The situation is much the same in Romania, where many children do not live with their biological parents, and families do not have a regular source of income so live on welfare benefits or occasional/seasonal work. Family relations in general are marked by concern for survival, with parents believing that children should contribute to the family income. The children described their relationship with their parents as superficial, with the parents being 'emotionally absent'. Some of the children surveyed said that their parents forced them to beg or steal. On the other hand, most of the children said that there were no disputes at home, although those who cited violence and alcoholism in the family also said this had prompted them to run away. In addition, in Romania there are still large numbers of children living in residential institutions. These children are poorly equipped to live independently when they exit the institutions, and are at high risk of being recruited into trafficking.
- In Ukraine, too, most of the trafficked children in the survey came from incomplete or restructured families. The children complained of neglect and cruelty from stepfathers. Violence towards boys and sexual violence towards girls was a common feature of these restructured families. Parental alcoholism, drug addiction and aggression, family violence and criminal activity increase the likelihood that children will leave or be ejected from the family home and become more vulnerable to coercion and persuasion. In 2001, some 78 per cent of children lived in a family with both parents; 14 per cent lived in single-parent households (usually with the mother); six per cent lived in a restructured family and two per cent lived with families to which they were not related. Almost half of all teenagers had a low level of mutual understanding with their parents. Children living outside the family setting are also at risk: between 1991 and 2000, the number of children removed from their parents by court ruling rose from 1,800 to 6,000. The number of children left without parental care reached 19,800 in 1999 and the child population of boarding institutions of various kinds had reached 99,600 by 2000. There has been a concomitant increase in the number of children living on the streets. More than half of children living on the streets and surveyed in 2001 said they had left home at their parent's instigation (55 per cent); 22 per cent left because they wanted to; nine per cent left to escape violence; 14 per cent said they left because their parents could not support them.

#### 2.1.4 Education

Education – or rather lack of it – is an important factor in the vulnerability of children to trafficking. When children are in school, they are more likely to be protected by appropriate information about the risks of early entry into work, migration and trafficking, and lifestyle risks such as alcohol or substance abuse and early and indiscriminate sexual activity. They are in a protective environment where they have the chance to encounter adult role models, a factor that is particularly important where children come from dysfunctional families where the adult members may not provide such models. They are also, of course, able to acquire

knowledge and skills that will equip them for employment in later life, breaking the cycle of poverty and unemployment that puts both adults and their children at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Not surprisingly, therefore, the four rapid assessment surveys showed that most of the children who had been trafficked or were at risk of trafficking had not entered school, had dropped out of school or attended irregularly and were therefore failing students (sometimes called 'hidden drop-outs'). Many of the children, moreover, had parents who were unschooled and who consequently did not take their children's education seriously or believed they would learn more by working. It is also important to note that children often drop out of school because there is a sick or disabled family member and a concomitant expectation that the children of the family will contribute to care or family income. In short, the health of the family as a unit may affect decision relating to the children's education or indeed their entry into labour or relocation to seek work.

- In Albania, the enrolment rate in primary schools in 2000 was only 90 per cent. Additionally, up to one-third of children attending primary school in some regions could be classified as hidden drop-outs because they attended school but for various reasons did not progress in their studies. Such children are at risk of dropping out all together because poor grades discourage them from continuing. Alarmingly, there are reports that there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of girls over the age of 14 attending high school in some areas, where children and their families fear that the girls will be abducted into trafficking on the long walk to school.<sup>18</sup> Family poverty is also linked to school drop-out, of course, because of the pressure put on children to leave school and start earning money, or because families cannot afford additional costs even where education is nominally free (in some areas, for example, children may be expected to contribute to heating and lighting in the school, or to pay for textbooks or supplies, or even to 'top up' the teacher's salary). In Albania, girls are typically taken out of school to look after a sick parent or other family member, while the boys are taken out of school to start work. The survey showed that the children most likely to drop out of school are from rural areas and from families with socio-economic problems, children from suburban areas who do not attend regularly, girls from remote areas kept home for early marriage or blood feud, and children who have returned after emigrating with their families but find it too difficult to re-enter school. Eighty per cent of Roma children are illiterate and are denied their right to education. Discrimination towards this ethnic minority explains in part why so many Roma children drop out of school.
- In Moldova, most of the trafficked children surveyed did not graduate from secondary school; the majority had dropped out before they were recruited and trafficked. Some of them said their parents had encouraged them to leave school. Children considered to be at risk of trafficking were generally out of school, too. Only two of 20 children surveyed said they had attended school regularly in the

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<sup>18</sup> Child trafficking in Albania, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

three months before the survey; 12 children did not attend school at all. Sometimes they simply played truant but generally they were obliged to work to support themselves and their families.

- The trafficked children participating in the Romania survey also had a generally low education level. Most had dropped out of school at an early age because of family problems, although some children had never attended school at all and one boy had graduated from high school. The survey showed, though, that the parents' lack of interest in their children's education was also a factor in drop-out; the parents justified this by saying that they had not been able to find a regular job themselves even though they completed compulsory education. The school enrolment rate for the Roma population of Romania is well below the national rate: 70 per cent compared to 98 per cent nationally in 2002.

### M from Romania

M comes from a modest family consisting of both parents and four children. The parents are employed as pavement sweepers at the municipality. Their dwelling, which is owned by the state, is in a precarious state of hygiene. The girl's family could also be characterized by a total indifference towards education. There is no cooperation at any level; each of the family members is independent financially and especially emotionally. M's education is not completed yet. She finished compulsory school and for a year attended an apprenticeship school in tailoring but, because of financial problems and because her parents did not support her, she dropped out.

- In Ukraine the number of pre-school institutions declined significant through the 1990s and there was a concomitant decline in the number of children attending pre-school, by 230 per cent in urban areas and by 350 per cent in rural areas. The number of schools of general education, on the other hand, has been stable since 2000. However the number of children in school has fallen each year since 2000. There has been a steady rise in the size of classes as the number of teachers in public schools has fallen; teaching is a poorly paid profession and standards have generally deteriorated. There has also been a significant decrease in the number of non-school learning/recreation centres, alongside under-funding and a lack of materials generally in the sector. The role of the street as a socializing factor has therefore been considerably enhanced. Structural problems in the education system exacerbate the family's lack of interest in education and have resulted in low enrolment rates and an increase in school drop-outs.



## 2.1.5 Child labour

Throughout the region, children who are not in school are most likely to be engaged in some form of income-earning activity, often in the informal sector. The years of transition in the region have given rise to a large shadow economy in which child labour is widely exploited and additionally there are sectors in which traditionally children have worked alongside adult family members, for example in agriculture or street-based trades. Increasingly, also, the rise in crime has drawn in adolescents in particular as adult criminals have sought out children to sell or courier drugs, engage in commercial sexual transactions, commit theft or other petty crimes in the knowledge that, if caught, children are less likely to be rigorously pursued by the law.

- There is much to be done in the subregion to underpin the value and imperative of education but also the general position of the child within the family and community. The notion that children have a right to education and health, to be cared for in a protective environment, and to not be exploited, alongside the concomitant responsibilities for ensuring this that fall upon families, communities and the wider community, are clearly still not entrenched. Although all the countries of the subregion have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the children of this subregion are still clearly denied many of their rights. In Albania, most of the trafficked boys had worked before being trafficked, often in street-based occupations. Often this is because adult members of the family have been unable to find work and there is a tradition of looking upon work as educational, rather than harmful for children. Much of the child labour in Albania is in the informal sector: petty commerce, washing cars or shining shoes. Around one-third of all working children are engaged in street- or market-based activities. Children are also to be found in clearly illegal activities. Children of the Roma and Gypsy communities, in particular, are vulnerable to trafficking because they are likely to be working on the streets. The majority of trafficked children surveyed were from Gypsy families; Roma and so-called 'white' Roma children figure less frequently among the victims.
- In Moldova, in contrast, most of the children did not formally work before they were trafficked. Most of them spent their time on the streets, where they were exposed to drinking, smoking, drug-taking and petty theft. The few girls who had worked were employed in a number of sectors including cattle grazing, waitressing, prostitution and agricultural labour.
- In Romania, the survey showed that children who have already been working are tempted to move on to other forms of work, accept higher loads or leave the city or country. Often this is because, having started work, they hope to earn more money in more dangerous work or in another place, considering doing the same work but abroad as 'progress'. The surveyed children had almost all worked, either on a regular or occasional basis. Half of them worked at least eight hours a day. They did housework for neighbours, carried merchandise in

the market, cleaned shops and sidewalks, sold cardboard and scrap iron for recycling, washed cars and sold smallgoods at traffic intersections. Some of the girls took care of the neighbours' or relatives' children while some of the boys also worked in agriculture, construction or in warehouses. Children living and working on the streets and the children of Roma families are at highest risk of trafficking.

- In Ukraine, crimes against children and adolescent groups are increasing and alcohol, substance abuse and petty criminality are becoming more common among these groups. Run-ins with the police often lead to the children being put out on the street where they are at high risk of coercion or offers of work. One-third of the trafficked children in Ukraine had worked while also attending school, particularly the boys.

### Vitaly, from Ukraine

Vitaly and his family lived below the poverty line and he often had to help his mother by doing small jobs, like polishing furniture produced in the furniture shop in their village. The family made ends meet by growing food in their own vegetable garden. Vitaly gathered forest berries and mushrooms and sold them. Friends sometimes invited him to help out at a construction site or in decorating work, and he was paid small amounts for this. One day, his friends got a job building a barn in Poland. They asked Vitaly to join them. It was difficult to refuse. His mother was happy that he would be working, even though it meant he would miss school. There were no formal written agreements for the work, but the boys were promised \$500 when the work was completed. When the work was done, the boys asked for payment and the master asked them to leave Vitaly, the youngest, to look after his livestock. Vitaly did not want to because not only had he not been paid for the first job, he was afraid to stay alone. He knew the master had a gun. For his services, the master provided the boy with a place to live and food. After Vitaly's mother warned the boys she would send the militia if he did not return, they went off to fetch him. The master was not happy. He kicked the boys out without paying them.

## 2.1.6 Lack of information, misinformation and perceptions

It is frequently suggested that, because children and young people may seek out work opportunities abroad or accept the offers made by recruiters, they are willing and complicit in their own trafficking. This is not so. International law does not accept the notion of 'consent' in trafficking for anyone below the age of 18 years. Beyond this, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of children – even if they seem to migrate into work 'willingly' – have no or little idea of the conditions under

which they will be obliged to work and live. Unfailingly, children who are trafficked describe the enormous gulf between their expectations of life and work abroad, and the promises made to them, and the reality they faced when they arrived in the country of destination. Indeed, often the country of destination itself is not the one they expected to go to. To suggest that children knowingly put themselves in the hands of exploiters is to underestimate the important influence that misleading information or no information at all have on a child who is in the direst of circumstances, under pressure to earn money and out of options.

The children's expectations may be based on what they hear or see in the media, the false or exaggerated testimonies of others who have returned from work abroad, outright lies and deception of recruiters and the sad, misguided hope that anything must be better than what they have at home.<sup>19</sup>

Once in the hands of traffickers, both children and adults are invariably deprived of any say in where they will go and what will happen to them. Recruiters, traffickers and exploitative employers indeed rely on this in order to be able to recruit, traffic and exploit.

- In Albania, most children who are trafficked are accompanied, often by family members or friends. The survey suggested that the children in fact have little say in the decision to relocate and that their wishes are not taken into account at all. In the rare cases where the child travels alone, then s/he may have taken the decision to move, but usually as a result of pressure from friends or on the basis of false information (in effect, the child has been deceived). This information may come from recruiters who knowingly paint a false picture, from acquaintances who are themselves ignorant of the truth of trafficking and exploitation, or from sources such as television programmes that paint an unfailingly glowing picture of life in other countries.
- This is also true in Moldova. The survey showed that girls, in particular, are easily influenced because they lack life experience and that the media represents life in the west as desirable. An opinion poll carried out in Balti showed that, of 800 respondents (male and female, below the age of 20), 80 per cent said they wanted to find work abroad. These young people knew what trafficking was but seemed not to care about the nature of the work, probably an indication of their lack of understanding of the serious repercussions of exploitative labour. In most cases, the survey showed, minors leave Moldova convinced that they will get a decent job. The Moldova survey also suggests that 'complicity' must be viewed in the light of the fact that many of the children who are said to 'accept' to be relocated

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<sup>19</sup> For more, on this, see: IOM: Trafficking in unaccompanied minors for sexual exploitation in the European Union, (STOP Programme, Brussels, 2001), p. 10.

are undernourished, deprived of resources, uneducated and sometimes thrown out onto the streets. In such instances, the notion of 'free will' hardly applies.<sup>20</sup>

### X from Moldova

X was misled with the promise of a vacation job in Italy. She left her country in July 2000 and was transferred first to Romania with four other girls. The oldest was 18 and the youngest 16. From Timisoara, she went on to Yugoslavia. There she was entrusted to Z, a man who sent her to Albania with another girl. They then moved on to Italy by boat and then by train to Lyon, where two other men picked them up and took them to Belgium. Here they were locked in an apartment and both raped. However, the two girls escaped and called the police. The younger girl agreed to voluntary repatriation but her return was delayed because she was pregnant as a result of the rape.<sup>21</sup>

- Children surveyed in Romania said that they or their parents had accepted that the child would go abroad because the people who approached them seemed kind and concerned about their welfare. The children agreed to leave because they hoped to have a better life.
- Case studies from the Ukraine survey also underline both the desperate situation of the child and the pressures s/he may be under to earn money or to leave for another country. The example of Vitaly (see case study in box above) is typical of the situation of children often described as 'willingly' migrating for work.

### Oleg, from Ukraine

Because the family had no money, Oleg, 16 years old, had few friends. In his spare time he tried to help his mother to earn money. Suddenly a new and, perhaps, the only friend appeared in the boy's life. Mike introduced himself as a representative of a church and talked with Oleg about his future, career and family. Early in the summer of 2000, Mike suggested that Oleg might be able to earn money abroad. Oleg agreed, influenced in this decision by the possibility of studying a foreign language and earning

<sup>20</sup> A report on the sexual exploitation of children in Europe also suggests that "children and young people in desperate circumstances...learn fairly quickly that if they have nothing else they can sell their bodies". L. Kelly and L. Regan: *Rhetorics and realities: Sexual exploitation of children in Europe*, (CWASU, London, 2000), p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Case study quoted (in shortened form) from *Trafficking in unaccompanied minors for sexual exploitation in the European Union*, op.cit., p.63.

money for himself and his mother. At first Oleg's mother did not agree to let her son go with a stranger, but in the end the financial argument prevailed. Mike suggested Oleg should go to Poland to a friend who worked there managing a recreation centre where the boy would be able to work, earn money and also have a holiday. Oleg's mother knew why he was leaving, but other acquaintances thought he was going overseas on vacation. Mike arranged travel documents for Oleg and even showed them to his mother. The only thing that was required from the boy was to take with him 50 Zlotys. Mike warned Oleg that what they were doing was not entirely legal because he was under age. Oleg and Mike travelled by train. Three other children travelled with them but Oleg had no chance to talk to them. In Wroclaw they were taken to sleep in a home that impressed the boy very much. He was provided with a room with a separate bathroom and in a wardrobe he found clothes that fitted him and that he could take with him. Next day they were taken to the outskirts of the town where they were told that they had to pay back the money for the travel to Poland. A precise sum was not mentioned, Oleg thought it should be about \$200–300. They were told what they should do. It turned out that what had been envisaged for them was begging in the streets of the city. Oleg was ashamed to do it. Even at home when they did not have money for food, he did not do it. Now he had no choice.

### 2.1.7 When the children come home

The surveys all clearly show that, when the children finally return from their trafficking experience (and most of them do), they have rarely 'profited' from it. The hopes and aspirations of earning money to improve their lives and the living conditions of their families are almost never met. Often they return with nothing at all to conditions that have not changed in their absence. Additionally, they may return to families or communities that reject them for the work they have done. This is particularly true of girls who have been forced to work in the sex trade.

Often relations with the family or friends who have participated in their trafficking, including parents, will have deteriorated and many children find themselves without family support or afraid to return to their homes. On the streets, institutionalized or living with people they do not relate to, these children are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked again. Additionally, of course, the majority of children who have been trafficked are unable to enter or re-enter school unless they are helped to do so by an NGO or government programme. Opportunities for

'light' work that would allow children who have reached the appropriate age<sup>22</sup> to earn some money in a non-hazardous occupation while also continuing their studies, are few and far between. Their vulnerability to labour exploitation and re-trafficking therefore remains high and their future prospects remain grim.

- Children trafficked from Albania who participated in the rapid assessment survey almost all returned to the same conditions they had left behind. Most continued to work after their return and said they wanted to leave again, despite their experiences. Many who returned after being caught by the police, or who managed to escape from slavery-like conditions, returned to a life on the streets. The conditions under which they worked influenced their decisions whether or not to return to work abroad. Even where the conditions were harmful to their health, though, the children often said they would go abroad again – a reflection of the difficulties they faced on return and the continuing poverty, family problems and lack of prospects they found at home as well as a sad hope of 'better luck next time'.
- The children from Moldova often showed signs of low self-respect and guilt when they returned. Where many had hoped to return with money for the family and having demonstrated their independence and their ability to contribute to improving the lives of their parents and siblings, they returned instead empty-handed, demoralized and with shattered dreams. Many children did not speak of their experiences to their families or tell exactly what work they did. Many of the children said their relationship with their parents deteriorated after their return, particularly where the parents had been instrumental in their trafficking. Their relationship with the community in general depended very much on the child's age, how much the community understood about trafficking, and whether the child was perceived as a troublemaker. Sometimes the community blamed the child for what had happened to her/him. Conversely, children who had been forced to leave because their parents drank or were extremely poor were shown some compassion. In general, however, Moldovan society is sceptical and intolerant, particularly of girls trafficked into prostitution. The children surveyed had returned from trafficking in a variety of different ways: most had been arrested and sent home, but significant numbers said their boss had wanted them to leave, they had escaped (with or without help), they had left after a police raid or, in just two cases, they had been released when their debts were paid. Sometimes girls exploited in commercial sex said they had escaped with the help of 'clients', who also paid for their travel home.

<sup>22</sup> 'Light' work is allowed under international labour conventions in very specific circumstances, the details of which are decided by national governments. In general, the child must have reached a stipulated age (often two years before legal working age), the conditions of work must be appropriate to the age of the child, must not be hazardous to the child's health or well-being, and must be for a limited number of hours per week. Importantly, 'light' work must not exclude schooling or training.

- In Romania, many surveyed children said they would be ‘willing’ to go abroad again, despite the abuse to which they had been subjected. Faced with unchanged conditions at home, many children seemed to see their bad experiences as bad luck and were willing to risk relocation again because they remained convinced that it was possible to earn money abroad. Many of the children mentioned the kind of work they hoped to find next time. One-third of the children had been released as a result of police raids; another one-third returned with parents or relatives sent back by the authorities; some were arrested and repatriated; some escaped with someone’s help; and some simply ran away.

### A boy from Romania

The boy told the researchers: “I didn’t go back to school after my return from abroad. I kept on working in Bucharest from time to time. I wash cars, load and unload merchandise to earn pocket money. I want to go back and work abroad and I am waiting for my parents to send me money to get a passport and pay for the travel arrangements.”

- Most of the children trafficked from Ukraine had escaped, and half of these children had done so without help. The other half had mostly been helped by someone they met during the course of their work or more rarely by a co-worker. Twenty per cent of the children just decided to leave and met no resistance. Almost the same number left because their employer wanted them to, generally because they were sick or injured and unable to work, or were not making enough money or else were considered ‘troublemakers’. Only a small number of the children surveyed had been arrested and sent back. More than 25 per cent of the children trafficked from Ukraine also wanted to go abroad again, despite the risks. Where the options for a decent life and work are so limited, the inclination to ‘try again’ is strong. More than half of the children returned to live with the same person as before their trafficking, generally a parent, even where the parent had been involved in the trafficking. Most of the children believed that this was what their parents would want. Many children, however, return to life in an orphanage or shelter, or on the streets. The overwhelming majority of returned children did not have enough to eat and could not afford to buy clothes or shoes when they returned. Half of the children had to support themselves and some had to be supported by grandparents or friends. As in other countries, the parent/child relationship sometimes deteriorated after return and children were often unable to talk to their parents about their experiences. The family may also be reluctant to divulge that the child had been trafficked. The Ukraine survey suggested that the children typically fall into one of three categories when they return: ‘reacting against circumstances’, where they are silent about their trafficking and try to forget the past; ‘passive’, where they seem indifferent about

the past and the future and have no motivation or aims in life; and ‘isolation’, where they distrust and avoid people.

### Ihor, from Ukraine

Ihor was trafficked with his mother to Poland. There he suffered inhuman working conditions: he had to sit in a chair for disabled people the whole day; he was not even allowed to eat or to go to the toilet. The boy was permanently under the boss’s control; he would check up on the boy several times a day...After returning home, Ihor’s mother decided not to appeal to the militia to avoid telling tales out of school. Now Ihor goes to school but he feels bad. He has become anxious and mistrustful, and cannot stay at home alone in the evening. His mother’s decision not to seek redress has had a negative impact on him: he saw that the people who had exploited, tortured and taunted him and his relatives went unpunished. This made him feel helpless and desperate. He lives in fear that those who worked for the traffickers will punish him and his relatives. Sometimes children of the same age insult him and call him ‘Mister Pole’. His mother does not ask for medical help to avoid having to explain the source of the trauma.

## 2.2 The children’s families

### 2.2.1 Parents as providers

The economic problems that families face in the four countries covered in this report in many ways fundamentally alter the dynamics of the parent/child relationship. Parents are often no longer able to provide for their children and members of the extended family may become more involved in the child’s life decisions. Friends and acquaintances also become more influential, as do independent sources of information such as magazines and television. Where there is social dysfunction in a family – perhaps because one or more parents abuses alcohol or drugs – or where a parent is absent or has been replaced (the ‘restructured’ family), then the relationship between parent(s) and child may sometimes be distant or even abusive. In relation to trafficking of children from this subregion, parents, family members and the complex relationships among them and between them and the child at risk of trafficking are of the utmost significance.

- Historically, the Albanian family is characterized as maintaining strong traditional values, with parents dedicated to ensuring their children’s future. However, parents surveyed said they had hopes of their children bringing money to the family, and they were not aware of the difficulties and challenges the child might face in doing this. Typically, Albanian parents will take the whole family



abroad to try and earn money, often motivated by the desire to improve their children's prospects, or will be convinced by someone they know to send the child abroad in their company. The drastic changes in Albania in recent years have led to a situation where migration for the family or some members of it is often seen as the only alternative to living in poverty and without hope. Nevertheless, the survey showed that family circumstances rarely improved as a result of the child working or being trafficked.

### Two mothers from Albania

A 37 year-old mother, interviewed in Korça, explained what her life is like: "I was living in one small room with six children. I did not have anything to feed them. Sometimes they had to sleep without eating anything. It was so hard to see them suffer. I asked myself several times how I would survive together with them."

A mother of three, interviewed in Elbasan, told her story: "The situation is worsening every day. We live in a small muddy house without electricity, without water. The only solution to escape this poverty is to beg in the street. Three of my children are begging in the street."

- In Moldova, the economic pressures on the family are again fundamental to the likelihood that a child will be put to work or sent/allowed to travel abroad to earn money. Practically all of the parents and relatives of trafficked children surveyed complained of the difficult economic situation at home and the need for all family members to contribute. Often the main source of income of the families of trafficked children was their grandparents' pension, or occasional work. A few families received income from a private farmstead, business or social assistance. Parents with no stable income regularly abused alcohol and many children are chased from their homes in these circumstances. Where parents have had no stable employment for several years, families might also be marked by domestic violence.

### Gheorghe, from Moldova

Gheorge's mother died in 2000 of cancer; his father drinks heavily. His father does casual work in people's houses but he spends almost all the money on drink. Gheorghe's father often beats and verbally abuses him. He has two older sisters, 19 and 16. He has been repeatedly offered by his oldest sister to go to Moscow to work. He has not done this yet because the family does not have enough money to pay for travel.

- In Romania, family relations are marked by concern for survival, with parents believing that children have a role to play in helping to overcome the family's problems. As a result, children begin work early and may travel abroad for work. Increasing school enrolment rates mask the problem of child labour in Romania, although it is recognized that Roma children are less likely to enrol in school than other children. Children may work for or alongside the family doing housework, agricultural work or in bonded labour to pay off family debts. Despite this, in general the surveyed children said that they thought their relationship with their family was good, even if they were at times beaten. In some cases this did prompt the child to leave home. Some children, however, said their parents forced them to beg or steal, often alongside their parents.
- In Ukraine, a weak childcare environment has undermined family support. Unemployment and family poverty again play a central role in the child's entry into labour or recruitment into trafficking. Parental alcoholism, drug addiction and aggression, family violence and criminal activity also break down the care structure of the family and increase the likelihood that the child will leave home or be thrown out. Many children trafficked internally said they worked as beggars under their parents' supervision.

### Catherine, from Ukraine

Catherine lived at home with her mother. From time to time her mother was out of work and drank. They were always short of money. When Catherine was nine years old, her mother gave her to her 20 year-old cousin. He raped her and occasionally gave money to her mother. One day Catherine's mother met Olga, who suggested she could take Catherine away forever to earn money. The mother did not accept this offer but decided she would be able to provide a job for her daughter herself. Catherine began to earn money by providing sexual services to her mother's acquaintances. If she refused, her mother beat her. Finally, Olena persuaded Catherine's mother to give the girl to her. She provided better living conditions, fed her and took care of her needs. Catherine had a chance to attend school in the daytime, however in the evening she had to stand on one of the central streets of the city with Olena, who offered her to drivers for sex. Olena, of course, kept the money.

## 2.2.2 Indifference and ignorance

- Albanian parents who take their children abroad are often completely unaware of the risk they are running of exploitation and of leading their children into exploitation, thus effectively becoming traffickers themselves. The survey showed that parents truly believed people who promised their children a good

job, marriage and the chance to have a better life, although some reports suggest that Albanian parents are becoming better informed about the risks of trafficking.<sup>23</sup> In addition, many children who had travelled abroad with their parents, or whose parents had gone abroad without them, were more ready to travel abroad themselves. Ninety per cent of the children surveyed had been recruited through an arrangement between a recruiter and a family member. When their children return from being trafficked, the majority of parents surveyed found it difficult to understand the trauma their child had suffered. Although many parents regretted the difficult experiences their children had gone through, they were unable to grasp the extent of the psychological damage they had suffered and some parents surveyed blamed the child for not returning with promised earnings.

### Three boys from Albania

A 17 year-old boy returned to a family that hardly welcomed him: “When I came back home, I did not really feel welcome. My parents] already knew that I had escaped from the exploiter. He called and threatened them, asking them to give back the money he had spent on my trip to Greece if I did not go back. My father was angry because he could not see a way to pay him back.”

A mother told a very different story of her son’s return: “The last time my son left for Greece, he walked for seven days and was caught by Greek soldiers. The whole group was returned home. When my son came back he was so exhausted that he couldn’t walk for a week. Since that time I decided that my son would not go abroad again even if we are starving.”

A father despaired for the future: “We cannot stop our child from being trafficked again. He doesn’t even listen to us. Now he is 14 years old and has started smoking. He leaves home without even saying anything. All these things are concerning us but we cannot do anything. We are even thinking of all leaving and going to Greece.”

- In Moldova, relocation is seen as simply another way of bringing in money and neither parents nor other family members responded negatively to what they see as simply ‘going abroad for work’. Almost half of the children surveyed said that their families had known they were going abroad but that their attitude was generally positive or indifferent. Children from rural areas, in particular, are at risk of being trafficked because of the tradition of sending children out to work. The parents, on the other hand, sometimes said they felt they had no influence

<sup>23</sup> Trafficking in human beings in South Eastern Europe, op.cit., p. 51.

over their children and blamed the child's environment and the influence of unsuitable friends for the child's departure. Parents said that, although they tried to give their children all they needed, the children still dropped out of school and left home.

- Children in Romania described their relationship with their parents as 'superficial', and said their parents were often 'absent', especially their father. They complained that their fathers drank and were extremely strict. Although the absence the children referred to was emotional rather than physical absence, in many cases the father was also physically absent, having gone abroad himself to work. In such cases, the child would take the same route as the father. One clear indicator of lack of understanding of the nature and impact of trafficking on children is that many Romanian parents thought trafficking was wrong only when it was done by someone outside the family; in such cases, they said, the perpetrators should be punished.

### An accordion player from Romania

This 17 year-old boy learned to play accordion from his father. One day at a party, after a performance, his father was approached by a man who said he was delighted with the performance and suggested the boy should sing abroad to get rich and be successful. The family was then approached by the traffickers, who seemed reliable people and who promised he would earn a lot of money abroad playing the accordion in restaurants owned by their business partners. Eventually the family allowed the child to go to Italy. There, the boy was taken over by another network and forced to sing in the streets, at market places and in transport hubs. They took his identity papers from the traffickers. Although he was not obliged to earn a specific amount of money every day, the traffickers beat him often because they considered he did not do his best to earn more money. The family was completely unaware of what had happened to their son because the child was not allowed to contact anybody.

- More than half of the children surveyed in Ukraine said that someone in their family knew they were leaving but was either positive or indifferent. Often this was because the person expected the child to send back money and so was not inclined to try and stop the child leaving. Parents and other family members are often involved in the decision when the child him/herself 'chooses' to leave, although those parents not involved were generally completely unaware of what their children were doing abroad. Nevertheless, the survey showed that only one in three children is supported by their family when they return.

To the extent that parents and family members may allow or send a child abroad to work in complete ignorance of the nature of that work or the impact on the child, therefore, it is perhaps unjust to say – as some commentators do – that families willingly traffick their children. The reality is more complex.

## Chapter 3:

# Intermediaries and Traffickers

### 3.1 Who are the traffickers and intermediaries?

There is much confusion about who can appropriately be labelled ‘trafficker’. It is not unusual to see reports that ‘parents traffic their own children’ but, as the preceding sections clearly show, it is not only inappropriate to suggest that parents unable to provide for their families and truly believing that there is work and a better life to be had elsewhere are ‘traffickers’ but also clear that the majority of parents, when (and if) they learn what has happened to their children, show remorse and anger and a clear anti-trafficking stance. Between the unknowing parent and the person who deliberately sets out to profit from trafficking another human being, there is a wide range of people who have an idea that they are contributing to something that is clearly illegal and potentially harmful to another person, but who put this aside in favour of personal profit or just prefer not to think about it too much – in this category fall the many friends and family members who urge children and families to approach transport agents and guides.

Research by the Australian Institute of Criminology suggests<sup>24</sup> that there are models of trafficking schemes that fall generally into three distinct categories (the first category has two different manifestations: ‘corporate’ and ‘network’):

The **‘corporate’** model is highly structured and generally involves organized crime groups. It is hierarchical, centrally controlled and bureaucratic, and is characterized by vertical relations between the members of the scheme. Working in a pyramid-like hierarchy, it involves a single person, family or tightly-knit group at the pinnacle, generally unknown to and far removed from the many ‘workers’ at the base – those who actually carry out the work of trafficking, from recruitment through to delivery to the exploiter (or sometimes the exploitation too). These ‘bosses’ may also be engaged in extortion, narcotics, corruption and illegal gambling, and the whole structure is held together by threats and violence that ensures that those on each level of the pyramid remain ‘faithful’ to the people on the rung above. Typically known mafia-like groups may be running such schemes. Where such criminal structures are engaged in cross-border crime, they may also be involved in trafficking human beings.

The **‘network’** model involves criminal groups working loosely together in a diverse, decentralized way and is characterized by horizontal relations, with no

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<sup>24</sup> A. Schloenhardt: *Organized crime and the business of migrant trafficking*, (Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, November 1999), pp.13-14.

'bosses' making the decisions but each 'specialist' deciding on his/her contribution and communicating it to the others, or at least those working closely in the next stage of the process. This model is very flexible because the component parts can be changed regularly depending on needs, and if one part is apprehended and stops working, it can be replaced and rarely damages the rest of the network. Studies suggest this model applies mostly to criminal organizations, which engage in complex and dynamic illegal markets with multiple competitors such as prostitution and the sex industry, loan sharking and trafficking in contraband. Again, if these groups operate across national borders, they may also be involved in human trafficking.

There are also **small groups of well-organized criminals** who specialise in leading victims (as well as irregular migrants) from one country to another along well-known routes. These 'guides' may operate on an almost permanent basis but their structure and organization is less professional and complex than the internationally operating trafficking networks and they are very localized in the service they offer, specialising in just one area, for example.

Those most often involved in trafficking human beings, however, are '**amateurs**'. These are individuals who provide a single service such as transport. They are also known as 'intermediaries', the people who are generally described as 'facilitating' trafficking. They may be a regular part of the trafficking process – generally broken down into recruitment, transportation, reception and exploitation – or they may provide occasional 'services' that help these stages to progress successfully. They may, for example, provide documentation that is needed for the child to leave a country, and this documentation may be bona fide or false. For example, a poor family that sells documentation relating to its own children and for a small fee signs consent forms for that child to leave the country may never know that another child has been trafficked using the documents provided. Conversely, a counterfeiter who makes a profit from producing false documents – passports, birth certificates, consent forms, for example – is fully aware that the actions are against the law and likely to be used to move a child illegally. Between these two extremes may be an official in the migration department who simply turns a blind eye when someone applies for a visa for a child to leave the country on an educational trip but in suspicious circumstances or with clearly irregular documentation. In the latter two groups, instances have been found where the 'occasional' intermediary, even if 'amateur', may link into a larger, internally operating trafficking network.

Often family members figure among the intermediaries. As in the case of parents, they may be ignorant of the impact of their intervention or may be fully cognisant of the fact that they are contributing to the exploitation or trafficking of a child. In general, family members are most likely to be among the people who recruit children into trafficking, by exerting pressure on them to travel abroad to find work. This may be in the genuine belief that there are opportunities abroad that can benefit the child and family or it may be because the 'recruiter' stands to

make a profit from providing the child to a trafficker and is fully aware of what this means.

In every country, there will be a veritable army of intermediaries involved in trafficking a child. Increasingly in this subregion there are signs that the amateurs are becoming more organized and being taken over (or perhaps replaced) by criminal organizations that already have many of the structures in place that are needed for trafficking: the 'safe' routes across borders; information-providers who give updates on border guard rosters and when 'primed' guards are on duty to allow fraudulent documents or known traffickers to pass; or transport companies who regularly also move contraband on behalf of the organization. In Ukraine, for example, it has been noted that in recent years 'lone law-breakers' increasingly 'buy in' services that have been developed by organized criminal elements, especially by feeding individual children into groups of children taken abroad along routes that have been developed for smuggling other contraband, or by paying a considerable fee for help with housing, transport, guides, forged documents and other logistical support.<sup>25</sup> A 2002 report by ILO-MIGRANT noted that middle-men are becoming stronger and more influential than the state structures that should be stopping them,<sup>26</sup> and that the middle-men are more and more using existing facilities and structures which are often in fact known to authorities, including land routes that historically were used to move people to safety in times of conflict.

There is continuing debate on whether these various intermediaries and 'service providers' should be considered traffickers in law, since they have participated in the process of trafficking. In most jurisdictions, however, many of these actions are currently mostly dealt with under other areas of law such as forgery, abduction of minors, bribery and corruption. In reality, nevertheless, it is almost impossible to differentiate between the intermediary and the trafficker proper. Is the trafficker just the person who arranges the relocation of the child? If so, then is the bus driver who knowingly transported the same child a one-off criminal or a trafficker? Is the trafficker the person who organizes the exploitation of the child at the point of destination? If so, is the employer who actually takes the child on just guilty of exploitation or of trafficking? It could be argued that the difference between a trafficker and someone who facilitates trafficking lies in the degree and nature of the action, or even how often they do it. For example, a forger of false papers may be seen as further removed from the process than the person who actually grooms and recruits the child – an accessory, rather than a perpetrator; and the bus driver who regularly accepts money for transporting groups of children knowing them to be crossing a border irregularly with the same 'guide' may be seen as 'more guilty' than the train driver who accepts a bribe just once. But this is an argument clouded

<sup>25</sup> Migrant trafficking and human smuggling in Europe, *op.cit.*, p. 342.

<sup>26</sup> Scanlan, S: Irregular labour markets and restrictive migration policies in Western Europe: Report on trafficking from Moldova, (ILO-MIGRANT, Geneva, 2002), p. 8.



in national legal specificities, unwritten perceptions of the nature of the crime and moral questions rarely dealt with in law and law enforcement. In this section, intermediaries and traffickers are dealt with together, and no judgement is made on who the ‘trafficker’ is, by looking at the processes of trafficking and detailing who is involved in them.

### 3.1.1 Recruiting the children

Recruitment takes a number of different forms and can be both active and passive. That is to say that children may be recruited by someone who deliberately sets out to make a profit from their trafficking, or they may be persuaded to accept a job offer, for example, by someone who really believes that this is in the best interests of the child and the child’s family. In this second group, family members and friends figure prominently and actions aimed at helping such people to see that their advice is misguided can make a difference to the likelihood that a child will be trafficked.

- In Albania, parents surveyed underlined that friends, neighbours and relatives encouraged the idea of sending a child abroad to work. The children explained that they were often encouraged to leave by a friend, and peer pressure played a significant role in the decision of many children to seek out someone who could find them work abroad, or to accept an offer already made to them. Thus recruiters generally belong to the community in which the child lives. The lack of understanding of both children and the people who urge them to leave are reinforced by media images showing unrealistic ideas of life abroad and reports received from relatives living in or returned from another country (many of whom may be frightened or ashamed to admit that their hopes and dreams have

#### An eight year-old girl from Albania

Where children go with their parents to work abroad, they are equally exploited. One eight year-old girl left for Greece with her six year-old brother, mother and mother’s boyfriend. The family had huge debts; both adults were unemployed and the mother, deceived by her boyfriend, chose the path of emigration together with her children. Settled in the house of the boyfriend’s friend, the mother and two children went out every day from dawn to dusk to beg. All the profits initially were handed to the mother. After some time the police seized the mother and the children were left in the care of the boyfriend, who mistreated them and took all the money from them. The girl was also forced to do housework, cook for everyone and do the laundry.

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<sup>27</sup> Trafficking in unaccompanied minors for sexual exploitation in the European Union, op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Child trafficking in Albania, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

not been fulfilled by moving away).<sup>27</sup> There are also reports<sup>28</sup> of recruiters who spend months convincing a girl to get engaged or married and who even present false parents to the family to demonstrate their good credentials. The 'marriage' will be arranged in Greece, the family is told, but instead the girl finds herself on a boat to Italy where she will be forced to provide sex services. Sometimes the 'fiancé' may pimp the girl himself or else he will sell her to someone else.

- In Moldova, too, the children often contact a recruiter through someone they know, or may be introduced to someone who can help them to leave by a family member or friend. In some cases, children themselves make contact directly with someone who is known to organize work abroad. In many cases, the decision to seek work abroad is as a result of a proposal or persuasion by the people who look after the child and, again, media images of a better life 'elsewhere' underline false perceptions of what life will be like abroad. As a result, most of the children surveyed said they had not been forced or lured into trafficking although, clearly, many of them had been misled. However, there are also 'professional' recruiters at work in Moldova. These are generally men aged between 20 and 30, or women in the 18-40 age range. They may obtain information on vulnerable children from representatives of town councils, ignorant of the process and consequences of trafficking. The children are then lured into accepting to relocate by promises of food, clothes, a place to live and money for the work they do. In the case of girls trafficked directly into sexual exploitation (as opposed to ending up in prostitution after already being exploited in child labour), pimps may show up at bars and clubs and 'groom' girls, getting to know them, gaining their trust and then offering to help them. Pimps also single out minors in public places and establish contact with them, again grooming them for eventual trafficking. In Moldova, members of the Roma population are also known to recruit children (especially boys) for labour, often begging, agriculture or selling fake gold. The survey undertaken in Moldova also found some examples of children abducted in the street.

### Veronica, from Moldova

Veronica is 16 years old. She was trafficked to Russia by a Roma family. They promised her work in agriculture but she was forced to beg. She had to sit in an invalid chair. To make her foot numb, the traffickers injected her. They forced her to take drugs and drink alcohol. Veronica was exploited for three months and returned home when the Roma family decided to return. In Moldova she ran away. All Veronica earned for these three months of exploitation was a tracksuit that cost 300 lei (\$23).

- In Romania, family members, friends and other close acquaintances are also instrumental in encouraging children to consider leaving their home town or country to find work elsewhere. Children who participated in the survey had in some cases been influenced by gangs to which they belonged. The survey showed that relatives are known to urge family members to migrate after they have themselves been abroad and have contacts with people who will facilitate the trafficking process and pay them for their help in finding a suitable victim. In the case of children trafficked into sexual exploitation, the recruiter was often a lover or fiancé. There are also non-family intermediaries at the beginning of the trafficking process, including middle-men who recruit children by promising jobs and services and who leave the family or child to organize their own transport and documents, and travel agencies who also knowingly arrange such services. The children surveyed said that often the middlemen seemed kind and concerned about their welfare, and this person may have entered the family circle specifically to acquire the children, openly disclosing his intentions.
- Similarly in Ukraine, children may be recruited as a result of encouragement from people they know. In this country, additionally, people known to the children may also be involved in violent coercion of children into trafficking, both domestic and cross-border. The survey showed that force is widespread in the internal trafficking of children in Ukraine. In the majority of cases, however, children and their families are misled by false information and promises of work. The recruiters may also arrange travel and documents, or introduce the child to someone who can do that.

### Stas, from Ukraine

One day a man came to Stas' school asking after 'cute girls'. Stas told him there were not any girls of this kind there. The man told Stas he had a job for him in his house and that he would pay him well. When Stas got to the man's house, he spent a day digging the man's vegetable garden but he did not get a penny for the work. The man said he could take Stas overseas if he wished, but Stas said he had no documents. That was not a problem; the man told Stas he did not need any because it was possible to stow away and then run across the border. The next day the man even started preparing Stas for the trip. He went to a market, bought Stas some clothes and hid him. However, the teachers from Stas' school and militia were already searching for him. They found and released him. In court, it was established that the man was not of sound mind, but Stas said he had seen the man before, in the company of girls he knew. He said the man was always on the lookout for girls, "trying to get them for somebody".

### 3.1.2 Providing 'services'

The 'services' provided to facilitate trafficking include: arranging transport and required documents; providing transport or counterfeiting documents; acting as a guide to children crossing borders on foot, or as a 'chaperone' accompanying children on their journey; providing information of many kinds at various stages of the process (for example on which borders are easiest to cross at any given time); arranging other logistics such as bribing guards or officials; liaising between the various parties, including 'employers' and 'clients'; supervising the children while they work, particularly if that work is on the streets; acting as 'bodyguards' not to protect children but to ensure that they do not run away; and providing accommodation and/or food. Someone may also, of course, have to 'bankroll' the process or parts of it: "child mobility dependent on adult finance", as one researcher has described it.<sup>29</sup> There is little information available on the financing of trafficking at an organized level<sup>30</sup> but, on a more modest scale, families and friends may themselves lend or give money to pay for travel or as a bond to the traffickers or proposed employer.

- The children in Albania were often accompanied on their journey by someone they knew, including relatives, neighbours and friends. Often this person was a boyfriend of the mother. The majority of trafficked children belong to the Gypsy community, and frequently the whole family will move at the same time. The children surveyed said that somebody, usually a relative or a neighbour, would also act as 'guarantor' for them to go and work abroad. Where they travelled with someone else, that person was often the recruiter who had agreed the transport with a family member. The establishment of a relationship between the recruiter/trafficker and the family means that often the child will be trafficked several times. The children who participated in the survey and who had been returned from trafficking by the police all said the traffickers had arranged for them to travel again. Most Albanian children are trafficked to Greece because it is easier to cross the border, inexpensive and in most cases no documents are needed. The greatest expense is travel to the border. According to the Greek police, 90 per cent of children arrested for begging each year on the streets of Athens are from Albania.<sup>31</sup> Trafficking to Italy is also common but more difficult. It involves the preparation of false documents and concealing the child on the ferry (it has become more difficult to make the sea crossing by speedboat since counter-trafficking initiatives have successfully targeted that means of travel). Despite this, the Municipality of Rome in 2001 indicated that 38 per cent

<sup>29</sup> Separated children coming to Western Europe, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> On the use to which the profits are put, however, see: L. Shelley: "Trafficking in women: The business model approach" in *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. X No. 1 (Brown University, Providence, 2003), pp. 119-131.

<sup>31</sup> Trafficking of Albanian children in Greece, (Terre des Hommes, Tirana, January 2003), p. 9, cited in Trafficking in human beings in South Eastern Europe, op. cit., p. 51.

of the minors taken into care because they were found unaccompanied and in an irregular situation were Albanian. Interestingly, many of these unaccompanied minors present themselves at social service centres or police stations with a 'full list' of demands: for residence permits, protection, admission into reception centres or asylum status. Some even have the contact details of emergency child protection centres or the relevant police offices, as well as birth certificates, often false, attesting to their status as minors. Clearly these children have been provided with this information as part of the 'service'.<sup>32</sup>

### A child from Albania

A child from Korça who was among those surveyed told this story: "A friend of our oldest brother arranged everything: how to cross the border and where to work. After two days we had to leave our family. A person came by car to our house with two other children and a woman. Close to the customs, only we, the children, got out of the car. A young boy took us and ordered us to follow him without talking. It was dark and the road was very difficult. The other two children, who were smaller than me, were exhausted. After midnight we met up with the person again, and the woman. They were waiting for us with another taxi, this time with a Greek licence. They accompanied us to Thessalonica."

- The survey in Moldova revealed a great deal about the intermediaries who had provided services to children and families as part of the trafficking process. The children said that they often had to borrow money for travel from relatives, friends or neighbours and that these same people would help to arrange travel. Roma community members also arranged travel for children, or the children were handed over to others who would arrange their journey, often with money changing hands. These 'delivery men' might also arrange the travel before delivering the children to buyers. Often the children were grouped together in bands of five to 15 for transport and moved by car, minibus or train, and drivers were often paid to turn a blind eye. There are some reports of children being moved along the rivers. Frequently the children crossed the border legally, since parents were duped into handing over their legal documents, but often the border guard would also be paid not to check too closely. Children taken across the so-called 'green border' would be accompanied by a guide. The choice of route would depend on an assessment of the 'risk factors', suggesting that information on borders was provided on a regular basis. The documents used to take the children across, if they did not come from the family, are often bought or hired from other vulnerable families, or acquired with the help of corrupt notaries. Before

<sup>32</sup> Parsec and the University of Florence: Alien separated children: Analysis of significant operational interventions with alien unaccompanied minors in Rome. General considerations, (Daphne Programme progress report by Parsec, Rome, October 2000).

June 2000, a child could be taken through the border by anyone who could present a signed agreement from the parents; now a child has to be noted in the passport of the person accompanying them, making documentation more complex. However, this does not seem to present a serious obstacle. The survey indicates that middlemen bribe state officials to acquire false documents and that corrupt passport office officials and staff of some foreign embassies will provide visas against a bribe. Some pimps make an immediate profit by preparing all the documents, taking them to Chisinau and selling them to transporters who then take the children to their final destination. This is effectively a 'relay' rather than a network, since the transporter and pimp may have only a casual link. While they were working, the children from Moldova often had 'handlers' who made sure they did not run away. They also said that sometimes their employers would appeal to real police officers to arrest the children and take them in custody. There they would be beaten, raped and kept without food. A few days later the employer would collect them. The police officers were paid for their help in teaching the children that they should obey orders, and the cost of the bribe would be added to the debts the children had to pay off. It is also worth noting that many Moldovan girls (and women) being trafficked into sexual exploitation first cross the border into Romania, arriving in groups in Timisoara where they are sold on to new traffickers and moved to Macedonia, Kosovo, Turkey, Italy, Cyprus and Greece. This two-stage trafficking obviously requires even more 'service providers'.<sup>33</sup> There are also reports, however, of traffickers offering the complete range of services – a sort of 'one-stop shopping'. They will organize transport, ensure work, prepare documents, arrange contacts at the other end, and provide money up-front for the family and loans to the child.

### Sergiu, from Moldova

Maria has four children. Her husband returned handicapped from fighting in Afghanistan. A neighbour, a Roma woman who herself had a boy working in Moscow, came to see Maria with another Roma woman and asked her to send her 14 year-old son, Sergiu, to work with the woman. At first Maria did not agree, arguing that she had never seen the Roma woman before, but the poor economic situation of the family convinced her that her child could help her if he went to Moscow and brought home money. She made a deal for him to go for three months. Maria and the Roma woman went to the notary (who had business relations with the Roma woman) and Maria signed a mandate that allowed the woman to take her son. Sergiu was brought home by the police nine months later and never told his mother what kind of job he had done in Russia nor how he had run away.

<sup>33</sup> Trafficking in human beings in South Eastern Europe, op.cit., p. 72.

They may also be responsible for establishing personal contacts with corrupt agents of the passport and visa service, law enforcement bodies or even the Ministry of the Interior.

- In Romania, too, the people who made arrangements for the child to leave were often acquaintances or friends. The recruiters were said to leave it up to the child and family to organize their own transport and documents. The Romanian Border Police report that it is not uncommon for foreign nationals to send invitations to Romanian families that can be used as ‘proof’ that the travel is legitimate. Buses belonging to specialized travel agencies, trains or illegal border crossing on foot are the most common modes of transport, with certain transport companies known to have ‘experience’ in providing these services. Often the bus drivers provide parents with information and advice on the obstacles they might meet or risks they run, and there are specialized guides to help with border crossings. The surveyed children who had ultimately been trafficked into sexual exploitation said that the transporters encouraged them and told them that everything would be fine. Girls who are trafficked into prostitution are often ‘received’ by host families – either in Romania or after they arrive in the destination country – who sell them for the first time and ‘break them in’. Bodyguards are used to keep the girls in check.

### Girls from Romania

The host family usually consists of a man and a woman with children, so that the girls do not become too suspicious. The selection process occurs here. The host family is the link with owners/pimps and arranges for various owners and pimps to come to select a girl. The girl is invited to have coffee with the family and ‘a friend’ at the house. Owners and pimps speak languages other than Romanian when they come to the host family. If the owner or pimp decides to purchase the girl, the host family tells the girl to go with him. It is only when they reach the workplace, generally a bar, that the girl realizes what her ‘job’ will be. She has to dance, drink and be available for selection by clients to whom she has to provide ‘services’. The girls are sold for between \$300 and \$1,500. Their identity papers remain with those who buy them. At the same time, the girls are reminded they have debts to the transporter. Even if they manage to pay those debts, they may be sold over and over again, the cycle of abuse and exploitation continuing.

- When children are trafficked from Ukraine, it is generally an acquaintance of a family member who arranges travel, although there are also service-providers who may offer a whole ‘package’ of services including organizing transport, providing a job and obtaining documents, providing credit or advance of pay to

the parents, or even arranging marriage or residency. Sometimes a young man will accompany the children (and sometimes the recruiter too) to the border and arrange protection as the child crosses the border. He may pay someone else to help the child pass through passport control. Children generally were introduced to these service-providers by people they knew. The children also report that they rarely had documents when they crossed the border but that they saw money change hands to allow them to cross.





## Chapter 4:

# The people who constitute “demand”

The words ‘trafficking’ and ‘demand’ put into any Internet search engine will throw up hundreds of web pages and sites where these two concepts appear together. Ninety-nine per cent of these, however, will not go beyond the statement that, if trafficking is to be effectively tackled, it is important to “address demand”.

Only a dozen of the search results will lead to attempts to explore what this means. What is ‘demand’, who generates ‘demand’ and is trafficking ‘demand-driven’? There are a number of theories on this and they are all vastly different. Sometimes they are contradictory. Additionally, since most of the research done to date is based on the body of evidence relating to the trafficking of women (particularly into the sex industry) – an established field of study where more data is available – there are also clear gaps in the theories relating to the trafficking of children specifically. Work on this is beginning but at this time the conflicting commentaries on ‘demand’ and the likelihood that research to date is partial mean that there can be no definitive wisdom on demand and all that it entails.

It is worth a brief look at some of the research that has been done, however, if only to underscore the complexity of the topic.<sup>34</sup>

### 4.1 Does trafficking happen because there is demand?

One point that is particularly contentious is whether trafficking happens in a simple supply-demand equation, where the supply of willing workers (including children) in less wealthy countries or regions satisfies a demand for cheap and malleable labour in relatively or absolutely wealthier countries or regions.

This is the very simple model that is often quoted when commentators say that, to combat trafficking, it is important to “address both the demand and supply sides of the equation”. To some extent this is true – as this report clearly shows, social

<sup>34</sup> In an otherwise overly simplified analysis, Frederick rightly underscores the dangers of acting to ‘reduce demand’ where that notion is not understood: “A decade ago in South Asia, organizations and governments leaped into action on the prevention of trafficking, with virtually no knowledge of how traffickers operate. This resulted in years of ineffective awareness campaigns and border ‘interceptions’ that have severely abused women’s rights of migration...For those who work ‘on the ground’ to end trafficking, the greatest concern about the growing interest in the demand side is that aggressive tactics of NGOs and governments will push the ‘enemy’ farther out of reach, as appears to have happened on the supply side. Action is needed, but let it be based on intelligence and careful strategic planning”. Frederick, J: “On addressing the demand side of trafficking” in *GRC*, unspecified, 17 July 2003), p. 4.

development initiatives that help people to earn a decent living, feed and clothe their families, send their children to school and have hope for the future at home, are undoubtedly going to reduce the likelihood that people will want to move, send their children away or take up offers that lead them into exploitation. In short, it is not difficult to see how the 'supply' of people vulnerable to trafficking might be effectively reduced.

However, appropriating this economic analogy falls down in the face of research that shows that people seek to migrate (legally and illegally, where they are vulnerable to trafficking) even when they do not have a job to go to. Schloenhardt,<sup>35</sup> for example, quotes a number of studies that show that many migrants are "willing to emigrate at all costs and take any risk to leave poverty, unemployment or persecution in the sending country" even where they have no prospect of a job in the receiving country, and that this is even more likely where the would-be migrant has contact with relatives or friends in ethnic communities in that country. In such situations, 'demand' as it is generally understood is not a known element for the would-be migrant and the 'pull' factors (hope of fitting into an established community or finding help on arrival) are less important than the 'push' factors. Some commentators suggest, as a result, that trafficking can also be 'supply-driven'.

There are other areas where 'demand' could be said not to exist for the end-consumer, that is that there is no clear 'consumer demand'. Anderson and O'Connell Davidson's research among clients of brothels in Denmark, for example, shows that the men had a clear preference for local prostitutes who spoke the same language as they did and that they placed local workers at the top of the 'prostitution hierarchy'.<sup>36</sup> Migrant prostitutes considered to have been forced into prostitution, either by a third party or by their own need to survive, were seen as less attractive as the local women the men imagined to have entered sex work voluntarily. Indeed, in almost every country study there will be examples of women (and children) who exited prostitution because the client went to the police or helped them to escape. In short, the 'demand' for migrant women in prostitution comes not from the clients but from the brothel owners and pimps who make a profit from the women's exploitation. As Anderson and O'Connell Davidson point out: "In theory, demand for any given commercial sexual service can just as well be met by someone working independently in good conditions as by someone subject to abusive and slavery-like practices". In such a scenario, of course, there would be no profit for the middle-man/exploiter. In the absence of 'consumer demand', there-

<sup>35</sup> *Organized crime and the business of migrant trafficking, op.cit.*, p. 18. Schloenhardt notes that, in these cases, the 'demand' comes in fact from the 'supply'-side actor, to the extent that the would-be migrant may 'demand' help to migrate and may in this way end up 'acquiring the services' of a trafficker.

<sup>36</sup> Anderson, B & O'Connell Davidson, J: *Is trafficking in human beings demand-driven?* (IOM, Geneva, 2003), p.22. Although this preliminary study looks only at trafficking into prostitution and domestic work, it challenges a number of widely cited common wisdoms and is an important contribution to any exploration of demand.

fore, it is the exploiter who generates the ‘pull’ equated with demand, in the form of a desire to profit by exploiting an opportunity. This is what economists call ‘derived demand’ and it can operate where there is no obvious consumer.

The same is palpably true of the case of children trafficked into begging, a phenomenon that has been little studied. It seems patently clear that, in almost all receiving countries, there is absolutely no demand from end-consumers for children who beg. Far from it. It is entirely unlikely that people in Western European countries, for example, ‘demand’ that a clearly distressed child or family approach them to ask for money, or that a poor, disabled or otherwise needy person sits on a street corner hoping to receive a few coins. What seems to be at play here is not supply and demand as it is generally understood (that is, to constitute supply of a product and demand by a consumer of that product) but ‘derived demand’ – exploitation of an opportunity. This is based on the notion that the social and moral context in a given country or of a particular group of consumers makes it likely that there are profits to be made. For example, the ‘handler’ of a child forced to beg in a western city profits from the presumption that people eating in a fast-food restaurant (often portrayed as over-indulgent, conspicuous consumption) will feel morally and socially compelled to give money to a clearly under-nourished child who approaches their table.<sup>37</sup>

## 4.2 When is there specific demand for trafficked children?

In relation to the trafficking of children, there are some specific sectors in which trafficked children are the desired ‘product’ (to borrow Bales’ business-related terminology). In these cases there is clear ‘consumer demand’.

Manufacturers of goods that require small, nimble fingers, for example, may demand children only and, if they believe that they will be more able to manipulate children who are away from their families and in a vulnerable, irregular situation, may stipulate that a trafficked child, as opposed to a local child, is preferable.

Employers seeking a child for domestic labour in their homes and who wish the child to be isolated from all outside contact (reinforced, for example, by the inability to speak the local language) may ask a trafficker to find them a child from another region or even country. In some instances there may even be a preference:

<sup>37</sup> Strangely, these two examples do not necessarily negate research analysing trafficking according to business models. Bales, for example, considers that trafficking occurs where “there exists in the destination country an economic context in which enslaved workers can be exploited and a social context that allows treating human beings in this way”. By “in this way” he means abusively, but clearly, as in the case of the child sent out to beg, “in this way” might also refer to a social context in which a disadvantaged child is treated with sympathy and generosity. His subsequent examination of ‘the worldview of consumers’ could also be expanded to take this into account. Bales, K: *Understanding the demand behind human trafficking*, [working paper], (Free the Slaves, US, 2004).

children from South Asia, for example, are often sought by families in the Middle East who intend to recruit a child into domestic labour because they are seen as respectful and pliable. And there are historical links between some countries that send children and others that receive them, as the oft-quoted case of children from South Asia trafficked to the Gulf States as camel jockeys.

Despite common wisdoms, there is probably not a real ‘market’ for children in prostitution. Adolescent girls trafficked into prostitution will most likely end up exploited alongside adult prostitutes and be seen essentially as ‘young adults’, catering to the same client base as adult sex workers but satisfying social perceptions of youth and beauty.<sup>38</sup> In societies where machismo is a powerful element, men may be expected to ‘prove their manhood’ and in such cases they may seek to show that they can ‘attract’ young women. Pimps and brothel owners will jump on this opportunity to raise the price of younger women and thus seek to recruit adolescent girls.

As O’Connell Davidson points out,<sup>39</sup> there is little evidence on the commercial sexual exploitation of pre-adolescent children and, although there have been highly publicized cases of paedophile rings in which very young (pre-pubertal) children may have been moved across borders, in general the available research on trafficking and prostitution suggests that such cases are rare. This explains why most of the children exploited in commercial sex are teenagers but it also explains why, where a specific demand for pre-teen or early-teenaged children does exist, the market is highly specialized and so prices, and hence profits to be made, are high.

These three examples beg the question of where the trafficking process ends. Does it end when the child is ‘delivered’ to the ‘end-user’ (in these cases the factory owner, head of the household and child sex abuser), in which case this ‘consumer’ is also a ‘trafficker’? Or does it end when the child is in the hands of the person who will make a profit from handing over the child to the end-user (that is, the person who ‘supplies’ the child to the factory owner or head of household, or the brothel or pimp who provides the child to the abuser), in which case the end-user is not seen as a trafficker but rather an exploiter or abuser? Different legal regimes answer this question differently, as do most commentators, and researching the issue further and recommending an enforceable answer would be a useful initiative.

Clearly, also, there are many different forms and levels of ‘demand’. It is clear that the nature and functioning of demand differs depending on the sector in which the child is exploited. In the case of paedophile demand for young children for sex, for example, there is clearly ‘consumer (or ‘primary’) demand’. This is also true of

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<sup>38</sup> “When such clients pick out an under-age prostitute, it is generally on the basis of her/his looks, working style, and so on, not simply because s/he is an adolescent”, *Review of evidence and debates on the demand side of trafficking, op.cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

employers who specifically seek out small children to do work that requires nimble fingers or small stature and who may prefer a ‘foreign’ child because s/he is easier to control. Where consumer demand is not at play, then there may be ‘derived demand’ generated by those seeking to make a profit from the trafficked child, and in some cases there may be no evident demand at all but rather supply-driven trafficking and exploitation (sometimes called ‘latent demand’).<sup>40</sup> Until all these possibilities are more thoroughly researched and mapped out, it is extremely difficult to contemplate ‘addressing demand’ appropriately.

## 4.2 Exploiters and their practices

The rapid assessment surveys, as might be imagined, do not provide detailed pictures of the people who exploited the children. This is not only because of the nature of their actions but also because they were generally located in a third country to which the child had been trafficked. However, the children gave testimony of the nature of their exploitation and the sectors in which they had been exploited.

- In Albania, children between the ages of six and 11 were exploited exclusively in begging. There was a strong correlation between this and their age and ethnic background; most of the children – including those trafficked internally – were Roma or Gypsy. They ended up begging or selling things on the streets of Greece, usually handkerchiefs or flowers. Some children were also involved in theft, and a smaller group with drugs. In these cases, the exploiter was their ‘handler’. Although only 17 per cent of the children, all girls, said they had been forced to provide sexual services, it is clear that some children were reluctant to disclose their involvement in prostitution in Italy, Greece or Belgium. Other children were involved in agriculture, as waiters, in housework or in other street-based activities such as washing cars. Their exploiters would be their employers, the heads of households for those in domestic labour, or ‘handlers’ who controlled them on the streets. The profits of the children’s labour was entirely in the hands of the exploiters and most children never received the money they had been promised. The children worked long hours and the hours of sleep they were allowed was strictly controlled. Children used as drug couriers were sometimes mistreated and abused, for example when their exploiters tested drugs on them.
- In Moldova, the children were put to work in agriculture, as waitresses and selling goods on the streets. The ‘entertainment’ sector, often masking prostitution, and commercial sex also figured among the destinations of about one-third of the children surveyed. Girls exploited in bars, brothels and saunas worked alongside adult prostitutes. One in six of the children surveyed was forced into begging and a small number of children were obliged to sell drugs. This variety of

<sup>40</sup> Kane, D and Kane, J: *Trafficking demand matrix*, (Darwin, 2004), Unpublished working paper.

activities indicates that owners of 'entertainment' establishments and employers in the agriculture sector employ child labour but that there are also 'handlers' who supervise the children on the streets, including drug suppliers and pimps. The children trafficked for begging were always supervised by older people who begged as well. Often the pimps persuaded the girls to take drugs, use alcohol and to smoke. The girls became used to this and, dependent on them, were obliged to work to be able to acquire them. The same methods were used to keep boys in begging. The exploiters physically abused the children, including sexually, and kept them poorly fed. Beating, rape and starvation were used as 'educational demonstrations' to keep the children under control. In the majority of cases, the exploiters held the children's documents and kept them in fear of disclosure.

### A former pimp, from Moldova

This man is 28 years old, single and lives and works in Chisinau. He completed higher education. Having been convicted of pimping and serving his time, he is now free. He said: "I have been trafficking girls since 1997, in collaboration with a tourist firm in Chisinau. For one girl I earn about \$250. If she is a minor, I arrange her documents through a well-known notary in Chisinau. If she is from the village, I pay less for the documents. I do not have too much trouble with the visas because I have acquaintances in the embassies. They need to eat too. If all the documents are fine, there is no problem crossing the border. I call the border guard I know and at the indicated time he waits at the border checkpoint. I choose the girls with no problems. In each village there are naive girls from difficult families. So, for example, in these places I go to discos and the boys show me who from the village had sex for an ice-cream – such a girl will give sex at any time. Then I get to meet these girls, take them to the bar, for a ride in the car and often have sex with them. I work each piece of 'merchandise: I analyse her and prime her until she trusts me. Then I make her an offer to work as a prostitute. Most of them are ready to accept this for money abroad instead of doing it for free in the village. I set a time when I shall meet her and take her to my apartment. I also work through newspapers. I place a simple ad: 'Girls, job' (Russian) and my mobile number. When they call I tell them up front that I send prostitutes to work, and I start to prepare those who accept ready for their departure. I also have acquaintances in villages and towns who help me. They find the 'merchandise'; I come with the documents and take her. I can also sell her on the way to Chisinau even without documents, but if I see that she is 'skilled' I take care of her personally and sell her at a better price."

- The exploiters of the Romanian children include night-club owners in Austria, Greece, Italy and Spain, and the ‘handlers’ of children trafficked for begging in Austria, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Spain. Romanian girls trafficked into prostitution might find themselves working for the owner of a brothel or more often a bar, night-club, massage parlour or disco, or for a pimp. Children were also exploited in agriculture or domestic labour, as waiters or in street-based activities such as fortune-telling or selling small items. Some children were made to beg or steal, although few children would admit this, since their ‘handlers’ had trained them to say they begged, rather than stole. The children worked without time off, were deprived of freedom and kept under constant supervision. In some cases, they were forced to sleep where they begged. The children were also poorly fed, often only as a reward for ‘efficiency’ and food was often withheld as a punishment if they did not earn enough money for the exploiter. The girls exploited in commercial sex received no health care or protection against STDs, although they said that sometimes the clients used condoms on their own initiative. The girls were physically abused and sometimes severely beaten for refusing clients.

### Two children from Romania

A girl from Pitesti told her story: “In November 2001, when I was 17, I was offered a job as a chambermaid in a Serbian hotel. I crossed the border at night, by foot, with two other people. These people sold me for US\$1,000. I was hired out in a bar, where I was forced to prostitute.”

A boy from Bucharest told of his exploitation: “When I went to Germany with my parents and my brothers, we worked in agriculture, picking fruit. We worked from eight in the morning to six at night, and then we ate, washed and fell asleep in a minute. There were many children there who worked with their families.”

- The children from Ukraine, like the children from the other countries surveyed, generally did not end up doing the work they had been told to expect. They, too, were mostly controlled by ‘handlers’ in street vending and begging, or exploited in agriculture, waitressing or domestic labour, where their exploiters were the employers. Girls were also exploited in prostitution. The children received no payment and were told this was being used to pay off their debts; occasionally they were ‘paid’ in alcohol, drugs or tobacco. The children worked long days and frequently nights, were deprived of freedom of movement and of contact with others. They were under constant surveillance, living and working only with other children. The exploiters frequently punished them, threatened to hand them over to the police and said they would harm their families. Those children who had been trafficked with their parents were generally separated from them. Girls were raped and children of both sexes were beaten and shown pictures of



other children who had been beaten as a warning. Often the children did not know where they were living or indeed which country they were in. When the children received food or clothes to keep them happy – often better than they had had at home, they reported – they generally had to pay for them in terms of an increase in their debt. If the child fell sick or was not able to work, the exploiter would send them back.

### Oleksander, from Ukraine

Oleksander, 17 years old, was by no means one of those ‘unmanageable teenagers’. He got good grades at school, attended a dance studio, where he had made strides in modern ballroom dancing, won prizes and still had time to work in the market. In short, he was a rather self-reliant boy. It should be mentioned that Oleksander was very handsome and had a good figure. It was impossible not to notice it. It may have been this, and his dancing talent, that first brought him to the attention of kidnappers. The initiator of Oleksander’s trafficking was one Sashko. Oleksander did not know him well; they had met at a striptease show in a local club. Sashko had seen Oleksander and suggested he could find work and earn good money. Oleksander had already discussed the possibility of working overseas with his mother and they had decided he should not leave, so Oleksander turned down Sashko’s offer. When he would not go willingly, Oleksander was kidnapped and sold. Naturally, no agreements were signed. The boy was plied with alcohol until he was drunk and then abducted and transported by car. There were three others in the car, including the driver, so he was unable to resist. His mother, of course, knew nothing of what had happened and lived in fear. Oleksander was threatened from the beginning. He was not beaten up because of the risk of ‘spoiling the goods’. He was shown pictures of people who had disobeyed and was told that he would suffer the same fate. This was enough to force Oleksander to work in a striptease bar on the outskirts of Moscow. When Oleksander was eventually able to return home (it is not known exactly how he managed to exit his exploitation), none of his friends or acquaintances knew about what had happened to him, so their attitude to him did not change. His mother did know, however, and this is clear in the way she behaves. She no longer allows him to go out; she is very nervous and cries a lot. Both she and Oleksander are receiving counselling and support to help them through the results of his trafficking.

## Chapter 5:

### Anti-traffickers at work

This section summarizes the major initiatives identified by researchers during the rapid assessment surveys in the four countries surveyed. It is not exhaustive but it does give a general overview of the types of frameworks and programmes that are in place and, importantly, it allows some idea of important gaps that need to be filled.

#### 5.1 Some obvious gaps

##### 5.1.1 Empirical, child-focused research

One clear area that needs to be addressed with some urgency – not only in this subregion but more globally – is updated, substantive empirical research on the nature of trafficking as it exists today. Programming has undoubtedly been hindered in recent years by the existence of a large body of ‘common wisdom’ that was useful as a kick-start to action at a time when anecdotal reports and incomplete data informed most commentary and planning. This is particularly true of child trafficking, where pronouncements, policies and programmes still suffer from being based on what is known about trafficking in adults (mostly of women into the sex sector) and where, as the preceding chapter shows, there is an urgent need for more differentiated, child-focused data collection and analysis.

In particular, it is important that data collected by national statistics offices and international agencies is disaggregated by age not only according to national definitions of what constitutes a ‘child’ but also according to international definitions. It would be useful, for example, if data could be collected and sorted in such a way that agencies such as ILO-IPEC were able to clearly analyse data in accordance with core conventions and action frameworks. For example, all data needs to allow for analysis relating to people below the age of 18, adopted in international law as the age at which childhood ends. This would, for example, allow accurate analysis of information relating to the worst forms of child labour (including trafficking) and in relation to rights specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Data should also be sorted to allow clear insight into the child labour situation in a given country, and should be able to be sorted according to minimum working age as well as nationally set limits relating to majority, light work, compulsory education, sexual consent etc. For this, data would need to be disaggregated by one-year steps between the ages of 11 and 16. In short, data collection and sorting in one-year steps rather than arbitrary and variable age-range groupings would greatly facilitate analysis.

### 5.1.2 Topical assessment of the impact of policy and programming

A second area that must be addressed is the impact of programming and its measurement. As the analysis in the previous chapter suggests, awareness raising and education of men who visit prostitutes, for example, is unlikely to lower demand for under-age prostitutes if, in fact, they are not the people generating that demand. And if, indeed, the demand is in fact generated by the pimps and brothel owners who exploit minors in prostitution because this keeps their costs low and increases their profit margins, then tougher laws and more rigorous law enforcement are what is needed, not awareness-raising and educational programming that is unlikely to have any impact. In short, as more detailed and focused research and analysis become available, the selection of programming options should be revisited to see which programmes are most likely to succeed in the light of more refined knowledge.

This is also true of the policy and frameworks put in place by governments and regional bodies. Given the lead-in time necessary to formulate, adopt and then implement these tools, it is even more important that decision-making and implementing arms of government should keep abreast of new knowledge and developments. This is not to say that existing global frameworks are not adequate – the several international instruments relating to child labour, child rights and human trafficking, for example, allow considerable scope for the adoption, implementation or revision of national and regional frameworks – but that it is important to regularly review national responses to international agreements in the light of new knowledge and progress.<sup>41</sup>

### 5.1.3 Cooperation with and from ‘receiving’ countries

What is clear is that governments in both ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ countries need to engage together in anti-trafficking work. The same is true of authorities within a country where some cities or areas are known to be ‘sending areas’ and others ‘receiving areas’. It is also important to note that much of the criminal activity involved in trafficking, as well as the construction or reinforcement of social norms that allow exploiters to flourish, takes place in the receiving countries. Western European governments have taken a number of measures aimed at combating trafficking, including in concert with other EU member states and in cooperation with countries in the wider Europe, but these have generally been aimed at cutting off

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<sup>41</sup> For example, a provocative study carried out in Canada has suggested that improved law enforcement might, in certain circumstances, increase the numbers of children trafficked. See: S.E.Dessy & S. Pallage: *The economics of child trafficking*, (CIRPEE and Departments of Economics of Laval and Quebec Universities, Canada, August 2003), p. 12. Given that trafficking research is still relatively new and new theories and knowledge continue to appear, it is important to remain abreast of emerging knowledge.

the 'supply' of people, intervening at borders or identifying victims once they have arrived. There is a desperately urgent need for governments in receiving countries to look dispassionately at the social and labour contexts in their countries that allow exploiters to flourish, and to act against criminal groups and individuals in their midst. It is startling, for example, that in every capital city in Europe children (and often a whole family) are visibly exploited in begging – and that their 'handlers' are often standing nearby and identifiable – but that law enforcement rarely intervenes. What is clear is that, if they are to address trafficking (and indeed illegal migration and people smuggling) effectively, governments need to take a multi-faceted approach that includes social development, crime and law enforcement, dealing with corruption at all levels and monitoring social norms and sending out signals that make it clear that trafficking and exploitation are not acceptable in any circumstances.

#### 5.1.4 Development and support to organizations to focus on child trafficking

Given the very short history of civil society involvement in anti-trafficking actions in this subregion, there is a need for continuing capacity building, information exchange and networking to reinforce NGO actions. In particular, there is an urgent need for NGOs to review programmes and projects that are predicated on experience in working to combat trafficking against women, to ensure that those actions are grounded in the very different realities of child trafficking. Of course experience in programmes designed to tackle trafficking of women are a good foundation for anti-child-trafficking actions, but they are not a sufficient base and more needs to be done in research, programme design and implementation to target actions to child trafficking specifically.

#### 5.1.5 Reviewing frameworks and practices in rehabilitation and reintegration

The need to re-orient programming so that it takes into account the very specific nature of child trafficking and its impact on children is also clear in actions designed to support and reintegrate children who have been trafficked. Efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate children are hampered by the fact that they are planned and implemented, throughout the region, in the framework of national standards and practices devised to support children in difficult circumstances in general, and are not tailored to the very special needs of child trafficking victims. These needs are multi-faceted and might include, for example, addressing the physical and psychological impacts of violence and abuse, the emotional trauma of separation and isolation, the repercussions of sequestration, and control –including the forced consumption of drugs and alcohol, as well as practical areas relating to accommodation, education, subsistence, basic provisions and family contact. There is a need to review frameworks, standards and practices relating to the rehabilitation and

reintegration of children who have been trafficked, therefore, and for attention to be paid to setting up multi-disciplinary and coordinated response mechanisms.

Although much remains to be done, governments and organizations in the four countries surveyed have all taken actions to begin to combat trafficking in human beings generally and, in some cases, in children particularly.

## 5.2 Governments in action

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### 5.2.1 Albania

In Albania, the government has ratified all major international conventions that can be brought to bear in the case of child trafficking, including the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and most recently the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (commonly known as the Palermo Protocol). Albania has adopted both the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 1996, and its adjunct, the Yokohama Global Commitment, 2001. On a regional basis, it is a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights, Recommendation (2000) 11 against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation and Recommendation (2001) 16 concerning the protection of children against sexual exploitation. In 2001, Albania was present at the Budapest Preparatory Conference to the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and adopted the European Commitment and Plan of Action formulated at that meeting.<sup>42</sup>

These international and regional frameworks are translated into Albanian law in particular through the Albanian Constitution of 1998, which provides an overarching legal framework for child protection by the state and recognizes the right to non-discrimination, to protection from violence, maltreatment, exploitation and child labour. The Civil Code, Labour Code and Penal Code all contain provisions that empower law enforcement to act in the case of child abuse and exploitation, and by guaranteeing minors special protection in the areas of life, health, freedom, sexual integrity and moral dignity, also cover trafficking. The survey research notes that the Penal Code does not at this time satisfactorily cover victim/witness protection and that this needs to be addressed.

As a member of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe Initiative against Organized Crime, the Albanian Government has put trafficking high on the

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<sup>42</sup> Found at: [www.csecworldcongress.org](http://www.csecworldcongress.org)

agenda. Raising awareness of trafficking is included in the National Strategy for Children (2001-2005), which also includes the setting-up of municipal and communal structures for the treatment of children in need and at risk; the improvement of legislation concerning children; and includes coordinating actions of central and local governments, NGOs and international organizations for the prevention of and the fight against trafficking. In December 2001, the Albanian Government adopted a National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking. This includes a National Plan of Action listing concrete actions against trafficking and indicating the institutions responsible for them.

Albanian Government commitment to translating the strategy into specific actions resulted in a National Conference on Combating Child Trafficking in Albania, supported by IPEC and UNICEF, in November 2001. This produced recommendations for implementing the National Strategy and led to the creation of a National Focal Point Committee on child trafficking in Albania. A Strategy for the Development of Social Services (March 2003) and Strategy for Employment and Vocational Training (February 2003) outline the most important actions needed to improve the country's economic and social conditions and mitigate the poverty and unemployment that underpin trafficking.

The various policies and laws are implemented through a number of state structures: An Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Fight against Trafficking of Human Beings began functioning in January 2002. The Minister of State, under the auspices of the Prime Minister, heads this committee and is the national coordinator for anti-trafficking. An anti-trafficking office has been established in the Ministry of Public Order, including a unit relating to the trafficking of children. Specialized anti-trafficking units have also been set up in 12 regional police departments, including special premises for the treatment of victims returned from trafficking. Meanwhile, the Albanian Ministry of Public Order has signed cooperation agreements with IOM and UNHCR which provide obligatory exchange of information, protection of police forces, referral of trafficking cases, and assistance for trafficking victims. A National Steering Committee on Child Labour (covering child trafficking as one of the worst forms of child labour) was established in November 2001 and the Child Labour Unit within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs acts as its secretariat. The directorate of social services within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs addresses issues of child trafficking and supervises a residential receiving centre in Linza for women and children returned from trafficking. The State Committee for Equal Opportunities (formerly the Committee for Women and Family) includes a unit responsible for implementing the strategy for children.

Albanian authorities also cooperate with local and international NGOs on a number of anti-trafficking issues as well as with IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO-IPEC, and the US, British and Dutch Embassies. The key actors in South Eastern Europe, members of the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, are coordinating their activities to effectively tackle the issue and Albanian Government

efforts are to be seen within this broader undertaking. The establishment of the Task Force in June 2000, making trafficking one of the priorities within the OSCE and the Stability Pact, was of great importance. One of the main objectives of the Task Force is to enhance and further strengthen regional cooperation among the various anti-trafficking actors in the Balkan region and beyond, among international organizations active in the region, and among governments of the region. A Regional International Centre for the Fight against Illegal Trafficking was set up in Vlora in October 2001, with four participating countries: Germany, Italy, Greece and Albania. This centre has assumed a major role in information about problems of trafficking, including child trafficking, arms and drugs.

### 5.2.2 Moldova

Moldova has been a member of the United Nations since 1992 and has ratified most UN conventions. Since 1995, Moldova has also been a member state of the Council of Europe and has similarly adopted Council of Europe Recommendations and Conventions. The Moldovan Constitution states that: “the exploitation of minors, their involvement in activities harmful for their health, morality or which are dangerous for their lives and normal development are prohibited”. It also recognizes the right of children to protection from violence, and their right to be helped socially. A new Penal Code and Procedure that came into force in June 2003 is in accordance with the Palermo Protocol. It provides for legal assistance to victims and guarantees the anonymity of witnesses. The Penal Code lays down that human trafficking is a criminal offence. Moreover, the Penal Code (Art. 207) provides that for actions such as taking a child out of the country based on false documents or using other illegal means, as well as abandoning children abroad for reasons other than those indicated in Art. 206, the offenders shall be punished with imprisonment for a period of seven to 12 years. The articles concerning child trafficking establish a significant legal framework for combating trafficking, and provide the investigator with an effective basis for successful accomplishment of the investigation. The Government of Moldova has also attempted to address the situation in which a child is forced by economic or family issues to go abroad, through a Law on Protection of Children in Difficult Circumstances. This law is still under discussion in the Parliament. On passing of the law, local authorities will have a social welfare officer dedicated to helping survivors of trafficking.

The survey suggested that additional provisions regarding victims, cause of death, damage, and affiliation to a criminal organization offer feasible opportunities for the long-term elimination of traffickers. The legal system of Moldova provides certain measures and norms for protecting victims' rights to dignity, security and private life. However, these regulations are not broad enough. Victims are sometimes threatened or bribed into changing their testimonies. In particular, there is a need for a more sophisticated system of consecutive and efficient protection measures at different stages of the process, in order to ensure the right of the

accused to a full defence and to a fair trial on one hand, and the rights of the victim on the other hand.

There is no specialized institution in Moldova responsible solely for fighting trafficking in children. Rather child trafficking is dealt with by structures concerned with the fight against human trafficking in general. A section for fighting human trafficking and offences committed by foreign citizens (with a staff of six people) was created within the Ministry of the Interior in May 2000. In 2002, as a result of the growth of the phenomenon, the section was transformed into a Specialized Directorate for Fighting Human Trafficking with three sections: south, north and centre, aimed at operational coverage of the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. In November 2001, in response to the obligations assumed within the Stability Pact, the government approved the nominal composition of a National Committee for fighting against trafficking in persons. The National Committee comprises: the Ministry of the Interior, the State Service for Migration, the Office of Prosecutor General, the General Directorate for Fighting against Organized Crime, the Customs Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The Government of the Republic of Moldova created the State Service for Migration in October 2001 in order to establish evidence on illegal migration over national borders, and to attempt to control and diminish the flow of trafficked people.

A number of international organizations are partners in implementing the National Plan of Action for fighting human trafficking, including UNICEF, UNDP, IOM, OSCE, ILO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the SECI Centre, as well as Moldovan NGOs active in the field of fighting human trafficking.

The survey concluded that a review of relevant reports and materials indicates that legislation for fighting and preventing human trafficking in Moldova is not adequately enforced. There are a number of factors contributing to this: insufficient activity of police bodies in identifying trafficking cases and traffickers, explained by lack of experience in the field and lack of specialized structures of police bodies in the territory; and unsatisfactory delivery by central public administration bodies and local public authorities of economic and social measures that would contribute to removing the causes and conditions that favour human trafficking.

In accordance with the Strategy of Labour Force Employment in Moldova, the following actions are foreseen for 2002-2008: supporting women's integration into active life; combating discrimination between men and women, between young people and adults; preventing gender discrimination in the labour market; and equal opportunity policy strengthening. Since many trafficking victims are girls on the threshold of womanhood, these actions may have some impact on their ability to find work. The Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection approved a 2003 Action Plan on labour force employment, according



to which measures to increase the participation of women, young people, disabled people in entrepreneurship and crafting activities were foreseen.

### 5.2.3 Romania

Romania, too, has ratified major international instruments dealing with the exploitation and trafficking of children, including the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour convention, and has translated these into the national legal framework. The Romanian National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings consists of three laws: the Law on preventing and combating trafficking in persons No. 678/2001, the National Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted through Government Decision No. 121/2001; and Government Ordinance No. 112/2001 on punishment for several offences committed outside the country by Romanian citizens or stateless persons with residence in Romania. Among recent progresses in enhancing the capacity of structures to fight crime, especially related to trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, a law dealing with trafficking in human beings was adopted by the Romanian Government. Law 678/2001 on preventing and combating trafficking in persons is in line with European legislation and the Palermo Protocol. Government Decision No. 1216/2001 establishes a framework for coordinating the activities of authorities concerned with trafficking in human beings. In relation to witness protection, Law 678 is considered to include all the necessary elements for actions that protect victims' rights. Another important step was taken in October 2001, when international adoptions were suspended until a new law enters into force.

A National Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted by the Government in 2001. This establishes an institutional framework and lays out the responsibilities of state institutions and partners. The institutions responsible are government agencies, implementing partners include the Stability Pact, OSCE, the Council of Europe, Delegation of the European Commission, the United Nations and other international agencies, and Romanian NGOs. NGOs are considered to play an especially important role in the rehabilitation and socio-professional reintegration of victims. Several steps have been taken in implementing the plan: an Inter-ministerial Working Group for coordinating and evaluating activities for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings was established; and the responsibilities of the General Division for Combating Organized Crime and Antidrug in the field of trafficking in human beings enhanced.

In addition to consolidating the legal framework, the government has also moved to reform law enforcement bodies and institutions so that they can better respond to the new challenges, national and regional, and correspond with their counterparts in the EU. In this regard, the national police and the Romanian border police have acquired new responsibilities that allow them to strengthen and improve their activities at national, regional and international levels.

The Romanian government agency empowered to take action to combat trafficking in human beings is the Ministry of Administration and Interior, through the General Division for Combating Organized Crime and Antidrug, the Customs Police and the General Inspectorate of Police. Prevention of trafficking in human beings is approached, however, at many levels: The Ministry of Administration and Interior carries out prevention activities through the Customs Police: flyers containing a short description of the phenomenon and phone numbers in various countries that trafficking victims can call are distributed at borders. Since 2002, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, in collaboration with IOM, has organized a regional Training of Trainers programme in the field of preventing trafficking in human beings. The teachers attending these training courses become trainers of other teachers in schools. As a result of these actions, in many schools throughout the country children are given information, videotapes and prevention guides on trafficking in human beings. The National Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings stipulates the establishment of nine shelters for the victims of trafficking, but none has been established yet because there are no budgetary allocations for this.

#### 5.2.4 Ukraine

As a signatory to the ILO Worst Forms of Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), Ukraine has committed to taking immediate measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour and to working towards the elimination of all forms of child labour, including trafficking. Ukraine has ratified international and regional instruments related to the rights of the child, including the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), is signatory to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and in 2001 signed its two protocols, including the Palermo Protocol. These have not yet, however, been ratified by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament). Article 52 of the Constitution of Ukraine states that violence towards a child and exploitation of the child are prosecuted under the law. The Constitution also has provisions recognizing the honour and dignity of human beings as the highest social values (Article 3), the protection of motherhood and childhood (Article 51) and public support and upbringing of orphans and children deprived of parental care (Article 52). The improvement of the legislative framework for the protection of children from crime, the implementation of preventive work, obviating situations where children become social orphans, the development of child assistance, the continuity of parental care, improvement of education, training and social protection are an important part of state activities, and are also the work of research institutions and NGOs.

There was no specific criminal legislation relating to human or child trafficking in Ukraine before March 1998, when amendments to the Code on Marriage and Family led to amendments in the Criminal Code to accommodate articles related to penalties for illegal actions in regard to adoption and human trafficking. The

Criminal Code of Ukraine includes provisions relating to liability for crimes against the life and health of children as well as for criminal actions relating to the exploitation of children. Expert commentators have noted that there are shortcomings in the formulation and definitions included in the legislative framework. In particular, they note that it is possible to initiate proceedings relating to illegal contract for transfer of a person only when such transfer has taken place across Ukraine's borders. Important work has been carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science in regard to putting in force legislation ensuring the rights of children in the course of adoption.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has prepared 14 intergovernmental agreements on cooperation against organized crime that regulate, among other things, human trafficking and illegal migration. These include agreements with Turkey, Israel, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, France, Sweden, Romania and Moldova. Actions to combat human trafficking are regulated by interdepartmental agreements. In 1998 and 1999 such agreements were signed with the United Kingdom, Macedonia and the Czech Republic. In 2003, preparations were under way to sign an agreement on cooperation against organized crime and especially human trafficking with Greece. These multilateral and bilateral agreements promote the cooperation of law enforcement bodies in countering human trafficking, especially child trafficking.

The legislative framework of Ukraine comprises not only national laws but also presidential and governmental decrees, ministerial legislative acts and government programmes. A number of these address child protection, social support for children and the special case of children deprived of parental care. Government policy for the prevention of child trafficking is implemented through the adoption of a number of programmes including the programme on crime prevention, the national programme to counter the abuse of drugs and their illegal traffic, and the national AIDS prevention programme. There is keen awareness of the need to take a comprehensive approach to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. Two programmes have already been adopted: to combat human and, in particular, child trafficking (cabinet decree of 25 September 1999, No. 1768) and a comprehensive programme on countering human trafficking (cabinet decree of 5 June 2002). The programmes envisage the introduction of amendments to legislative and regulatory acts in order to put in place a system to prevent human trafficking and, in particular, trafficking in children.

According to Ukrainian legislation, responsibility for implementing social protection and prevention of delinquency among juveniles is assigned to the State Committee for Family and Youth of Ukraine, the Republican Committee for Family and Youth of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the services dealing with issues of juveniles in oblasts, Kiev and Sebastopol cities, district state administrations, the executive committees of cities, city districts, schools of social rehabilitation and vocational schools of social rehabilitation operating under

educational authorities, juvenile socio-medical rehabilitation centres operating under healthcare authorities, shelters for juveniles at the services dealing with juveniles, courts, criminal militia for juvenile affairs in internal affairs bodies, juvenile correction services of internal affairs authorities, and work farms operated by the State Department for serving of punishment.

Not surprisingly, the fragmented nature of these implementing arms does not promote well coordinated action. Additionally, the results of the survey suggest that these provisions need to be amended and supplemented to include into the scope of their functions specific activities aimed at preventing child trafficking, providing assistance to victims, and educational and preventive work in this area.

First steps in the coordination of efforts to prevent child trafficking were made in 1998 by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (ombudsperson). A National Coordination Council on combating trafficking in women and children was established to coordinate the authorities' and institutions' efforts in prevention of human trafficking and development of coordinated state policy in this area. The Council has played an important role, but its impact on the central executive administration is limited by its inadequate status. An Interdepartmental Steering Council on human trafficking, including child trafficking, and a regional permanent commission on coordination of efforts and exchange of information on the prevention of human trafficking, were established to coordinate different ministries and departments (first of all of the executive branch). This commission consists of representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Committee for Family and Youth, State Employment Centre, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Science and other central executive authorities involved in the prevention of human trafficking. The State Committee on Frontier Security of Ukraine is also involved in activities to prevent child trafficking. Since birth certificates giving the right to go to Russia and Moldova do not have a photo to identify the person, the Committee jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs has submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers a proposal to introduce a photo ID to confirm citizenship.

## 5.3 Other initiatives

### 5.3.1 Regional and subregional initiatives

Three of the four countries are members of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and participate in the programmes of the **Stability Pact Trafficking Task Force** (SPTTF), including the Southern European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) that links police forces of the region. In addition, bilateral agreements have been signed on labour migration and on cooperation to protect victims of trafficking.

The Council of Europe and the European Commission are also active in developing anti-trafficking policies and programmes with their member states. As early as 1996, the **European Commission** began developing policies relating to trafficking and, through a number of Joint Actions, sought to encourage cooperation and harmonization of policies and legal frameworks. It also had allocated funding to NGO, local authority and law enforcement actions in the field of trafficking, in particular through the STOP and Daphne programmes. Since 2001, the Commission has shifted its concerns to position trafficking within the broader issues of people smuggling, cross-border crime and illegal migration, as part of its mission to increase security and fight crime in Europe.

The **Council of Europe** has a number of anti-trafficking initiatives and additionally works, with UNICEF, to monitor and support implementation of the Budapest Regional Commitment against Sexual Exploitation of Children (2001), which covers trafficking for both labour and sexual exploitation. The Council's Expert Group created to advise and monitor implementation of the Commitment and also Recommendation (2001) 16 concerning the protection of children against sexual exploitation, is piloting a logframe-based monitoring tool that also is to be used to promote inter-governmental exchange of good practice.

On a regional basis, it is also important to note that the role of Europol was expanded to cover cross-border trafficking and that a number of successful operations have resulted. In 2002, Europol spearheaded a large-scale law enforcement operation against traffickers, code-named 'Leda', which identified 110 suspected traffickers and led to 38 arrests. Romania and Moldova both participated in Operation Leda. Europol has, among its other tasks, to identify the cross-border modus operandi of traffickers and analyse the methods of networks with a view to dismantling them.

**ILO-IPEC's** subregional project of technical assistance against labour and sexual exploitation of children, including trafficking – 'PROTECT CEE' is being implemented in five countries: Albania, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Bulgaria. It is also in action in Kosovo. IPEC's mandate is to provide technical and financial assistance to member states as they implement the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999), No. 182. All five countries have ratified this convention. The PROTECT CEE project runs until 2007 and is funded by the German Government and the US Department of Labour. It combines: action at national levels to ensure that laws and policies relevant to the worst forms of child labour (including trafficking) adequately address the needs of victims; pilot actions and capacity-building activities at field level to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific approaches and to reinforce the capacity of partner institutions; and knowledge-sharing activities at subregional level focusing on good practices in combating child trafficking and other worst forms of child labour.

A Strategic Planning Impact Framework workshop was organized in each country and in Kosovo to provide inputs for drafting or improving policy documents, to

define IPEC's comparative advantage in relation to technical assistance at national level, and to start programming activities. Field activities in progress include awareness-raising initiatives (mainly through youth centres), strengthening the employability of families at risk and former victims, reinforcing child labour monitoring and referral systems, and supporting cooperative actions in the areas of identifying, documenting and sharing good practices.

IPEC has developed good practices in policy development, grassroots surveillance and vertical links to relevant authorities, the use of traditional community media for awareness raising, alternative livelihood generation, and improving services to survivors over the years. A training manual for the psychosocial rehabilitation and occupational integration of child survivors of trafficking<sup>43</sup> was recently developed in South Asia in collaboration with the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, Amsterdam. In South Asia, also, the concept of the 'whole life framework' was developed to ensure that the trafficked or vulnerable child is considered within the continuum of risk/victimization/rescue/reintegration. In the Greater Mekong subregion, a model for linking community-level initiatives with local and national authorities was developed that provides useful lessons for collaboration.

A thematic evaluation of ILO-IPEC programmes to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation was conducted in 2001,<sup>44</sup> and identified programme elements that were worth replicating, those that had potential for development and those that had not been successful. Many of those that have proved successful are incorporated in the Europe project and the lessons learned guide implementation of the project.

Three of the four countries (Albania, Romania and Ukraine) have signed Memoranda of Understanding with ILO-IPEC.

### 5.3.2 Albanian and international organizations

In Albania, a number of organizations run programmes and projects to support children at risk and their families; provide educational opportunities for girls in particular; and organize community mobilization and awareness raising in areas where vulnerability to trafficking is high.

Donor governments and specialized international organizations have supported a wide range of activities to combat child trafficking. A number of programmes in

<sup>43</sup> ILO-IPEC (TICSA): Specialized Training Manual on Psychosocial Counseling for Trafficked Youth - Handling the trauma of sexual exploitation, (ILO-IPEC, Katmandu, 2002)

<sup>44</sup> ILO-IPEC: Going where the children are: An evaluation of ILO-IPEC Programmes in Thailand, Philippines, Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, (ILO-IPEC, Geneva, 2001).

different parts of the country have efficiently tackled issues linked to trafficking, and have shown that success can be achieved only where there are strong links and close coordination among prevention, protection, repatriation and reintegration actions. It is also clear that repatriation is successful only when the child is reintegrated within the family and community and protected from the risk of being re-trafficked. The programmes have proved that the effort to combat child trafficking and abuse needs to be supported by every member of society and by strong cooperation not only within the country, but also among countries that are affected by trafficking.

Preventing trafficking from occurring in the first place is the best way to ensure that the child is protected. A number of 'prevention' projects have been run, addressing the root causes of child trafficking through support to children at risk and their families; providing educational opportunities for girls in particular; and focusing on community mobilization and awareness raising in vulnerable areas. The OSCE has coordinated anti-trafficking activities among the international organizations and has supported local NGOs, including through capacity building.

The NGO **Terre des Hommes** (TDH) implemented a programme named PRAEVE: 'Prevention, Reintegration and Assistance for Child Victims of Exile' together with **Help for Children** (NPF, a local NGO), with the agreement of the Albanian authorities and support from UNICEF Tirana and the OAK Foundation in Geneva. The programme aimed to reduce the risk of relocation by making 3,000 children of the Elbasan and Korça regions aware of the problem and, with the support of schools and parents, to set up a recording and detection system for children at risk, as well as a system of direct intervention for high-risk children. Various activities were planned to meet the objectives of the PRAEVE programme, such as the production and distribution of materials (booklets, posters, videos) to make people more aware of the problem, and the creation of a photo identification file for each child. Teaching materials about school drop-out and the risks of street life were also prepared for teachers.

The **IOM** launched a project called 'Prevention of women and girls' trafficking through awareness raising and institutional capacity building'. This awareness-raising campaign included radio and television spots, public announcements, posters and leaflets, and materials for schools on gender/domestic violence and trafficking.

The **International Social Service** (ISS) works to identify high-risk families with children. ISS offered vocational courses to 50 young people (hairdressing, tailoring, mechanics, electrical services, and plumbing) for five to six months in Tirana.

Projects in the field of protection have included collaboration with legal authorities for law enforcement; the training of social workers; identifying ways to help children with psychosocial needs; physical protection for children at risk through shelter centres; setting up foster families for children at risk; and advocacy to the general prosecutor. There remains a shortage of prevention actions compared to

the size of the problem. **IOM** and the **Legal Clinic for Minors** run training programmes for the judiciary and prosecutors as well as teachers on law enforcement, to help them understand trafficking, prosecute traffickers, de-criminalize victims and help in prevention.

Programmes that help children who have already become victims are also important. The first challenge is to find them. Then their needs have to be identified on an individual basis, and they have to be protected from further abuse and removed from their exploitative situation in a carefully planned and sensitive manner. **ISS Albania**, in collaboration with **ISS Italy**, has a project supporting unaccompanied minors. ISS has experience treating problems related to abandoned unaccompanied children who are exposed to trafficking; from 1992 to the end of 2002, ISS intervened in 4,457 cases. When possible, they facilitate the return of the child and then take measures toward reintegration. **Terre des Hommes** is piloting a repatriation project (RSA Project). Since the beginning of the bilateral partnership between Albania and Greece, with the close cooperation of **Arsis**, a Greek NGO, and with the **Filoxenia Centre of Thessalonica**, some 15 children have been returned to their families in Albania and have now benefited from programmes tailored to their needs. Since 2001, children and families who participate in TDH programmes in Albania are registered and photographed so that they can be more easily traced if they disappear.

Reintegration programmes are at the heart of anti-trafficking strategies because they aim to help the child to rebuild a safer life and are, in this way, effectively also protection. Whenever possible, children who are very young are reintegrated into their families. Successful reintegration schemes are long-term endeavours that require monitoring and regular follow-up of each child after the child has left the programme. Economic reintegration includes financial support to families but should also include help to get the adults into work. The aim is to improve the family context that may underlie the child's vulnerability to trafficking, through actions designed to generate income or prepare adult members of the family to increase income. **IOM** has run two projects: 'Voluntary return and reintegration of illegal migrants and victims of trafficking stranded in Albania' and 'Reintegration assistance to Albanian victims of trafficking through capacity building of national reintegration support network'. A Reintegration Centre was opened in mid-February 2002 to provide temporary protection, medical and psychosocial counselling and return and reintegration assistance to Albanian victims of trafficking. Also, IOM and the **International Catholic Migration Committee (ICMC)** run an 'Inter-Agency Referral System for Return and Reintegration Assistance to Victims of Trafficking' project. ICMC manages a shelter for foreign victims of trafficking who are being helped by IOM to return home. The shelter accepts those who will voluntarily return home, offering medical and social services.

**Help for Children** (NPF), with **UNICEF** support, holds reintegration classes for street children, the majority of whom have been commercially and sexually



exploited in Greece. With ILO-IPEC support, NPF also does capacity building on child labour issues. Already more than 1,000 children have been reintegrated into the regular curriculum in the four original target cities of Tirana, Korça, Elbasan and Berat. In 2002 the programme was extended to Pogradec, Kuçova and Cërrik. This organization is also working on the reintegration of children returning from Greece. The programme includes: assessment of the situation in Greece in cooperation with Greek organizations; monitoring of informal repatriation; reintegration of children into schools; development of a legal model for the protection of trafficked children; and lobbying for children's rights.

**Save the Children** prepared a report on child trafficking in Albania in 2001, providing information on trafficking in young girls for prostitution and, primarily, boys for begging and labour. In 2001, Save the Children helped a national NGO, **The Hearth**, to establish the first shelter for trafficked Albanian girls and women in Vlora. Save the Children also participates in a witness protection task group, which helps women at risk who have given evidence against their traffickers. Save the Children also supports the establishment of youth activity centres in Cërrik and Kuçova. Each centre has a library and sports and musical facilities (table tennis, keep-fit equipment, computer, sound systems and musical instruments). If the centres are shown to make a difference to the lives of young people over the longer term, Save the Children will consider supporting local groups to open centres in other small towns.

An NGO coalition on child trafficking called **BKTF** (se Bashku Kunder Trafikimit te Femijeve – All Together against Trafficking) was set up in 2002, bringing together nine local and international NGOs and UNICEF, ILO-IPEC and IOM as advisors.

### 5.3.3 Moldovan and international organizations

In Moldova, many children are vulnerable to trafficking because they lack information on the risks associated with leaving the country, on methods of recruitment, and on ways and means of travelling abroad legally. In the absence of a state strategy to address this, a number of NGOs run prevention activities.

The **Centre for the Prevention of Trafficking in Women** (CPTW) focuses primary on preventing the trafficking of women from rural areas, as the majority of victims come from the villages. In 2002 CPTW opened its first branch with a telephone helpline in Ungheni county, identified as a cross-border zone with a population at high risk; it is a region of origin and transit for trafficking in children. CPTW campaigns to prevent trafficking in women through the mass media: it produces a monthly information bulletin, a quarterly review *Anti-traffic*, radio spots including advertising for the CPTW helpline, and monthly programmes on TVM called 16-25 Export. In partnership with the Information and Documentation

Centre on women's issues, CPTW produced a booklet, *Trafficking in women. What you should know*, aimed at potential victims of trafficking. Programmes aimed at preventing trafficking in women are also likely to have an impact on adolescent girls.

Since 2001, **IOM** has also been active in raising awareness of the dangers of human trafficking through the mass media. The IOM produced two television spots on trafficking in women that were broadcast at peak hours, 12 editions of *Counter-Traffic*, a programme on national television, weekly radio programmes on national radio and Antenna C, the most popular radio stations in Moldova. A publicity campaign *You are not merchandise* covered the republic and promoted the number of the CPTW helpline. IOM published a leaflet in cartoon form as well, with a typical story of trafficking in women, from recruitment to sexual exploitation in the country of destination. In partnership with the International Centre **La Strada**, IOM also runs an education campaign with seminars, lessons and forums for at-risk groups, professional groups and implementing partners.

With the support of UNICEF, the **Neovita Medical Centre for Young People** was opened in Chisinau, aimed at teenagers and designed to provide medical services to young people, provide information, education and communication activities for young people on health, healthy lifestyle, prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS in the family, legal and psychological consultations.

In general, the Moldova office of **UNICEF** focuses on public childcare system reform, aimed at transforming institutional care into a community-based system. Special attention is placed on family reintegration, education and development of community-based alternatives to ensure appropriate protection and development of the child. UNICEF also supports the development of social work through training for professionals working in the field, as well as university teaching staff. Social Work Resource centres have been established within the universities that offer social work education. UNICEF's work aims to foster greater respect for children's rights in society, communities, schools, kindergartens and families. In 2002, the 'Education for All' National Strategy was developed and approved for five years. This is the result of joint UN advocacy and technical assistance through an inter-sectoral working group led by the Ministry of Education. The Strategy addresses four main priority areas: early childhood development, quality and access to primary education, inclusive education, and non-formal education.

NGOs are less involved in release and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in human beings, as these actions require long-term resources. Since January 2000, **IOM** has provided assistance to NGOs, law enforcement and other bodies in repatriating some 1,000 women, most of them of aged 18-24 and approximately 70 children under 18.

### 5.3.4 Romanian and international organizations

In Romania, NGOs have responded to the increase in trafficking in human beings by developing services for victims. NGOs providing services for victims of violence and abuse are also involved in providing assistance for victims of trafficking, since they have developed the necessary infrastructure and have the specialized staff needed for this work. In parallel with campaigns for raising awareness on child abuse, these NGOs have also developed campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking. Twenty NGOs have been identified as developing projects on trafficking and providing services to the victims of trafficking (counselling, social assistance, psychological counselling). There are few shelters for victims: three in total, of which two are in Bucharest (IOM's shelter and a non-governmental one) and one in Pitesti. A new shelter was due to be opened in Iasi in 2004. Although these NGOs have specialized staff, the large number of victims and their needs call for extended services and increased financial and human resources.

**Salvati Copiii** (Save the Children Romania) has been running its International Cases Programme since 1991 in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the **International Social Service** (ISS) and its branches from other countries. The programme provides social assistance services and monitors the cases of Romanian children at risk of being trafficked, children who are, for one reason or another, separated from their parents, and whose physical and/or mental health is endangered. Save the Children has initiated in partnership with the ISS and the **National Authority for Child Protection and Adoptions** a social approach for children separated from their families who are in a foreign country. In 2002, 161 children were helped in cooperation with ISS branches in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, France, the US, Great Britain, Greece, Canada, Holland, Australia and Israel. Some 116 social inquiries were completed at local level and eight children were repatriated (seven from Italy and one from Greece). Save the Children became a partner in the IOM Anti-Trafficking Regional Programme in May 2002.

**Social Alternatives Iasi** is involved in a number of initiatives: it runs a programme to support trafficking victims, with financial support from IOM's Bucharest office. The aim of this programme is the psychological and social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking from Iasi, Botosani and Vaslui counties who are repatriated by the IOM. The victim assistance programme lasts from three to five months according to the victim's social and psychological needs. It includes legal assistance, psychological counselling, health care services and social assistance. Forty-six people were helped between February 2001 and 2004. The organization also operates the Assistance and Protection Centre for the Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, funded by the IOM and **Secours Catholique/Caritas France**. Social Alternatives runs a transit shelter in Iasi that provides services to victims of trafficking from Iasi, Vaslui, Piatra Neamt, Botosani and Suceava counties for a limited period of time. The shelter can accommodate 10 people and provides social services, psychological and legal counselling.

Seven NGOs from the region work together in the Coalition against trafficking in women and regional awareness raising campaigns funded by USAID/World Learning – GRASP Programme. **Reaching Out Pitesti (RO)** aims to bring all victims of trafficking into safe environments, bring them back as fully functioning members of society, give them a chance to live a normal life and provide community education to prevent trafficking. RO established a shelter providing long-term assistance for victims, including health care services, legal assistance, individual planning for the future, individual and group therapy, life skills, job training, job hunting, school and vocational education, and help with accommodation upon exit.

**Conexiuni Foundation Deva** provides services to victims of trafficking: social assistance, psychological counselling, guidance to health care services for tests and treatment, legal counselling and assistance, and temporary shelter. The Foundation has two apartments to accommodate victims of trafficking. To help young victims of trafficking to find appropriate work, the Foundation signed a protocol with the County Agency for Employment and an agreement with a social service centre where girls are helped and can participate in free training courses.

Since 2001, **Avicenna Association Bacau** has run a social reintegration project for victims of trafficking in women, in partnership with the IOM Bucharest office. The association provides free social, psychological, legal counselling and health care assistance, educational and professional guidance and support in finding a job. Information and prevention campaigns are also carried out in high schools and the local university. The association also has a good working relationship with the media.

**ANMRF Braila** provides social assistance services and financial support to victims of trafficking. People helped are guided to health care services for tests and treatment, and benefit from psychological counselling. The cases are managed in partnership with IOM. **SEF Foundation Iasi** designs an individual social reintegration plan for every victim it helps. The services vary but generally include social assistance, psychological counselling, guidance to health care services for tests and treatment, and legal counselling. SEF Foundation also runs a school and supports professional reintegration for trafficking victims.

**Sinergii Foundation Timisoara** provides victims of trafficking with transit and social assistance. Transit assistance consists of taking the victims from the border or the airport and accompanying them home. Social assistance for victims aims at social and professional reintegration. The victims are also provided with psychological counselling, legal counselling and assistance and are guided to health care services for tests and treatment. **Sinergii Association Medias** has a counselling centre for children and young victims of trafficking. The activities carried out there include school rehabilitation of children and young victims of trafficking and raising public awareness on the phenomenon and its consequences.

**The media** have responded well to the challenge of raising awareness and understanding of trafficking in human beings. Several awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out by the national television and other TV channels and newspapers. There continues, however, to be a problem with newspapers seeking out the sensational, presenting cases of trafficking in human beings in a way that does not help public understanding of the risks and consequences of trafficking. There continues to be much confusion between prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation, where the trafficking victim is portrayed as the guilty party; and between illegal migration and trafficking.

### 5.3.5 Ukrainian and international organizations

A network of NGOs working to support trafficked people has existed in Ukraine since the end of 1990. By the beginning of 2003 it comprised more than 30 organizations.

However, there are few organizations focusing on the prevention of child trafficking in Ukraine. This may be because child trafficking has not been considered as widespread as trafficking in adults, especially trafficking in women. Also child trafficking is less visible, and actions to prevent child trafficking and provide support to victims must be implemented on the basis of a different legislative and regulatory basis and different principles of work than for adults. Simply replicating strategies designed for preventing trafficking of adults is not necessarily effective in preventing child trafficking.

This is the main reason why organizations with enormous experience in the prevention of human trafficking, such as La Strada Ukraine, have begun to develop separate programmes targeting children. **La Strada** has developed a guide for teachers and a video film for children, accompanied by brochures about employment or marriage abroad. 25,000 copies have been distributed to schools. La Strada is lobbying to make information about trafficking a compulsory part of the curriculum. **Winrock International** conducts interactive discussions in schools and orphanages to prevent trafficking and violence. As part of its legal literacy programme, it has published materials on labour law, employment abroad, entrepreneurship, anti-trafficking legislation, laws on domestic violence, and other related topics.

There are also NGOs working in Ukraine that address issues around children's recreation, providing help to orphans and children without parental care. Some 360 organizations are dealing with problems of family, children and women. In working to improve the lives and hopes of vulnerable children and families, these organizations are in fact contributing to reducing the risk that they might succumb to trafficking. However, they do not present their programmes in this light.

Shelter employees are supported by volunteers, mainly students of institutes of higher education who work with children and their families, and by religious

organizations, charities, funds and individuals. This work is complicated because there is an inappropriate legislative framework for providing charity aid and voluntary services.

Clearly there is an urgent need for NGOs in Ukraine to develop child-focused anti-trafficking programmes, but also for organizations elsewhere in the subregion to share their experience and to contribute to capacity building and potentially even creation of new anti-trafficking organizations and initiatives.



## Chapter 6:

### Conclusion: the next steps

The four rapid assessment surveys all contain recommendations on what should happen next in each country. These are summarized below. A number of over-arching needs have emerged from the exercise also, however, some of which are outlined in Section 5.1 above. These relate to the need for:

#### **Empirical, child-focused research**

Some areas that might profitably be looked at again and in more detail (as understanding of trafficking grows and its complexities become more evident) include:

- the relationship between legal migration and irregular migration and in particular the impact on irregular migration of government policy;
- the true form and nature of ‘demand’ in relation to child trafficking specifically;
- ways of making trafficking less profitable and in particular the role of governments and law enforcement in identifying and confiscating the profits of trafficking and in sanctioning traffickers.

#### **Topical assessment of the impact of policy and programming**

This might include, for example:

- Assessing the impact of work permits that ‘tie’ a migrant employee to a particular employer;
- Exploring and expanding the role of employers and workers as well as labour standards in countering trafficking (for example, by recognizing that employers’ organizations can influence the standards of behaviour of their members and are central to the setting of the social norms that operate within the labour sector).

#### **Cooperation with and from ‘receiving’ countries**

In addition to initiatives such as border cooperation and intelligence sharing, this includes, as outlined earlier, giving consideration to the social context in which trafficking occurs, for example, by:

- examining the social and labour contexts in receiving countries that allow exploiters to flourish;
- acting against criminal groups and individuals in receiving countries to combat exploitation and effectively cut off the receiving end of the trafficking process.

#### **Development and support to organizations to focus on child trafficking**

There is a need both to support the establishment of new child-specific NGOs in the subregion and also to build the capacity of those that already exist. In particular, there is a need to:



- Clearly differentiate child trafficking from the trafficking of women and in particular ensure that programmes to combat child trafficking and to support and reintegrate child victims are based on child-specific research and analysis and implemented within trafficking-specific frameworks;
- Promote the exchange of knowledge and experience through staff exchange schemes, information exchange and secondment of expertise;
- Expand existing European anti-trafficking networks into the countries of Eastern Europe and promote collaboration and joint programming;
- Make existing, current literature on child trafficking available to organizations in the subregion by translating reports and data that currently exist only in western European languages;

## **6.1 Recommendations from the Albania survey**

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The following recommendations arose from the rapid assessment survey exercise in Albania, targeting four principal areas of concern in combating child trafficking: prevention, protection, repatriation and reintegration.

### **Relating to prevention**

- Improve legislation relating to child traffickers and strengthen enforcement of existing laws;
- Increase opportunities for legal migration for employment or vocational training;
- Support family reunification for children with migrant parents;
- Reinforce borders to prevent illegal crossings and coordinate police operations with neighbouring countries;
- Organize and fund targeted awareness campaigns;
- Integrate information on child trafficking into the education system through textbooks and the curriculum;
- Establish municipal structures to identify and be concerned with orphans, poor children and other high-risk groups, particularly in rural areas;
- Encourage return to school for street children, rural girls and other marginalized children through social and financial incentives;
- Support collaboration between local institutions and NGOs for assistance programmes to poor families;
- Undertake capacity building for the main stakeholders related to child trafficking issues (police, teachers, local authorities, trade unions).

### **Relating to protection**

- Improve the legal framework to establish criminal, civil and administrative liability for all those involved in child trafficking;

- Provide a child protection system in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Pass the draft law on witness protection, including relocation;
- Conduct public awareness campaigns in destination countries, highlighting the conditions of exploited Albanian children;
- Intensify the fight against corruption within the judiciary;
- Fortify bilateral and regional agreements to improve judicial cooperation among countries.

### **Relating to repatriation**

- Establish a legal framework and national benchmarks for repatriation of trafficked children;
- Coordinate state agencies and their Italian and Greek counterparts for return of children;
- Encourage establishment of reception centres in all major trafficking cities of Albania.

### **Relating to reintegration**

- Create new rehabilitation centres for repatriated children while strengthening existing ones;
- Provide sufficient anti-trafficking training to NGOs and government agencies;
- Coordinate and synchronize donor activities to avoid overlap and ensure sustainability of NGO activities;
- Support efforts of NGOs with government policies and funding.

## **6.2 Recommendations from the Moldova survey**

The rapid assessment survey exercise in Moldova gave rise to a number of recommendations, relating to strengthened institutional frameworks, legal frameworks, specialized social services for potential victims and victims of trafficking, and training of specialized personnel

### **Institutional framework**

- Development of international and national anti-trafficking networks;
- Development of international networks to find and repatriate victims of child trafficking;
- Adoption of long-term measures as well as guaranteed instruments to ensure a level of economic and social growth that would reduce risk;

- Establishment of social policies and programmes to prevent child trafficking, including economic and legal measures;
- Appointing in town halls focal points responsible for activities to combat trafficking in women and children (including allocation of additional functions);
- Establishment of legal networks to improve coordination between different government institutions and ministries for development and implementation of national strategies and anti-trafficking action plans;
- Enforcing of systems to check people transporting minors based on accompanying documents at border checkpoints and provision of modern equipment at border posts to facilitate identification of traffickers;
- Increased effectiveness and surveillance, especially over intermediaries who offer employment abroad, and line institutions that perform rigorous control over procedures to issue permits for such work;
- Creation of commissions for child rights in town halls where these do not operate;
- Training (or professional re-training) courses in child trafficking for teachers;
- Involvement of local public administration and responsible bodies in assuring children's rights in solving minors' problems;
- Establishment within educational institutions of committees for surveillance of minors with behavioural problems, minors from dysfunctional families and school drop-outs;
- Collection and data analysis on at-risk children;
- Development of social assistance infrastructure, so that local social services support and mediate in disadvantaged families to prevent children's behavioural problems and potential institutionalization;
- Creation of a specialized body authorized with supervision, tracing, sanctioning and re-establishing children's rights violated through their involvement in child labour.

### **Legal framework**

- Improve national legislation, clarifying the concept of trafficking in all forms, with subsequent development of implementation methods of these norms;
- Review national legislation in view of prevention, fighting trafficking in children, calling to account child traffickers and protecting the rights of children who have been trafficked;
- Recognition that obstacles to a child's returning home after trafficking are a violation of the child's rights;
- Stipulation in national legislation of certain provisions regarding penal responsibility of parents for child abuse;
- Adoption of the law on protection of child in difficult situations;

- Introduction into the law on child rights of provisions regarding creation of equal opportunities for all children to benefit from the right to free time, recreation and cultural activities, as well as working out a concrete mechanism for realizing these rights;
- Working out normative acts that would regulate in detail child work, amendment of relevant normative acts regarding responsibility of people responsible for exploitative work performed by children, institution of severe sanctions for such cases;
- Introduction in national legislation of additional measures for protection of witnesses in trafficking cases, as well as legal responsibility for people who knew about child trafficking but failed to report it to relevant bodies;
- Adoption of provisions regarding additional responsibility (even penal) of state notaries who authorize children's leaving the county based on the wishes of the parents and not the child;
- Adoption of provisions through which forced begging is considered as a form of child exploitation, with relevant penal responsibility;
- Adoption of an adequate legal framework for the activity of social employers, with elaboration of a mechanism for rehabilitation and social reintegration of children whose rights have been violated or who have been abused;
- Introduction of special stipulations in penal legislation regarding all forms of child abuse, with provisions to apply penal sanctions to the guilty person who may be the parents, the tutor, adoptive parents, teachers, personnel of state residential institutions;
- Adoption of measures to preserve confidentiality for victims of trafficking after their reintegration;
- Adoption of mechanisms to protect trafficking victims and to facilitate and improve the situation of the victim during testimony.

### **Development of specialized social services**

- Introduction of life skills education in schools;
- Information and school courses for children, especially from rural areas, on the dangers of trafficking;
- Additional and extracurricular activities to strengthen the self-confidence of children and to improve their participation in the society;
- Creation of extracurricular centres based on the interests of the children, where they could spend their free time;
- Support to family institutions to provide assistance to young families in building their own homes;
- Preferential conditions for children in rural areas to continue studies and acquire a profession;

- Implementation of a programme of real financial assistance for families with numerous children and with disabled children;
- Creation of centres to help parents in difficult economic circumstances in order to guarantee an appropriate lifestyle for the children;
- Creation of centres for provisional placement and re-socialization of children living apart from the family, under the tutorship of local public administrations who will contribute to the expenses;
- Spreading information on positive examples of young people succeeding in life;
- Revisions of birth certificates and identity documents and issue procedures.

### **Information dissemination on trafficking**

- Involvement of relevant actors (police, social workers, medical staff, employment agencies, teachers, church, local authorities, local ngos , and young people themselves);
- Development of a network of local ngos and of helplines in all counties of the republic;
- Use of available mass media resources, of new information technology etc.;
- Development of the school curriculum through interactive training methods and introduction in the programme of relevant topics for fighting trafficking.

### **Rehabilitation services**

- Creation of a network of rehabilitation centres based on victim assistance programmes designed for each victim after assessment and identification of needs;
- Development of special programmes of rehabilitation for trafficked children, orphans, and pregnant girls or those with children;
- Creation of social integration centres for trafficked minors with opportunities for vocational training.

### **Development of human capacities**

- Development of an action plan to assure, implement and correctly apply legislation, common training of all participants in anti-trafficking actions in order to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to the problem;
- Specific training on anti-trafficking actions based on modules of instruction for each sector, for example for public prosecutors, police officers, judges, social workers, private lawyers and ngos. Components should include information on national, regional, and international legislation and standards, and bi- and multi-lateral agreements;
- Training of ngos active in the field to implement and coordinate actions in an international environment.

## 6.3 Recommendations from the Romania survey

### Policy and legislation

- Include in the legislation that regulates domestic and international transportation new provisions related to the transporters' obligation to inform border authorities about suspected cases of child trafficking;
- Approve and implement the npas on prevention and elimination of trafficking in children, the worst forms of child labour, child sexual commercial exploitation and child abuse and neglect;
- Establish child courts and a children's ombudsman in order to ensure a better approach to issues relating to children from the perspective of child rights and a better monitoring system;
- Allocate the necessary funds from the state budget for the implementation of the National Plan of Action for combating trafficking in human beings (for example, to open the proposed nine shelters for victims of trafficking).

### Institutional frameworks

- Develop a monitoring system of child victims of trafficking and an institutional structure to be responsible for the coordination and evaluation of activities carried out for preventing and combating trafficking in children. This structure should have also a methodological role;
- Develop a coherent system for the repatriation of child victims of trafficking;
- Develop a database of all child victims of trafficking and ensure appropriate data protection;
- Strengthen existing anti-trafficking networks and ensure that activities are carried out in a coordinated manner;
- Develop international networks for supporting the repatriation of child victims of trafficking;
- Develop the social assistance infrastructure for targeted and immediate identification of and support to communities at risk;
- Enhance the partnership between local authorities and civil society by establishing multidisciplinary local action committees to take concrete and coherent action for preventing and combating trafficking in children and for the rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking.

### Capacity building

- Develop/adapt to the local context training modules for specialists working with trafficked children and with children at risk of being trafficked;
- Develop periodic training for judges and prosecutors on victims' rights according to international standards and the united nations convention on the rights of the child;

- Train peer educators to work with child victims of trafficking and children at risk of being trafficked;
- Train multidisciplinary local action committees to develop and run child labour monitoring systems for child victims of trafficking and children at risk of being trafficked.

### **Prevention**

- Organize training courses and information sessions for teachers with a view to monitoring cases of children vulnerable to trafficking. Training courses should be based on the most recent data regarding the occurrence of trafficking in the respective areas and the potential victims;
- Make information available to journalists on appropriate terminology and on the issue of trafficking in children so that they may better inform the public and contribute to protecting victims' rights;
- Disseminate information and facilitate public access to information on legal migration and employment modalities, necessary documents, authorized bodies, rights of migrant workers, protection, etc.;
- Inform communities at risk about available services and entitlements;
- Carry out targeted awareness-raising campaigns focused on specific issues (risk groups, community involvement, changing attitudes) and evaluate the impact;
- Mobilize local communities from both rural and urban areas (school, church and town hall, social actors who have an impact in rural areas);
- Inform marginalized youth and parents on how to find a job or get social benefits;
- Develop extracurricular activities to increase children's self-esteem and confidence in their own potential;
- Carry out awareness-raising campaigns and courses for parents from marginalized communities on the risks and legal consequences of trafficking in children;
- Conduct educational campaigns on issues like safe sex, hiv/aids, drug use and civil rights (in sending and destination countries);
- Empower children and young people by promoting their participation;
- Develop social services for preventing school drop-out and monitoring school attendance;
- Map risk areas and risk groups, with a focus on street children, roma communities and communities with a high prevalence of migration for temporary jobs in the country or abroad;
- Adapt vocational training programmes to labour market demand;
- Encourage employers to employ young people and adults from risk areas and risk groups.

### **Support services and interventions**

- Ensure confidentiality of personal data;
- Respect the 'best interests of the child' in all actions and procedures in which victims are involved, especially during the phase of return to the country of origin and throughout court proceedings against traffickers. In relation to this recommendation, there is a standing request from international organizations/ngos for the establishment of viable witness protection programmes;
- Establish reception centres in the areas that are most affected by trafficking;
- Establish regulations for repatriation of unaccompanied children and identification of child victims of trafficking.

### **Rehabilitation and reintegration**

- Take a 'victims first' approach to all programmes on prevention and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in children (enforcing the principles of child participation and the best interests of the child);
- Develop a continuum of services (shelters, counselling, vocational training and guidance, witness protection, education, etc) for victims and their families, in order to cover the needs in risk areas and adjust different types of assistance according to age, risks of being re-trafficked, personal needs and case history;
- Diversify services addressed to child victims of trafficking and their families at the level of the local authority in order to ensure the coverage needed and sustainability;
- Develop non-formal education alternatives for children released from trafficking;
- Enforce the role of and cooperation between school counsellors and social workers from the departments for child protection at local level;
- Increase the period stipulated by law for the rehabilitation of a victim in a shelter and ensure long-term monitoring and periodic assessment;
- Ensure free health care assistance for victims after repatriation and financial support for victims in the rehabilitation process;
- Support victims and their families in obtaining damages from imprisoned traffickers for the moral and material prejudices caused by the abuse to which they were subjected;
- Ensure community support and promote a non-discriminatory attitude;
- Promote and support both state institutions and ngos that already work on trafficking issues to develop joint programmes.

### **Knowledge base on trafficking in children**

- Develop research focused on: knowledge, attitudes and practices of children and parents from risk areas regarding trafficking in children; internal trafficking;



child prostitution; child pornography; sex tourism; evaluation of services and prevention activities.

### **Destination countries**

- Develop a system for monitoring cases of missing children and trafficked children in and outside the country;
- Include trafficked children in special protection and rehabilitation programmes during the investigation and repatriation process;
- Improve anti-trafficking legislation and procedures (ie develop child-friendly procedures for repatriation taking into consideration the child's wishes and needs);
- Harmonize social services in destination and sending countries;
- Organize targeted information campaigns on child trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation.

## **6.4 Recommendations from the Ukraine survey**

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### **At the national level**

- Introduce amendments into effective legislation (Art. 149), including the introduction of the provision “without crossing a border” that is especially important in child trafficking situations, highlight in a separate paragraph a disposition on child trafficking and formulate it in more detail;
- Improve Article 150 on the use of juvenile labour;
- Articles 121, 122, 125 and 126 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, determining liabilities for inflicting deliberate physical injury, beating, and assault and battery do not contain qualifications with respect to committing these crimes against juveniles. In Articles 121, 122 and 125 of the Criminal Code, there should be increased liability for committing these crimes against juveniles. Article 126 of the Criminal Code should envisage more severe punishment for beating, assault and battery against juveniles. In part 2 of Article 127 of the Criminal Code, there should be increased liability for torture of juveniles;
- Improve coordination among law enforcement bodies: militia, office of the public prosecutor, frontier guards and customs service. To this end, joint meetings and seminars to improve coordination mechanisms should be organized;
- Improve provisions of the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 31 March 1995, No.231: “On approval of the rules of preparation and issuing of passports to citizens of Ukraine for travelling abroad and children's travel documents, their temporary acquisition and requisitioning”;
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

according to which all listed actions are considered as a criminal offence regardless of the place where they were committed;

- At government level, adopt or improve legislation with a view to combating trafficking. Negotiate diplomatic agreements with those states to which Ukrainian children are trafficked. These agreements should aim to identify centres of child labour and combat organized crime. Approval of comprehensive legislation provides not only for supervision of law enforcement authorities but also reformed social policy by means of material aid and assistance to parents in finding employment in the regions with the assistance of oblast, district and village administrations;
- Pay more attention to improving children's understanding of their rights and freedoms, through legal and rights education; develop a system of preventive and educational work in this area involving the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and State employment centre;
- Develop and introduce special educational programmes for parents on children's rights and prevention of child trafficking. Jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science, develop a plan of preventive educational measures aimed at preventing child trafficking. Introduce into prevention training courses issues related to prevention of child trafficking. Promote the inclusion of this course into compulsory subjects in the school curriculum;
- Support the actions of NGOs developing programmes in the area of prevention of child trafficking;
- Organize comprehensive multidisciplinary seminars on the issue at national and local levels;
- Establish a working group on the development of a rehabilitation model for trafficked children;
- Support initiatives on preparation, production and distribution of educational, preventive and methodological materials on child trafficking;
- Carry out educational activities for homeless children on child rights and the dangers of falling into the hands of traffickers. This activity can be carried out at charitable canteens at religious organizations, mobile centres for homeless children, juvenile correctional services, shelters or crisis centres for women who are victims of violence and attend with their children;
- Initiate the annual collection of statistical data on child trafficking based on the activities of state, public and religious organizations;
- Establish an integrated system for training parents in the skills of family education with the assistance of educational institutions. School departments can provide significant help to parents in the education of their children, improvement of the microclimate in the family, establishing adequate relations between adults and children. For example, in schools, vocational schools and institutes

of higher education, a special hour could be allocated for highlighting topical issues in Ukrainian society and ways of dealing with them effectively;

- Promote the development of human rights and public organizations in Ukraine that assist the trafficked victims;
- Promote the establishment of a network of reintegration and crisis centres for people who have been victims of crimes relating to human trafficking and violence.

### **At the local level**

- Develop and introduce social programmes for assistance to at-risk families and families with children who have been trafficked;
- Departments for juveniles and social services should improve monitoring of children in difficult families;
- While doing paperwork before admission to shelters for juveniles or juvenile correctional services, officers of social services and the militia should pay special attention to the experiences children may have had of exploitation or trafficking and should have special programmes to which to refer them;
- Psychologists in social services and ngos should develop programmes for rehabilitation of trafficked children;
- Organize meetings with representatives of law enforcement authorities and social services in schools, orphanages, shelters for children and youth, to disseminate information on human trafficking, trafficking in children and to increase the authority of these services in the eyes of children;
- Organize in villages and settlements, services for parents of children from at-risk groups and the parents of trafficked children, with a view to increasing their knowledge about the chances of a child being entrapped in trafficking and where to seek help if a child has been trafficked;
- Establish local youth social services or reorient existing ones to engage children and young people in social activities. With the help of these services, the spare time of children and young people from at-risk groups can be organized;
- Local council or social services should have on their staff a psychologist and lawyer who should provide consultations to all population groups free of charge. People should be comprehensively informed about the availability of this service;
- Carry out special family psychological training to improve mutual understanding in the family, perhaps on the basis of district social services;
- Raise understanding in society of the problems of child trafficking, not only with the cooperation of the mass media but also by involving educational institutions;
- More completely and impartially inform government structures of the problem of child trafficking and children's right to protection, in particular for those children in high-risk groups;
- Work with the mass media and other educational media and organizations to improve and promote coverage of child trafficking.

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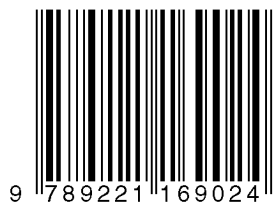
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