

## **Overview**

According to the first Eurostat report on the traffic of persons in European in the month of April 2013, using data from 2008-2010, the conclusions for countries of origin of victims of THB in the EU is that the majority of victims originate either from Bulgaria or Romania (as EU countries), or from Nigeria and China (for non-EU countries). Trafficking people for the purpose of sexual exploitation continues to be the most widespread, despite an increase in labour exploitation. Additionally, the topic of trafficking in persons, especially minors and/or women, for the purpose of pickpocketing and begging is also increasing, as well as the topic surrounding cybercrime and trafficking.

Bulgaria continues to be primarily a country of origin and transit for victims, including minors, with major destinations such as Germany, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Norway, Sweden, The Czech Republic and Poland.

According to the US Department of State 2013 Anti-Trafficking Report, the Bulgarian government has made considerable efforts with regard to minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in human beings. During the reporting period, the government envisaged an increase in the funding for the two State shelters for the accommodation of victims of trafficking in human beings, managed by the NCCTHB. 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. Despite the serious efforts made in limiting the trafficking in human beings and increasing prevention, Bulgaria remains in Group 2 of the US State Department's Anti-Trafficking Report for the thirteenth consecutive year together with Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus, Serbia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Estonia, Portugal, Brazil and Mexico. Among the reasons for this is the minimal increase in the number of convicted traffickers- only 212 in 2012 compared to 119 in 2011, the country's insufficient capacity to care for the victims, and the lack of specialised care for male victims of trafficking. 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.

In this regard, and as a coordinating body, the NCCTHB sent letters asking all local anti-trafficking committees (LCCTHBs); institutions- members of the NCCTHB and those related to the problem; NGOs working on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings requiring the provision of information on the measures taken in implementation of these recommendations.

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 to 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, the 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, as well as the Scandinavian region between May-August for the purpose of labour exploitation. The Roma population remains as the most vulnerable group of exploitation.

The past year has shown a tendency for victims to be trafficked to various countries for different forms of exploitation, including:

- Sexual exploitation, the main countries of destination are Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, France and Poland;
- Labor exploitation- Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden and the Czech Republic;
- Pickpockets and/or begging often involving minors, almost always of Roma origin, as well as people with disabilities- Greece, Great Britain and Austria;
- Trafficking in pregnant women for the purpose of selling newborn babies and child trafficking- Greece.