

OVERVIEW

In 2011, domestic traffic remains to be primarily for the purpose of sexual exploitation and is concentrated in tourist destinations (winter and summer resorts), and around the sites of the road infrastructure, with victims often being re-trafficked abroad. Those at highest risk of trafficking are found in small settlements with lower living standards and high unemployment, where the main coercive factors for trafficking are poverty, unemployment, lack of education and illiteracy among the Roma population, lack of experience with safe migration, or gender-based violence. Driving factors include job opportunities in destination countries, high demand for cheap and unskilled labor, and a high demand for sex services. To counteract these driving factors, the National Commission for Combating Traffic in Human Beings (NCCTHB) works to raise the awareness of vulnerable groups, where aggravating factors are addressed on a bilateral and multilateral basis through cooperation with the countries of final destination of the Bulgarian victims of trafficking in human beings (THB).

Externally, the main destinations for trafficked victims outside of Bulgaria remain to be The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Austria, France, Italy, Cyprus, Poland. There is an increase in the number of victims of trafficking to destinations of Northern and Central Europe, mainly Sweden (labor exploitation), the Czech Republic (labor and sexual exploitation) and the UK (pickpockets), due to the effect of the economic and financial crisis in Europe. Bulgaria remains as the main country of origin of victims, with most being trafficked from Sliven, Varna, Burgas, Dobrich, Russe, Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, and Montana. Furthermore, and for the year 2011, the purpose of different forms of exploitation remains in the countries where such exploitation is predominant: Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France and Poland – for sexual exploitation; Greece, Great Britain and Austria – for pickpockets; Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden and the Czech Republic – for labor exploitation; Greece – for sale of newborns.

The statistical data below provides an indication of the number of victims and type of exploitation:

TOTAL VICTIMS – 541

1. By gender and age:

- Women – 448
- Men – 93
- Minors (14-18 years old): girls – 57; boys – 0
- Minors (below 14 years old): girls – 3; boys – 10

2. By type of exploitation:

- Sexual exploitation – 404
- Forced labour – 91
- Forced obedience – 17

- Pregnant women for the purpose of selling the newborn – 29
- 3. Trafficking signals directed at the NCCTHB in 2011 – 56
- 4. Total amount of individuals from trafficking signals – 144
- 5. Number of NGOs & international organisations registered with the NCCTHB which provide services to victims of THB – 29

In an effort to minimize the number of victims of trafficking and provide effective assistance, the NCCTHB held a number of trainings for specialists working in the field of THB, teachers and pedagogical counselors, students, as well as the central and local structures of the NCCTHB. In 2011, the NCCTHB held specialized trainings for teachers and pedagogues in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Kyustendil and Blagoevgrad, with the purpose of familiarizing the participants with the regulations, risk factors and root causes of trafficking in human beings. During the training the participants gained knowledge and skills to subsequently provide information about human trafficking to students. The National Commission also held a national training seminar for student volunteers from 5 cities in the country, in an effort to facilitate „peer education“ on the topic of THB. Moreover, the NCCTHB and the Dreesheim Children’s Crisis Center in Vienna, Austria organized a joint training for managers and collaborators from the Crisis Centers in Bulgaria. The participants had the opportunity to share problems and exchange experiences in their common effort to assist children who are victims of trafficking, victims of domestic violence and children at risk.

In terms of the prosecution of individuals for the crime of trafficking, the below statistical data represents the findings for 2011:

- New cases – 138
- Charges – 115
- Convicted persons – 131
- Sentences entered into force – 119
- Number of imprisonments – 57
- Conditional sentences – 61
- Penalties up to 3 years – 34
- Penalties from 3 to 5 years – 13
- Penalties from 5 to 10 years – 4
- Penalties over 10 to 15 years (the maximum provided by the Criminal Code) – 6