



**Roundtable Discussion:**

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

December 10, 2014; Bucharest  
Crowne Plaza Hotel; Magnolia Conference Hall, 1 Poligrafiei Boulevard

# FINAL REPORT

## 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The roundtable “Together against Human Trafficking: Challenges and Practical Lessons” 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, and with support of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bucharest, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Romanian-American University.

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. **2/3 of the identified victims** of human trafficking within the 28 EU countries, from 2008 to 2010, are coming from Romania.

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 (and a training) 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 40 representatives of the main key stakeholders in order to attend in roundtable debates on specific aspects concerning cooperation, prevention, victims' protection and identification or on specialised investigation methods of human trafficking offences. The event gathered **78 participants** as NGO representatives, judges, 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, Austrian, UK, US and the Nederland's embassies).

The large interest for the proposed topic for debate at the roundtable determined us to increase the number of participants from 40 to 95 enrolled representatives of key stakeholders in the field of human trafficking and 78 persons attending.

Among the 78 participants, there were:

- **20 representatives of GDSACP** (the General Direction of Social Affairs and Child Protection) from all over the Romania;
- **15 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;
- **5 representatives of the foreign embassies** in Romania (Germany, Austria, UK, US and the Nederland's);
- **8 lawyers** interested in protection of the victims of human trafficking;
- **18 representatives of the civil society at large** (psychologists, National Agency against Human Trafficking, other NGOs representatives, journalist of investigation etc.).

There were **no representatives of the Romanian law enforcement authorities**: Direction for Combating Organized Crime (DCCO) and Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT).

### 4. RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The project 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 and the Nederland's).

The roundtable was structured on 2 different panels: one discussing the victim protection and assistance in the Romania, the Nederland's and Germany and the second one on the successful prosecution of human trafficking in the Germany and the Nederland's. The Romanian law enforcement agencies have not appointed a representative as a speaker and neither accepted the invitation of the organisers to be represented among the participants.

The **FEEDBACK REPORT FORMS** showed that:

- the event was **very well organised** (only one participant graded it as “moderate”);
- the debated topic was considered to be “very important” (8 participants considered the topic “important”);
- the participants were **“most impressed” by speakers, discussions**, the event's planning and organisation, the real interest of the speakers in the challenges that human trafficking is facing in Europe, the number of examples offered by the speakers and also by the participants during discussions;
- the presentations and discussions **were up to the expectations of the participants “very well”** (12 of the participants appreciated/ assessed them as “well” and 1 as “moderate”);
- the **most interesting topics** were considered by the large majority of the participants *“The Need for Effective Investigation of Human Trafficking Offences to Secure Successful Prosecution”* and *“The Challenges of*

*Investigating Human Trafficking and Promoting Transnational Partnership to Combat Human Trafficking”;*

- the most useful aspects that have been discussed: **comparative legal provision** in the 3 participating countries and way of interpretation and application of the EU legal standards, **good practices** from Germany and the Nederland’s, the lack of real protection of the victims in Romania as they have been identified during the discussions etc.;
- an even greater interest was manifested on the part of the participants in **TRAINING PROGRAMS** and in similar **GENUINE DEBATES** on human trafficking issues with experts from other European countries;
- among the most interesting topics for the participants were/ largest interest of the participants was in **topics** like:
  - interpretation and application of the legal norms in the field of human trafficking;
  - assistance and protection of victims of human trafficking;
  - drafting better national strategies in the field of human trafficking;
  - awareness about legal and irregular migration;
  - sharing of good practices and workshops with actual cases and ways to solve them better;
  - cooperation and dialog forums on human trafficking.

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