



# FINAL REPORT

**2<sup>ND</sup> Conference:**

**TOGETHER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING:  
CHALLENGES AND PRACTICAL LESSONS**

November 9, 2015; Bucharest  
InterContinental Hotel; 4 Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard



## 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The 2<sup>nd</sup> conference “*Together against Human Trafficking: Challenges and Practical Lessons*”, focused this year on „*Fight against Labour Exploitation*” has been co-organized by the European Center for Legal Education and Research and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Romania, being fully funded by the German foundation. The event was supported by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom Embassy in Bucharest.

Human trafficking is a crime that often goes underreported due to its covert nature, various misconceptions about its definition, and lack of awareness at the local and regional levels. It is also overwhelmingly perpetrated by organized crime groups that operate in various countries, and this transnational crime dimension makes it harder to combat. The existence of criminal networks undermines the security and integrity of any democratic state and destabilize its social and economic order. The huge dimension of this worldwide phenomenon shows that **2 persons are sold or resold every single minute** for a global profit estimated annually at about 25 billion Euros.

Human trafficking is one of the most urgent political challenges of our global age, being the fastest growing crime (in EU 12% in the period of 2008-2013) as a complex and evolving phenomenon, which exploits people’s dreams for a better future, robs them of their dignity and violates their basic human rights. As the United Nations defines it, human trafficking is essentially **a form of modern slavery** and, at the same time, **the most severe form of human exploitation** in the world. There are today more slaves than at any time in our history.

The 2012 ILO Report states that there are about **20.9 million “official” slaves** (the international civil society and the doctrine talks about 35 million victims of human trafficking) of which more than 5.5 million are children. 3 of 1000 people worldwide are in forced labour of which, the highest number, 4.2 of 1000, is coming from SEE.

The main identified causes of the increasing number of human trafficking victims in SEE, and mainly in Romania, are: extreme poverty and vulnerability (economic instability, ethnic

discrimination, natural disasters etc.), violence against women and domestic violence, the “west mirage” - false promises for a better job and high or fast incomes, population growth in poor communities, as well as the absence of the rule of law.

Based on the fact that Romania still applies the criminal law perspective, this event addressed trafficking in persons as a human rights violation and focused on the need of a better protection of the victims and on the promotion of human values. The human rights approach is a comprehensive one that also addresses the **root causes of human trafficking**, helps reduce the vulnerability as a push factor and addresses the demand side as a major pull factor.

## 2. AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Our event’s main goal is to promote human rights and security of the vulnerable groups, especially the rights of women and children, thus stimulating civil society to enhance the rule of law by welcoming citizen participation, offering debates and trainings based on a human rights approach to key stakeholders involved in combating trafficking in persons and protection of the victims.

The project’s aim is to be **an annually debate forum** in order to facilitate a stronger and more coordinated response to human trafficking in Romania and in Europe. It promotes the human rights approach to countering trafficking in persons and a better protection of the victims.

## 3. TARGET GROUP

Our initial target group was 60 representatives of the main key stakeholders in order to attend in conference on specific aspects concerning cooperation, prevention, victims’ protection and identification or on specialized investigation methods of human trafficking offences. The event gathered **90 participants** as judges, labour inspectors, NGO representatives, representatives of national authorities (Romanian Ministry of Affairs, Romanian Labour Ministry, Constitutional Court, General Inspectorate for Immigration, regional General Directions for Social Affairs and Child Protection, National Agency Against Human Trafficking), lawyers, researchers, journalists of investigation, as well as foreign diplomats in Romania (representatives of the German, Spanish, Hungarian, Finnish, UK, US and the Netherlands embassies).

The large interest for the proposed topic for debate at the roundtable determined us to increase the number of participants from 60 to 96 enrolled representatives of key stakeholders in the field of human trafficking and 90 persons effectively attending it.

Among the 90 participants, there were:

- **12 representatives of GDSACP** (the General Direction of Social Affairs and Child Protection) from all over the Romania;
- **26 representatives of the Romanian NGOs** working with victims of human trafficking;
- **12 magistrates** working on cases of human trafficking at the tribunals and courts of appeal levels in Romania;
- **9 representatives of the foreign embassies** in Romania (Germany, UK, Finland, Norway, Spain, Hungary, US and the Netherlands);
- **8 labour inspectors;**
- **3 lawyers** interested in protection of the victims of human trafficking;
- **20 representatives of the civil society at large** (psychologists, National Agency against Human Trafficking, other NGOs representatives, journalist of investigation etc.).

#### 4. RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The conference contributes to the identification of the **key challenges in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings at the national level** and addresses this phenomenon as a human rights violation, focusing on the need of a better protection of the victims in order to successfully prosecute trafficking in person offences.

The main outcome of the event was to provide **an annually debate forum** for a better implementation of the international legal provisions and obligations undertaken by Romania. The focus of the carried out project was to help lay the foundation for consistent approaches in the provision of assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking through improved dialogue and cooperation among state actors and civil society organizations, as well as foreign partners (from Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands).



**5. THE CONFERENCE WAS STRUCTURED ON 3 DIFFERENT PANELS:**

- one **mapping human trafficking** for forced labour in order to define the main national policies and legal provisions;
- the second panel focused on challenges and consequences for the **investigation and prosecution** of THB for forced labour in the Romania, the Netherlands, The United Kingdom, the Republic of Moldova and Germany;
- and the third panel was on **good practices** in order to better fight against human trafficking for forced labour.

**6. THE MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED DURING THE DISCUSSIONS ARE:**

- victims do not see themselves as victims of THB for forced labour and are often reluctant to come forward and testify;
- lack of evidences to prove the link between the victims and the recruitment agencies that were involved in THB;
- **licensing of recruitment agencies**, understanding that abusive practices, including charging of recruitment fees, can contribute to THB for forced labour;
- **limited or no protection of the victims** of THB for forced labour;
- need for **proper and multidisciplinary training** for main stakeholders involved in the eradication of THB for forced labour;
- lack of **effective national and European cooperation** among law enforcement, labour inspectors, judges and immigration officials;
- need for **better financial investigations** and **effective confiscation** of traffickers' assets, including those of fraudulent and abusive recruitment agencies.

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