



3RD Conference:

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

November 18, 2016; Bucharest
InterContinental Hotel; 4 Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard

FINAL REPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The 3rd conference “*Together against Human Trafficking: Challenges and Practical Lessons*”, focused this year on „*Human Trafficking and Exploitation in the Wake of the Refugee Crisis*”. It 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, the United Kingdom Embassy and the Embassy of Sweden in Bucharest.

Human trafficking is one of the most urgent political challenges of our global age, being the fastest growing crime (in EU 16% in the period of 2008-2015) 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.

Since 2013, E.C.L.E.R. have played an active role in the field of human trafficking in Romania. Among the main results of this annual conference, organized with FES financial support, are:

- in the end of the First Edition, organized in 2014, it was launched the **National Independent Working Group on THB and Smuggling**;
- after the Second Edition, in 2015, the Working Group tried to **amend the national legislation on labour recruiting agencies**;
- in the end of the Third Edition of this event, our proposal was to have **the issue of illegal organs removal on the public agenda** and to launch discussions for an **integrated national strategy on organized crime** in accordance with the 2015 Annual DIOCT (DIICOT) Report.

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 trafficked or re trafficked every single minute** for a global profit estimated annually at about 25 billion Euros.

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 to reduce the vulnerability as a push factor and addresses the demand side as a major pull factor.

2. AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Our main goal is to promote human rights and human 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.

This event aims to be an annual debate forum developed in order to facilitate a stronger and more coordinated response to trafficking in persons in Europe. The 3rd edition addressed the main challenges encountered by the Romanian, German, Dutch, British and Swedish actors

involved in preventing and combating trafficking in persons in the context of the present refugee crisis, as well as the protection of the victims. It promotes, also, the human rights approach to countering trafficking in persons and a better protection of the victims.

This year we started a public discussion, for the first time in Romania, on the issue of **illegal organs removal**. There were presented specific cases of organs' trade in which Romanian victims were involved. Also, the lack of investigation at the national level on these kind of cases was mentioned. The second aim of the conference was to have a better cooperation among national actors responsible for the prevention and combating human trafficking.

3. TARGET GROUP

The target group of this event was made of magistrates and lawyers, physicians, police officers, public servants, researchers, journalists, labour inspectors, NGO's representatives, as well as foreign diplomats in Romania. We planned to have **100 representatives** of the main stakeholders working in the field of human trafficking.

The large interest for the topic discussed during this edition determined us to **increase the number of participants from 100 to 122**. However, there were **178 representatives** of the key actors in the field of human trafficking that expressed their interest to participate. Unfortunately, we were not able to confirm the attendance for **the last 56 persons** enrolled.

Among the 122 participants, there were:

- **28 representatives of the Romanian NGOs;**
- **23 magistrates** (prosecutors and judges);
- **19 representatives of the foreign embassies** in Romania and international organizations (Germany, the Netherlands, UK, US, Sweden, Israel, Spain, Slovenia, Finland, Norway, Lithuania, Serbia, Austria, and UNODC, Council of Europe, GRETA, United Nations);
- **18 representatives of GDSACP** (the General Direction of Social Affairs and Child Protection);
- **13 police officers;**

- 12 researchers and journalists;
- 7 representatives of Romanian central administration;
- 2 physicians.

4. THE CONFERENCE WAS STRUCTURED ON 3 DIFFERENT PANELS:

- *PANEL I: Exploiting the refugee crisis for profit. Are patterns of human trafficking shifting?* – gathered four international renowned experts who introduced the audience into the topic of discussions and presented main challenges that we face at the moment in the field of human trafficking;
- *PANEL II: How to efficiently combat human trafficking in the EU - framework? Strategies and best practices* - gathered three international experts that presented good practices on THB;
- *PANEL III: Policy and law enforcement response to human trafficking. Consequences for Romania* – focused on the Romanian challenges in the field of THB and on how national actors can cooperate better in this field, using the model of the anti-corruption strategy. The need for a national integrated strategy on organized crime was launched.

5. RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

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

Following the previous outcomes of this event – the establishment of the National Independent Working Group on THB and Smuggling (2014) and its efforts to amend the national legislation on labour recruiting agencies (2015) – the main outcome of this year’s edition was to put on the **public agenda the issue of illegal organs removal** and to discuss **a better procedure on national actors’ cooperation** in the field of human trafficking.



Five days after our event, the Romanian Minister of Health identified huge problems in 4 institutions accredited for organs removal. Based on these findings, he decided to control all national institutions for organs removal and the National Agency for Transplants. He referred the cases to national authorities responsible to investigate possible criminal offenses, fraud and use of forgery on the accreditation of health units for activities in the field of transplantation. **So, the main objective of our conference was fully met.**

The second outcome of our event was to launch the discussion for **an integrated national strategy on organized crime** in accordance with the 2015 Annual DIOCT (DIICOT) Report. At the moment, Romania has sectorial strategies on different forms of organized crime, but there is a need for an integrated strategy in order to establish a better and more efficient cooperation among all stakeholders relevant for this field. To be able to meet this objective, E.C.L.E.R. – supported by the main interested national actors and international partners, will try to **make a SOCTA (Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment) on Romania**, using the expertise and methodology of EUROPOL and UNODC.

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