

ROMANIA

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE PHENOMENON OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

1. EVALUATION OF TRENDS

In 2017, trafficking in persons presented similar dynamics as those registered in the previous years.

Romania continues to remain a country of origin for human trafficking, as the majority of identified victims are trafficked and exploited abroad, predominantly in other EU countries¹ (the top 5 preferred trafficking destinations are Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, France).

Criminal patterns and the socio-demographic profile of both the traffickers and the victims remain almost unchanged. Traffickers deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment. Most of the victims of Romanian origin are recruited in the country, with usually less violent ways of constraint or mislead: false promises of getting well paid jobs, winning victims' confidence through sentimental blackmail, debt bondage etc.

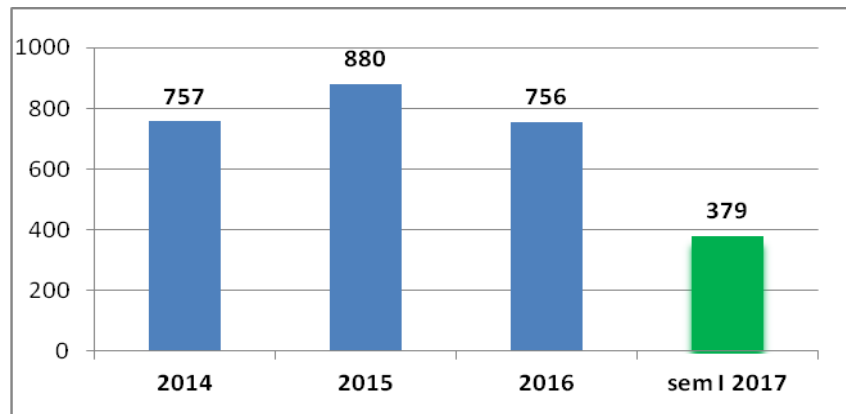


Figure 1 Victims registered by the Integrated System for Monitoring and Evidence of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Romania during 2014-2016 and the first 6 month of 2017

The main factors that increase the vulnerability to trafficking and therefore **fuel the offer** of cheap services offered by victims are related to low living conditions and poverty: high rate of unemployment in Romanian rural areas, high dependency on the social assistance system, gender discrimination (on labour market), significant income inequality, lack of opportunities for improving quality of life, sexual or ethnic discrimination, violence and abuse.

¹ According to the US Department of State TIP report 2017 and Eurostat

2. INCREASED CAPACITY TO DEVELOP ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIONS

a) Investigation and prosecution

Statistical data in this area suggest a dynamic that includes Romania among the European countries with a high rate of success in tackling human trafficking. The majority of prosecutions and convictions continue to remain those for offences committed for the purpose of sexual exploitation of victims.

YEAR		2014	2015	2016	Sem. I 2017
TOTAL INVESTIGATION REGISTERED, out of which		729	721	623	321
	SEXUAL	605	596	509	271
	LABOUR	61	71	49	23
	BEGGING	49	48	28	16
NUMBER OF PERSONS					
	PROSECUTED	671	467	350	362
	CONVICTED TRAFFICKERS	331	252	333	163

Table 1 Chart regarding the registered cases at national level by the units for combating organized crime from Romanian Police

Giving the cross-border nature of human trafficking, the Romanian police have continued to exchange information with law enforcement agencies in transit or destination countries which lead to numerous joint projects and operations.

As part of the European Union's Policy Cycle, Romania have permanently participated within the EMPACT framework dedicated to the fight against human trafficking and have currently assumed the co-driver position of THB priority for the EU Policy Cycle 2018-2021. This is a clear signal given by the Romanian authorities as regards the importance of the fight against this phenomenon at both operational and strategic level.

Romania have also intensified the use of EUROPOL's resources and databases through actively participating in a significant number of coordination meetings and an increased contribution with intelligence to the SIENA information system (Romania is ranked second in EUROPOL statistics-after the UK-as a contributing country to the AP Phoenix - analytical project on human trafficking).

Another important aspect of international cooperation in criminal investigation of international human trafficking cases is the signing of Joint Investigation Team agreements (JITs). In 2017, Romania initiated a number of 27 JITs and with the support of EUROJUST and EUROPOL developed joint procedural activities on the territory of the signatory states, including the UK, ES, BE, CZ, NOR, FR, NL, DE, AT, CH.

b) Prevention and reducing the demand and offer

The **Romanian National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP)** has continued to strategically approach the key factors related to human trafficking with the purpose to deter and reduce both the demand and the offer.

The prevention activities aimed to cover all forms of exploitation and involved all key partners in an attempt to multiply the messages related to risks and implications associated with human trafficking. The communication campaigns ranged from direct meetings with the target groups and the dissemination of prevention materials, to organising media campaigns, using audio and video clips, documentaries, flash mobs, online campaigns, media articles etc.

According to the ANITP's assessments, the high number of **prevention campaigns has led to an increased level of awareness with regards to the risks associated with human trafficking.**

These are just a few examples of prevention campaigns:

"*A begging hand does not get help, but sends money to the traffickers!*" (August 2015- April 2016) targeted adults in vulnerable communities, minors at risk aged between 8 and 18 as well as representatives of institutions involved in preventing and combating human trafficking with the objective to prevent human trafficking for the purpose of begging.

The national prevention campaign "*Do not ignore the invisible girl! Her story may also become your story!*" (April - July 2016). The campaign was the result of a public-private partnership and the objectives were to increase awareness among vulnerable categories about the risks associated with sexual exploitation.

The Church plays an important role in the fight against human trafficking complementing the efforts of the Romanian national authorities. During 2014-2017, the ANITP started a partnership with the **Ecumenical Association of Churches of Romania (AIDRom)** and implemented 4 national prevention campaigns that addressed human trafficking, with the purpose of developing attitudes consistent with legal provisions and moral values. Starting with 2017, AIDRom has become a partner of ANITP in a new project funded by the Internal Security Fund, "Reducing the amplitude of trafficking in persons through a better information of the citizens", which intends to organize for the period 2017 – 2020 three anti-trafficking prevention campaigns, focussing on three types of exploitation: labour, sexual and begging.

Complementary to the prevention campaigns, ANITP started a series of trainings on key competencies and indicators on human trafficking, in order to raise the capacity of the personnel involved in preventing and combating human trafficking. During 2014-2017, ANITP carried out more than 500 trainings and information activities, attended by more than 8,000 specialists (community policemen, investigators, border guards, gendarmes, school teachers and inspectors, psychologists, social workers, placement workers, educational counsellors, priests, city hall representatives, volunteers etc.).

c) Assistance provided to victims

Romania have set up a National Identification and Referral Mechanism (NIRM) since 2007. Along with a unitary understanding of concepts such as trafficking indicators, the aim of the mechanism is to provide a coordinated response from police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, etc., in ensuring and facilitating victims access to assistance service providers, in a so called "victim oriented approach".

The development of NIRM is also an important part in the transnational referral of Romanian victims identified abroad, thus increasing their prospect of recovery and reintegration.

This mechanism was complemented with an additional program for “Victims coordination during criminal procedure” that helps victims that choose to be included in this program to make informed decisions regarding their participation in the criminal proceeding as witness or injured parties. This program is setting the framework for a whole set of measures – ranging from emotional support to physical protection - that are taken into consideration while assisting witnessing victims.

3. TOWARDS A STRATEGIC APPROACH OF THE PHENOMENON

Romania’s latest strategy against trafficking in human beings (2016 – 2020), currently pending approval at Government level will provide a comprehensive framework and a multiagency response aimed at reducing the impact and the prevalence of human trafficking. The main objectives of the strategy commit Romanian authorities to boosting the prevention measures and the involvement of the civil society, enhancing the quality of protection and assistance offered to the victim with the view of reintegrating them, improving the multiagency investigative response and their capacity to collect and interpret data, as well as optimising and extending the interagency and international cooperation.

In addition to the above mentioned strategic documents and taking into account the top countries in terms of number of criminal investigation registered in 2017, the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated discussions in order to promote comprehensive cross-border frameworks with the purpose of ensuring effective coordination between Romanian authorities and those of the destination countries, addressing thus more effectively human trafficking phenomenon.

In line with the latest communication from the Commission², Romania is taking steps towards developing a data collection methodology which would allow for coherent, comprehensive and comparable statistics on human trafficking at both national level and the destination countries. In this respect, the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs have also established a high-level intra-institutional TASKFORCE on preventing and combating cross-border Romanian criminality, with one of the main objectives to put together all the data related to crimes and victimization of Romanian origin.

² COM(2017) 728-Reporting on the follow-up to the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of trafficking in human beings and identifying further concrete actions