

Trafficking in human (THB) beings is a serious crime that violates fundamental human rights, and is one of the most lucrative criminal acts along with arms and drug trafficking. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation continues to be the most widespread, despite a parallel increase in the amount of trafficking for labour exploitation. One reason is the deepening of the financial crisis and the political changes that have taken place in different countries.

Bulgaria continues to be a country of origin for human trafficking victims, and has become a transit and destination country in recent years, especially in tourist resorts and border regions, where Bulgarian women and children are largely sexually exploited, while men are exploited for labour. Moreover, Bulgarian women, predominantly of Roma origin, are forced to sell their newborn children abroad, while children are exploited for begging and pick-pocketing as well as minor theft.

In recent years there has been a tendency for an increase in the number of victims identified, indicating an increase in the confidence of the victims themselves towards state institutions. Moreover, the Bulgarian Government has made significant efforts in terms of minimum standards for the elimination of THB. During the reporting period, the government has also envisaged an increase in funding for the two State shelters for the accommodation of victims of THB operated by the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the Council of Ministers. The shelters provide care for more victims who are female. A positive aspect of the work is the doubled increase in the funding of prevention campaigns, which include a number of public events and awareness raising campaigns, as well as the training of labour mediators, social workers, journalists and Roma specialists working to prevent trafficking of people. Although the government is working towards better integration of the Roma communities, work with this vulnerable group should be strengthened as a whole. Among the recommendations directed at Bulgaria, made by the US State Department Report, are continuing efforts in the investigation, prosecution and condemnation of civil servants who are sympathetic to trafficking in human beings, as well as ensuring that convicted employees get effective convictions. Additionally, undertaking legislative action to prohibit the prosecution of victims of trafficking for acts committed as a direct result of their trafficking, increasing the capacity of existing shelters for female victims of trafficking, and providing financial compensation and legal advice.

With regards to internal trafficking, domestic traffic remains 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. It is also seen as a preparation for external trafficking, which is often the next stage. High risk individuals are those from small settlements with lower living

standards and high unemployment. Victims of domestic trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation are recruited from smaller settlements and exploited in large cities, Black Sea and winter resorts, and border areas, in general, where there is a high concentration of foreign tourists.

With regards to external traffic, the main countries of final destination for victims of trafficking in human beings in 2013 are Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, France, Cyprus, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic. For victims who are trafficked towards a final destination, there is an increase in movement to Central European countries. Bulgaria remains as a country of origin for victims of trafficking, with the Roma community as a particularly vulnerable group.

In the last year, there has been a tendency for victims to be trafficked in different countries for different forms of exploitation: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, 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 pregnant women for the purpose of selling newborns.

In 2012, the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB) received a total of 70 trafficking signals from citizens, non-governmental organizations and other institutions. There were 126 people in total, of whom 50 were sexually exploited, and 64 were exploited for labour purposes. Among the countries of origin concerned with the signals submitted to the NCCTHB are Germany and Greece. In the first half of the year, out of 5 child victims of trafficking, 2 were trafficked for pickpocketing purposes. In the second half of the year, alerts on pickpocketing include sexual exploitation and affect 8 people. On the territory of Bulgaria, two child victims of trafficking with Afghan origin were identified and placed in the Crisis Center for children victims of violence and trafficking in human beings. During the reporting period, two shelters for temporary accommodation of victims of trafficking in human beings in Burgas and Varna are actively functioning and are funded by the NCCTHB budget, accommodating and caring for 24 victims of trafficking during the reporting year. In Burgas, and for the year 2012, 10 victims of trafficking, all of whom are victims of sexual exploitation, are accommodated and cared for in the temporary accommodation for victims of trafficking in human beings in Burgas. Most of the victims are mainly trafficked and operate abroad, with Germany, Austria and the Netherlands being the main destinations. All were given social and psychosocial assistance, and 4 of them have been successfully integrated. The age group of the victims is between 20 and 46 years of age. In Varna, 14 victims of trafficking are accommodated and cared for in Varna's shelter for temporary accommodation of victims of trafficking in human beings. 13 cases concern sexual exploitation and one for trafficking a pregnant woman for the

purpose of selling the baby. Most of the victims operated abroad, with Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, the United Kingdom, Greece and Cyprus being the main destinations. In 1 of the abovementioned cases, a Czech citizen was sexually exploited in Bulgaria.

Additional information concerning the trafficking of human beings, domestic and sexual violence between 1 January 2012 and 21 December 2012 include:

1. Total number of victims of trafficking – 579.
2. Underage victims of trafficking – 66.
3. Number of assisted victims of trafficking, Bulgarian citizens – 79.
4. Number of assisted victims of trafficking of foreign citizenship – 1 (Czech Republic).
5. Non-governmental organizations involved in assisting victims who provided information to the NCCTHB – Samaritans Association – Stara Zagora, Naya Association – Targovishte, Demeter Association – Burgas, Foundation „A21”, „Open Door” Association – Pleven, „PULS” Foundation – Pernik, Women’s Association „Ekaterina Karavelova” – Silistra and „SOS – families at risk”, Varna.
6. Number of non-governmental organizations registered by the NCCTHB as service providers to victims of trafficking – 27.
7. Repatriated victims from Bulgaria to the country of origin – 1.
 - Number of minors repatriated and their nationality – NCCTHB does not have information on minors who have been victims of trafficking in human beings from other countries.
 - Number of adults repatriated and their nationality – 1 (Czech Republic).
8. Repatriated Bulgarian citizens who are victims of THB and the countries from which they came:
 - Number of underage repatriated Bulgarian citizens and country from which they were repatriated (State of exploitation) – 66, according to the Coordination mechanism for referral and care of unaccompanied Bulgarian children – Trafficked victims returning from abroad: 47 girls and 17 boys. Greece – 15, Germany – 12, Spain – 9, Sweden – 5, Finland – 5, Austria – 4, Czech Republic – 3, Poland – 2, Italy – 2, England – 2, Netherlands – 2, France – 1, Denmark – 1, Hungary – 1, Slovenia – 1.
 - Number of adult repatriated Bulgarian victims and country from which they are repatriated (State of exploitation): Austria – 6, Great Britain – 2, Germany – 17, Greece – 11, Ireland – 1, Spain – 2, Cyprus – 3, Poland – 3, France – 2, Netherlands – 4, Sweden – 1.
9. Information on trafficked victims receiving financial assistance/financial compensation under the Law on Support and Financial Compensation for Victims of Human Trafficking crimes – 0.
10. Information about exploited adult Bulgarian citizens in the country and abroad/statistics/:

- Number of victims of sexually exploitation – 461;
- Number of victims of labor exploitation – 131;
- Number of victims of street crimes (begging, pickpocketing, shop theft – no data;
- Number of body organ harvesting – no data available;

Information on exploited minors of Bulgarian citizens in the country and overseas/statistics/:

- Number of sexually exploited victims – 9;
- Number of victims of labor exploitation – no data available;
- Number of street crime victims (begging, pickpocketing, robbery shops) – 21;
- Number of babies trafficked – 3;
- Number of body organ harvesting – no data available.