



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN ROMANIA

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

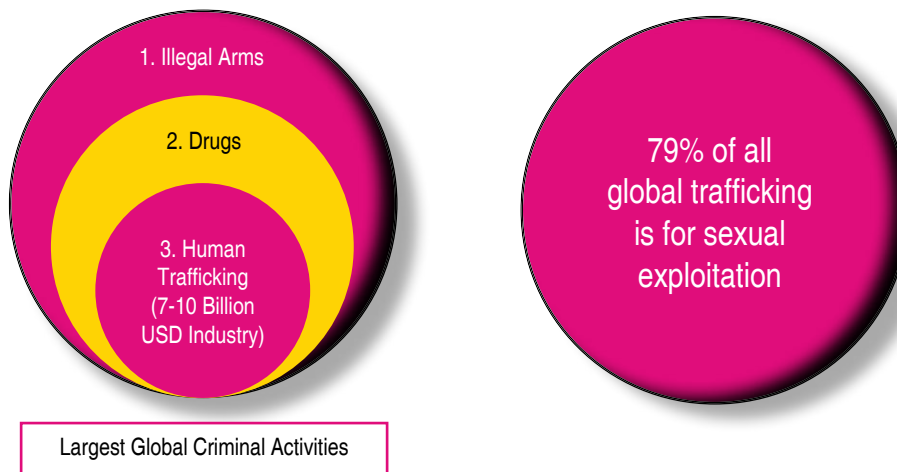
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest international crime, following illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN ROMANIA

The criminal and hidden nature of child trafficking for sexual purposes and the varying numbers of trafficked victims according to different authorities' reports, makes it difficult to assess the exact scale of the problem. In 2006, the Romanian police reported 2,285 victims of trafficking in persons and 2,072 victims in 2007, of whom approximately 14% were children. The

Public Ministry in Romania has recorded less trafficking victims in the same period, but proportionally more children, with almost one in four victims identified as being children.³

The vast majority of victims identified are trafficked for sexual exploitation. According to the Public Ministry, 83% of victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation in 2005 and 63% in 2007. However, in 2007, the police recorded more trafficked victims for forced labour – 49% were identified, compared to 40% of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁴ It is also significant to note that for the first time, the number of male victims was higher than the female victims identified.⁵

During the first six months of 2008, 109 minors were identified as victims of trafficking, representing 14% of the total number of trafficked victims. Most of the identified victims were girls (91 victims representing 84%), and 91% of the victims were aged between 14 and 17 years old. 50 minors (46%) were victims of internal trafficking and 59 victims (54%) were trafficked outside the country. The main form of exploitation was for sexual purposes, with 67% under 18 years of age.⁶

Reports from various European countries also mention the involvement of organised criminals trafficking Romanian children for begging, and committing petty crimes such as pick pocketing.⁷ Since Romania joined the EU in 2007, the British police noticed a sharp rise in Romanian children trafficked to London by criminal 'gangs'.⁸

Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced, or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived.

Countries are considered:

- 'Sending' or 'origin' - from where children are sent;
- 'Transit' - where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- 'Receiving' or 'destination' - where the children finally end up.

Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries might be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. Romania is mainly a country of origin for the trafficking of children for sexual purposes and forced labour, as well as a destination and transit country.⁹

Up to 170,000 people, mostly women and young girls, are trafficked in southeast Europe each year, with Moldova, Ukraine and Romania the main countries in the region involved in trafficking.¹⁰ The main destinations for Romanian men, women, and children trafficked for sexual purposes are Italy, Spain, England, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Greece, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Turkey, Austria, and Israel.¹¹ Victims are also trafficked internally. In 2007, the State authorities reported 207 victims of domestic trafficking (11% of identified victims).¹² However, internal trafficking has remained less visible than trafficking abroad.¹³ In most of the cases involving children trafficked within the Romanian borders, exploitation occurred in private dwellings/premises (63% of the cases) focusing attention on the underground nature of the phenomenon. Such cases are difficult to identify as access to these locations is less visible and restricted, or strictly controlled by traffickers and customers.¹⁴

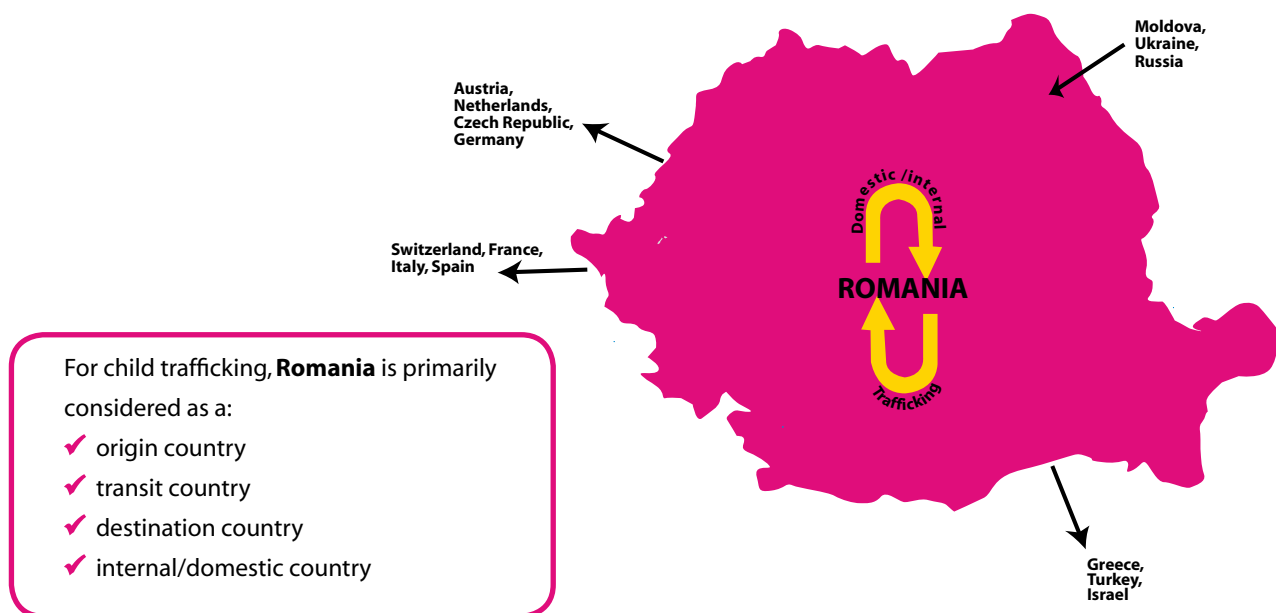
Who gets trafficked?

The majority of trafficked victims identified by the Romanian police are girls (87% in 2007). However, young boys are also trafficked for various forms of exploitation and reports from Italy, Spain or France point to the specific vulnerabilities of unaccompanied minors (in particular boys) and their exploitation in forced labour and prostitution. Romanian boys are involved in male prostitution (in Rome) and this is reportedly, “totally ignored in Romania.”¹⁵

In 2008 and the first two months of 2009, the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons reported a total number of 1375 victims of trafficking.¹⁶ Most male and female victims of trafficking for sexual purposes are between 14 and 17 years old, while younger children are involved in petty crimes. The police has also identified children younger than one-year-old used for begging.¹⁷

Most trafficked children come from broken homes and poor families with socio-economic problems, suffer from domestic violence, abuse and discrimination. These children are especially at risk of being trafficked because they often have a low education level and have dropped out of school at an early age. Their desire for a better life makes them vulnerable, and easy to overpower and convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. In Romania, street children, Roma children and children whose family and community life has been disrupted, or those who do not have someone to look out for them, are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking.¹⁸

Reports show that the main areas where trafficked and/or unaccompanied minors originate from are mainly the Southern regions (Calarasi, and Craiova), the Eastern area near the Moldovan border (Galati and Lasi) and Bucharest.¹⁹ However, there does appear to be a general decline in the number of trafficked and unaccompanied children from Satu-Mare.²⁰



Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

Foreign citizens are also involved in illegal migration and human trafficking networks. They send invitations to Romanians - guaranteeing subsistence during their stay, ie. medical treatment, that can be used as 'proof' of legitimate travel to a country in the Schengen area. They are also involved in their transportation from Romania to destination countries. In most cases there are also middlemen - Romanian, Yugoslavian, Austrian, Dutch, Italian and others - who recruit potential workers by promising them jobs, medical treatment and other 'services', or sometimes by telling them what they really will be involved in, for example begging or prostitution.²¹

CASE STUDY

A.M. Bianchi, an American citizen, was convicted in 2007 for traveling to Romania and Moldova to sexually abuse children. In Romania, he engaged in illicit sexual conduct with boys younger than 16 years of age. In one instance, he took a young boy to a Romanian pub, gave him wine and engaged in illicit sexual conduct with him.²² He was found guilty of all 10 charges against him.²³

Who are the traffickers?

Traffickers can be a stranger or someone the child knows, such as a relative or a friend. Traffickers are often part of an organised criminal network that 'recruits' children and supplies them with fake identification. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life. In Romania, girls are usually recruited through direct contact or their families are approached by traffickers, who are often people they know and trust.²⁴ Women trafficked for sexual exploitation are also often recruited after responding to newspaper advertisements.²⁵

Romanian law specifically defines and prohibits trafficking in children and generally meets international standards. However, trafficking in persons continues to be a serious problem.²⁶ In 2007, authorities investigated 232 trafficking cases both domestically, as well as with foreign law enforcement counterparts. The Government prosecuted 398 people for trafficking, a significant decrease from 780 prosecutions in 2006.²⁷

Romania convicted 188 individuals for trafficking offenses in 2007, 40% were convicted and imprisoned for sentences ranging between 1 to 5 years, while 35% were imprisoned for between 5 and 10 years. Romania has increasingly prosecuted women involved in trafficking. Between 2004 and 2006, according to the Resource Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons, women represented 19% to 34% of all convictions.²⁸

According to statistics from the State authorities, in the first six months of 2008, 720 persons were prosecuted for human trafficking. Most of those prosecuted, were adults, 91% (657 persons), representing 501 men and 156 women, while 9% of those prosecuted were minors (63), including 11 female and 52 male minors.²⁹

Romanian Government officials reported that small groups of citizens are the most common operators of trafficking rings; several domestic prostitution rings are also known to be active in trafficking victims into, through, and from the country. Traffickers used employment agencies and travel companies as fronts for their activities. It is not difficult for traffickers to obtain legal work papers for the victims they intend to traffic.³⁰

CASE STUDIES

Trafficked to Croatia via Serbia

Ivana is a 15 year-old Romanian girl who grew up in a family with socio-economic problems; her divorced parents were living in the same house for financial reasons. After she was admitted into high school, she dropped out and decided to join her sister in Italy for a better life abroad. She was assisted by the same acquaintance of her mother who had facilitated her sister to leave for a 'career in sales'. Accompanied by an unknown man, she travelled by train from Bucharest to Timisoara, a city close to the border with Serbia. Once in Timisoara, another man took her to a guide with whom she crossed the border into Serbia. After they reached Belgrade, recruiters came to 'assess' her. They told her to get undressed, and it was then that she realised that they intended to prostitute her. One recruiter took her to the border with Macedonia and two guides helped them walk through mountains for about 12 km. They headed to Skopje, where she was locked in a flat. She was later sent to a bar where she stayed for about a month and was forced into prostitution and threatened with physical violence. After about a month, the police raided the bar and she was repatriated to Romania.³¹

Romanian girl sexually exploited in prostitution in Rome

Clarissa's mother passed away and her father left to go and live with another woman. When she was 15, she decided to go and live with her aunt in Rome. Her aunt paid for her journey to Italy and promised to find her a job. When Clarissa arrived, the aunt took all her money and found her a job as a cleaner in a private house. After two months, her aunt told her that the money she earned was not enough and threw her out of her house. She took her to a house where there were two other Romanian girls and one boy and then disappeared. For four months, they forced her to have sex with different men to pay for rent and food until she escaped with the help of a friend and reported them to the police.³²

Romanian girl sexually exploited into prostitution in Ireland

Alina was 17 years old when she was trafficked. When her parents divorced she stayed with her mother. After her mother remarried, she was sexually harassed by her stepfather. She dropped out of school and ran away with a girlfriend to Ireland, trying to find a better situation there. She was then exploited in a prostitution ring. She was returned to Romania after being discovered in a police raid and put into a reintegration program, where she received psychological counseling and enrolled back into school. She also received life-skills training. She is now in high school and preparing for college. She never returned home.³³

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Increase efforts to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders and to ensure that sentences reflect the grave nature of the crime committed against a child victim.
- Multi-disciplinary training for personnel dealing with children at risk or victims of trafficking should be conducted on a regular basis, including training for border guards to support the victim identification and referral process.
- Special child rights measures should be implemented to ensure trafficked children are treated as victims and do not enter the criminal justice system.
- Ensure that offences committed by trafficked children are decriminalised in the legal provisions of the Criminal Code and that victims receive protection and psychosocial rehabilitation support.
- Romania should accelerate the legal procedures regarding child victims of trafficking and ensure adequate protection of victims and their families in the judicial process.
- Cross-border coordination is essential and needs to be strengthened. Existing bi-lateral agreements with countries receiving trafficked Romanian children or those traveling unaccompanied should be reviewed to adopt a child's rights approach. More cross-border coordination and cooperation mechanisms should be implemented to reinforce prevention and safe repatriation of victims.
- Romania should consider looking more closely at the issue of internal trafficking of children.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Romania	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Romania
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	28 Sept 1990	Initial: 4 Feb 1993 Second: 1 Nov 1998 Third and Fourth: June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate and ensure sufficient resources and qualified staff for the effective implementation of the National Action Plan for Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children for Commercial Reasons, taking into account the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the 1996 and 2001 World Congresses against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children; • Train law enforcement officials, social workers and prosecutors on how to receive, monitor, investigate and prosecute complaints, in a child-sensitive manner; • Ensure that all victims of trafficking and forced prostitution have access to appropriate recovery and reintegration programmes and services.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	18 October 2001	Due 1 January 2004, not yet submitted.	

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Romania	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Romania
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	4 December 2002	N/A	
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	12 December 2000	September 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007	
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	August 2006 – Entered into force February 2008	N/A	

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Specialised preventative services for children at risk (in particular street children and Roma minorities) need to be put in place in all regions of Romania, including alternative care, such as outreach services, hotlines, drop-in centres, child-friendly materials developed in consultation with children and young people, particularly those most at risk.
- Education and awareness raising campaigns are necessary and should be reinforced, particularly in at risk communities, to inform about the risks of trafficking for boys and girls, especially in relation to migration.
- More effective multi-disciplinary coordination and specialised training for people involved in the social reintegration of child victims of trafficking for sexual purposes should be promoted to ensure better identification of victims, proper referral mechanisms and appropriate care and support. The National Anti-trafficking Agency could play a key role in this regard.
- Increase in the number of counseling and support centres for psychological rehabilitation and social reintegration for child victims of abuse, neglect and trafficking.
- A national system for the prevention needs to be created for the identification and intervention of cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, including sexual exploitation for commercial purposes, labour exploitation, violence against children and unsafe migration of children.
- It is essential that long term support services and all appropriate measures are established at the local level, to ensure the durable physical and psychosocial recovery of child victims of trafficking.
- Alternatives to basic education adapted to individual rural areas, as well as various types of vocational training options, have to be developed based on actual opportunities from the labour market. Vocational training for victims of trafficking should also be offered free of charge.

- Employment alternatives for children over 16 years old who have abandoned school should be created along with 'second chance education' or vocational training.
- A monitoring period for ensuring the provision of adequate support to child victims of sex trafficking should be established over more than 6 months and an evaluation of the reintegration process should be conducted every three months to ensure long term solutions are provided to victims.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

Asociatia Telefonul Copilului: 116 111 (<http://www.telefonulcopilului.ro/home>)

Child Helpline International – Romania: (Toll-free) 0800 8 200 200

Help Line: 0800.800.678

MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT Group in Romania: Salvati Copiii/Save the Children Romania: www.salvaticopiii.ro
- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

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