

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING MANUAL FOR JOURNALISTS



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## INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHORS

This Manual was created with the intention to offer all those who write or wish to write on the phenomenon of trafficking in women fundamental information on the problem itself, and give recommendations for writing, all for the purpose of the most precise possible presentation of the problem to the citizens, in the interest of women victims of trafficking and all the persons dealing with them.

The second edition of the Manual that you have in front of you provides a cross section of the most significant aspects of the problem of trafficking in women as experienced by an organization from Serbia. NGO ASTRA, the publisher of the Manual, is a women's non-governmental organization which works on the prevention of human trafficking and offers direct assistance to the victims. This Manual has been created on the basis of our eight year long experience in fighting human trafficking in Serbia. In the period between March 2002 and November 2008, ASTRA SOS Hotline received 8,533 calls. During the same period, 275 trafficking victims were identified, of whom 41% were children.

We advocate the position that trafficking in women is just one of the forms of violence against women, that is, of the violation of women's human rights. We define it as trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and trafficking in women aimed at exploitation of labor e.g. work at home or forced marriage. We speak of trafficking in women when a woman is recruited by deception, coercion, threat, force, exposed to violence and forced to engage in jobs which are exploitative, in slavery-like labor, and which are, therefore, the violation of human rights that are guaranteed by birth. Due to the complexity of this phenomenon, we have tried to fully cover all its aspects.

Due to the fact that trafficking in persons, but especially in women and children, has been marked as a priority of political officials around the world and that it is present in the media more than ever, this Manual was created as a response to the current way of presenting the problem of trafficking in women and to the existing assistance mechanisms in the Republic of Serbia.

The second, extended edition of the Manual for Journalists, besides offering a definition and historical outline, also provides a general overview of the situation and new trends in human trafficking in the world. The Manual presents the fundamental information on the problem of trafficking in women, on who the victims of trafficking are, how they are recruited, and on the causes of trafficking in women. It speaks of trafficking in women as another form of violence, on the difference between trafficking in women, prostitution and illegal migration, on the violence a woman experiences as a victim of trafficking, and on prejudices we often hear concerning the problem of trafficking.

In the second section, the Manual speaks of the extent of trafficking in women in Serbia, the mechanisms developed to this day for the purpose of suppressing trafficking; it stresses the data collected by means of the SOS hotline for victims of trafficking; it presents national legislation that governs the problem of trafficking in women, as well as the data on trafficking in children. Moreover, in this section you may read what the citizens of Serbia think and how much they know about this topic.

In order to reach out to as many journalists as possible, we have tried to include experts, excellent journalists who have been practicing investigative journalism in the area of trafficking in women for years or who have otherwise been contributing to the prevention and suppressing of this problem. Our idea was that it would be most useful for journalists to read about the experience of their peers working in the area of radio, TV, documentary journalism, print media and marketing. This section

also contains a comparative analysis of the print media in the period May–October 2008 and throughout 2003, in order to assess qualitative progress in the reporting by Serbian media on the problem of human trafficking.

Also, we have tried to analyze terminology, the intensity of writing and the visual presentation of the problem of trafficking in women as it appeared in the print media, as well as to give recommendations to all those who write or are preparing to write on the topic of trafficking in women.

The last section contains additional references and contacts of relevant institutions, international and nongovernmental organization in the country and abroad that may be of use for all those who are doing in–depth research of this problem.

Adequate media reporting on this problem is very important for deconstructing prejudice and stereotypes, popular awareness raising, preventing future recruitment and improving the quality of assistance and reintegration process of persons who have managed to come out of the trafficking chain. We considered this to be in our common interest.

Therefore, we hope you will find this Manual useful for your work. Should you have any questions, confusion or you need additional information, call ASTRA, we will be glad to help.

Authors







## GENERAL OVERVIEW

*Have you ever watched waves at sea? Violence is like a sea wave. You see it coming, but you cannot evade it. You have no choice – when it finally reaches you, it gets hold of you. Everything is out of your control, you are in the wave, desperately trying to free yourself, but the wave has its course, a life of its own. And then it breaks – and you never know where it broke, where you are now... That was my life – everything I wished was at least some possibility of choice – a chance to evade that wave. To live my own life. Then I got the feeling that this chance appeared and – I left... (The Story of a Woman Victim of Trafficking, radio drama, Siobhan Cleary)*

### WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon that hits all countries in the world: countries in political and economic transition, underdeveloped and developing countries, countries in war and post-conflict countries that appear as the countries of origin and transit of trafficking victims, and economically developed countries that appear as the countries of destination. Terms "the country of origin/source country", "transit country" and "destination country" are not absolute categories – one country may be any of these in specific cases. Also, economic development and the wealth of destination country cannot be observed independently from the situation in the country of origin.

There are not reliable and comprehensive data on the size of the problem of human trafficking, but estimations made by international organizations and some national agencies may serve as a good indicator. According to the UN, 700,000 children, women and men fall victim to trafficking every year<sup>1</sup>. US State Department estimates this figure at 900,000, of whom 20,000 persons are exploited in the US territory<sup>2</sup>. In its 2005 Report, International Labor Organization states that 2.45 million people every year become victims of labor exploitation only<sup>3</sup>. According to UNICEF, 1.2 million children become trafficking victims every year<sup>4</sup>. Although it is still the dominant belief that only women and children may fall victim to trafficking, the truth is that anyone can be the victim.

Human trafficking is considered to be one of the three most profitable criminal activities, alongside drug trafficking and illegal arms trafficking. It is often referred to as "a highly profitable and low-risk activity" because, on one side, it is estimated that traffickers' profits range from a couple of billion to as much as 60 and even 500<sup>5</sup> billion USD<sup>6</sup> a year, while, statistically, only a small number of traffickers end up in court and are sentenced to long prison sentences.

Human trafficking works on the supply–demand principle. On one side, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, deprivation, wars, political instability, family violence, and discrimination make people, in search of a better life or pure survival, look for jobs, education and other opportunities in some other town or country. On the other hand, in the globalization era, more developed and wealthier countries<sup>7</sup> generate growing demand for cheap products, cheap labor, and cheap services. It is not irrelevant that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the century of numerous armed conflicts and international peace operations, which correlates with great demand for sexual services wherever the troops are located, as well as with the absence of institutions and the collapse of the system in countries in which the conflict occurs. All of these is factors create favorable conditions

1 [HTTP://WWW.ENDHUMANTRAFFICKINGNOW.COM/PUBLIC/STRUCTURE/1\\_1.HTML](http://www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/public/structure/1_1.html)

2 [HTTP://WWW.STATE.GOV/G/TIP/RLS/RPT/23495.HTM](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rpt/23495.htm)

3 [HTTP://WWW.ENDHUMANTRAFFICKINGNOW.COM/PUBLIC/STRUCTURE/1\\_1.HTML](http://www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/public/structure/1_1.html)

4 [HTTP://WWW.UNICEF.ORG/MEDIA/MEDIA\\_23970.HTML](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_23970.html)

5 [HTTP://WWW.ENDHUMANTRAFFICKINGNOW.COM/PUBLIC/STRUCTURE/1\\_1.HTML](http://www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/public/structure/1_1.html)

6 SERBIA'S GDP IN 2006 WAS AROUND USD 30 BILLION.

7 THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF DESTINATION COUNTRY SHOULD NOT BE OBSERVED AS SUCH, BUT IN THE LIGHT OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT, POVERTY OR INSTABILITY OF THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

for the growth of all kinds of crime, including human trafficking. Organized criminal groups have found their interest and possibility for enormous profits through matching such supply and demand. Besides socio-economic circumstances that generate the development of human trafficking, there are other reasons that may also make one country or region favorable for the recruitment of trafficking victims, such as natural catastrophes and too strict visa and immigration regulations of developed countries.

Human trafficking is a complex problem and different actors fight its different aspects. Although not every single act of human trafficking is linked to organized crime, but may appear as a crime of an individual, or even a crime of opportunity, organized criminal groups are those that run and control the largest portion of this "business". In a public-law and strategic context, a serious state must not allow the growth of organized crime in its territory, as this brings economic destabilization due to increased money laundering, the rise of corruption in the public sector, political corruption, the loss of control over border management and similar, resulting in the purchase of political power and the creation of a criminal state. However, not equally important aspect which civil society insists upon and state authorities are often prone to neglect is the fact that human trafficking is the gravest violation of victims' human rights. In addition to the human rights violation which victims suffer while they are being exploited, their situation changes only slightly even when they manage to find a way out. Although the process of recovery and reintegration is hard, long and uncertain in itself, on top of this victims are forced to fight prejudice and a lack of understanding on the part of their community and institutions and are often exposed to secondary victimization by those who are supposed to provide them with assistance and support.

Although it may sometimes look as if this is a new problem which has arisen only recently, human trafficking is actually a phenomenon that has been present and tolerated in different forms throughout history. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it flourished in Europe thanks to extensive socio-political changes that took place in Eastern Europe. The economic collapse that accompanied the transition from socialism into capitalism and parliamentary democracy, together with false impressions of a good and worry-free life on the other side of the former "iron curtain" which they knew nothing about, made many people, especially women and girls, go to Western Europe. Wars in the territory of former Yugoslavia only contributed to the establishment of a safe transit route, which was often a place for temporary exploitation of trafficking victims, too.

Already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the international community sensed a need to internationally ban such practices<sup>8</sup>. Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UN General Assembly adopted in 1948, strictly prohibits any form of slavery or slave trade. Soon followed other international treaties and convention that prohibited practices that might be associated with trafficking in human beings. Finally, in 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol)<sup>9</sup> was adopted, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as the first document addressing the problem of human trafficking in a modern way and, with all its deficiencies, giving a comprehensive definition of this phenomenon.

Actions that constitute trafficking in human beings are specified in Article 3 of the Trafficking Protocol.

8 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC – 1904, CONVENTION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN – 1921, CONVENTION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN OF FULL AGE – 1933.

9 LAW ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATION'S CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AND PROTOCOLS THERETO [OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF FR-Y – INTERNATIONAL TREATIES, NO. 6/2001]

*For the purposes of this Protocol:*

*[a] "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;*

*[b] The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;*

*[c] The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;*

*[d] "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.*

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING – ILLEGAL MIGRATIONS – PROSTITUTION

Both the general public and some professionals equate human trafficking, illegal migrations and prostitution. However, these three terms essentially differ, in spite of some commonalities.

According to the general definition, migration stands for any form of temporary or permanent geographical movement of living creatures. To put it simply, this concerns any geographical movement of individuals or groups for the purpose of permanently resettling. Migrations are not a new phenomenon. For centuries, people have been leaving their homes in search of a better life. Migrations are affected by different factors: demographic, economic, political, geographical. Migrations are often caused by national, religious, racial persecutions and persecutions on political grounds. However, it should be remembered that migrations, both legal and illegal, are driven by the same push and pull factors as human trafficking, and many persons have fallen victim to trafficking by attempting to migrate.

Cross-border migrations may be divided, inter alia, into legal and illegal. As opposed to moving to another country based on legal documents, visa, residence and work permits and in compliance with all immigration regulations of the host-country, illegal migrations most often involve people smuggling.

People smuggling implies the illegal transfer of persons from one country to another in exchange for money. An illegal migrant, i.e. smuggled person, voluntarily participates in the entire process. Human trafficking lacks the element of consent on the part of the victim, i.e. even if it is there, consent arises out of coercion, deception, threat, being misled and the like. Also, people smuggling is of a cross-border nature, that is, the crossing of one or more international state borders constitutes the act of people smuggling. On the other hand, human trafficking can be transnational and internal, i.e. victims may, but need not cross state borders during the process of trafficking. However, it should be kept in mind that the status and position of illegal migrants, both during the transfer and their staying in the desired destination, make this group vulnerable to human trafficking, which is another point where these two phenomena meet. In other words, fully dependant on smugglers, without documents and money and with limited or non-existent knowledge of the country they go to, its language etc., illegal migrants are easy prey to human traffickers.

Human trafficking was criminalized for the first time in Serbia in 2003 [Article 111b of the Criminal Law of the Republic of

Serbia) in such a manner that nicely illustrates unacceptable confusion between this problem and people smuggling. Although formal conditions were provided that were supposed to make possible the monitoring of the size of human trafficking in Serbia and of the intensity and efficiency of the state response, the data obtained remained incomplete and unreliable. In addition, a great number of criminal reports of human trafficking filed by the police actually referred to migrants caught in an attempt to illegally cross the state border.

Human trafficking is also often confused with prostitution because the majority of victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. However, sexual exploitation is only one form of human trafficking (alongside forced labor, forced begging, coercion into criminal activity, illegal adoption, forced marriage, organ trafficking and the like).

Prostitution is a complex social phenomenon and, although made under pressure of various living and social circumstances, it ultimately represents a choice of a sex worker. A trafficking victim is coerced into practicing prostitution. She cannot make free decisions on where and how she will work, she cannot refuse a client, she does not have the freedom of movement and cannot decide to quit. In addition, she is poorly paid – if paid at all – for the work she does, while the major portion of her earnings is withheld by the trafficker. To put it simply, she is the property of the person who bought her. On the other hand, although the relationship between a voluntary sex worker and her pimp may be complex and on the verge of exploitation, and the freedom such a person enjoys may not be real and unlimited, the sex worker still can freely dispose of her own body and earnings and freely make decisions on her life.

Very often, persons who voluntarily practice prostitution fall victim to trafficking: this can happen when sex work shifts from choice into coercion. Although a woman may decide to go to a foreign country to do the sex work, if she becomes an object of sale, purchase, coercion and exploitation there, the fact that she chose or agreed to do this kind of work does not affect her status of a victim of trafficking.

## CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In the majority of international documents that deal with the problem of human trafficking, special emphasis is put on trafficking in women and children because women and children constitute more than 90% of all identified victims. However, it should be borne in mind that men can fall victim too, especially to trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation. In that respect, some of the causes of human trafficking are gendered, based on the special vulnerability of women, while others equally affect both men and women.

Different causes may affect someone becoming a trafficking victim. These causes may be divided into the so called *push* and *pull* factors. Unemployment, poverty, lack of education, lack of opportunities, violence or discrimination may push someone to try to build life in some other place. Anyone who wants to change their life will be interested in considering offers that seem to be conducive to that goal. And, in the light of imagined advantages of a better life, job or interesting experience in some other place, it is easy to accept such offers.

### LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

If we look at the most frequent countries of origin of trafficking victims, we can see that these are mostly developing countries and countries in transition. Countries in transition are undergoing political, social and cultural changes and are faced with numerous developmental challenges. The unbalanced distribution of power and opportunities, poverty and unemployment, create an environment that is favorable for recruiting trafficking victims, because people are in a constant search for work. In addition, corruption and the presence of armed conflict in one country or the region give traffickers a breeding ground for

work. All these factors have marked life in Eastern and Southeastern Europe in last twenty years, while numerous political, social and cultural changes and collapses have strengthened an unequal “distribution of power” between men and women, in the form of increase in poverty and unemployment in general, and in particular the unemployment of women.

At the beginning of the new millennium, trafficking in women is a result of a new social and political reality and the balance of power in the world, but first of all, of a society that has no interest in facing its own violence. Despite numerous international documents and national constitutional provisions that guarantee the rights and freedoms of all individuals, violence against women is an omnipresent phenomenon. It has repercussions on economic, family, educational and public levels, creating a circle that any woman is unlikely to step out of without the support of her community, institutions or the law.

## DISCRIMINATION

Economic uncertainty and discrimination against women is one of the main causes of trafficking, which is indicated by its precisely determined geopolitical route: underdeveloped countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are the most often countries of origin, while economically developed countries of Western and Northern Europe appear as the major destinations. In societies that are in an early or advanced stage of the transition process, the female population takes the brunt of unemployment. The so-called “feminization of poverty”, typical for these societies, implies low representation of women and their discrimination in the labor market: they are marginalized at poorly paid jobs, earn less than men, have limited promotion opportunities, etc. Obstacles and discrimination are visible in the very process of searching for a job. For many women, a job interview resembles police interrogation, where they have to answer questions about their marital status and family planning, something no man is put through.

Even if they manage to find a job, it is in underdeveloped and low-paid industries, i.e. in “traditionally feminine” professions: health, education, culture, in which they rarely occupy managerial positions.

For example, Moldova, one of the most frequent countries of origin of trafficking victims, used to employ 80–85% of women in light industries. After a failed transition and total collapse of these industries, 68% of them lost their jobs. According to the 1999 data, 63% women and 37% men were registered as unemployed<sup>10</sup>.

Women in Serbia constitute the majority of unemployed persons, too, both according to the National Employment Agency's data and the Labor Force Survey. Although this difference decreased during 1990–2001, it has been registering an upward trend in recent years. The October 2006 Labor Force Survey<sup>11</sup> reports the unemployment rate of 24.7% for women and 17.9% for men, an increase compared with female unemployment rate of 22.9% reported in 2004.

Moreover, gender segregation of occupations in the Serbian labor market is very strong<sup>12</sup>; thus, women are more often employed in jobs with lower pay. An increase in the concentration of women in certain occupations or their presence in top positions often correlates with a fall in the salaries and social influence of such occupations. According to the Republican Statistical Office, in 2002 only 44 women or every 100 men held the position of legislator, manager or senior official<sup>13</sup>, although there were 112 women for every 100 men who identified as professionals<sup>14</sup>. At the same time, women have a relatively large share of the gray economy, where they are less protected from sexual harassment and exploitation and where the gender gap in wages is even greater.

<sup>10</sup> [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

<sup>11</sup> STATISTICAL OFFICE OF SERBIA

<sup>12</sup> GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA (2006), NATIONAL MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

<sup>13</sup> ISCO 88

<sup>14</sup> GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA (2005), REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Men are much more formally and visibly active in the labor market, while women more often appear as unpaid workers in the family or in family business. Women spend 5.2 hours on average every day doing "unpaid work", i.e. running the household, while men spend around one hour a day on such activities. "The Gender Barometer"<sup>15</sup> shows that the greatest burden of parenthood still rests on women, while the only activities in which fathers take a larger part than mothers are "playing with a child, disciplining a child and talking about problems". Doing unpaid work exhausts women's resources and makes them less competitive in the labor market<sup>16</sup>.

Social policy has also seen changes: maternity leaves have been shortened and child care systems have changed, making it even more difficult for a woman to balance her career and family obligations. At the same time, thanks to the restoration of traditional social values, especially traditional gender roles, women are seen in the model of a "stay-at-home mother" seeking protection of a man, whose only happiness and purpose is to take care of her family. Such an image is conveyed and maintained through the education system, the media, legislation. However, gender relations are quite different in reality: women are often the main breadwinners of the family, but they also suffer most because of bad labor market conditions. This double role that women are forced to play in most societies in the times of economic crisis and war has caused many women and girls in the whole region and beyond to view their bodies as the only source of income they have at their disposal.

The economic and social marginalization of women is the main cause of trafficking in women and women's migration, which is illustrated by data obtained through the analysis of cases of women victims of trafficking in three Western European countries: Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. In Italy, 92.40% of women victims had lived with their families in the countries of origin; 68.75% of them had work experience and 58.75% lived on the verge of poverty. The most frequent motive for accepting the offer of strangers who recruited them in the countries of origin was employment (35%), money for basic needs (30%) and money for their families (23%).<sup>17</sup>

One of the circumstances human traffickers benefit from is the lack of knowledge, especially among young women, about actual possibilities of migration into Western European countries: they either have no or very little information about living conditions and employment opportunities in the European Union. They do not know their rights or if and how they can be issued legal working permits; they also do not know that they cannot work legally with tourist (Schengen) visa and are not aware of all the risks of working in the "black" labor market.

Militarization of the region is also one of the causes of trafficking in women that contributes to its spread. Defined as the "concept of armed peace", militarization is accompanied by the arrival of a large number of soldiers into the post-conflict environment, in which there is no state control, with impotent state institutions (if any), and where there are no mechanisms for suppressing this and other forms of crime. Big demand created a new sex industry market.<sup>18</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia are nowadays known as one of the main destination countries in the territory of South Eastern Europe, while surrounding countries are the regions of transit and origin. Members of international military/peacekeeping forces primarily appear as clients, but not rarely they are involved in the organization of the human trafficking chain<sup>19</sup>. The

15. BLAGOJEVIĆ M. (2004), *POLOŽAJ ŽENA U ZEMLJAMA BALKANA – KOMPARATIVNI PREGLED*, GEEP GENDER JEDNAKOST I RAVNOPRAVNOST U BIH, GENDER CENTAR VLADE RS I GENDER CENTAR VLADE FBiH, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.

16. BLAGOJEVIĆ M. (2006), *RODNI BAROMETAR – DRUŠTVENI POLOŽAJ I KVALITET ŽIVOTA ŽENA I MUŠKARACA SRBIJA 2006*, AŽIN, BEOGRAD I ALTERA MB, BUDAPEST

17. *RESEARCH BASED ON CASE STUDIES OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN 3 EU MEMBER STATES, I.E. BELGIUM, ITALY AND THE NETHERLANDS*, PP 26 AND 192

18. MILITARIZATION AND SEX TOURISM ARE EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASE IN TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN IN THE SENSE THAT THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH OF THE MARKET OF SEXUAL SERVICES. HOWEVER, THE CONSUMERS OF SERVICES RENDERED BY WOMEN WHO ARE FORCED INTO PROSTITUTION ARE NOT SOLELY FOREIGN SOLDIERS OR TOURISTS, BUT (SOMETIMES TO A MUCH GREATER EXTENT) LOCAL MEN, TOO.

19. UNFORTUNATELY, HIGHER INSTANCES RARELY REACT IN ORDER TO PREVENT THAT – THERE IS A WELL-KNOWN CASE OF KATHERINE BOLKOVIC, MEMBER OF THE US PEACE-KEEPING MILITARY TROOPS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, WHO WAS READY TO PUBLICLY ACCUSE AND PRESENT EVIDENCE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF HER FELLOW SOLDIERS IN THIS CRIME. AS A RESULT OF THIS DECISION OF HERS, SHE WAS DISCHARGED FROM DUTY WITHOUT POSSIBILITY TO EVER JOIN ANY PEACE OPERATION.

unbreakable link between “peacekeepers” and trafficking in women is to a great extent maintained by generally accepted social values, according to which it is normal that soldiers have needs – “boys will be boys”<sup>20</sup>.

One should not forget the influence militarization has on the ideological level: “At the ideological level, the militarization process is expressed through imposing and adopting of military values – it is a process in which the values and needs of the military apparatus are given advantage over all other processes that integrate almost all aspects of everyday life of civilian population into the logic of a war system [...] in which [...] almost all the inhabitants, women included, become at the same time the victims and the accomplices of a militarist system through an even more rigid division of gender roles and striking political marginalization”.<sup>21</sup>

In that respect, a good illustration is the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where war veterans were given priority in employment and earn more, which was directly to the detriment of women in the labor market, since men formed the majority of demobilized soldiers<sup>22</sup>.

Despite the efforts of nongovernmental and international organizations and recently of the state institutions, the intensity of trafficking in women does not seem to be weakening. Unfortunately, some segments of society are still reluctant to admit that the problem exists at all.

## VIOLENCE

Women and children are often forced to leave their families or their communities because of violence they suffer there, either family violence or violent environment as such. Not being protected by any competent system in society, girls, boys and women are accepting offers that would enable them to live a life without violence.

According to ASTRA SOS Hotline<sup>23</sup>, more than half of Serbian nationals identified as trafficking victims in 2002–2007 had previous experience of violence<sup>24</sup>. We have every reason to believe that this percentage is even higher since we do not have relevant information for one third of our clients.<sup>25</sup>

Chart 1: Previous experience of violence of trafficking victims (domestic nationals)

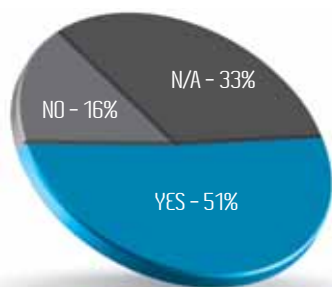
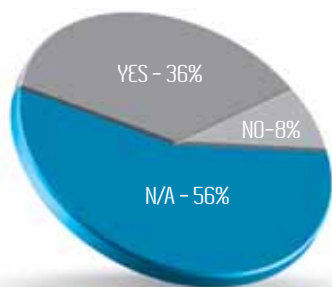


Chart 2: Previous experience of violence of trafficking victims (foreign nationals)



<sup>20</sup> THIS EXPLAINS (JUSTIFIES) THE PROBLEM WITH THEIR “MASCULINE NATURE” WHICH CANNOT BE CHANGED.

<sup>21</sup> ZAJIĆ S. (2000), ŽENE I MILITARIZAM U SRBIJI, ŽENE U CRNOJ, BEOGRAD

<sup>22</sup> WOMEN 2000, AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STATUS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CEE AND SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE AND NIS, IHF, 2000, P. 89.

<sup>23</sup> SINCE MARCH 2002 (WHEN SOS HOTLINE WAS LAUNCHED) UNTIL DECEMBER 2007, 260 TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WERE IDENTIFIED AND/OR ASSISTED THROUGH ASTRA SOS HOTLINE. QUOTED DATA ARE TAKEN FROM ASTRA DATABASE.

<sup>24</sup> DATA REFER TO BOTH VIOLENCE IN PRIMARY FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

<sup>25</sup> ONE OF THE RULES OF ASTRA SOS HOTLINE IS THAT ONLY INFORMATION DIRECTLY RELEVANT FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM ARE TAKEN FROM VICTIMS, WHILE THEY SHOULD NOT BE BURDENED WITH ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONING. EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, WHICH INVOLVE ACUTE VIOLENCE, SEARCHES AND THE LIKE, DATA ARE OBTAINED IN COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS OVER LONGER PERIODS OF TIME, WHILE TOPICS LIKE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE ARE INITIATED AND HANDLED AT CLIENT'S INITIATIVE.

Human traffickers are trying to make use of push and pull factors described earlier in the text, and target women and girls who are looking for opportunities in foreign countries and who often have difficult economic and social situations at their homes. One of the most attractive thing for young women from Central and Eastern Europe are promises of their own comfort, which is the level of independence they cannot imagine in their home countries. They are attracted by an idea that they could travel to the Wealthy West and earn (their idea of) great amounts of money there in a short period of time, which would enable them to rescue themselves and their families from poverty and despair.

Women are offered jobs of waitresses, dancers, artists, escort, maids or beauticians, whereby it is difficult to instantly distinguish between the agencies that offer legitimate employment and those that serve as a cover for trafficking in women.

## REALITY OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

*"When buyers come, the girls are ordered to take off their clothes and stand naked on the road. They are exhibited like cattle for selection." (testimony from ARIZONA marketplace in Bosnia and Herzegovina)*

Once a woman finds herself in the trafficking chain, exploitation may take different forms. Thus, women are mostly forced to work in the sex industry, i.e. in districts and streets where prostitution and porno industry are concentrated, in escort agencies or apartments that are used as brothels and in bars, but they may also be subjected to labor exploitation in households and farms, shops, factories, etc. Children are usually sexually exploited or forced into begging, while as far as adult men are concerned, they are forced to work at construction sites, farms and the like. It is important to stress that women make up the majority of victims of this crime.

Regardless of the kind of exploitation, it is always done in the most severe possible conditions. For the purpose of this Manual, we have tried to outline some common points, but it should be borne in mind that the reality of trafficking victims is always much worse than it can be presented in a manual, report or any other publication. On the other hand, human traffickers are always introducing new, more severe and perfidious ways of abuse, with only one goal: to make and sustain profits. Trafficked persons are exposed to different forms of violence (psychological, physical, sexual) and torture, in order to gain full control over them, break their resistance and ensure obedience. Thus, women forced into prostitution are required to have intercourse with a great number of clients per day, often without any protection, while traffickers often make them drug addicted in order to have more efficient control. Victims usually live in the same establishment where they work. They have to clean, cook, do the laundry and ironing for the entire club/bar. They do not eat regularly or sufficiently. They are required to work extremely long hours, without possibility to refuse certain services to certain clients.

In short, victims are exploited without possibility to make any decision about their own life.

When we talk about women that ended up in the trafficking chain, we may see that society is quick to make judgments about whether she "asked for that" or "knew what she was going to do", whether she is "naïve and stupid"... It is often forgotten that these women are deceived regarding their working conditions, that they are made to believe that they are going to another country/town to work as waitresses, nannies, models, factory workers, nurses, etc. From the moment of a victim's recruitment, when abuse and exploitation start, her/his motivation to leave home becomes irrelevant. Victims themselves are often not aware that they are victims; they think everything is their fault, they feel ashamed for work they have to do and do not know that they can ask for help.



The basic goal of human traffickers is to make money through long-term exploitation of victims. To achieve that, they would do anything to protect their investment, i.e. ensure undisturbed work and prevent any runaway attempt, using different mechanisms of control. The most frequently used control mechanisms are as follows:

### CAPTIVITY/ISOLATION:

As mentioned earlier, trafficking victims have limited freedom of movement. Every time they go out, they are escorted and they are not allowed to have contact with strangers or with their families. They are often kept in isolation, thus becoming dependant on traffickers. Traffickers benefit from such a situation and their goal is to strengthen that feeling of isolation and the dependence of the persons they exploit, in order to make them believe that they should not expect help from others, especially from state authorities and the police. They do not know the local language, they have no money and documents, they do not trust the police and other institutions, their residence status is illegal, they feel scared, ashamed and isolated – all of these contribute to their dependence.

Trafficking victims are often transferred from one place to another so that they lose orientation as to where they are (they sometimes do not even know in what country they are living) and to prevent them from developing friendships and close relations with their environment. This is also done in order to make any investigation and discovery by the police more difficult.

With their identification and/or travel documents taken away, victims are deprived of their officially verified identity; in addition, their illegal status is confirmed in this way, preventing them from asking for help or running away to another country/address. Since many victims come from countries where the police is seen more as a cruel force than as a service to help citizens, victims themselves avoid any contact with the police. Traffickers support such a picture, telling the victim that she is free to go to the police if she wishes so, but that she would be instantly deported, i.e. returned to her home country, where she would be exposed to reprisal. Alternatively, traffickers may tell the victim that it is no use to ask for police assistance, because all police officers are corrupt and sort of dependant (*inter alia*, because they are compromised in regards to (free) use of sexual services). Unfortunately, on more than one occasion traffickers were right, either regarding corruption or deportation, i.e. banishment from the country. Moreover, deported persons are criminally prosecuted in some countries after their arrival, for prostitution or illegally leaving the country. Besides, they may be required to cover the costs of deportation, which only adds on their previous debt.

### THREATS AND VIOLENCE/IMPOSING FEAR

Traffickers use violence and/or threat of violence as an effective means of control. Victims are often beaten and raped, their movement is restricted, they are kept in isolation for long periods of time, deprived of food and water, drugged and tortured with sharp objects and burned with cigarettes, all of this in order to subdue them. This may be done as a way of punishment for some forms of disobedience, but also as a warning to other victims, i.e. to show them what kind of consequences they would suffer in case of disobedience. In other cases, physical and/or sexual violence is imposed on a victim simply for the reason of sexual sadism. In case of sexual exploitation, the shame that the victim may feel is another mechanism of control. Trafficker may threaten that he would tell the victim's family that she worked as a prostitute. In this way, she is made to abide by all trafficker's requests.

### USE AND THREAT WITH REPRISAL AGAINST VICTIM'S FAMILY

One of the most effective threats is threat of violence against persons the victim loves, i.e. her closest friends and family and against herself. In many cases, human traffickers are trying to find out exact information on the victim's family or her loved

ones. This can be an internal nick name of a close family member or the address of another close person. The threat itself enables control over the victim, and that is why it is not necessary that trafficker possess all data about victim's family. Since the victim does not want to risk the safety of people she loves, she would not try to check whether trafficker is bluffing or not when he speaks about intimate details and when he threatens with violence against her family.

These threats are also used to secure the victim's obedience and to prevent her from running away. And they often realized, too: if a woman dares to run away and gets caught, both she and her family are faced with reprisal. On more than one occasion such victim was murdered as an example for other victims.

## DEBT BONDAGE

One of the primary mechanisms of control is debt bondage, which implies that the victim is required to pay back the augmented costs of her transfer to the destination country and all other alleged costs – food, clothes, makeup – that trafficker had to bear for the victim. The victim is promised that she will be free to go as soon as she pays back that debt. These costs are additionally increased by exaggerated and cumulative interests rates, as well as by enormous price of accommodation she uses, advertising costs, transportation costs. In the end, this transforms into an amount that cannot be repaid. The trafficker often manipulates with these alleged costs, increasing them and reducing them in dependence of "her behavior". She believes that, once she repays her "debt", she will be free, while in reality this is only one of the mechanisms to keep the victim dependant.

## WHEN THE CHAIN BREAKS...

Above described are the methods traffickers use to impose the feeling of fear, helplessness and stigmatization on trafficking victims. If they pluck up enough courage and strength to run away or endure long enough to be rescued by the police (which is mostly the case), this does not mean that they would necessarily leave the circle of violence.

The majority of trafficking victims returns to the same situation they tried to escape from in the first place: people around them do not know and do not want to know what have happened to them, they can not explain why they are returning without money, they are scared and feel humiliated, believing that such thing happened only to them. Their families and institutions refuse any responsibility and additionally impose the sense of guilt and shame, for which reason girls often do not want to return home. It should not be forgotten that it is the same community in which local criminals who once recruited them live. They can find them and sell them all over again.

In some countries, the law treats trafficking victims as criminals or illegal migrants who break the law. On the other hand, women that end up in forced prostitution are not considered, by both society and public opinion, as persons who have been deceived – they are prostitutes that practice a socially stigmatized activity.

For the beginning, women who survived enormous physical violence (beatings, squashing out cigarettes on their bodies), sexual violence (rape), mental violence (maltreatment, threats, blackmail, control) need only to be in a safe place and surroundings. They need to reconnect and gain trust in persons who offer them support. Women who have experienced trauma often relive the same situation through flashbacks and nightmares. Some of them avoid any situation – people, places, things – that may remind them of traumatic event and have overwhelmingly strong feelings and reminiscences of the traumatic event.

## STEREOTYPES ABOUT TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

### “Girls fall victim to trafficking because they are naive”

The motive that makes a girl respond to an advertisement or accept a job offer is irrelevant. The most important is violence she is exposed to if she ends up in the trafficking chain. It should especially be kept in mind that human traffickers are often persons victims trust – fathers, brothers, boyfriends... whose offers hardly any of them would check.

### “Trafficking in women and prostitution are one and the same.”

Prostitution may be a voluntary choice of a woman, if she decides about the conditions of her work and controls the profession she practices. A woman who ends up in forced prostitution as the victim of trafficking has no freedom of choice and decision-making about any aspect of her life, while prostitution can be a conscious choice. In addition, human trafficking is not only forced prostitution or sexual exploitation, but can also appear as forced labor, forced begging or forced removal of organs. Not only women, but children and men too can fall victim. Even when a girl knows that she will be engaged in prostitution, she is deceived about conditions she will work and live in, and she has no control over anything happening to her whatsoever. The victim cannot agree to human trafficking, because consent cannot be based on deception, coercion, the loss of control over one's own life or the loss of personal dignity. Victim's consent is irrelevant for the existence of human trafficking as a criminal offense.

### “Trafficking in women is white slave trade.”

Women victims of trafficking cannot be called “white slaves” because trafficking does not affect only women of a particular race, ethnic or national affiliation. “White” women are not the only victims of trafficking, but among them are African women, Roma women, Asian women... It is a racist term which does not reflect the reality. The term “female slaves” is also problematic because it is discriminatory – it stigmatizes the woman, presenting her as somebody whose destiny is sealed and nothing can be done to change that.

### “Only foreign women are victims of trafficking.”

Trafficking in women can take place internally, i.e. within the borders of a single country, it does not necessarily imply the crossing of state borders. Trafficking victims are not always foreigners or illegal migrants; quite the opposite, people may be recruited and exploited in their own country. This means that a Serbian national may be trafficking victim in the territory of her country when she is sold from one town to another or even in the same town. Human trafficking does not affect only “Russian women”, “Ukrainian women”, “Moldovan women”, but also to the citizens of Serbia and we must be aware of recently identified trend of a growing number of trafficking victims who are domestic nationals.

### “Why trafficking victims just don't run away?”

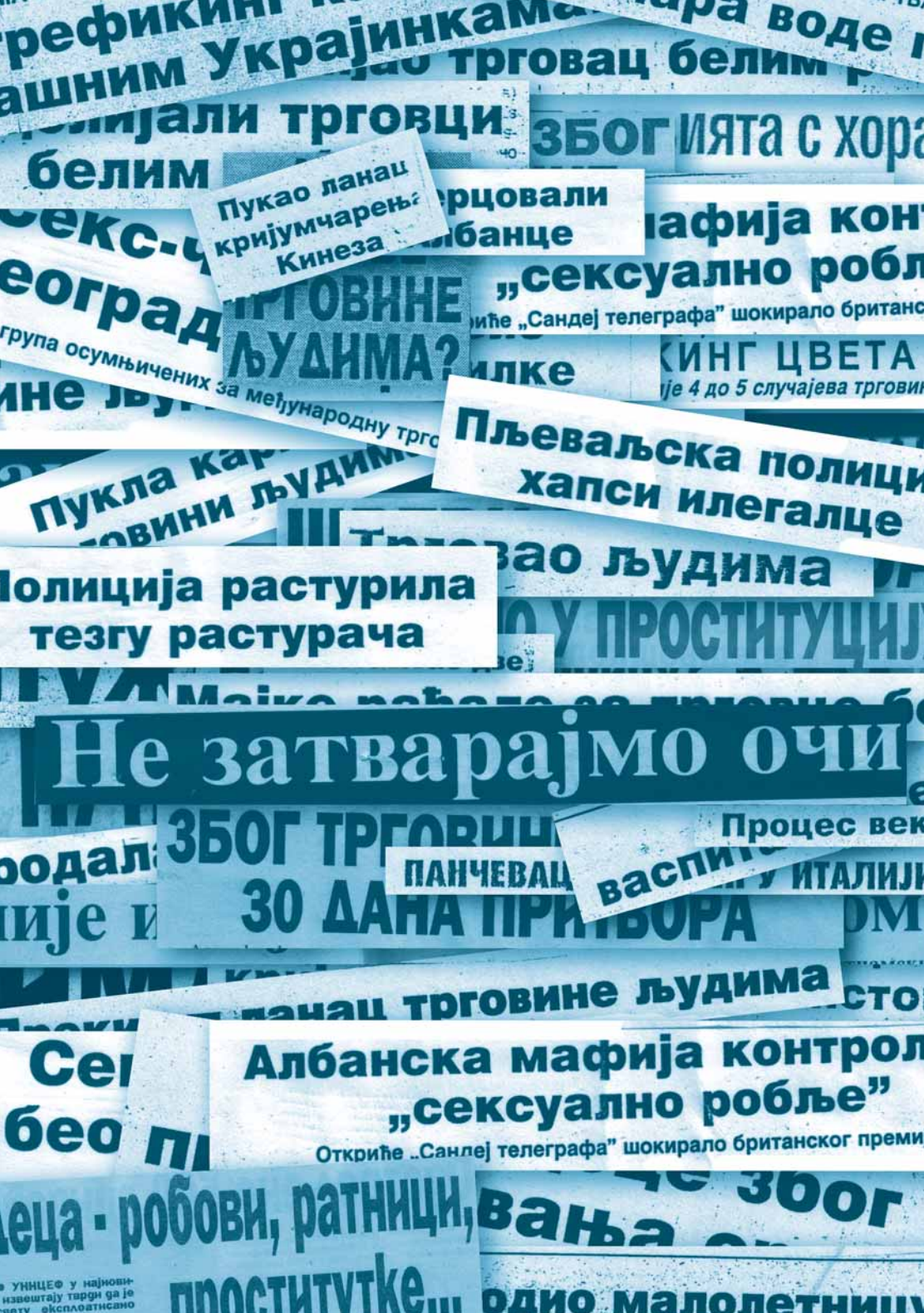
Trafficking victims live under constant control and threat of violence. Moreover, they are blackmailed and threatened that traffickers would do harm to their children, brothers and sisters, parents, if they ever tried to escape. When they try to escape and fail, they are severely beaten, sometimes to death, sending a message to other girls as to what will happen to them if they attempt the same thing. Besides other factors, this is the most convincing part not to try to run away.

### “Persons will ask for help or assistance when they are identified as victims of trafficking or when they identify themselves as victims.”

Victims of trafficking do not always identify themselves as victims. Moreover, if they do so, mistrust and self-blame will prevent a victim very often to share his/her story. One victim said: “I didn't know whom to trust so I ended up like slave. Now they say, in order to be free and get assistance, I am supposed to trust all of you, complete strangers.” What you know is always less scary than what you do not know.

### “Trafficking victims always come from poor families.”

There is no profile of a trafficking victim. They may be of any sex, age, social or ethnic background. Although young people without opportunities are under greatest risk of falling victim to trafficking, poverty is just one element that enables human trafficking to exist.



рефикини... ара воде  
ашним Украјинкама... трговац белим  
...јали трговци... ЗБОГ ИЈТА С ХОРА  
белым...  
Пукао ланац кријумчарења...  
Кинеза... рцовали...  
...банце... афија кон...  
...ексуално робл...  
...иће „Сандеј телеграфа“ шокирало британс...  
...ОГРАД... ТРГОВИНЕ...  
...ице „Сандеј телеграфа“ шокирало британс...  
...КИНГ ЦВЕТА...  
...је 4 до 5 случајева трговин...  
...не луд...  
...за међународну трго...  
...Пукла кар...  
...овини људима...  
...Пљеваљска полици...  
...хапси илегалце...  
...зао људима...  
...У ПРОСТИТУЦИЈИ...  
...Полиција растурила...  
...тезгу растурача...  
...Не затварајмо очи...  
...ЗБОГ ТРГОВИ...  
...Процес век...  
...ПАНЧЕВАЦ...  
...васпит...  
...ИТАЛИЈИ...  
...30 ДАНА ПРИТВОРА...  
...ДМ...  
...ланац трговине људима...  
...сто...  
...Сел...  
...Албанска мафија контрол...  
...„сексуално робље“...  
...Откриће „Санлеј телеграфа“ шокирало британског преми...  
...бео п...  
...леца - робови, ратници, вања...  
...ЗБОГ...  
...проститутке...  
...дио малолетниш...





# HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA

In order to provide journalists with as comprehensive as possible information about the human trafficking phenomenon, in this chapter we present an overview of relevant legislation, institutional framework and trafficking trends in the Republic of Serbia.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The state authorities of Serbia and Montenegro placed the problem of human trafficking on the political agenda after the change of political climate in 2000. US State Department, in its 2001 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) classified the Republic of Serbia into Tier 3, assessing that it did not fulfill minimum standards in combating human trafficking. One year later, Serbia passed into Tier 2, but already in the 2004 TIP Report, it was put in Tier 2 Watch List. As it was explained in the Report: "The Tier 2 Watch List designation is based on the weighted aggregate of their efforts, which showed a lack of significant progress, especially in the case of Montenegro<sup>26</sup>". Since the 2005 TIP Report until today, the Republic of Serbia has been classified as Tier 2 country.

Observed chronologically, and like in other countries in the region, the building of institutional framework was initiated by high-level international bodies, such as the Stability Pact Task Force, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)<sup>27</sup> and the UN. In May 2001, the *Yugoslav Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* was established at the federal level. Because of the uncertain status of the Federation, activities in the field of combating trafficking in human beings were transferred from the federal level to the level of the Republics.

On 28 December, 2001, Interior Minister appointed<sup>28</sup> Mr. Dušan Zlokas, Deputy Chief of the Border Police Department was appointed as the National Coordinator for Combating Human Trafficking. Shortly after, the *National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* was formed to operate at the level of Serbia<sup>29</sup>. Today, this Team gathers the representatives of relevant government institutions (9), non-governmental organizations (7), and international organizations (5).

The Team operates through four working groups:

1. Working Group for Combating Child Trafficking – coordinated by NGO Beosupport
2. Working Group for Prevention and Education – coordinated by NGO ASTRA
3. Working Group for Victim Assistance and Protection – coordinated by the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy
4. Working Group for Law Enforcement – coordinated by the Ministry of Justice

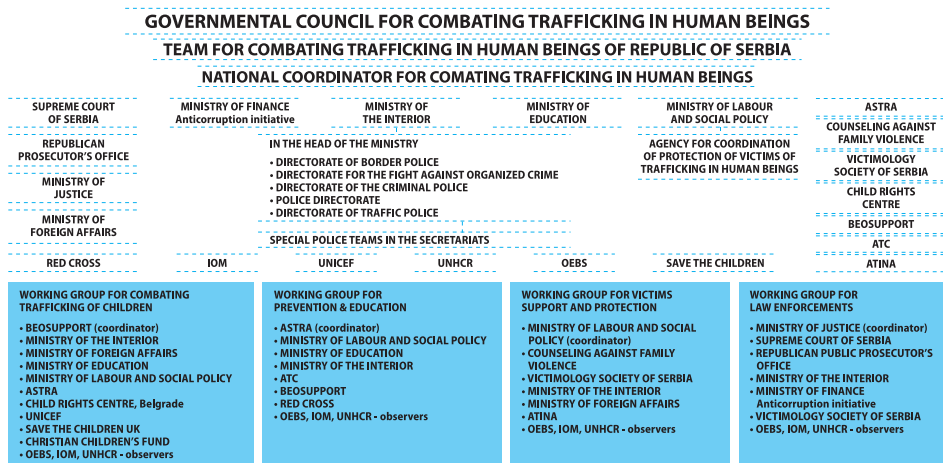
<sup>26</sup> HERE THEY REFER TO THE CASE OF TRAFFICKING IN A MOLDOVAN NATIONAL KNOWN IN PUBLIC AND IN THE MEDIA AS "S.Ć." CASE.

<sup>27</sup> UNDER ITS MANDATE, THE MISSION ADVISES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS AND MONITORS THE PROPER FUNCTIONING AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES IN SERBIA. IT ASSISTS LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES AND THE JUDICIARY IN TRAINING AND RESTRUCTURING. IN CONJUNCTION WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, THE MISSION HAS CARRIED OUT A RANGE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC DEFICIENCIES. AS A LEAD AGENCY IN THIS AREA, THE MISSION HAS WORKED SINCE 2001 TO MAKE NATIONAL APPROACHES TOWARD CURBING THE TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEING MORE EFFECTIVE, ALONGSIDE THE EFFORTS OF OTHER RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS. [HTTP://WWW.OSCE.ORG/SERBIA/13167.HTML](http://www.osce.org/serbia/13167.html)

<sup>28</sup> FILED UNDER THE NUMBER 26-1515-6/02 – MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

<sup>29</sup> THE FIRST (FOUNDING) MEETING OF THE NATIONAL TEAM FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WAS HELD ON 30 MAY 2002. WORKING PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL TEAM WAS ADOPTED ON 17 OCTOBER 2002 AND FILED UNDER THE NUMBER 26-1515-6/02 – MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR.





The structure of the National Team for Combating Human Trafficking

Human trafficking was introduced as a criminal offence into the Criminal Law of Serbia – Article 111b – in April 2003.

With a view to the more efficient and cost-effective work of the National Team, an *Advisory Body* was established in February 2004, composed of the National Coordinator and his associates, the coordinators of four Working Groups and the representatives of international organizations.

On 14 December 2004, the Government of Serbia passed a decision to establish the *Anti-Trafficking Council*<sup>30</sup>. Members of the Council are the Interior Minister as its president, the Minister of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, the Justice Minister, the Health Minister, the Minister for Education and Sport, and the Deputy Finance Minister. The task of the Council is to coordinate national and regional activities in combating human trafficking, discuss reports of relevant international bodies, take positions and propose measures for the implementation of recommendations made by international bodies.

On 5 July 2004, the Ministry of the Interior issued the *Instruction on the conditions for approving temporary residence to foreign nationals – trafficked victims*<sup>31</sup>. Based on the Instruction, on 20 September 2004, the Deputy Chief of the Border Police Directorate for Aliens and Administrative Affairs issued an *Instruction on the procedure for approving temporary residence to foreign nationals trafficking victims*<sup>32</sup>. The Instruction provides for a possibility to approve temporary residence permit for humanitarian reasons to foreign victims of trafficking in the duration of three, six and 12 month.

In March 2004, as a result of a joint project of the Ministry of Social Policy and OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro, the *Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims* was set up as a part of the national referral mechanism, within the Correctional Institute for Children and Youth in Belgrade. The Mobile Team existed within the Agency and was supposed to make the first assessment of a potential victim and his/her needs. Mobile Team members were the Ministry for Social Affairs and NGOs ASTRA and Counseling against Family Violence. The Mobile Team concept was abandoned in November 2004, while the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims has continued to operate. The main task of the Agency is to act as a coordination center in the organization of assistance and protection of trafficked victims in Serbia, but

<sup>30</sup> GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO SET UP THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING COUNCIL NO 02-6783/2004-1, 14 OCTOBER 2004

<sup>31</sup> NUMBER D NO. 5131/2004, INTERIOR MINISTER OF SERBIA DRAGAN JOČIĆ, 5 JULY 2007

<sup>32</sup> NUMBER 03/01 NO. 26-1658/04, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE BORDER POLICE DIRECTORATE FOR ALIENS AND ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS LIEUTENANT DUŠAN ZLOKAS, 20 SEPTEMBER 2004



it does not provide direct assistance itself. The Agency should provide information on the available services of importance for trafficking victims and their recovery and reintegration in the country and abroad. OSCE Mission to Serbia together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy funded the work of the Agency until 31 May 2005. Since that day, the Agency has been fully incorporated into the public social welfare system and funded from the budget of the Republic of Serbia through the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

On 1 January 2006, the new *Criminal Code of Serbia*<sup>33</sup> came into force. In Article 388, it introduced some novelties into the definition of human trafficking and new penal provisions for this offence, distinguishing it clearly from people smuggling, now governed by in Article 350 titled *Illegal Crossing of State Border and People Smuggling*. Another new offence is *Trafficking in Children for Adoption*. The *Witness Protection Law*<sup>34</sup> came into force, as well.

In December 2006, the Government of Serbia, with support of OSCE Mission to Serbia, adopted the *National Anti-Trafficking Strategy*<sup>35</sup>, which contains a range of measures and activities that should be undertaken to suppress this problem. By adopting the Strategy, strategic goals have been set that should be implemented through various activities of state institutions, nongovernmental and international organizations.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Republic of Serbia (then FR Yugoslavia) signed and ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Protocols Thereto in 2001. Trafficking in human beings was criminalized in 2003, by Article 111b of the Criminal Law of Serbia. The offences of human trafficking and people smuggling were not clearly distinguished on that occasion, which was put right in the currently valid Criminal Code of Serbia that came into force in January 2006. The definition of human trafficking as given in the Criminal Code of Serbia is to a great extent in compliance with Article 3 of the Trafficking Protocol.

### Article 388 Trafficking in persons

*1) Whoever, by force or threat, deceiving or keeping in deception, by abusing authority, confidence, dependency, another's difficult conditions, or by withholding identity documents or giving or receiving payments or other benefit, recruits, transports, transfers, delivers, sells, purchases, mediates in the purchase, harbours or holds another person, for the purpose of exploitation of their labor, forced labor, pursuing a criminal activity, prostitution or other form of sexual exploitation, vagrancy, using for pornographic purposes, placing in slavery or in similar status, or for the removal of organs or body parts or using in armed conflicts, shall be punished by imprisonment for two to ten years.*

*[2] If the criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is committed against a juvenile, the perpetrator shall be punished by the punishment envisaged for this offense even if no force, threat or any other envisaged act for perpetrating this criminal offense has been used.*

*[3] If the criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is committed against a juvenile, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than three years.*

33 OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF RS, NO. 85/2005, 88/2005 AND 107/2005

34 OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF RS, NO. 85/05

35 THE STRATEGY WAS PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF RS, NO. 111/2006 OF 12 DECEMBER 2006

*(4) If the perpetration of criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 and 3 of this Article, resulted in a serious bodily injury of a person,*

*the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment for three to fifteen years.*

*(5) If the perpetration of criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 and 3 of this Article, resulted in death of one or more persons,*

*the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than ten years.*

*(6) Whoever engages in committing criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 to 3 of this Article or if the offence is committed by an organized group,*

*the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than five years.*

However, the criminalization of trafficking in human beings suffers from some shortcomings. The major inconformity of Article 388 with the UN standards refers to

- (a) Its failure to state explicitly that the consent of a victim of trafficking in human beings to the exploitation, intended or actual, shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in paragraph that criminalizes trafficking in human beings have been used, which is a request established in the Article 3 (b) of the Trafficking Protocol.
- (b) The fact that the statutory text fails to refer to abduction and fraud as the means necessary to the crime, which has also been means necessary to the offense established in the Trafficking Protocol. Note that the previously valid law recognized abduction as the mean necessary for the crime {{Article 111b of the previously valid Criminal Law of the Republic of Serbia [CL RS]}.

In addition, although not specifically required by the Trafficking Protocol, we find that the present law has made a step back in criminalizing trafficking in human beings in comparison with the previously valid law when it omitted to refer to the following situations:

- (a) First, the Serbian Criminal Code does not envisage as an aggravating circumstance where a public official in the performance of his or her legal duties committed trafficking. If the perpetrator is of such characteristic, then he or she can be criminally liable for an ordinary crime defined in Article 388 (1), which means that more severe punishment may be imposed only in the presence of some of the above-mentioned aggravated circumstances. However, the previously valid Criminal Law of the Republic of Serbia regarded as an aggravating circumstance where a public official in the performance of their professional duties committed trafficking {Article 111b (2) CL RS}; and
- (b) Second, the Serbian Criminal Code does not regard as aggravating circumstances where trafficking endangered the victim's life deliberately or by gross negligence. Yet, like in the former case, the previously valid law had regarded as aggravating circumstances where trafficking was committed in a very cruel or degrading manner, where the first might have amounted to "endangering the life" {Article 111b (2) CL RS}. The present law does not envisage such a possibility.

Having in mind that children are often trafficked for the purpose of adoption and that the main crime of trafficking in human beings does not embrace trafficking in children for the purpose of adoption, the Serbian legislature found appropriate to incriminate a separate offense of trafficking in children for the purpose of adoption. Article 389 reads:

### *Trafficking in Children for the Purpose of Adoption* *Article 389*

*[1] Whoever takes a person who has not turned 14 away for the purpose of adoption contrary to valid regulations or whoever adopts such a person or mediates in such an adoption, or whoever for that purpose purchases, sells or delivers another person who has not turned 14, or transports, provides accommodation or harbors such a person, shall be punished by imprisonment for one to five years.*

*[2] Whoever engages in acts referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article or if the offence has been committed in an organized manner by several persons, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than three years.*

## VICTIM / WITNESS PROTECTION

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime recognizes the importance of protecting victims and witnesses in Articles 24 and 25. The Law on the Protection of Persons Participating in the Criminal Proceedings (Witness Protection Law) of 2005<sup>36</sup> regulates the protection of suspects, defendants, special witnesses, witnesses, injured persons, expert witnesses and experts. Under certain conditions, relatives and other persons close to the above-mentioned persons are entitled to protection, as well. Protection program may be undertaken before, in the course of, as well as after the criminal proceedings have been completed by a final judgment.

The protection scheme provided by the Law includes:

- Physical protection of individuals and property.
- Domestic or foreign relocation;
- Identity protection and protection of data related to property;
- Altering personal identity.

In addition, the Criminal Procedure Act provides evidentiary rules to permit witness testimony i.e. special arrangements for giving evidence.

However, although we find that the standards regarding witness protection, which are set forth in Article 24 of the Convention, have been duly respected in the Serbian legal system, they are rarely applied on human trafficking victims in practice. Very often, trafficking victims rightly do not feel safe and protected, which is mostly the reason for their refusal to testify. On the other hand, prosecutor's offices most often rely on victim/witness's testimony as the major piece of evidence.

Due to physical and mental torture that may have lasted for years, victims are often frightened and are not ready to talk about what they were through. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, among other things, make some of them remember the tiniest details (nicknames, names of clients, tattoos, sentences), while others forget even the names of their abusers. This is one of the reasons why their testimony in court often differs from what they have said to the police. Also, scared for themselves and their families (with their fear being entirely justified), some victims do not tell everything they know. In addition, to strengthen control over victims, traffickers sometimes convince them that they are violating the law and that they will be prosecuted and held responsible. Victims are often ashamed and blame themselves for what have happened, for which reason they deny or minimize the offences committed by the accused. They are afraid of community's judgment and of return to their families, where they will have to answer where they were, what they were doing, what happened to them and why they did not bring the money for which they left their home town in the first place.

<sup>36</sup> OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF RS, NO. 85/05.

In practice, we have seen situations that victims who decided to testify in court were exposed to permanent threats. These threats were not sent only to victims themselves, but also to their families in their countries of origin (pending the trial against traffickers in the destination country), which speaks of good connections and information sharing between all actors involved in the trafficking chain.

## REPRESENTATION OF VICTIMS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

The so-called injured party (Serbian legislation does not know the term “victim”) has the right to representation by their legal representative throughout the course of the proceedings. Victim’s legal representative has right to participate in all procedural actions, propose evidence, examine the accused, witnesses, expert witnesses and other participants, submit the claim for indemnification and, finally, give the closing. In case of the withdrawal of Public Prosecutor, he/she may continue prosecution. For this reason, it is necessary that in all stages of the proceedings for trafficking offences the victim is ensured representation by professional and sensitized attorneys, ready to fight and face misogyny, xenophobia, certain personal risk and different modalities of obstruction.

Since the victim, and consequently her legal representative, does not have the status of the party but only of a participant to the proceedings, the court is not obliged to send them the indictment, expert witnesses’ findings or even the judgment. The victim does not have the right to appeal the judgment, except for the part pertaining to costs or in case that the Public Prosecutor has assumed the prosecution from the victim that instituted the proceedings as a private plaintiff. For this reason, good cooperation with the Public Prosecutor is vital for the protection of victims’ personal rights, because this is the only way in which the argumentation of her legal representative may be presented through Public Prosecutor’s appeal.

Despite noticeable progress in combating human trafficking, it should be pointed out to problems, deficiencies and challenges that need to be tackled soon, in order for the fight against this problem to be fully effective.

- [a] The Republic of Serbia still does not have the National Action Plan for combating human trafficking. Also, Serbia has not yet ratified the Council of Europe’s Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- [b] The coming into force of the new Criminal Code of Serbia has brought about a great progress with regard to the definition of human trafficking in Article 388 and the regulation of illegal crossing of state border and people smuggling in Article 350 (in which way these two offences have been clearly distinguished), as well as the introduction of child trafficking for the purpose of adoption as a new offence governed by Article 389. However, the new Code brings generally lighter penal policy, which could be noticed with regard to trafficking offences. Namely, sentence for child trafficking, as provided in Article 388 Paragraph 3, was reduced from not less than five to not less than three years in prison. This is especially disturbing bearing in mind that the number of identified child trafficking victims has been on the rise.
- [c] The National Team for Combating Human Trafficking is an excellent example of cooperation between governmental, nongovernmental and international organizations (mainly in the capacity of observers), but, unfortunately, it still works without clear procedure and rules (unclear criteria for admission in/withdrawal from membership, decision-making, membership in working groups and the like). Until today, the Team has not undertaken any joint anti-trafficking action. The team members do not have clearly defined roles, and consequently responsibilities. Communication between the Team members remains informal<sup>37</sup>. All anti-trafficking activities in Serbia carried out so far have been implemented thanks to the donations from international organizations and foreign governments, and by nongovernmental organizations (shelters, SOS hotline, media campaigns, the majority of trainings) or through institutions in the form of

<sup>37</sup> THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, WORKING GROUP FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, COORDINATED BY THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAS NOT MET EVEN ONCE. MEMBERS OF THIS WORKING GROUP, BOTH GOVERNMENT BODIES AND NGOs, DID NOT FIND IT APPROPRIATE TO ACTIVATE THE WORKING GROUP EVEN TO COMMENT THE INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS CRIMINAL OFFENCE INTO SERBIAN CRIMINAL LEGISLATION.

education sessions, study visits and technical equipment (in particular the police). No significant funds for combating human trafficking have been allocated from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, apart from those directed to the Correctional Institute for Children and Youth in Belgrade.<sup>38</sup>

- (d) The majority of nongovernmental organizations, as well as a great portion of the government sector representatives, works on human trafficking prevention activities. The representatives of state institutions readily take part in such projects (as participants or lecturers). However, there is still no systemic prevention and we do not have any evaluation of prevention activities done so far in order to establish how effective they were and what direction they should take in future.
- (e) Although the establishment of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims (2004)<sup>39</sup> was a very important step, the fact is that direct victim assistance (medical, legal, psychological...) is at the moment provided only by three NGOs and the International Organization for Migrations (through repatriation and support to one shelter). Unfortunately, Serbia still does not have a protocol for handling trafficking victims, the procedure is rather unclear, while too many people from institutions are not familiar with the work of the Agency and its competences. In practice, the identification of trafficking victims is still in the majority of cases done by the police, while the Agency mostly confirms this primary identification. On more than one occasion, trafficking victims have been exposed to direct or indirect pressure to testify in court, recovery period is not fully respected in practice, while risk assessment is done quite rarely. Also, it is very important to do the evaluation and assessment of the quality of assistance provided to trafficking victims, both by governmental, and nongovernmental and international actors. In future, it will be necessary to work not only on increasing the quantity of services provided to victims, but also on improving the quality of existing ones.
- (f) The Republic of Serbia does not have specialized programs and measures for child trafficking victims. They receive the same sorts of assistance as adult survivors, sharing the same shelters and undergoing the same treatment.
- (g) The Agency possesses a database which contains the data on all the victims the Agency has ever been in contact with. However, data protection methods are not clear, as well as criteria for access/deny of access to public, researchers and victims themselves.<sup>40</sup>
- (h) With a few exceptions, penal policy regarding the trafficking offences is rather light. In the course of 2005, several major trials were finalized, but, unfortunately, the main bosses in Serbia (and in the region) are still free and/or at large. Links between the corruption of state authorities and human trafficking have never been examined in specific cases. The proving of this crime still to the greatest extent depends on victims/witnesses and their testimonies. Another problem is the slowness of civil procedures for the compensation of damages. Criminal courts are reluctant to decide on victims/witnesses' damages claims, but refer them to litigation, which is, as a rule, lengthy, costly (court fees, representative's fees...) and requires plaintiff's presence. The problem is even more evident when it involves foreign nationals, who, having testified in criminal procedures in Serbia, were repatriated to their countries of origin. If they wish to realize their right to indemnification, such persons need to bear extra travel and accommodation costs. Their return to the country where they testified and probable encounter with a trafficker raise the question of their safety all over again. Ongoing training programs for judges and prosecutors should by all means be continued, but the idea of including litigation judges should be given a thought to, in order to reduce the revictimization in court procedure to the minimum.
- (i) The reintegration and resocialization of trafficking victims appear to be a burning question. Trafficking victims are usually offered to attend foreign language courses, PC courses and the like, but systematic and long-term programs are still lacking. What also could be observed is the lack of information about victims after their repatriation and about

38 LAW ON THE BUDGET OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF RS, NO 123/2007, 58/2007, 106/2005, 108/2005., 85/2006 AND 86/2006., 127/2004 AND 66/2005, 33/2004 AND 115/2004, 86/2002 AND 35/2003, 74/2001, 35/2002 AND 86/2002, 21/2001 AND 27/2001

39 AS SAID EARLIER, UNTIL 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2005 THE AGENCY WAS SUPPORTED BY OSCE/M MISSION AND THE MINISTRY FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

40 LAW ON PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION, OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF FRJ, NO. 24/98 AND 26/98

the success of their resocialization in the country of origin. The social welfare system needs to be included here urgently and systematically and special programs need to be designed in that respect.

- (j) For successful fight against this specific form of violence, government must take a determined and systemic effort to eradicate poverty. Also, we must be aware that human trafficking would not be so sizable unless there was corruption. For these reasons, fighting root causes that contribute to trafficking, which are, above all, poverty, deprivation in general, gender inequality and gender-based violence, corruption and organized crime, stands out as a priority when we talk about combating trafficking in human beings.

## SERBIA AS A COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, TRANSIT AND DESTINATION

Based on the analysis of available data pertaining to the human trafficking problem<sup>41</sup> it was determined that Serbia is nowadays the country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking victims.

In the last two decades, socio-political changes in our country and the entire region, along with numerous specific measures undertaken to combat human trafficking, shaped the dynamics of human trafficking problem only to be understood in a chronological context of circumstances, ranging from those existing in the former SFRY to the ones we live in today.

Given that Serbia and Yugoslavia for that matter in the 1980s had a higher living standard than the rest of the countries in the region, they were primarily considered as the destination points for women trafficked from Eastern European countries. With the incidence of war and the establishment of war zones and foreign troops during the disintegration of SFRY, the number of human trafficking victims destined for Serbia significantly increased. However, at the same time, Serbia served as a transit country for human trafficking victims from Bulgaria, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine on their road to Bosnia (and further to their final destinations such as Italy, Spain, France, etc), Kosovo and Macedonia (with final destinations being Greece and countries of the Arabian Peninsula), and to the Central and North European countries. Serbia, due to its specific geographical position, represents a permanent transit route between the Eastern and Western Europe and the shortest route for immigrants from poverty ridden countries to the "promised West".

The collapse of state institutions in the nineties of the last century, next to the increase in the crime rate in the society as whole, led to the proliferation of organized crime and criminal groups involved in organizing human trafficking. However, at this time human trafficking was far from recognized as a specific problem.

Serbia in the post-conflict period became also a human trafficking victims' country of origin. After the armed conflicts ended, the country was flooded with corruption providing fertile grounds for thriving organized crime groups that were established during the period of militarization of the region and crisis of the institutions struggling to overcome the state of transition. The socially owned sector became increasingly privatized having as a consequence an increase in the unemployment rate of women formerly employed in socially owned enterprises. The process of privatization had an especially detrimental effect on women with elementary or high school education holding job posts that due to the new market needs became redundant and hence were required to undergo further training. In such social climate, large emigrational waves of people from our country left to go west, both legally and illegally.

However, up until 2002, an official attitude of the state was that Serbia was solely a transit country for human trafficking

<sup>40</sup> DETAILED INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHAPTER "ASTRA SOS HOTLINE STATISTIC"

due to its geographical position, while the problem itself was compared to and treated as prostitution. The belief that human trafficking victims are only foreign female nationals, and that such phenomenon does not plague Serbian citizens was retained. Foreign female nationals who became detained on the grounds of our country lacking regulated legal residence were sent to the Foreign Nationals Detention Center in Padinska Skela. Domestic female nationals who were human trafficking victims for the purpose of sexual exploitation were not recognized as such, and were very often criminally persecuted on the grounds of violating public order and prostitution. According to the governmental reports on female human trafficking from that period which state that a basic method used for combating this problem was employing measures for fighting prostitutions, which further illustrates how institutions from that period did not clearly differentiate between the phenomenon of prostitution and the phenomenon of human trafficking. Assistance and help programs launched by nongovernmental organizations during 2001–2002 (SOS hotline and shelters for human trafficking victims) were in particular intended for female and child human trafficking victims.

When the criminal aspect of human trafficking was introduced into the Serbian legislation in April of 2003 (Article 111b of the Criminal Law of the Republic of Serbia), Government's attitude toward this problem changed, resulting in numerous coordinated activities involving all relevant actors implemented for the purpose of combating human trafficking. These activities further included a joint action on instituting a system for providing help and shelter for human trafficking victims. One of the consequences of mentioned events is also the change in the human traffickers' mode of operation. They were at once faced with a more pronounced response from both governmental and non-governmental and international organizations, and therefore had to adjust the ways of conducting their activities, hence becoming less apparent, both in Serbia and the entire region. While, prior to "Saber" police operation in 2003, the police was, during their raids in escort agencies and brothels, able to find up to 20 girls, some of whom were human trafficking victims, after the "Saber", many of them became put away and hidden in private apartments and membership only clubs. Therefore, human traffickers took a low profile and became less apparent to the citizens and hence less approachable for the police. Also, it was noticed that traffickers modified their ways of controlling human trafficking victims, and brutal violence as a control method was in part abandoned, or at least less apparent. Traffickers are now extremely cautious when it comes to physical violence and they are very careful that evidence of violence is not evident or easily noticeable. Instead of physical violence, traffickers nowadays control their victims by using threats, blackmail and psychological abuse which leaves no physical trace, therefore much more difficult to use as evidence or prove in the court of law.

It is also possible that a more educated border control police forces, with a higher awareness on the matter of human trafficking, were more efficient in their operations, but they may have also, at the same time, influenced a shift in epicenters of human trafficking within Serbian borders. Internal human trafficking and child trafficking turned out to be a far less risky business (a victim can be transported to a desired location much quicker, without having to cross the border; since there are no control check points within the country, it is far easier to bypass the police; it is substantially easier to secure identification documents since the only necessary document is a Serbian ID card). On the other hand, regional human trafficking is being conducted across open borders to Bosnia, Croatia and Montenegro, from where the routes lead to Italy as the most common final destination. Before the assassination of the Prime Minister Mr. Zoran Đinđić and "Saber" police operation in 2003, Belgrade served as a main transit route and a "collection point" for traffickers, where victims were further sent to destinations in both Serbia and Western Europe. After these two mentioned events there was a standstill, only to be noticed that a main transit route in Serbia shifted to Pančevo, a town 15km north of Belgrade. At the same time, Romania became an acceding EU country (in 2003), and a year later a visa regimen was introduced for the citizens of Serbia wishing to travel to Romania and Hungary. It is possible that for this particular reason, transit routes for foreign female nationals shifted north

of the borders of our country, that is, we can presume that traffickers have less of a difficulty transferring their victims from Romania, as a country of origin and transit for countries to the east of it, through open EU borders.

However, a smaller number of foreign female citizens who are human trafficking victims we can define in a different way. Since 2004, police raids has become extremely rare and the police has focused more on illegal migrations. Foreign nationals, both male and female, if caught violating the Law on the Movement and Staying of Foreigners, which prescribes a mandatory measure of deporting a trespassing foreign national from the territory of the Republic of Serbia, are according to the prescribed procedure sent to the Foreign Nationals Detention Center and then deported.

All of the mentioned circumstances led to the complete change in the structure of human trafficking victims' origin and their final destinations. The number of victims originating in Serbia increased in the last eight years, and from previous 30% of the total human trafficking victims, in November of 2008, even 85% of identified victims were Serbian nationals. On the other hand, in the period from March 2002 to November 2008, Serbia was a final destination for over 50% of human trafficking victims. Under the influence of circumstances from the previous years when, according to the of the relevant actors' data, 70% of human trafficking victims were foreign female nationals, it took quite a while for the governmental bodies to, through its official statement, recognize that Serbia is increasingly becoming a country of human trafficking victims' origin, and not only their transit route and the destination point, and that human trafficking problem does not target "only Moldavian and Ukrainian women", but Serbian citizens just as well. A number of vulnerable and high risk groups were identified, where the most vulnerable are children, adolescents and individuals with physically altered behavior. At the same time, there was an increased occurrence in exploitation of Serbian citizens in the territory of our country. This phenomenon was for the first time registered in 2004, when it was determined that 35% of all the identified trafficking victims ended up in the chain of internal trafficking. In the following years, this phenomenon was also very pronounced and continually on the rise, what unequivocally shows that human trafficking, as a third most profitable form of organized crime has no prejudice towards nationality or citizenship, and furthermore the data on the internal trafficking mirror a general trend pertaining to the human trafficking problem in our country.

The main reason for mentioned changes lays certainly in the change of a general social climate and economic conditions in Serbia. Women are predominantly prone to lose their jobs in the process of reconstruction occurring, in particular, in the industrial branches with traditionally female occupations.

The process of privatization, however, left a large number of men jobless, too. Back in 2004 the first cases of human trafficking with males as victims were registered, mostly for the purpose of labor exploitation. In only one case at the beginning of 2007, the police identified nine males of Serbian nationality<sup>42</sup>, who were recruited thorough a local employment agency for a construction work in the United Arab Emirates, where there were further exploited. It is interesting to mention that they have never received any form of assistance intended for human trafficking victims. Practice has showed men considerably less ask for any kind of help, and have a hard time accepting it, since they do not want to be identified as "victims" or individuals who require professional help; although it is also possible that there are shortcomings in referring a male victim to an adequate organization offering assistance.

Still, a very large number of individuals want to emigrate because of a poor economic situation in the country. A research conducted in 2004<sup>43</sup> showed that more than one half of population age under 30 would leave the country if they had a chance [18% of young individuals age 18 to 27 who took part in the research were already determined to leave, while 43% said they would leave the country if they were given an opportunity, giving us a total figure of 61% of young individuals

42 [HTTP://WWW.MAIL-ARCHIVE.COM/SIM@ANTIC.ORG/MSG33436.HTML](http://www.mail-archive.com/sim@antic.org/msg33436.html)

43 CENTAR FOR POLICY STUDIES, APRIL 2004



who want to leave Serbia]. Also, 65% of them did not believe the state would do anything in the forthcoming period to improve their status, primarily to provide a higher quality education and employment. More than half of the total unemployed population are young people, while one fifth of them work illegally in private businesses. While the general unemployment rate is 22%, the unemployment rate for the age group between 15 to 25 years is 48.8%, making our country the leading country in the unemployment rate of young individuals in the region.

Agencies and individuals who serve as intermediaries in attaining employment recognized a lucrative opportunity in the existing climate and therefore place an increased emphasis on providing employment abroad. Up until 2004 there was a "gap in the law" and the government did not monitor their work. However, the adoption of the employment agencies licensing regulation introduced a certain level of control of available jobs, which are in addition to jobs offered through the National Employment Services, offered to Serbian citizens. Inclusive with December 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008, on the registration list at the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia<sup>44</sup>, there are 49 registered employment agencies, although being registered does not guarantee the quality of their work. Jobs offered through employment agencies are mostly au pair programs, work and study programs for students and graduates, and a wide variety of jobs on cruise ships or in large hotel complexes particularly in the Arabian countries.

Human traffickers were always very good in estimating victim's needs and therefore had many possibilities to manipulate them. Having the mentioned data in mind, it is not surprising that the most common way of recruiting victims is through job ads for employment abroad. Very often such jobs are offered by individuals close to the victim, especially in the case of children and very young people.



Young women, age 25 to 30 needed for work as waitresses in Dubai. Knowledge of English language and work experience is required. CV with a photograph send to the following e-mail address: emiratestow@yahoo.com

more consequence of the war period. Individuals who are also returning to Serbia through a process of readmission are at risk as well.

Like the majority of countries in transition, Serbia is also faced with the increase (or maybe only the increase in registered cases) of gender-based violence. According to the research Victimology Society of Serbia conducted in 2005, every other woman is exposed to psychological domestic violence, every third suffers from physical domestic violence, while every fourth is in danger to be abused. Only in Belgrade there are three shelters for female victims of domestic violence. The fact that all three shelters are mostly filled up to their capacity is alarming. Knowing that family violence is one of the main risk factors for human trafficking, especially in the case of women and children, it is clear that mentioned situation works in favor of the

"Lover boy" (young men who date young women for a period of time and then, after they gain their trust they drag them into the trafficking chain) is a way of recruiting victims also used by human traffickers. Since 2005, more and more victims were recruited via Internet and text (SMS) messages, what is a novelty within the meaning of using different mediums for recruiting.

Along with the high unemployment rate, very poor living standard and numerous unsolved social challenges, the human trafficking problem targets a large number of refugees and displaced persons, what represents one

44 MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT WAS ESTABLISHED IN MAY OF 2007. UP UNTIL THEN THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY WAS IN CHARGE OF LICENSING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES.

further existence of this problem in our country.

Democratic changes in Serbia which commenced back in 2001, and the entire transition process of the Serbian society are followed by a high degree of corruption, which represents a crucial prerequisite for the existence and further expansion of organized crime and human trafficking. In the conclusion part of the Evaluation Report for the Republic of Serbia GREKO adopted in Strasburg, there is a remark that corruption is a serious problem influencing different social sectors in our country, primarily the justice system, the police and health services. In 2005, Serbia was out of 158 countries on the Transparency International list ranked 97, with the 2.8% Corruption Perception Index out of possible 10. In September of 2008<sup>45</sup>, out of 180 examined countries on this list, Serbia advanced to the 85 place. The Corruption Perception Index is 3.4% placing us in the group of countries still severely struggling with this problem.

Cooperation with all the relevant actors in combating human trafficking greatly depends on the course of political events and the political will of the current establishment. Quite contrary to the era of the PM Zoran Đinđić, after his assassination, since 2004 institutions have closed up their channels for cooperation with the non-governmental sector. As a result, we now lack adequate mechanisms for identifying human trafficking victims and providing them assistance, and have insufficiently developed assistance programs not adjusted to victims' specific needs that lack any involvement from the state. Consequently, what finally happens is that the victims are not adequately or duly identified, and some individuals end up being dragged into the trafficking chain time and time again, while the court proceedings are lengthy and inefficient with cases of sentenced human traffickers walking free years after a valid court decision was adopted. A fact that basic human rights of the human trafficking victim who exits the trafficking chain are not respected is particularly disturbing. It happens that the case of human trafficking is again treated as smuggling and a violation of a public order.

Seven years after the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and Protocols<sup>46</sup> thereto were ratified, we can notice a different stand Serbia has regarding human trafficking problem, but still there are many obstacles on the road to find an efficient method for combating this problem and to offer efficient solutions for preventing consequences human trafficking, as one of the most severe forms of human rights violation, causes.

## CHILD TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA

Child trafficking represents a most brutal violation of the rights of a child jeopardizing its future life and development. Due to the specific psychological, social and physical consequences this experience has on children, it is necessary to approach the problem of human trafficking as one needing a response in tune with children's needs. However, there is a general tendency to treat child trafficking as a sub-part of a general human trafficking problem<sup>47</sup> and therefore a majority of international standards dealing with the adult human trafficking victims are applied to children as well.

Article 3c of the Trafficking Protocol very clearly distinguishes a difference between children and adult human trafficking victims: force, deception, fraud or other ways of execution do not have to necessarily be present when a child is in question. In order to be identified as a human trafficking victim, it is enough for a child to be recruited and for the exploitation intent to exist. Along with all other European countries, Serbia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child back in 1991, but has only in May of this year submitted an Initial Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of a Child in its territory.

<sup>45</sup> DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT [HTTP://WWW.VESTI.RS/KORUPCIJA-SRBIA-INDEXI.HTM](http://www.vesti.rs/korupcija-srbija-indexi.htm)

<sup>46</sup> OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF FRY – INTERNATIONAL TREATIES NO.6, 26, JUN 2001.

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF, INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE: *CHILD TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE – A BROAD VISION TO PUT CHILDREN FIRST*, 2008.

A coalition of nongovernmental organizations, led by the Child Rights Center, has prepared an Alternative Report presented to the Committee for the Rights of the Child in Geneva in February of 2008. It is significant that children themselves gave their contribution to this Report<sup>48</sup>. To this day, only nine European countries have developed a National Action Plan intended solely for solving the problem of child trafficking (Moldova, Romania, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Norway and Island) while other countries have action plans intended to protect children against specific forms of violence and abuse. In February of 2004 a National Action Plan for Children was adopted in Serbia, offering guidelines for improving the position of the child<sup>49</sup>

Governmental and reports from international organizations offer different estimates on the number of children that are recruited into the trafficking chains. International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor – IPEC, within the International Labor Organization<sup>50</sup>, has in 2003 published a figure saying that approximately 1.2 million of children per year become human trafficking victims for the purpose of sexual or labor exploitation. The US State Department’s TIP Report from 2007, according to the research completed in 2006, states that approximately 800,000 human trafficking victims annually crosses international borders. Out of that figure it is estimated that in 80% of the cases, the victims are women and young girls, while 50% of them are less than 18. This figure does not include millions of victims involved in internal trafficking<sup>51</sup>.

In 2004, one of the rare research projects dealing particularly with the question of child trafficking victims in Serbia<sup>52</sup> was published. It states that among identified human trafficking cases, 25% of victims are children, victims of internal trafficking.

According to the ASTRA SOS Hotline data, during 2002/2003 children represented around 20%<sup>53</sup> of all identified human trafficking victims, and mostly all of them were from Serbia. However, since 2004 there has been a sudden increase in the number of child trafficking victims, confirmed by other data obtained from all relevant actors in Serbia. The percentage of human trafficking victims younger than 18 was in the last four years around 40%.

This change in the trend can be explained in many different ways. Considering that in 2004 we did not witness an increase in the overall number of human trafficking victims in Serbia, nor that a better help system for child trafficking victims was instituted, a probable reason for the increased number of identified child trafficking victims lays in a more efficient identification of involved children by better educated competent services (primarily the police), and is due to a change in the traffickers operation mode, who can easily manipulate children and are therefore exposed to a lesser risk.

Namely, at the same time there was a significant increase in internal trafficking, involving still children who are Serbian nationals, but the exploitation was conducted mainly in our territory. Children are trafficked for the purpose of mainly sexual and labor exploitation, begging, forced marriages and are forced to commit criminal offences. A significantly greater number of girls are identified as human trafficking victims than boys. The practice shows that boys are also victims of many forms of exploitation; namely if they do not fulfill trafficker’s expectations in the field of forced labor and as beggars, sexual exploitation is used a way of punishment.

Although the problem is much more complex, the problem of human trafficking and child trafficking is often regarded as sexual exploitation. The reason may be in the fact that sexual exploitation represents a most common form of exploitation of both children and adults in the trafficking chain. On the other hand, it is possible that it is considered so since it is the most

48 THE REPORT IS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.ASTRA.ORG.RS](http://WWW.ASTRA.ORG.RS)

49 [HTTP://WWW.ARHIVA.SRBJA.SR.GOV.YU/G/DOCUMENTS/NPA.ZIP](http://WWW.ARHIVA.SRBJA.SR.GOV.YU/G/DOCUMENTS/NPA.ZIP)

50 [HTTP://WWW.ILO.ORG/GLOBAL/ABOUT\\_THE\\_ILO/MEDIA\\_AND\\_PUBLIC\\_INFORMATION/PRESS\\_RELEASES/LANG--EN/WCMS\\_005284/INDEX.HTM](http://WWW.ILO.ORG/GLOBAL/ABOUT_THE_ILO/MEDIA_AND_PUBLIC_INFORMATION/PRESS_RELEASES/LANG--EN/WCMS_005284/INDEX.HTM)

51 THE DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: [HTTP://WWW.STATE.GOV/DOCUMENTS/ORGANIZATION/82902.PDF](http://WWW.STATE.GOV/DOCUMENTS/ORGANIZATION/82902.PDF)

52 NIKOLIC-RISTANOVIC, ČOPIĆ, MILIVOJEVIĆ, SIMEUNOVIĆ-PATIĆ, MIHIC TRGOVINA LJUDIMA U SRBiji (HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA), VICTIMOLOGY SOCIETY OF SERBIA AND DEBS, BELGRADE, 2004

53 ASTRA DATABASE

noticeable, and therefore the mostly discovered form of exploitation. Also, we should keep in mind that cases of sexual exploitation of children are the ones attracting the most attention from the media and causing very strong reactions from the professional and general public. Other forms of exploitation are more difficult to recognize and are of a lesser interest.

Child trafficking for the purpose of entering forced marriages at the very early age [11, 12 years of age] are most frequently not prosecuted. In practice, upon receiving a notification, the police will collect all the information on the field and inform the competent Social Welfare Center. Based on the estimate from the Center, the child could be removed from the family before it is sold, and the police would hence inform the persecutor. However, the procedure is not initiated because the persecutors consider it to be the matter of tradition. Cases we are familiar with dealt with children much younger than 16, an age when, according to Article 23 of the Family Law, there is no possible circumstance in which a child could enter a marriage agreement. Furthermore, the family receives a cash benefit and the child seizes to attend obligatory elementary education, without which it has very limited employment prospects, and general prospects for attaining other rights prescribed by the Convention on the Rights of a Child.

During 2008, over 50% of human trafficking activities reported via SOS Hotline were the cases of forced marriage. In particular cases girls, age 15–17 were without their parents' knowledge and approval taken to the traffickers under the pretenses of marriage. Afterwards, they suffered abuse, sexual exploitation, were pimped and exposed to the danger of being sold further. Some of them, out of fear and under the influence of suffered abuse, did not have the courage to say to the police they wanted to leave their "husband". Unfortunately, in such cases, the representatives of relevant instances completely relied on victim's testimony, entirely neglecting the specificity of the victim's psychology and the fact that she is being exploited at that very moment. The parents usually try to return their child on their own, but their contact with their child is completely cut off by the trafficker. In such instances, it is often the case of individuals with psychologically altered behavior, making them highly vulnerable and particularly prone to manipulation.

The experience has showed us that regarding the human trafficking problem, the most vulnerable are the children in early and middle stage of adolescence. Considering the living standard in Serbia, the difficulties they are faced with when looking for a job, and a minimal possibilities for independent living, a large number of them sees their opportunity in going abroad. An obstacle on that road is the existing visa regimen causing illegal immigration to become an option significantly increasing the risk of human trafficking and exploitation. In that context, the results of the research UNICEF conducted in Moldova are very interesting<sup>54</sup>. Regardless of the fact they were made aware of the dangers of human trafficking, some children were ready to use the unsafe, illegal channels to go abroad. Furthermore, poverty, domestic and sexual abuse, alcoholism and drug abuse are also risk factors greatly contributing to children's vulnerability<sup>55</sup>.

One of the basic presumptions regarding human trafficking is that this criminal activity stems from economically underdeveloped countries and spreads toward developed and rich countries of the West. Socio-economic factors definitely influence the possibilities of this kind of victimization, but however, especially in the case of children, family surrounding and specific individual factors significantly increase the risk. The largest number of victims comes from dysfunctional and incomplete families. Children who live on the street or are placed in the institutions are more prone to the risk of human trafficking. To that end, a research conducted in Serbia in 2007 involving 81 children living on the street that revealed that 70% of them

54 O'BRAIN, MUIREANN, ANKE VAN DEN BORNE AND THEO NOTEN: *JOINT EAST WEST RESEARCH ON TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES IN EUROPE: THE SENDING COUNTRIES*. ECPAT EUROPE LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUP, AMSTERDAM, 2004.

55 UNICEF, OHCHR AND OSCE/ODIHR, LIMANOWSKA, BARBARA: *TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE: 2004 – FOCUS ON PREVENTION IN: ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CROATIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MOLDOVA, ROMANIA, SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO, THE UN ADMINISTERED PROVINCE OF KOSOVO*. 2005

were beggars, and that they knew of other children who were exploited and under adult control serves as the best example<sup>56</sup>. In practice, it is not always easy to make a difference between a child who is a human trafficking victim and a child who is a victim of a different kind of abuse. That is particularly the case when we do not have complete information on the family and general circumstances of that child. Then it is possible to make a mistake and to identify that child as a victim of violence, sexual exploitation, children of the street, illegal immigrant or even a delinquent rather than a human trafficking victim.

After a child has suffered through a trafficking experience, it is not realistic to expect that it would easily establish a system of trust with the assistance providers. There are reasons why a child does not want to be identified as a human trafficking victim, because it is not able to see own interest in doing so, rather it sees only negative consequences. Children sometimes do not believe their wishes will be fulfilled and their expectations taken into consideration and met. Also, possible reasons may be traffickers' threats targeting the child itself or its family, fear from labeling and legal consequences. Also it may be the case the family of that child expects the child to provide for their everyday existence and to provide funds to repay family debt, therefore making the child not ready to be identified in order to get back to its 'duties' as soon as possible.

Protection measures that are available to human trafficking victims are only short-term. Protection measures for a great number of vulnerable children at high risk of human trafficking are lacking. Specific programs [either institutional or nongovernmental] providing help and working with minor victims of human trafficking are non-existent. Up to 80% of children who exit the trafficking chain are returned to their families and returned to the same surrounding they first became victims in. What is concerning is that even the return to the old is better solution for such children than its alternative, that being a placement in the Homes for Children without Parental Care. In few instances we witnessed that children ran away from provided accommodation because it is a completely inadequate type of accommodation lacking satisfactory programs that would include or involve them. Unfortunately, in such cases, it is already too late to react, and any information about those children cannot be obtained for months up until the police identify them as victims of the same or different type of abuse. The current social protection system does not have capacities to provide continued care and assistance for children and their immediate surroundings. On the other hand, a nongovernmental sector does not have a specific program devised for work with those kinds of victims; hence this form of assistance is often ineffective. Also, the number of research projects conducted in Serbia on this topic is very small, directly emphasizing the problem of a child and their rights' marginalization and neglect by both governmental and, unfortunately nongovernmental sector.

## ASTRA SOS HOTLINE STATISTICS

One of the most commonly asked questions by the media in the previous years had to deal with the statistical data on human trafficking victims received via ASTRA SOS Hotline. Since this Manual is intended for the media and the public, we are happy to meet their expectations and are therefore presenting the ASTRA SOS Hotline statistics for the period since it was instituted inclusive with November of 2008.

### ASTRA SOS HOTLINE AND DIRECT VICTIM ASSISTANCE MARCH 2002– NOVEMBER 2008

ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program was originally thought out as a phone service which would provide information on human trafficking prevention. However, only a month after SOS Hotline became operational, we received the first call involving a human trafficking victim. Subsequently, the original idea was expanded and the SOS hotline service today is the only

56 CHILD RIGHTS CENTER, CENTER FOR YOUTH INTEGRATION, SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2007. GODINE

one SOS hotline service of this kind in Serbia, specialized in the area of providing help to victims and preventing human trafficking. ASTRA SOS Hotline provides a possibility to establish a contact with potential victims, individuals already in the human trafficking chain or the ones who has just existed it and received no psycho-social assistance in the recovery period, which makes the ASTRA SOS phone a tool for:

### Prevention

It provides information on the human trafficking problem in general, advice on safe immigration and possibilities for obtaining legal employment abroad. At the same time, it provides its clients a possibility to consult legal experts on how to obtain employment at home and abroad, and potential problems they may encounter. When we speak of a preventative role of the SOS hotline, it is important to mention that very same information we receive when talking to clients represent a basis for further analysis, based on which we are able to identify new ways traffickers use to recruit their victims.

### Identifying and providing direct assistance to human trafficking victims

Direct help to human trafficking victims includes the provision of various forms of free medical, psychological and legal assistance, securing means of transportation, monitoring clients and conducting follow-up through institutions, and offering assistance in attaining their human (nondiscrimination) and civil rights (obtaining personal identification documents, receiving child support supplements, social welfare and so on). When we speak of ASTRA's activities pertaining to the emergency assistance and the evaluation of immediate needs, from the moment we find out any information about a human trafficking victim or we have access to it, we are doing the analysis of needs, doing the best to satisfy victim's needs, desires and to serve victim's best interests.

Forms of assistance provided to a (potential) victim in this phase are:

- Legal assistance – providing full information on the status, rules and relevant legislative procedures, employing a legal representative in the court procedure
- Psychological counseling and/or psychotherapy
- Medical assistance
- Support and monitoring through institutional procedures
- Securing safe accommodation
- If a client is a foreign national, providing translating/interpreting services

Providing support to victims continues during the process of recovery and reintegration, while still having mentioned forms of assistance at their disposal

Realization of the above mentioned is conducted through:

### Basic – primary activities:

- *SOS Calls*
- *Direct victim assistance* (field actions, assistance and interventions)
- *SOS database*<sup>57</sup>
- *Reintegration program*

<sup>57</sup> THE PURPOSE OF ASTRA'S DATABASE IS TO STORE AND EFFICIENTLY USE RECEIVED DATA. DATA BASE ENABLES MONITORING THE CLIENT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS STRUCTURE (WITH THEIR CONSENT), CONSOLIDATING THE DATA ON TRAFFICKERS, FORMS OF OFFERED ASSISTANCE AND OTHER VARIABLES USED TO MEASURE SOS PHONE ACTIVITIES.

**Other activities:**

- *Contacts with institutions and partner organizations in the region for the purpose of providing full and timely information and specific forms of assistance to (potential) victims*

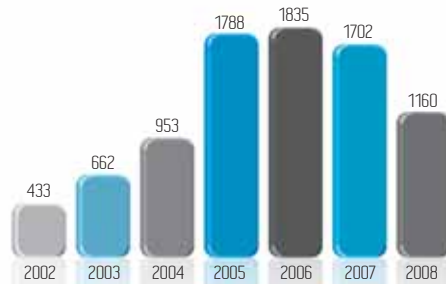
ASTRA SOS Hotline 011 33 47 817 is operational every work day between 14 and 20 h. Next to this number a following 0800 101 201 number, free of charge was provided for clients calling from the territory of Serbia.

Since January of 2008, number 065 33 47 817 is open 24h every day for all emergency cases and to aid human trafficking victims.

**SOS CALLS**

Since the first call received on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2002 up until November 2008, we received a total of 8533 calls from 1862 clients.

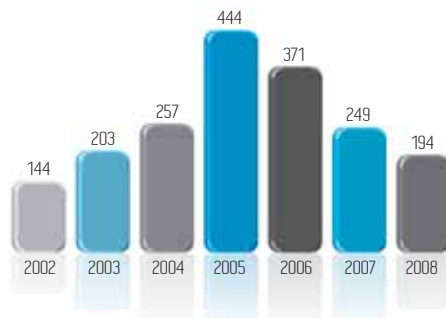
Chart 3  
Number of call  
March 2002 – November 2008



During its six years of work, through its numerous preventative and educational activities, based on achieved results in working with human trafficking victims and designing new programs for meeting their needs, ASTRA has been widely recognized by professional and general public, what is exemplified through a number of calls it receives on a yearly basis.

The number of received calls via SOS hotline is directly connected to ASTRA's work in two ways; first it is a direct consequence of its activities for improving the visibility of the human trafficking problem and the recognition of the organization itself, and secondly also has to do with a high degree of mistrust in institutions citizens hold, and therefore feel more comfortable to contact a nongovernmental sector. Also, we can presume that work conducted on preventing human trafficking has raised the awareness of the general public regarding human trafficking, therefore increasing the number of individuals willing to report potential trafficking activities or those willing to learn more on the ways of protection. Also, through the increasing number of domestic victims in the last years, our citizens are directly faced with the growing problem, and are therefore becoming more involved and interested in it.

Chart 4  
Number of newly identified clients  
March 2002 – November 2008



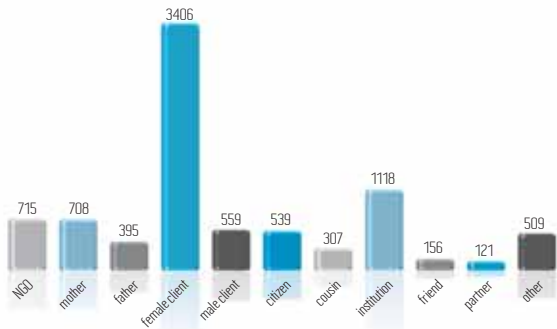
Great oscillations in the number of received calls are a result of campaigns ASTRA conducted, but also the media appearances, press statements and various other forms of preventative and educational actions (street actions, promotional participation in various public events). Our practice showed that during the periods when ASTRA ads are airing the number of calls rises up to even 100%.

During 2002/2003 a media campaign "Open Your Eyes" was implemented. At that time, the trafficking in women in the territory of Former Yugoslavia was a long standing problem not recognized as such in the society. This campaign's aim was to make trafficking in women more visible through instituting cooperation between nongovernmental organizations active in this field and relevant governmental institutions and the police in order to make them aware of this problem and, to at the same time, introduce them to the, to this day, only human trafficking specialized SOS hotline. In the second half of 2004, two and a half times more SOS calls were registered than in the period of first six months. Basic reason behind this increase is the beginning of ASTRA's campaign "There is a Way Out", conducted with the UNODC support up until the fall of 2004. In 2005, the majority of clients contacted ASTRA in July, when the campaign "Save the Children from Human Trafficking", organized in cooperation with Save the Children started, airing six videos on this subject. In 2006, with the support from Save the Children UK, a campaign "Child Trafficking – Our Reality" was conducted in two time periods (from May – Jun and from September – October), airing ten video clips on the subject, involving individuals from public life, implementing street actions and distributing promotional materials via printed media. After the campaign ended in November, an increase of 40.3% calls pertaining to children was registered. In 2008, with the support of the OEBS Mission to Serbia and ADA – Australian Agency for Development and Cooperation, ASTRA conducted the "Naked Facts" campaign. During the time videos aired (Jun and October), an increase of 40% in calls was registered.

From the mentioned, it is clear that the variations in the numbers of calls can be explained by ASTRA's presence and therefore the presence of the human trafficking topic in the media. Media reporting on the problem of human trafficking is the second important factor greatly influencing calls' frequency, regardless of whether media reporting was documentary or educational in nature or whether it followed the scandals on human trafficking where sensationalistic elements tend to especially attract the public's attention.

One of the reasons for the changing frequency in calls is seasonal employment trends and traveling abroad, meaning the number of calls always increases in the period between March and Jun. During summer vacations, a great majority of predominantly young individuals is interested to go abroad for both seasonal work and vacationing. In the later period, during and after summer months, the number of calls drops probably due to the end of the season and the diminishing number of offers.

Chart 5  
Contact Initiators  
March 2002 – November 2008





Clients themselves are the ones who most often use the SOS hotline to contact ASTRA (3406 or 39.92%). Next in frequency are the contacts with institutions (1118 or 19.93%) and clients' parents (1103 or 12.93%). Also, a large number of calls received by ASTRA come from NGOs (715 or 8.38%), friends, relatives or victim's partners (584 or 6.84%) and citizens (539 or 6.32% of the total number of calls).

Out of 8533 received calls in the period between March 2002 – November 2008, 6599 (77.33%) calls were initiated by a female individual, while the rest of 1934 cases were initiated by men.

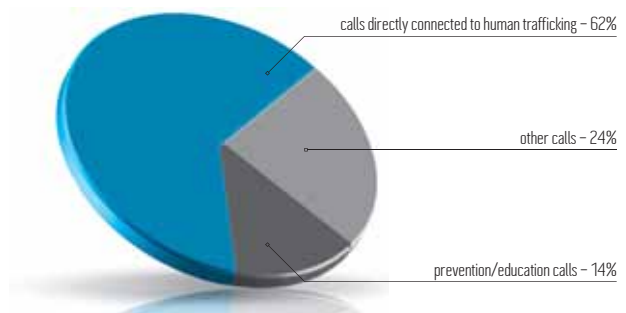
The main reason behind this figure is the fact that women are most frequently (potential) human trafficking victims. Women more often seek help while men lesser ask for any kind of support and have a hard time accepting it, based on the role they were given in the patriarchal model of society, wanting to escape any identification with a position of being a victim, or a person needing professional help. Also, a reason why a significantly larger number of women contacted ASTRA is because women have a higher level of awareness and the ability to recognize social problems.

Next to utilizing the SOS hotline, a direct contact with the clients can also be established through field actions. A total of 487 field actions were implemented. A number of field activities decreased with the opening of ASTRA Daily Center, where clients tend to come to ASTRA (from 2004 – 2005, 181 field actions were implemented while between 2007 and 2008 only 84). Clients were provided assistance during their contact with other NGOs and institutions for the purpose of attaining their rights to specific kinds of assistance and were accompanied during realization of all forms of assistance in order to prevent secondary victimization and to obtain optimal treatment for human trafficking victims. Victims very often ask ASTRA employees to be present during various procedures, often only as a psychological support. This form of support is very important since it offers victims a sense of security and belonging, and establishes a relationship of trust with ASTRA employees, what in fact represents the basis of our work.

## STRUCTURE OF CALLS

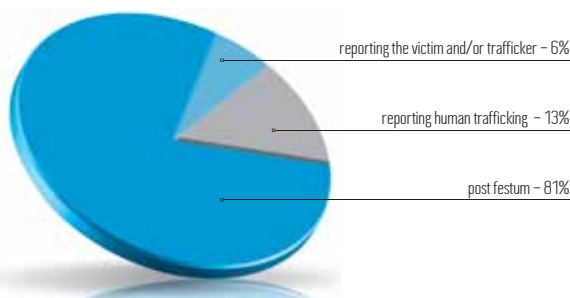
Over the period March 2002 – November 2008, ASTRA SOS helpline received 8,533 calls. They are classified into three basic categories, as shown in Chart no. 6.

Chart 6  
Type of calls March  
2002 – November 2008



The first group comprises helpline calls which directly referred to trafficking in human beings (Chart no.7). In total, there were 5,281 such calls (or: 61.89%). There were 1,186 calls classified as preventive and educative calls (or: 13.9%); they are represented in Chart no. 8. The third group comprises other calls; there were 2,066 such calls (or 24.21% of all calls received over the period 2002 – 2008); they are represented in Chart no. 9.

Chart 7  
Calls Directly Related to Human Trafficking  
March 2002 - November 2008



As regards the category of calls directly related to trafficking in human beings, which is the largest category and comprises 61.89% of all calls received by this SOS Hotline, we will first say a few words about the group of calls classified as *Reporting Trafficking* (12.54%). Upon receiving this type of information, ASTRA promptly distributes it to all relevant authorities and takes further steps towards identifying trafficking victims and helping them, in cooperation with NGOs, international organizations operating in the country and abroad, the police (municipal police departments, Republican Ministry of Interior, INTERPOL National Central Bureau – Belgrade, SECI Regional Centre for Combating Trans-border Crime), competent Social Welfare Centers and other relevant institutions. The cooperation with NGOs in the region enables a simultaneous “multi-track” operation in terms of coordination of activities and exchange of information aimed at identifying victims of human trafficking and providing effective support. NGOs in the area of destination, transit or origin of a trafficked human being establish a direct contact with the local institutions; thus, different institutions are integrated into this assistance process and the number of anti-trafficking stakeholders promptly rises.

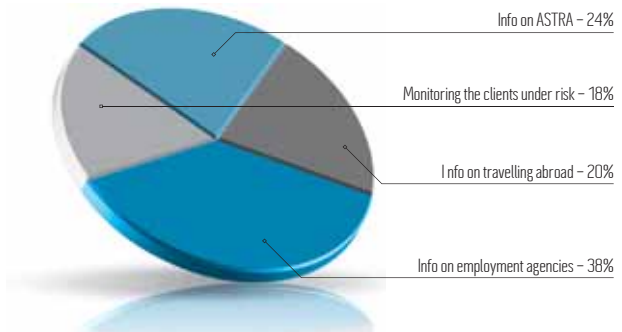
*Reporting the victim and/or trafficker* (5.91%) is another group of calls directly related to trafficking in human beings. This type of information is mainly provided by the citizens and, as a rule, in a form of anonymous telephone call. Although we suspected the relevance of these calls at the beginning, many of them in practice proved really valuable. In connection with this group of calls, we must underline the important role of the actions taken to raise public awareness, because, as already mentioned, they helped people become aware of this problem and learn how to identify it. However, when traffickers change their modus operandi, their victims become less visible and available. For that reason, the number of calls of this kind marked a decrease in the past couple of years.

*“Post festum”* is the third group of calls and there were 4,282 such calls (81.08%). ASTRA is turned to by the trafficking victims who have emerged from their situation of exploitation, but still need some form of assistance or support (medical, legal, financial, etc.). These forms of assistance are available only through the programs which are realized by NGOs. It should be said that victims are inclined to seek help from NGOs rather than going to public institutions as they seem to have more trust in NGOs than in the institutional system. The number of *“post festum”* calls has marked a significant increase over the years, which is indicative of the actual need for such services, in particular when bearing in mind the scarcity of reintegration programs in Serbia and their limited capacity and lack of systematic approach.

Over the past five years the traffickers in human beings have many times changed their modus operandi, due to which it is ever more difficult to identify the methods they use to recruit victims. In the period 2001 – 2003, a great number of escort agencies advertised their activity openly, and by taking job with these agencies women and girls often came into position of becoming the victims of trafficking. Since 2004, the frequency of this sort of advertising has been significantly reduced; on the other hand, the number of offers for au pair, catering and modeling jobs has been on the increase. Men who were

trafficked were mainly recruited as seasonal farm or plantation workers, construction workers, or workers on oil rigs. In the referred-to period, we learned of the first cases of male victims who were trafficked for labor exploitation.

Chart 8  
Preventative and Educational Calls  
March 2002 – November 2008



In the category of preventive and educational calls, there were 1,186 calls, which makes up 22.46% of the total number of calls received. Per annum, 20–25% of all clients turning to ASTRA make calls which come under this category. By making preventive calls, the clients seek for solid information they need at that very moment.

The most frequent calls made to ASTRA within this category were those in which clients sought information about the *operations of employment agencies and individual intermediaries who provide employment*, especially in cases of employment abroad. There were 451 such calls (38.03% of the total number of calls received in the category of preventive and educational calls; calls from this group are getting ever more frequent over the years). In 234 calls received by ASTRA, the clients asked for miscellaneous *information in relation to going abroad for other purposes* such as education, tourism, etc. (19.73% of the total number of calls received in the category of preventive and educational calls). This group of clients is monitored over the entire process of their preparation for the journey and during their stay abroad – up to the moment it has been established that their safety is not threatened.

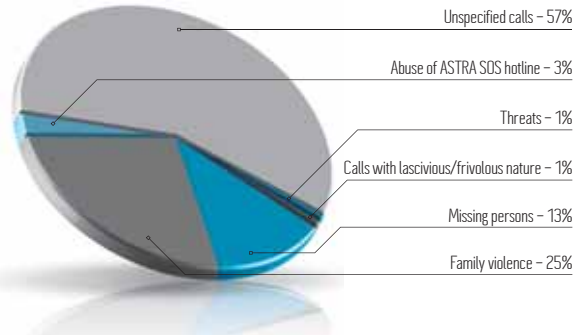
The following services are offered to ASTRA clients: the provision of information on whether or not the agency concerned holds the license to perform work (such licenses are issued to employment agencies by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development); the provision of legal analysis of the contracts in writing, with special reference to those contract stipulations that might be ambiguous or detrimental to clients; and in this respect, the provision of additional legal consultancy with the lawyers who are engaged by ASTRA. Clients are presented with accurate information on safe migrations (in relation to preparation of documents, relevant procedures and visa regimes), contact points in Embassies or Consulates in foreign countries, contact points in NGOs operating in the destination country. It is investigated whether or not the school or company concerned actually exists (and the reliability of all information regarding their location), whether or not the company has actually announced jobs, whether or not the company has representative agents in Serbia, and other issues as appropriate. In this way ASTRA preventively operates in order to prevent not only human trafficking, but also the potential abuse and fraud to which people who seek employment or wish to continue their education abroad might be exposed.

With the aim of maintaining contact and *monitoring the clients at risk*, ASTRA answered 215 calls (18.13%) from 208 clients. The situation of the clients whose calls come under this group indicated that it was very likely for these clients to find themselves in the trafficking chain as victims. In these cases a regular contact was maintained in order to ensure an adequate monitoring of the situation or, where the situation was deemed alarming, the person concerned was moved at her/his own request into a safer environment (they were mainly placed in safe havens) until we satisfied ourselves that her/his safety

was no longer endangered. It is possible that in some of these cases the issue was more about domestic or other similar form of violence rather than trafficking in human beings, but the environment in which these clients lived was nevertheless potentially dangerous to them.

The number of calls which refer to seeking *information on ASTRA* is also on the increase on annual basis (there were 286 such calls or 24.11%). As regards this type of calls, ASTRA is mainly contacted by persons who wish to contribute to combating human trafficking by committing their enthusiasm and their expertise in the field. In addition to their interest in taking part in ASTRA activities, these persons also wish to simply get better acquainted with the programs, aims and principles upon which the work of ASTRA is carried out.

Chart 9  
Other calls  
March 2002 - November 2008



Within the category *Other Calls*, we have received as many as 2,066 *unspecified calls* (39.12%). The *unspecified calls* group includes our contacts with clients from the *post festum* group of calls, but only such contacts whose nature does not pertain to the former situation of exploitation of these women. These women often turn to us with regard to various issues for which they had not managed to obtain adequate response from institutions, and when they do not know which institution is competent for solving the problem concerned or which non-institutional organization might provide the needed support. We have a somewhat similar situation when it comes to calls related to *family violence*. There were 526 such calls (25.46%) made mainly by persons who considered that the help provided theretofore was either insufficient or inadequate. The intervention of ASTRA in such cases includes the provision of support to victims of violence, particularly in establishing contact with the competent institutions and non-governmental organizations whose primary activity is oriented towards this specific type of problem.

*Reporting missing persons* is a specific sub-group under the *Other Calls* category. There were 270 such calls (13.08%) and they all referred to missing persons who were of age, who had not disappeared in the zone of war operations, and for whom there were no direct indications that they were in the trafficking chain. It has been shown that the families of adult missing persons in practice almost exclusively depend on institutions which often cannot provide the needed support or "logistic assistance". As regards to the civil sector, a substantial number of organizations across the world is engaged in providing assistance in the cases of missing children; however, when it comes to adult missing persons, the situation is quite different. It should be noted that in practice, in particular in the institutional system as it was in the previous period, but such a tendency still exists, the missing or runaway children are rarely looked upon as children who may have been victims of violence, and it is overlooked that their "delinquent" behavior may be just a logical consequence of the abuse and violence they have suffered. With regard to calls which referred to missing persons, ASTRA provided assistance and support to the families of missing persons. ASTRA also facilitated their contacting the relevant organizations which specialize in these issues and accordingly may provide a more specific form of help.

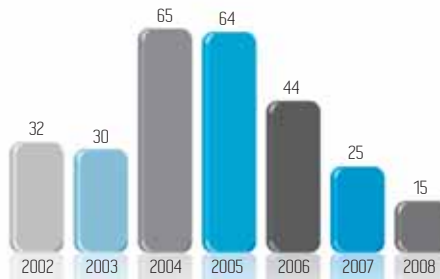
Within the category *Other Calls* we have received 68 calls which are classified as attempts of *misuse of ASTRA SOS Hotline* (3.29% of the total number of calls received in this category). These calls were mainly made by the traffickers or other perpetrators who wanted to locate the whereabouts of their victims after they got out of the situation of exploitation. In some cases the traffickers called during the court proceedings in order to establish contact with the victims and thus influence their testifying. In addition, some traffickers tried to obtain the address of the Shelter for trafficking victims in which the victim, to their knowledge, was placed. In some cases the perpetrators even tried to misinterpret their case, which in effect might be e.g. a case of domestic violence, as a case of trafficking in human beings in order to come into contact with the victim.

Over the six years of SOS Hotline operation, we have received 15 calls of *lascivious/frivolous content* and 14 *threatening calls*. These calls were also made by traffickers or their lawyers, as a rule immediately after the victim had got out of the trafficking chain or during the court proceedings.

## CLIENTS/VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Over the period March 2002 – November 2008, 275 victims of trafficking in human beings were identified by way of ASTRA SOS helpline.

Chart 10  
Number of trafficking victims  
March 2002 – November 2008



Out of total number of victims assisted, 166 persons were of age (over 18) while 109 were children victims of human trafficking [in the meantime 47 of them came of age].

Over the past five years, the number of children in the total number of the identified victims varied. Over the period 2002–2003, the number of children victims of human trafficking amounted to approx 10%, while in the period 2004–2005 that figure was considerably higher and totaled to alarming 44%. This figure was particularly high in the year 2004 and it totaled to 41 minors out of the total number of victims [i.e. 63.07%]; in 2005 this figure was somewhat lower (18 minors i.e. 30.51%). In the year 2006, the number of children in the total number of identified victims of human trafficking was still extremely high 47.7%, as well as during 2007 (40%) and 2008 (53.33%).

Chart 11  
Ratio of children in the total number  
of identified victims of human trafficking  
March 2002 – November 2008



Out of 275 victims of human trafficking ASTRA identified in the period 2002–2008, there were 17 male and 258 female victims. In the year 2004, the first cases of males as victims of human trafficking were recorded. Most often the boys were exploited for begging and criminal purposes and sometimes they were sexually abused, usually as a means of punishment in cases when a boy would not meet certain criteria set (for instance, if the boy did not earn enough money during that particular day). In the cases recorded so far, male adults were mainly exploited for labor.

Out of 109 children victims of human trafficking identified in the period 2002–2008, 12 were boys at the time when they were recruited and exploited, whilst among adults, there were five male trafficked persons.

In the past five years, the ratio of local and foreign citizens of both genders at the annual level considerably varied. According to the data available, the representation of female citizens of Serbia in the total share of the identified victims until the year 2002 was app. 30%. However, after the year 2002, this figure increased and in the period 2002–2003 it rose to 61%. In the period 2004–2005 it amounted to 71.11%, whilst in the year 2006, in 161 (68.51%) cases recorded, all victims were females with the citizenship of the Republic of Serbia. As regards the year 2007 this figure came to 88%, whilst in 2008 it is 86.7%.

CITIZENSHIP OF ADULT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING	
Serbia	97
Moldova	18
Ukraine	14
Romania	11
Bulgaria	5
Hungary	4
France	2
Slovakia	2
Uzbekistan	2
Croatia	2
Others <sup>58</sup>	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>

Table 1

CITIZENSHIP OF CHILDREN VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING	
Serbia	97
FYROM	3
Moldova	2
Albania	2
Romania	2
Bulgaria	2
Iraq	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 2

Regarding the total number of identified children, 99 of them (89.2%) hold Serbian citizenship, while 59% of adults are also of Serbian origin. This data clearly shows the most prominent trends regarding human trafficking in our country.

Since the establishment of ASTRA SOS Hotline until November of 2008, Serbia was identified as a target (destination) country for a total of 137 (49.8%) persons. For 37 persons (13.45%) the destination country was Italy, whilst a lower number of clients of both genders were transported across the transit countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia) to reach Italy and Spain, or to reach south (Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Malta, Turkey, Libya), or to reach the West European countries (France, Belgium) and North European countries (mainly Sweden). We should not disregard the fact that the final destination of trafficking of the majority of victims was not identified due to the fact that the trafficking chain was intercepted and cut in its transportation stage i.e. in its transit stage through Serbia. However, in some cases this action still did not prevent further exploitation of victims which had existed even before they entered Serbia in their country of origin and/or in some other transitional countries.

<sup>58</sup> Czech Republic (1), Latvia (1), Armenia (1), Belarus (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Albania (1), Serbian–French dual citizenship (1)

DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR ADULT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING	
Serbia	83
Italy	21
Not identified	12
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7
Greece	5
Montenegro	5
Spain	4
Croatia	4
Macedonia	4
other <sup>56</sup>	8
Germany	3
Kosovo	4
Sweden	2
France	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>

Table 3

DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR CHILDREN VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING	
Serbia	54
Italy	16
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6
Germany	6
Croatia	6
Macedonia	3
Kosovo	3
Sweden	3
Montenegro	2
France	2
Not identified	5
Greece	1
Slovenia	1
Belgium	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 4

There is a high percentage of victims of human trafficking (64 i.e. 27.23%) whose final destination is Serbia. Some of these male and female victims are the citizens of Serbia which implies that the scope of trafficking in human beings within the borders of our country is substantial as well. At the annual level, this figure becomes even more prominent. In the period from 2004 to 2005, this figure reached the alarming trend of app. 35%. At the annual level the representation of the internal trafficking is as follows: in the year 2006 – 29.54%, in 2007– 36%, and in 2008 – 30.8%.

The method of identification used on ASTRA SOS Hotline is the result of seven years of experience in this particular filed. This is why some of the indicators have been intentionally so broadly defined thus deviating from the standard bureaucratic procedures. Also, it is worth mentioning that the indicators ASTRA is using for the identification of victims of human trafficking are somewhat different than the indicators used by the Agency for the Coordination of Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and/or the police. During the year 2004, the opinions of ASTRA and the Agency for the Coordination of Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, regarding the two respective cases differed. There were eight children identified by the police as victims of human trafficking who were not registered into the Agency's database because the Agency was not directly involved in their sheltering, although in this particular case the criminal charges for trafficking in human beings were filed. There are no standard procedures pertaining to the identification and processing of victims of human trafficking in Serbia. Therefore, in practice, these procedures are enforced arbitrarily and with many omissions, which is clearly evident in the quite disparate data on the number of identified victims provided by different agencies (non-governmental organizations, Agency for the Coordination of Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, the police)

## ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

ASTRA provides *legal assistance to (potential) victims of human trafficking*.

ASTRA offers its clients free-of-charge analyses of contracts, support during the criminal procedure and legal assistance in case they decide to file a complaint for the compensation of damages. In the period from 2004 to 2008, a total of 31 legal

<sup>59</sup> Romania (1), Libya (1), Turkey (1), Malta (1), Norway (1), Slovenia (1), Belgium (1), Austria (1)

analyses of the contracts produced by various employment agencies were conducted. The clients received written analyses of such contracts, with particular emphasis placed on both positive and potentially unfavorable contract clauses. Very often the contracts were produced in two languages, in Serbian and in English language, and there were cases where the contents of a contract differed from one language to another. Since the Near East was a rather common destination for the persons to be trafficked, some of the contracts offering employment in that territory were written in the Arabic language as well. ASTRA checked the uniformity of the contract versions made in different languages and informed its clients on the differences noticed as well as on the potential risks which such differences may imply. Besides, very often the logo of the employer in the offered versions of the contracts was not identical. Certain contract clauses were so devised as to implicitly place the employee not only in a debt bondage situation, but also in some sort of isolation, and deprive him/her of the possibility to leave his/her work place and the country concerned (to be more specific – the clauses regarding personal identification documents i.e. passport.)

In the past four years, ASTRA rendered a total of 202 legal assistances to its clients.

In addition, it is illustrative that only in the year 2006/2007 ASTRA provided to its 32 clients 458 *psychological assistances*, in a form of individual therapy with a psychologist or psychiatrist, group therapy or psychological testing. In the course of 2006, 16 clients received this form of help 146 times, whilst in the course of 2007, 13 clients received this form of help 202 times, out of which 77 (38%) were realized within ASTRA Daily Centre. In 2008, 232 psychological assistances were provided to 17 ASTRA clients.

ASTRA was monitoring the procedures in which its clients participated either as witnesses or injured parties, as well as the cases pertaining to the exercise of rights of its clients, which were not directly related to trafficking in human beings. So far **three** damage claims have been filed and in one case the court ruled the legally binding verdict in favor of the victim. However, the compensation to the client of ASTRA has not been paid yet. The court procedures in which ASTRA clients participated as witnesses/injured parties were heard in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pančevo, Bijelo Polje, Niš, Sremska Mitrovica, Vranje. Besides, ASTRA also monitored a number of court trials which were not directly related to its clients. This was because the charges were raised on the basis of **Article 111b** of the **Criminal Law** of the Republic of Serbia [note: as of January 01, 2006 the criminal act of human trafficking is incriminated by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia under Article 388]. In the period from 2004–2008, there were seven forensic examinations.

## CONTACTS WITH INSTITUTIONS

With the objective of meeting the clients' requirements and providing assistance to the 275 so far identified victims of human trafficking, there have been many contacts made with institutions.

In order to relocate cases to relevant authorities, we address the **Republican Ministry of the Interior, Interpol National Bureau-Belgrade, SECI Regional Centre for Combating Trans-border Crime, and the Municipal Police Departments**. The information is passed on directly to the members of anti-trafficking teams or, if there are no such teams, to the sections within police departments dealing with the cases of human trafficking. Any further communication between the above services and the clients is usually made through ASTRA, whereby one of the activities is the constant encouragement of the two-way information flow so that the clients would be aware of the potential police work outcomes regarding the specific cases. Except for several cases we are informed of via telephone, the results of just one investigation show that ASTRA received an official note.



The periods of cooperation with the police that will be considered are those pre and post 2004. What is interesting is the fact that the cooperation was at its best precisely during the time when human trafficking had not yet been defined in our law and when no structures dealing with this problem existed. An overall impression is that the cooperation was successful until basic mechanisms were created. After 2004, the work of institutional actors which was only formally in accordance with the rights of the victims and the standards for dealing with the victims. However, there was no further progress in developing the newly formed programs being made. By having built the foundations for combating trafficking, the institutions appear to find the problem of trafficking in Serbia a matter that was resolved back in 2004 when the Interior Minister at the time declared that there was no problem of trafficking in children from Serbia, as well as there not being any clear evidence of children, foreign citizens being trafficked into or through the Republic of Serbia<sup>60</sup>. It was particularly that year that 41 children were identified in the trafficking chain through ASTRA SOS Hotline.

The cooperation with the **Social Welfare Centers** is of great importance, especially in providing aid to children and during the rehabilitation process. Since 2006 there has been a close cooperation with homes for children and youth in Belgrade whose protégées are now involved in ASTRA Daily Center programs.

Moreover, there has been long cooperation with the **Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia** on the issue of prevention for the timely receiving of information about private employment agencies for Serbia and abroad on time. The list of licensed agencies is available online on the **Ministry of Economy and Regional Development** official web page<sup>61</sup> as this Ministry grants the agencies with work licenses.

For the purpose of providing the victims of human trafficking with all-round support, we are also cooperating with the **Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims**. On a number of occasions, when the Agency addressed us for help, the help was given to those persons not identified through ASTRA SOS Hotline. Nevertheless, as it is common with collaborating with institutions on a more general level, this particular collaboration came across numerous obstacles. For instance, one such obstacle was in the form of an undefined sector authority in the Agency which would appear unbeaten to this day.

In September 2007, the office of the first Serbian **Ombudsman** opened. At the very beginning of 2008, the Ombudsman was assigned to the case involving two Uzbekistani citizens suspected of being victims of human trafficking who had been accommodated in Detention Center for Foreigners in Padinska Skela. After a joint visit to these girls, they, being victims of human trafficking, received assistance. Shortly afterwards, however, they were deported primarily due to the lack of awareness of others working on the case.

In addition, ASTRA clients also needed medical assistance from the **Institute for Forensic Medicine and Infectious Clinic of the Clinical Hospital in Belgrade** on numerous occasions. The Institute's examinations are documented, hence are of great value during court proceedings when proving inflicted injuries as a consequence of exploitation.

## CONTACTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

In order to satisfy the clients' needs, the NGOs in Italy, Spain, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Great Britain were contacted. Furthermore, we addressed to institutions in the Netherlands, Macedonia and Malta. The information obtained through these contacts was extremely important in cases of prevention during our clients' departures abroad. For those persons

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF, OHCHR AND OSCE/ODHR, LIMANOWSKA, BARBARA: TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE: 2004 – FOCUS ON PREVENTION IN: ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CROATIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MOLDOVA, ROMANIA, SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO, THE UN ADMINISTERED PROVINCE OF KOSOVO. 2005, P.117

<sup>61</sup> [HTTP://WWW.MERR.SR.GOV.YU/](http://www.merr.sr.gov.yu/)

already abroad, the support these organizations had given them was often the only help available in urging times. So far, there have been several repatriations of victims of human trafficking easily completed owing to these contacts with regional organizations. Particularly effective teamwork was with our state's Consulate departments in Athens, Greece, as well as the Consulate of the Republic of Serbia in Trieste, Italy, as the most frequently used destination.

ASTRA is a member of various local and international networks, consequently allowing us a speedy flow of information and an immediate action in most urgent situations. Some of these networks would be ASTRA Network, Network of Trust, HPVPI Network, The World Organization against Torture (OMCT), FLARE and others<sup>62</sup>.

As for the number of countries of destination for our citizens, it is far greater than that above and more hard work in making new contacts in the future is essential.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' REINTEGRATION

Re-socialization and reintegration of the victims of human trafficking are one of the weakest points in the overall efforts in combating human trafficking and specifically in victim assistance in Serbia.

Up until 2007, after all the necessary support would be given to a victim upon breaking free from the chain of human trafficking or, after leaving the "Temporary House" (reintegration shelter led by NGO Atina since 2005) one year program which would have provided the victim with accommodation if needed, there were no systematical reintegration programs in practice which would have strengthened the victims' fundamental capacities. Most importantly, the victims would be entirely left on their own after the finalization of the court proceedings. Resulting from such a position whereby no alternative, mainly for their financial independence was offered to them, the victims would often again be exposed to different types of exploitation and investment in the human trafficking chain.

### ASTRA DAILY CENTER

Within the framework of ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program, a direct contact with victims is made, further allowing us to learn of their needs. After leaving the trafficking chain, the victims are faced with many difficulties: PTSD, financial hardships, no remaining family members or separation from their families, discontinued education, no job opportunities, going through any legal procedures, virtual nonexistence in the health protection system and consequential non-access to free health care, etc.

Nonetheless, together with CARE International, Save the Children UK and International Women's Club, ASTRA has designed a reintegration program suitable for different age and requirements of its users.

In addition to assistance available through ASTRA SOS Hotline, the Daily Center also offers the following activities:

- encouragement to continue education,
- continuous therapy,
- self-help groups,
- leisure time and encouraging creativity,
- yoga and self-defense course,
- educational workshops (topics chosen by Daily Center's clients),
- focusing on self-confidence and self-esteem,

62 TO SEE DETAILS GO TO [WWW.ASTRA.ORG.RS](http://WWW.ASTRA.ORG.RS)

- financial empowerment.

From January 2007 to November 2008, ASTRA Daily Center received 1853 visits from 62 clients (15 were children), 49 of whom actively participated in the activities program. Several significant changes were made in ASTRA's working methodology in the last year because there was a need for a constant reevaluation of achieved results through Daily Center's work. Daily Center's design was constantly being amended to fit the clients' needs.

The way in which ASTRA Daily Center operates on victim reintegration requires a systematic cooperation upgrading with various institutional authorities so to acquaint them with the specific problems of human trafficking, criteria and positive experiences ASTRA has obtained. Apart from through ASTRA SOS Hotline, the clients can get the necessary information about the Daily Center from different educational and social welfare institutions, as well as other NGOs which became well aware of ASTRA's problem solving expertise, clients' profiles and Daily Center's services during their preparation periods.

However, so far there has been no referral to ASTRA Daily Center from the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims.

The relevant actors do not seem to be giving any priority to victim recovery and resocialization, which would explain why ASTRA Daily Center remains to be the only reintegration program meant for human trafficking victims not already placed to the Shelter, when the victims still need any and every form of support in getting well, stabilized and empowering. Such programs demand intensive inter-sectoral teamwork, training, standard and procedure ratification, cooperation from various actors and primarily government authorities in order to establish a "positive discrimination" of the human trafficking victims during their (re)socialization period.

## OPINION POLL ABOUT THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM IN SERBIA CONDUCTED BY MEDIUM GALLUP FOR NGO ASTRA

### INTRODUCTION

TNS Medium Gallup research agency in October of 2008 conducted a public opinion poll for the purposes of NGO ASTRA.

Research objective: To examine perception and understanding Serbian citizens have on the subject of human trafficking

The poll was conducted by using a direct interview technique (face to face) and a structured questionnaire. The research sample was representative of the national population structure and included 1139 Serbian citizens over 11 years of age.

TYPE OF RESEARCH	Quantitative field research
METHOD	Omnibus quantitative research – Face to Face
TECHNIQUE	Direct interview, face to face with the respondent guided by a structured questionnaire
SAMPLE	Multi-stage stratified random sample, systematic random sampling of respondents Territory: Territory of Serbia, urban and rural settlements Age of examinees: 11+ Sample size: 1139
WEIGHTING	According to age and education

Table 5

## SAMPLE STRUCTURE

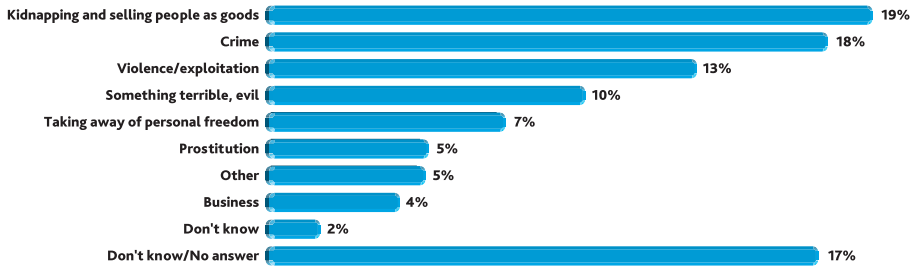
		NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	%	% WEIGHT
Gender	Male	564	50%	49%
	Female	575	50%	51%
Age	11-15	72	6%	6%
	16-20	105	9%	8%
	21-30	215	19%	16%
	31-50	421	37%	37%
	51-65	230	20%	23%
	65+	96	8%	10%
Education	Elementary and lower education	357	31%	34%
	High school education	592	52%	49%
	College education (2 or 4 year)	190	17%	16%
Settlement type	Rural	680	60%	59%
	Urban	459	40%	41%
Region	Belgrade	257	23%	22%
	Vojvodina	288	25%	25%
	Midwest Serbia	238	21%	22%
	Southeastern Serbia	356	31%	31%
Employment status	Employed (full or part time)	522	46%	45%
	Unemployed	170	15%	14%
	Housewife	65	6%	7%
	Student	213	19%	16%
	Pensioner	166	15%	17%
	DK/NA	3	0%	0%
Income per household member	Up to 6.000 RSD	102	9%	9%
	6 - 12.000 RSD	167	15%	15%
	12 - 18.000 RSD	188	17%	17%
	18 - 30.000 RSD	237	21%	20%
	30 - 60.000 RSD	118	10%	10%
	Over 60.000 RSD	36	3%	3%
	DK/NA	291	26%	25%
Total		1139	100%	100%

Table 6

## UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Citizens most commonly define human trafficking as **kidnapping and selling people**, frequently comparing it to the sale of goods. Every fifth respondent considers human trafficking to be a criminal act, and for that matter, the most severe kind. Very often it is considered that human trafficking is **violence or illegal exploitation of human beings**.

Chart 12 – What is in your opinion human trafficking? OPEN ENDED QUESTION



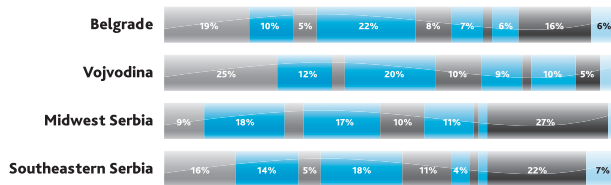
A large number of respondents consider this phenomenon to be so disturbing that it makes them unable to clearly and rationally define it, and they thus provide a highly emotional explanation – human trafficking is something terrible and evil.

„The evil of modern civilization we should fight against.“  
 „I am aware it exists, but such horror I have hard time accepting.“

Chart 13

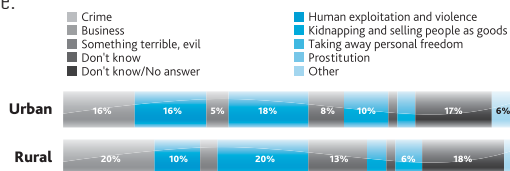


Chart 14

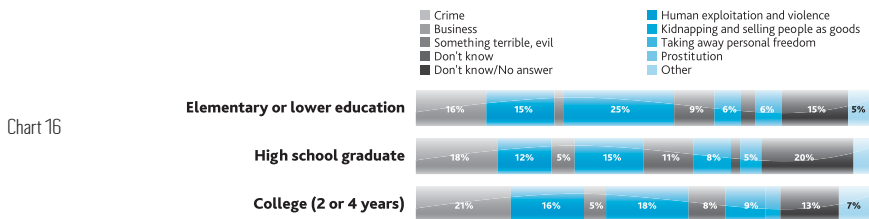


Human trafficking is in all of the age categories most often defined as the kidnapping and selling of people as goods, and younger people tend to use this definition more.

Chart 15



Inhabitants of the Midwest Serbia are more frequently than inhabitants of other regions unable to define human trafficking, while the rural inhabitants more frequently than urban ones define human trafficking as "something terrible and evil."



Highly educated individuals, compared to individuals from different educational categories, tend to define human trafficking as a crime. Individuals with high school education more often than others do not know how to explain what human trafficking is, while individuals with the lowest level of education state that human trafficking is kidnapping and selling people as goods.



Individuals with lower income describe human trafficking as a criminal act, a lucrative business and kidnapping and selling people as goods. Respondents with a higher monthly income consider human trafficking as an act against personal freedom of an individual.

### PERCEPTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA

The majority of citizens (86%) are aware that human trafficking occurs in our country, while 4% of the population believes that such thing does not exist in Serbia. A lot of respondents – as many as 9% – do not know whether human trafficking exists in our country or not.

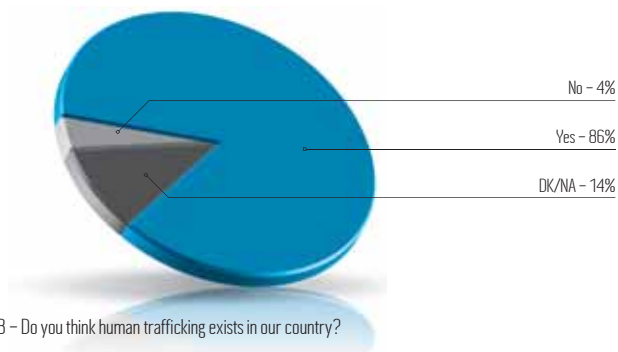
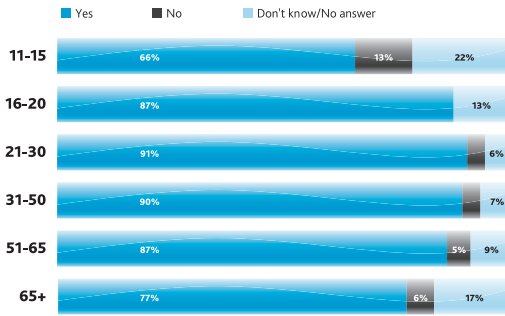
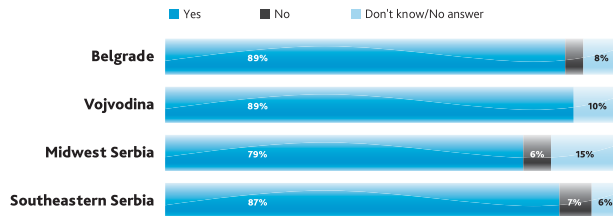


Chart 19



The youngest respondents (age 11-15) more frequently than the older ones believe that human trafficking does not exist in Serbia, or are not sure whether it exists or not. It is similar with the respondents older than 65, who are also not well acquainted with the existence of such phenomenon in Serbia.

Chart 20



Insufficient awareness of human trafficking in Serbia is noticeable in Midwest Serbia as well.

Chart 21

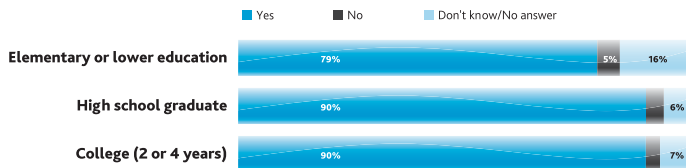


Chart 22

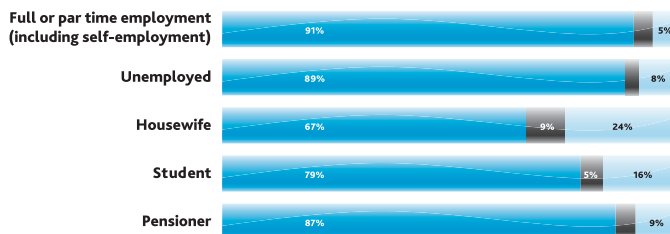
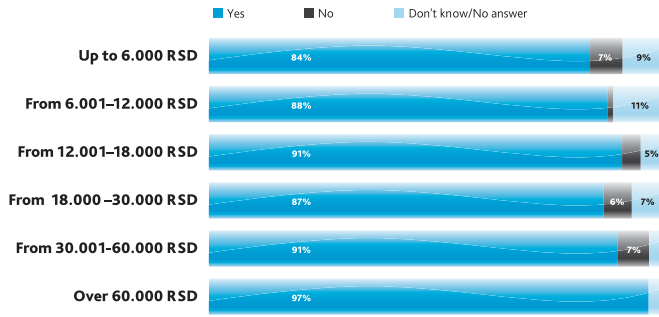


Chart 23



Categories of respondents that have a lower awareness of the existence of human trafficking in Serbia are also individuals with elementary education, individuals belonging to a lower income bracket, and housewives, but also students.

CAUSES

Serbian citizens believe that major causes for human trafficking lay in the country's poor socio-economic climate, while the microclimate, that being the family violence, is not seen as a significant cause.

Poverty and poverty associated phenomena, such as unemployment and a desire to have a better life are also considered as some of the most significant causes for human trafficking.

Citizens also believe that other elements, such as corruption, transition, former war environment also significantly contribute to the existence of human trafficking.

Chart 24 – In your opinion what are the causes for human trafficking? MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

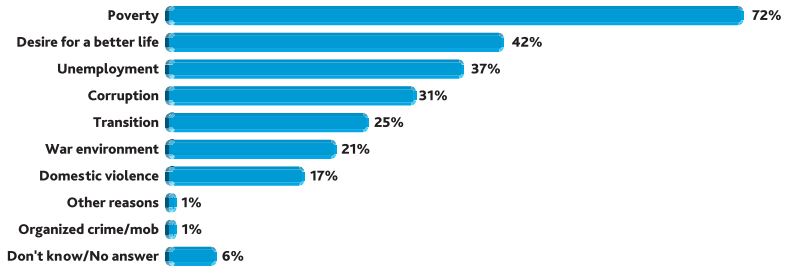


Chart 25

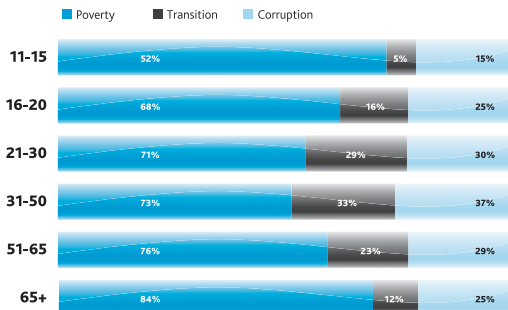
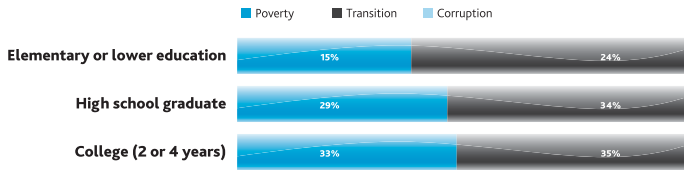




Chart 26

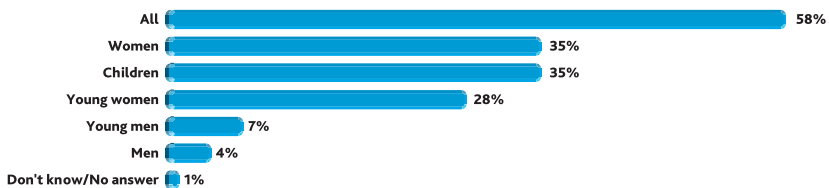


The oldest respondents (over 65), more frequently than others, state the poverty as one of the main causes for human trafficking. On the other hand, poverty is the least frequently mentioned cause among the youngest respondents (age 11 – 15). Middle aged respondents, (age 31 – 50) and highly educated respondents most frequently state the process of transition as a leading cause for human trafficking, while the youngest respondents (age 11 – 15) least frequently mentioned this cause. Middle aged respondents (age 31 – 50) and highly educated individuals also believe corruption to be one of the significant causes for human trafficking.

### POTENTIAL VICTIMS

The majority of citizens believe that almost anybody can become a human trafficking victim.

Chart 27 – Who can become a human trafficking victim? MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS



Respondents with higher education levels are more aware of the fact that everyone is a potential human trafficking victim; however, there are vast regional differences on this issue. The highest awareness of this fact is in Vojvodina, while the lowest awareness on this issue is among respondents from Southeast Serbia.

In general, it is considered that women and children are more prone to becoming human trafficking victims than males.

Chart 28

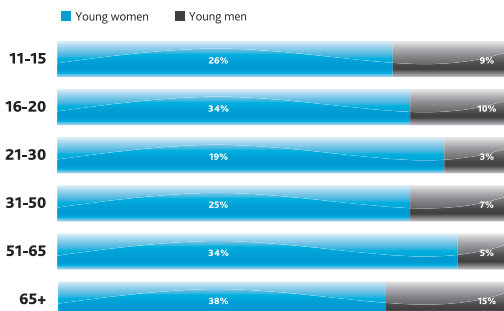
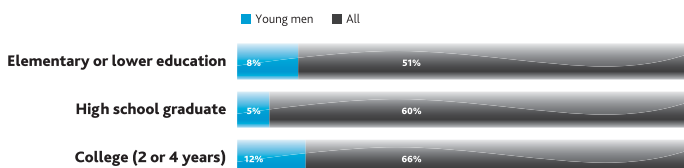


Chart 29



College educated respondents more often than the respondents from other educational categories believe that everyone can become a human trafficking victim.

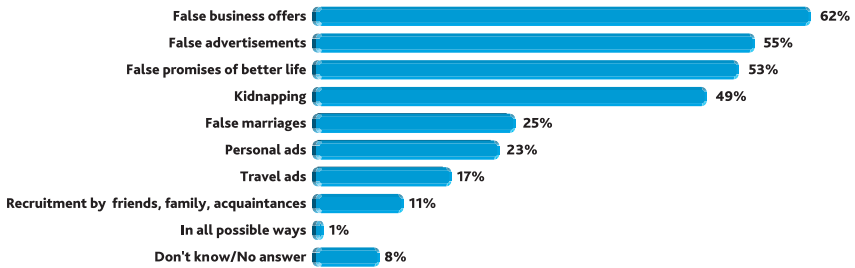
These respondents also believe that young men can also become human trafficking victims.

The oldest citizens believe that human trafficking victims are mostly young men or women.

### RECRUITING VICTIMS

Different kinds of deception performed by unknown individuals are considered as the most frequent instruments for recruiting victims – false business offers, false advertisements and promises for better life, and somewhat false marriage proposals.

Chart 30 – Do you know what instruments human traffickers use to recruit their victims? MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS



Kidnapping is also considered as a frequently used way to get victims, while recruitment by familiar individuals is seen as less often.

On the other hand, as many as 8% of citizens are not aware of the ways to recruit human trafficking victims.

Chart 31

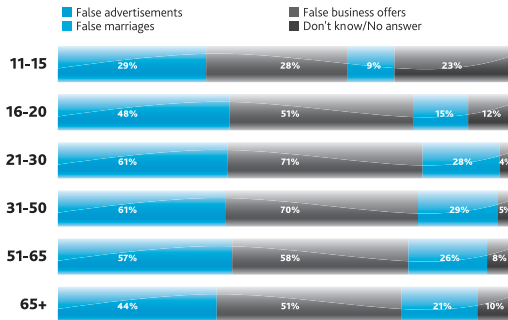
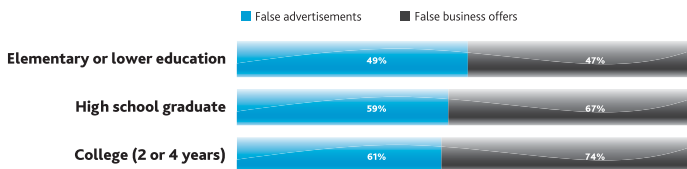


Chart 32



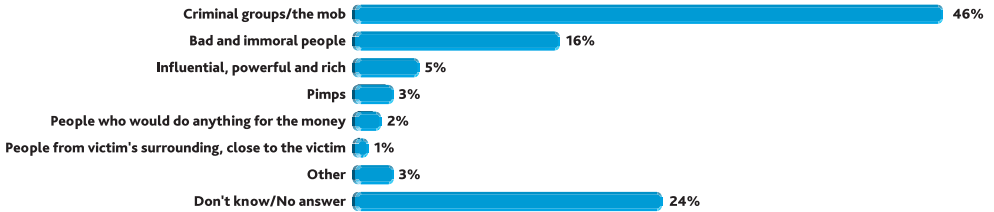
False ads and false job offers as the ways of recruitment are mostly cited by the middle aged respondents (age 21 to 50), and by the highly educated individuals. On the other hand, these ways of recruiting victims, including false marriage offers, are significantly less referred to by the youngest respondents.

The youngest respondents (age 11 – 15); however, more often than other age groups state that they do not know what instruments human traffickers use to recruit their victims.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKERS**

The majority of citizens (46%) describe human traffickers as criminals or mobsters, sometimes stating that these activities belong to an organized crime network. There are also those (5%) who explicitly state that these are activities powerful and influential high ranking individuals partake in, such as businessmen and politicians.

Chart 33 – In your opinion who are human traffickers? OPEN ENDED QUESTION



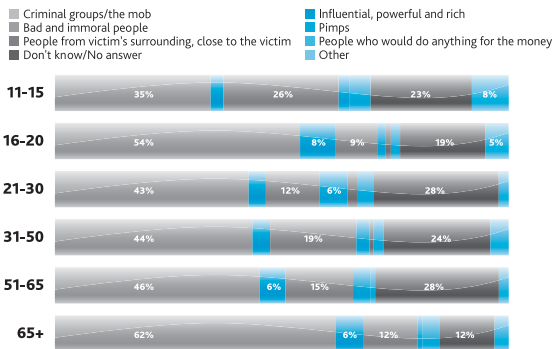
Every fifth citizen describes human traffickers as individuals who are bad, immoral, unscrupulous, stating very often that such individuals are not human, that is to say they lack "humanity".

"Criminals often linked to the police."

"They are the worst scum, lacking any humanity whatsoever."

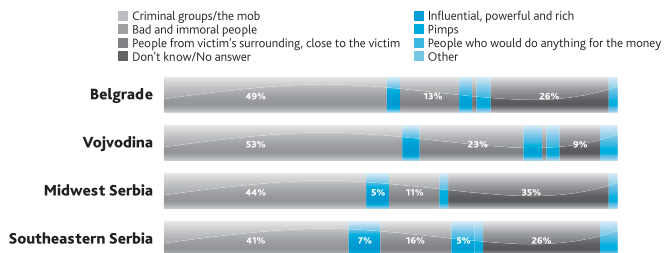
"Businessmen, politicians, tycoons, criminals."

Chart 34

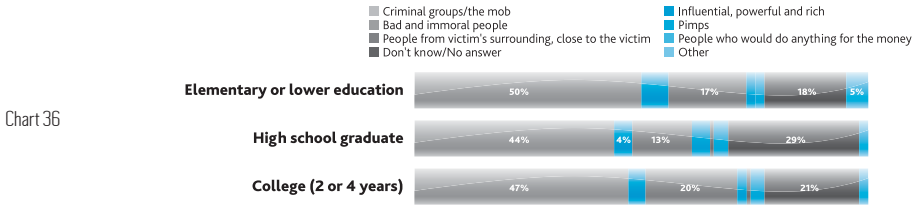


The youngest respondents (age 11–15), more often than other age groups see human traffickers as bad and immoral individuals, while the oldest respondents in Serbia consider human traffickers to be individuals involved in criminal acts and the mob.

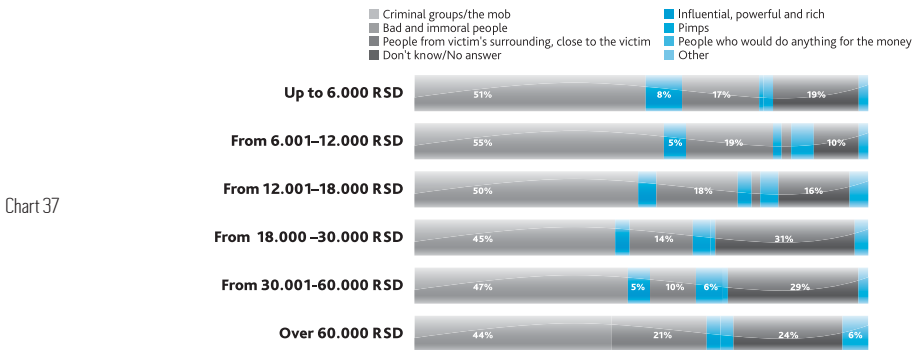
Chart 35



Respondents in Vojvodina more often than other examined groups describe human traffickers as criminals and mobsters.



The majority of respondents with a lower education level describe human traffickers as criminals or mobsters. On the other hand, highly educated individuals consider human traffickers as bad and immoral individuals, while the high school educated individuals do not know who human traffickers are.



Citizens belonging to a lower income bracket, earning between 6 and 12 thousand RSD describe human traffickers as criminals and mobsters, while citizens belonging to a higher income bracket more often point out that human traffickers are bad and immoral individuals.

### FORMS OF EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation is a form of victims' exploitation most commonly known among Serbian citizens.

Forced labor and begging are also often mentioned, followed by coercion into committing criminal offences and forced marriage.

On the other hand, sale of human organs is the least mentioned form of exploitation.

Chart 38 – What forms of exploitation of human trafficking victims have you heard of? MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

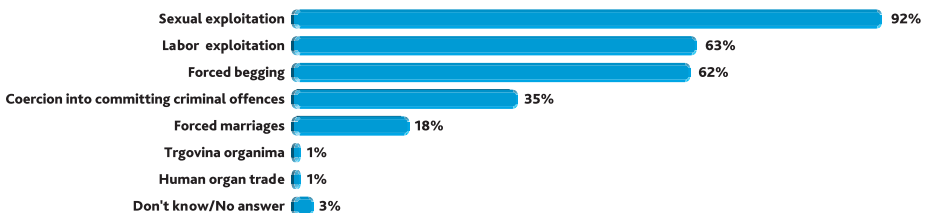


Chart 39

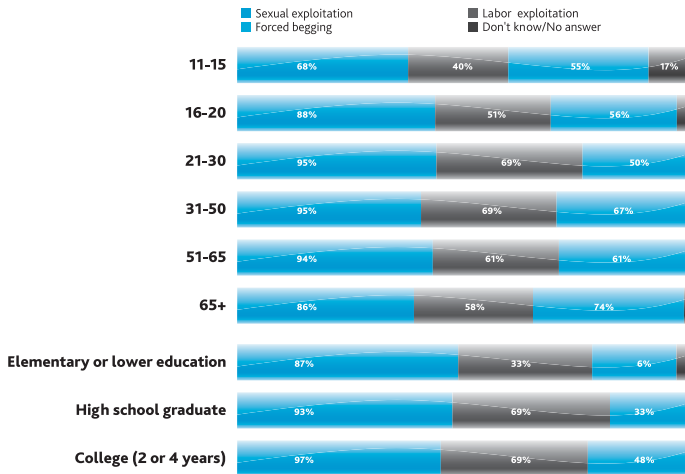


Chart 40

Sexual and labor exploitation are the most commonly cited forms of exploiting victims, however, the youngest respondents (age 11 to 15) and those with a lower education level tend to mention them more than the other groups of respondents. Forced begging is the most commonly cited form of exploitation among individuals over 65, while coercion into committing criminal offences are the form of exploitation cited by the highly educated individuals. Respondents age 11 to 15, including those with elementary education, more frequently than other categories do not know what forms of exploitation of victims exist.

TYPES OF CONTROL

The majority of Serbian citizens [63% of them] state that in most cases human traffickers control their victims with **physical violence and threats**.

*"Extortion, physical and mental violence, blackmailing, use of force."*

*"Various threats, where the worst are threats to kill a family member or the victim."*

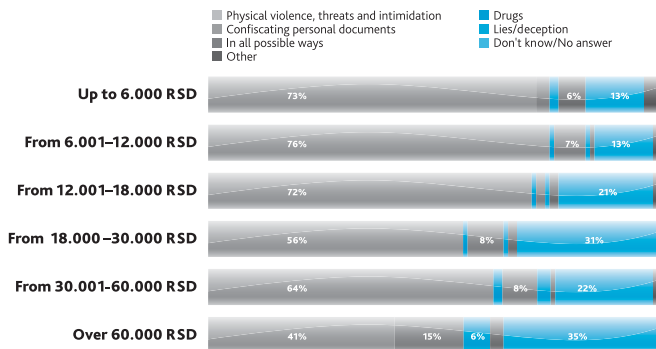
*"They tell them how they are connected to the police and how they have who to report them to."*

The next often mentioned [6%] form of control is by **confiscating personal identification documents**.

*"They confiscate their personal identification documents, take their right to communicate with their surroundings and all other fundamental rights, they keep them locked away."*

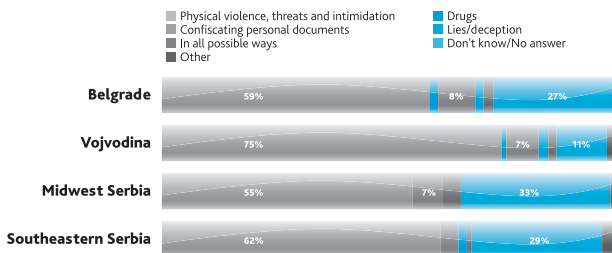
Citizens also stated that victims can be controlled by being provided with **false promises of a better life ahead**, while some also mentioned traffickers use **drugs** to control the victims.

Chart 41



Citizens in the highest income bracket more often than others do not know what instruments human traffickers use to control their victims, and also more frequently than others mention confiscation of personal documents as a form of control.

Chart 42

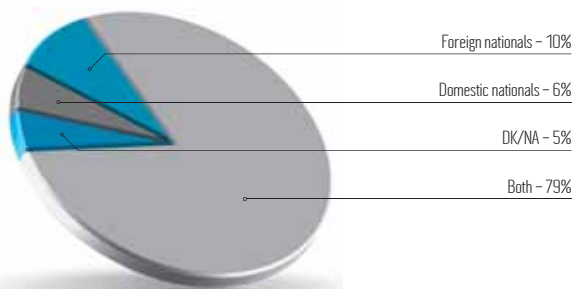


The citizens of Vojvodina more often than citizens from other Serbian regions list physical violence, threats and intimidation as ways human traffickers use to control their victims.

### VICTIMS' NATIONALITY

The majority of citizens [79%] believe that human trafficking victims are equally both domestic and foreign nationals. Every tenth respondent believes human trafficking victims are predominantly foreign nationals, while 6% believes that domestic nationals are more prone to become human trafficking victims.

Chart 43 – Are human trafficking victims predominantly domestic or foreign nationals?



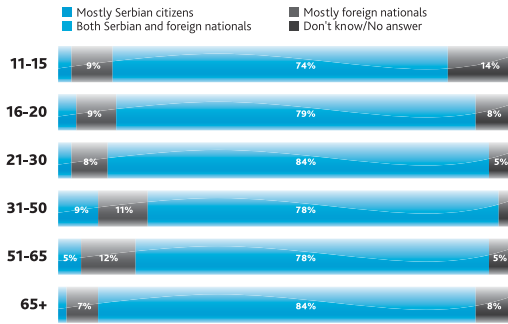
#### IN YOUR OPINION, HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS ARE PREDOMINANTLY WHAT NATIONALITY?

All	59%
Roma	23%
Ukrainian	22%
Russian	21%
Moldova	16%
Serbian	15%
Romanian	13%
Chinese	4%
DK/NA	4%

Table 7

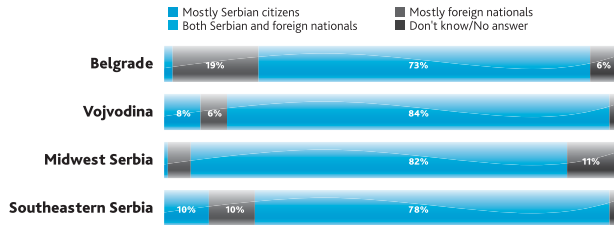
The most common answer is that human trafficking victims belong to all nationalities, while it is believed that more vulnerable nationalities are Roma, Ukrainian and Russian, followed by Moldovan, Serbian, Romanian and Chinese.

Chart 44



The youngest respondents from Midwest Serbia once again demonstrate lower human trafficking awareness than other groups of respondents.

Chart 45



The citizens of Belgrade believe, more than other groups of respondents, that human trafficking victims tend to be foreign nationals. On the other hand, citizens from Southeast Serbia and from Vojvodina, as well as middle aged respondents (age 31 to 50) believe that human trafficking victims are domestic nationals.

Chart 46

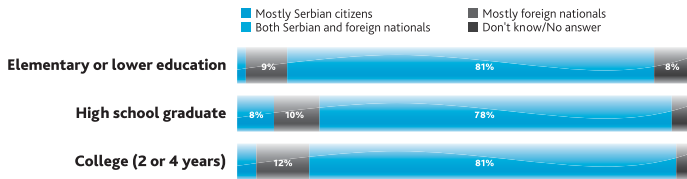


Chart 47

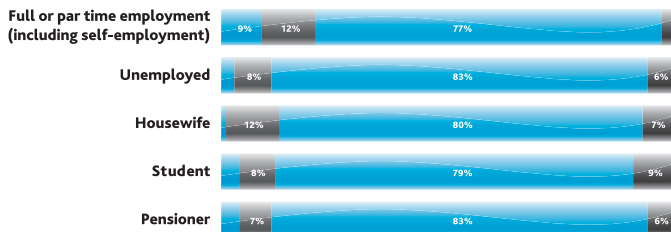
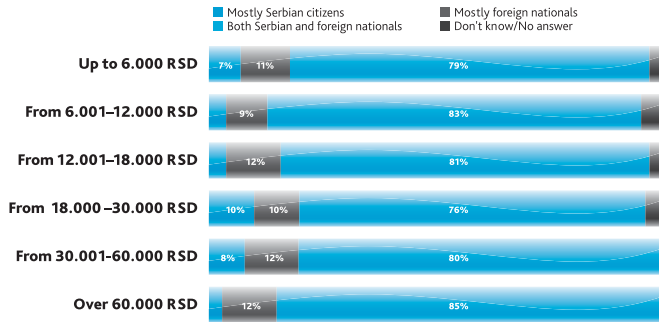
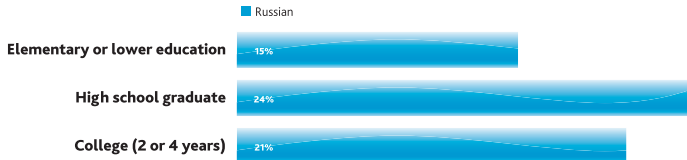


Chart 48



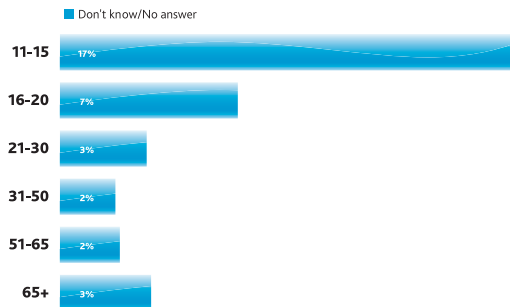
Citizens with elementary education and students more often than other categories of respondents do not know whether human trafficking victims are domestic or foreign nationals. Respondents with high school education, employed and citizens belonging to an average or a higher income bracket more frequently believe that human trafficking victims are domestic nationals.

Chart 49



Individuals with high school education believe more often than others that human trafficking victims are mostly Russian nationals.

Chart 50

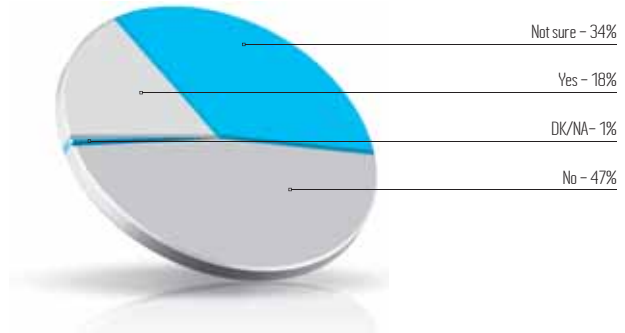




## VICTIM IS TO BLAME?

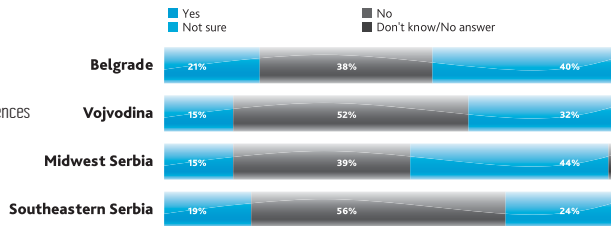
The majority of citizens (47%) believe that human trafficking victims are not to be blamed for their predicament, while 18% of respondents believe that they are responsible for it.

Chart 51  
Are victims responsible for their predicament?



The opinion that victims are to be held responsible for their predicament is more present in Belgrade than in other regions, where also the opinion that the victim is not responsible is significantly less represented. However, the majority of the population in Belgrade is undecided.

Chart 52 – Are victims responsible for their predicament?  
Regional breakdown – significant differences



In Midwest Serbia almost the half of citizens does not have a formed opinion on victim's responsibility, and also the number of those who believe that the victim is not responsible is significantly lower than in Southeast Serbia and Vojvodina.

## OPOSING OPINIONS

We have asked the citizens of Serbia to further explain their opinion on the victims' responsibility for their predicament.

The citizens who do **not** believe the victim is responsible show a great **empathy** towards them, severely judging human traffickers and labeling them as **the most severe kinds of criminals**. In their opinion, the starting point is that the victim was **kidnapped** or **deceived**, and even though they sometimes do mention that victims may have been **careless**, believes they **can never be responsible** for what happened to them.

Very often they tend to **condemn the state** who contributes to existence of this phenomenon by implementing bad economic policy (high unemployment, insufficient salaries, lack of care for the poor and marginalized populations) and by having inadequate regulations and punishments for human trafficking crimes.

Also, it is mentioned that in particular poor and uneducated citizens are not aware of the human trafficking problem, and therefore are not at all aware of its dangers.

*"Before they can realize what is happening to them, they are dragged into the human trafficking chain."*

*"How can someone be responsible for what happened to them? In such situation, a victim is always only a victim, not a criminal."*

*"Those are mostly young and poor individuals forced to such things."*

*"The state is responsible – unemployment, poverty, lack of punishment for punishable crimes."*

*"Taken advantage of while in search for a better life."*

Those who believe the victim is responsible mostly believe that the victim has knowingly entered the entire situation driven by the desire to obtain quick and easy cash.

*"She/he fell for the promise of quick and easy cash."*

*"If the case is not kidnapping, the victim knowingly entered the risk in search of a better life."*

The victims are considered thoughtless and gullible, and there is no understanding for these traits, and therefore are very irrationally blamed on the grounds of mentioned traits. *"The victim is guilty for being naive."*

Commentaries from individuals who consider victims guilty are at times pretty harsh and judgmental, even suggesting that the victim should pay the price for being naive.

*"Since they consent to it, they ought to bear the consequences of their behavior and ignorance."*

*"A naive victim believes strangers, and therefore has to pay for it."*

*"They are involved in criminal actions as well."*

*"If they were not hungry for big bucks, rather than working hard as the rest of us on the fields."*

Undecided citizens most frequently elaborate their position on the victim's guilt by saying that everything depends on the circumstances in which the victim became vulnerable.

For the most part, there is a belief the victim cannot be blamed if she/he was abducted or kidnapped or in any other way forced to perform actions she/he did not consent to. On the other hand, if the victim willingly entered a particular agreement, it is considered that she/he ought to be responsible for what happened since in part she/he was able to foresee a possible turn of events.

However, undecided respondents show a high level of tolerance and understanding for the victim's predicament, stating that such individuals are mostly naive and uneducated, and should therefore be provided with proper education rather than persecution.

*"Some are forced (kidnapped), while others bear the consequences of their own actions."*

*"Sometimes the victim knowingly enters a business engagement of sorts, and when they try to exit, that is not possible."*

*"They should have been more careful, while on the other hand, the mobsters are skilled and dangerous."*

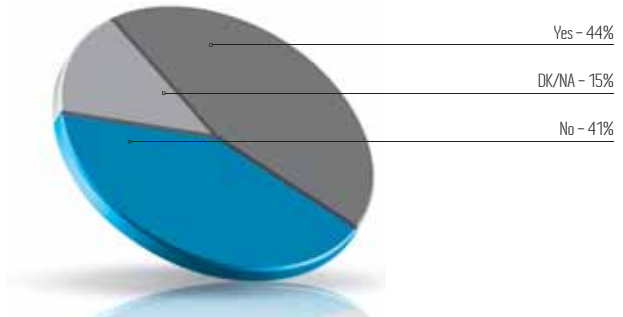
*"Maybe they consent based on their ignorance and the need for money."*

*"They are all responsible, but above all, the state is responsible because it is not fighting this crime."*

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

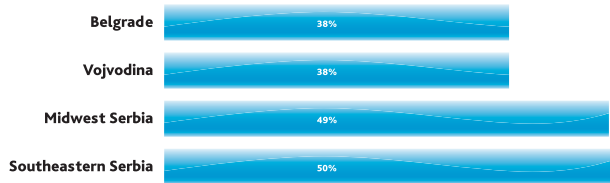
Opinions on the legal responsibility of individuals who are forced to conduct illegal actions are divided. Even though 40% of population considers the victims should not be held responsible under the law, a similar percentage believes that they should.

Chart 53 – Do you believe a victim coerced into illegal actions should be held responsible under the law?



On the question of legal responsibility of the victim there are significant regional differences in opinions – the half of inhabitants in Midwest Serbia and Southeast Serbia, a substantially higher number than in Belgrade and Vojvodina, believe the victim should be criminally persecuted.

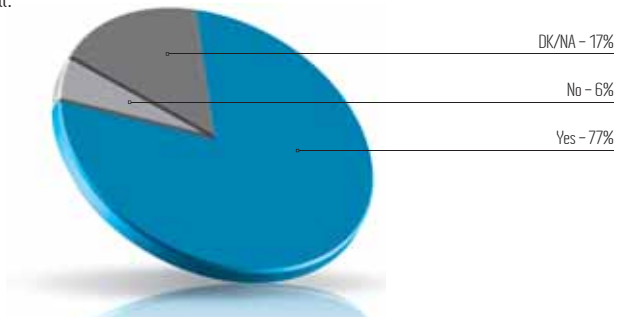
Chart 54  
Percentage of those who believe the victim should be held responsible under the law  
Socio-demographic cross section – significant differences



UNDERSTANDING THE LAW

The majority of Serbian citizens believe the law in the Republic of Serbia prescribes punishments for human trafficking crimes. However, 6% of them believe such activities are not regulated by the law, while 17% of them do not know whether these actions are regulated by the law at all.

Chart 55 – Is human trafficking punishable according to the Serbian law?

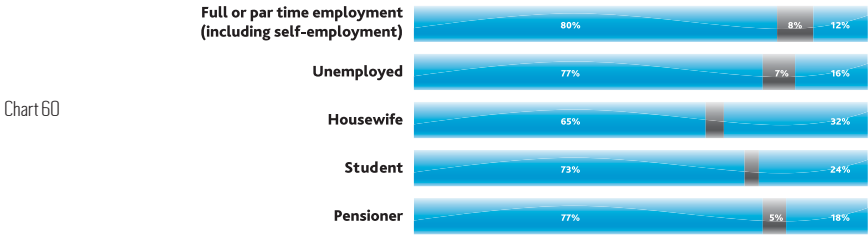
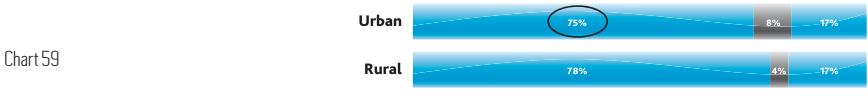
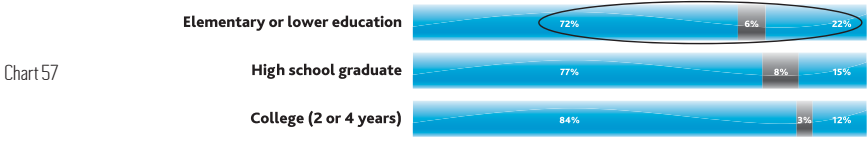
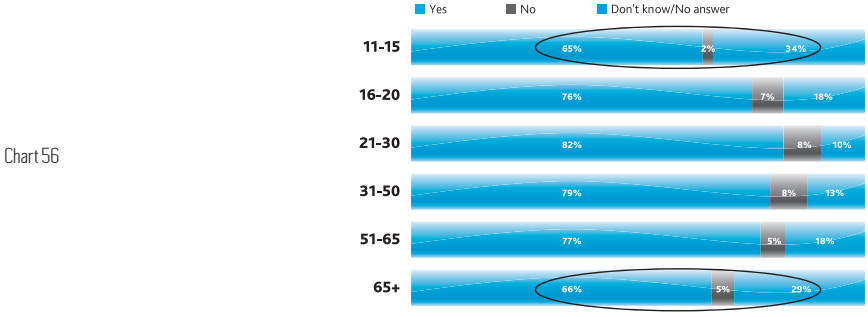


The awareness levels on punishing human trafficking crimes differs based on different age groups, different education levels and the place of residence of examined individuals.

KNOWING THE LAW - DIFFERENCES

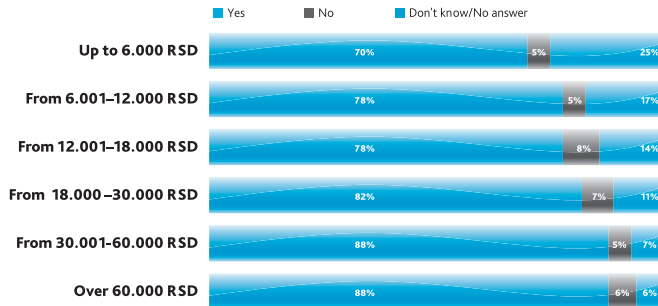
The lowest awareness on the existence of legal sanctions for human trafficking is among the youngest and the oldest, individuals with low educational level and the inhabitants of Midwest Serbia.

Is human trafficking punishable by law in our country?



Significant differences in opinions exist between examined individuals based on the type of settlement they live in – rural population is slightly more aware of the fact that human trafficking is punishable by law than urban population.

Chart 61



Socio-demographic cross section shows that individuals with a higher level of education, employed and individuals belonging to a higher income bracket, generally speaking, individuals having a better socio-economic status tend to be aware of the fact that human trafficking is punishable according to the Serbian law.

### HELP

In case they found out some information involving human trafficking, the majority of Serbian citizens would go to the police. A smaller number of people would contact a nongovernmental organization involved in this matter or a social welfare center, while some would go to their close ones – parents/guardians or friends.

Chart 62 – In case you had some information on a human trafficking case, who would you first contact to search for help?



A significantly large number of citizens, almost 10% of them do not know where to seek help if they knew something about a case of human trafficking.

Chart 63

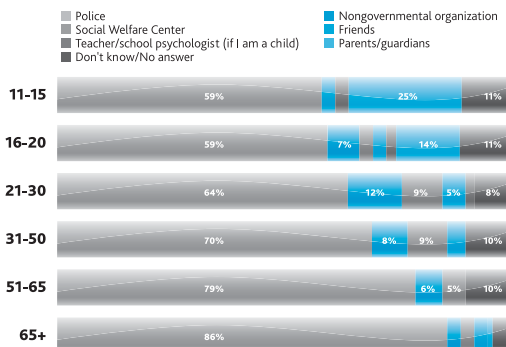
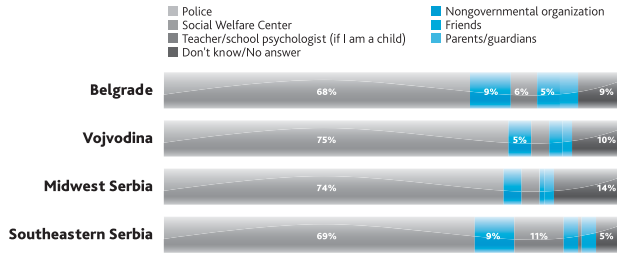


Chart 64



In case they had any knowledge about a case of human trafficking, the majority of the elderly in Serbia would go to the police. Contrary to them, the youngest ones would confide in their parents/guardians.

The inhabitants of Vojvodina and Midwest Serbia more often than others would in such case go straight to the police. In Southeast Serbia, however, citizens would contact the social welfare center.

Chart 65

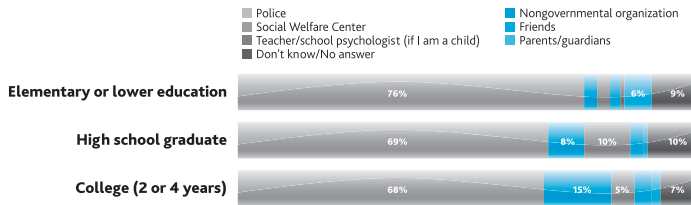


Chart 66

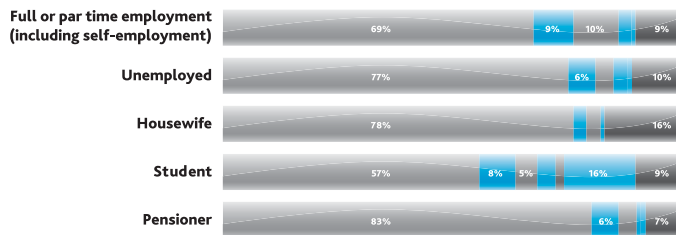
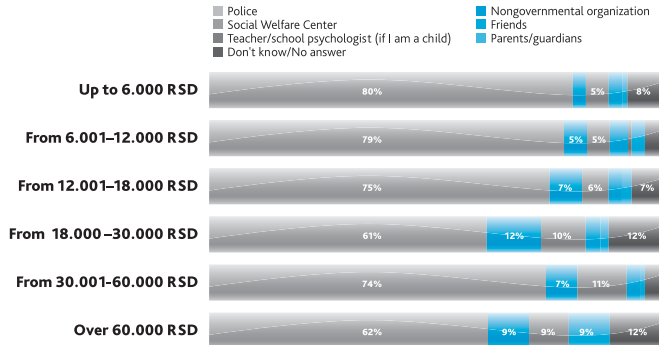


Chart 67



Individuals with elementary education, pensioners and individuals with a lower monthly income (up to 12000 RSD) more often than others say they would go to the police in case they knew of any human trafficking occurring. Students would in such situation talk to their parents/guardians.

**PREVENTION**

We asked the citizens of Serbia an open ended question on how they think the human trafficking problem can be solved, and what are the possible preventative measures.

The majority of examined individuals said they believe the **police** should undertake a more aggressive action to fight human trafficking. Such action would above all include efficient action in **discovering human trafficking chains and their detainment**, and a **better border control**.

**Raising awareness and educating** on this problem is often mentioned form of prevention. Everyone should partake in the process of education – including the **media, schools, and in particular parents and family**.

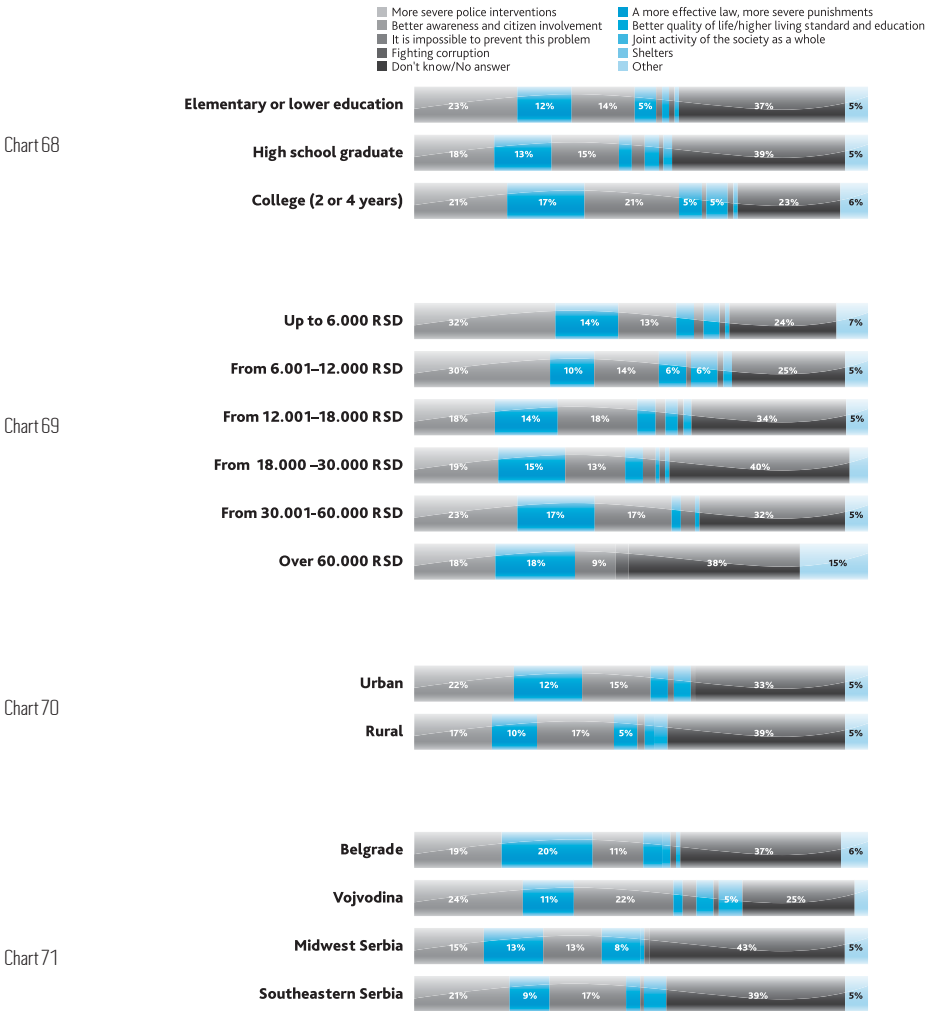
A better **legislation** providing **strict sanctions** for these sorts of activities would, in the opinion of Serbian citizens be an efficient human trafficking prevention measure.

Also, in their opinion, **an increase in the living standards**, meaning higher salaries and a higher employment rate would have a significant effect on reducing human traffickin, followed by **cooperation and joint action of all concerned institutions** – ministries, social welfare centers, schools, nongovernmental organizations, **the opening of shelters** for human trafficking victims and **fighting corruption**.

A significant number of citizens commenting on the measures that ought to be undertaken believe the process of solving this problem in Serbia is very slow, and the state should play a significantly larger part in fighting this problem.

*"Nothing is being done to prevent it; everyone is keeping their mouth shut and play ignorant."*

*"Something sinister is always more important in this country than a mere human life."*



An almost equal number of lower and higher educated respondents believe the police should undertake a more severe action in fighting human trafficking. The same opinions also share the individuals with a lower monthly income, citizens from Vojvodina and urban areas. Highly educated individuals more frequently than others state the need for providing better education on the subject.



## SUMMARY

Serbian citizens consider human trafficking to be a very disturbing subject, while the majority of them believe solving this problem should be seriously dealt with. Human trafficking is described as kidnapping and selling people, representing the most severe legal and moral offence, and is seen as the most severe form of violence and human exploitation.

The majority is aware that human trafficking also occurs in our country, but the youngest and the oldest population, individuals with elementary education and the inhabitants of Midwest Serbia are less familiar with this fact. Main causes for human trafficking are found in the poor socio-economic conditions in the country, while the microclimate of domestic violence is not regarded as a crucial cause for human trafficking.

Instruments and strategies for recruiting and luring victims citizens are the most familiar with are different false promises for a better life and quick cash. It is considered that human traffickers are individuals the victim is only getting acquainted with, rather than someone close to the victim. Forms of exploitation most commonly mentioned by Serbian citizens are above all sexual exploitation, forced labor and begging, coercion into committing criminal offences and forced marriages, while the organ trading is not frequently cited. The most pronounced opinion among our citizens is that human traffickers control their victims with physical violence and threats, false promises for a better life and sometimes by employing drugs on victims. The majority believes human trafficking victims are both domestic and foreign nationals, among which the most vulnerable are Roma, Ukrainian and Russian nationalities.

The population is divided on the question of victim's responsibility and guilt. Although majority believes the victim is not responsible for its predicament, a large number of examinees hold an opinion that victim is responsible, or they are undecided. Citizens, who believe the victim is not to be blamed, believe so based on the fact they were kidnapped or deceived, although they do mention sometimes the victim may have been careless.

Those who believe the victim is responsible explain that the victim knowingly entered the whole situation inspired by a desire to obtain quick cash. Here, victims are regarded as careless and gullible, and should pay the price for being naive. Undecided citizens most frequently explain that everything depends on the circumstances under which someone fell victim to trafficking. Even though they are ready to place the blame on the victim, they show a great deal of tolerance and understanding by saying that the victims should be educated rather than victimized.

Opinions on the criminal responsibility of victims partaking in illegal actions are also divided. A slightly large number believes that such individuals should be held accountable under the law.

Although the majority of Serbian citizens know human trafficking is punishable by law in Serbia, still, a lot of them are not aware that this is a crime, and some even think that it is not a crime. In case they knew something about a human trafficking case, the citizens of Serbia are most likely to report to the police, although there are some that do not know where they would seek help.

The majority of citizens believe police has a key role in fighting and preventing human trafficking, along with better education and efficient legal system. Better living standards are also regarded as a factor in reducing human trafficking. A large number of individuals state that the process of solving this problem in Serbia is very slow, and that the state should play a significantly larger part in fighting this problem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The citizens of Serbia have a very negative opinion on human trafficking, mostly based on the difficult and uncomfortable **emotions** this subject initiates. On the other hand, to the large extent citizens are lacking **knowledge** in this area. For that purpose it is recommended to **organize, as many as possible, campaigns dedicated to raising awareness on this problem.**

Insufficient awareness is distinctive for the entire the population of Serbia, but particularly for the youngest and the oldest citizens, those with a low educational levels and inhabitants of Midwest Serbia. Hence, particular attention should be dedicated to educating mentioned categories of citizens.

Facts to be emphasized in educational campaigns are:

- **The ways of recruiting victims** (8% of citizens are not aware of the ways for recruiting victims)
- **Selling human organs** (only 1% of citizens mentioned this as a form of exploitation)
- Human traffickers may be **individuals close to the victim** (this is seldom mentioned, it is mostly believed traffickers are strangers)
- 

Particular emphasis in raising awareness and educating should be on the matter of guilt and responsibility, for **both the victim and the offender.**

A large number of citizens exhibits a lack of **understanding for the victim's predicament** since the majority of them believes the victim is responsible for it, or are not sure whether the victim is to blame or not. Some even believe the victim should pay the price for being naive, careless and gullible.

Furthermore, when we realize that almost half of the population believes the victim should be held responsible before the law, it is evident that the she/he is being highly condemned for her/his predicament. The citizens are not familiar with the secondary trauma that the victim suffers, while the activities geared toward supporting victim's reintegration into the society are not even mentioned in the open ended questions, therefore emphasizing a crucial need to provide more information on this subject.

On the other hand, every sixth citizen does not know whether human trafficking is punishable by law, while some even believe that it not. It should be kept in mind that 8% of individuals would not know how or where to report the crime. All of the mentioned results make us question the answers of those individuals who said they would go to the police or to some other institution.

When providing information to the public, it should be clearly stated that human trafficking is a **severe crime** prohibited by law which prescribes **legal sanctions** for it, and that every individuals **must** report and submit to the competent authorities all the information they may have pertaining to human trafficking.

Raising awareness and potentially developing local and regional centers in Serbia in charge of informing citizens and offering help to victims also represents an important recommendation for attaining a better knowledge on human trafficking among Serbian population, especially in the regions where the awareness rate is the lowest (Midwest Serbia).





# MEDIA PRACTICE

## MEDIA REPORTING ABOUT TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN: THE HUNT FOR VICTIMS

WRITTEN BY: SAŠA LEKOVIĆ, A FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND A TRAINER OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

The research into the media treatment of human trafficking, presented in this brochure, shows that the situation in the Serbian newspapers (only print media content was analyzed) does not substantively differ from the situation in other ex-YU countries or even from the practice in other SEE transition countries.

Judging by articles written in both daily and weekly papers in Serbia in 2008 that were analyzed for this research, it turns out that journalists and editors do not discern between illegal migration, international prostitution and human trafficking (see the section on human trafficking, illegal migration and prostitution) or that it simply does not matter a great deal to them.

However, this is just a beginning of the confusion that walks hand-in-hand with misunderstandings, wrong interpretations and the publishing of articles in which it is obvious how unclear the topic of human trafficking (in women, in this particular case) is to many journalists who would actually like to write about the subject.

The research has shown that human trafficking was mostly written about after news of a victim of trafficking being discovered became public, but that, most often, this would not serve as a catalyst for a more long-term analysis about the phenomenon of human trafficking. A large number of the published texts are shallow, appeal to the basest passions, and either instigate or simply track undocumented scandals.

### HOW TO DESTROY A STORY?

A drastic example of a totally mishandled media portrayal of trafficking in women is the one known as the "Montenegrin Case," which began at the end of 2002. This scandal lasted for months. On the basis of a statement made by a young Moldovan woman who was put into a shelter for victims of trafficking in women, some high state officials were accused of sexually abusing her, as well as other women, who they knew were also victims of trafficking. The media accusations were even expanded to accusing the said officials of being actual accomplices in trafficking in women.

The victim's statement was published, as were the names of those believed to be involved in abusing the young woman, along with arguments between lawyers, prosecutors and judges concerning details of the case. Political parties also became involved in the discussion. Everyone had an opinion about everything. Arrests were made, and even the deputy state prosecutor was temporarily imprisoned.

In the end, the courts ruled that there was not enough evidence for prosecution, while the victim was additionally traumatized, humiliated and totally psychologically broken. The media, in large part, only competed in trying to exploit the more seedy details of this ugly tale and participated in feuds, where the goal seemed to be everything except solving this case and doing something about trafficking in women.

After there was no longer any interest in sensationalistic media reports, the “Montenegrin Case” disappeared from the newspapers and TV screens altogether. It was as if it never happened. Although using victim’s story as a starting point, it was possible to develop a series of different stories connected to the human trafficking problem, most of the media did not even try. Not one aspect of this story was followed to its end. This despite the fact that, out of all analyzed texts in 2002, 60% of those printed in Serbian newspapers dealt with this case<sup>63</sup>.

Instead of the interest in the theme of “trafficking” being used as a catalyst for investigative reports that would bring these problems to light in a professional manner and for the purpose of finding solutions, many in the media abused and neglected this chance to inform the public about the essence of this problem. They neglected the inherent responsibility of the journalistic profession and, foremost, elementary human rights – primarily those of the victim.

## RE-VICTIMIZING THE VICTIMS

Like with many people, most of the time it does not occur even to journalists that when the story involves “some prostitutes”, first of all, this is really about the violation of basic human rights. Without regard to a person’s age, where they come from, their education or past, all of these women are, first and foremost, victims – which they are even if, by their own free will, they choose prostitution.

No sex worker has willingly agreed to be beaten, raped or forcefully drugged. Could anyone actually believe that even one woman would like to service the sexual pleasures of many strangers without the possibility to decide, where, how, when and with whom this would take place? Would anyone like to be deceived or paid little or nothing – no matter what kind of work they were performing?

These are banal and, in the end, worn-out questions. But it would be good for every journalist to seriously ask themselves and try to honestly answer every time they decide not only to write about trafficking in women, but also when they write about topics like illegal migration and prostitution. Just as it is a mistake to lump all these together, at the same time it is wrong not to see how often they could be linked.

In any case, the victim is the most injured party. This particularly relates to situations where an entire story is written on the basis of only one source involved in actual events. A woman or girl who is already frustrated, humiliated and damaged, is additionally victimized by irresponsible conclusions about a situation she has found herself in. Sometimes a victim is not even asked whether she wants her experience written about, especially if the source has their own motives for bringing the certain details into the public arena.

With that, for journalists, but not only journalists, it can be useful to ask themselves one more banal and unnecessary question: how would we act if this involved our mother, sister, wife, girlfriend or friend? Would we publish our story without looking for substantiation? Would we even write about the details of her tragedy? Would we do so without the victim’s consent?

Victims are the most interesting part of the human trafficking story, so it is understandable that journalists and editors like to have victim’s story, or at least a story about the victim. With that, they do not keep in mind that the victims of trafficking are vulnerable and exposed, that they never cease to be victims – not even when they manage to escape from the grasp of

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human traffickers. Even when these victims choose to share their stories with reporters, that does not mean that reporters have free reign.

In those situations it pays for reporters and editors to apply in the most responsible fashion the professional rule of protecting their source (especially when the source is particularly exposed to additional physical and mental pain). Every non-adherence to this rule can end in tragedy.

## MISTAKES ARE (NOT) A PART OF JOURNALISM?

Both journalist and editors can make catastrophic mistakes in their reporting and they can harm victims even while having the best intentions in mind. Following are some actual examples which confirm this.

One American TV station announced, in 2002, a story about young Albanian women who were abducted from the streets of small Albanian towns and taken to Italy where they were forced into prostitution. The story came to light when the girls were found and rescued by local police. With their faces blurred for their protection, the young women detailed their ordeal to TV reporters before they were sent back to Albania. Although the story was only aired in the US, once they got back to Albania the women were again abducted and then killed. In the world of organized crime, news travels most quickly and most surely. If the reporter does not keep this in mind when dealing with the topic of trafficking in women and girls, this can have unintended and fateful consequences.

The TV crew in this story was obviously not warned how carefully these victims needed to be protected, and how much preparation was necessary in order for this situation to be brought off with the best possible outcome. Most importantly, a basic rule was ignored: a reporter must protect his source, sometimes even from the source itself. A victim is not compelled to know what the journalist must: what the potential dangers are if she decides to be interviewed, particularly in front of a camera.

Unfortunately, even those whose job it is to protect victims sometimes do the opposite. An example of this happened in Macedonia where the police, in 2002, raided a few local establishments where it was suspected that foreign girls were being forced into prostitution. In these clubs, many girls were found who, it could be assumed, were the victims of human trafficking. The police, without any preparation or permission from anyone, allowed a local TV crew to film the girls while they were still at the local police station.

Some of the girls agreed to be interviewed by the reporters, but their identity was not sufficiently hidden, while the other girls, although they had not agreed to be either interviewed or filmed, were also clearly seen simply because they happened to be in the same room. This is an obvious example of unacceptably unprofessional behavior of both police and reporters. The girls were returned to their countries of origin and their ultimate fate is still unknown.

## HOW TO AVOID MISTAKES?

With regard to any kind of video footage, a good rule of thumb is (as much as this is possible), that the victim is able to view the footage to make sure that her identity has no chance of being revealed. With that, it is also important to electronically alter the victim's voice and that the victim (especially her head) be filmed from behind or that her head, along with the rest of her

characteristic features, be electronically altered so as to be unrecognizable. In the end, it is also important that even when meeting with the reporter the victim does not give her correct name or place of residence – much less give this information during the actual filming.

The victim must be informed of the possible hazards of airing the piece and given the opportunity for legal and all other pertinent counsel. If the victim, for any reason, is incapable or unable to understand the potential dangers of having the piece aired, then the responsibility falls squarely on the journalists and editors to do everything they can to protect her.

To be sure, the media outlets and editorial staffs that act the most professionally are those that have clearly stated and written procedures which are to be followed in the more delicate cases. The BBC, for example, is known for its exceptionally high standards and strong criteria, but every editorial staff, even every news team, can have a group of procedures to which they will always adhere. The risk of making a mistake will automatically be drastically reduced if this is the case.

Obviously our colleagues from Macedonian TV had no written code of conduct that they could strictly adhere to. However, the fatal consequences brought about by the mistakes of the aforementioned American TV crew are a clear example of how unprofessional and irresponsible behavior is not the exclusive domain of young, inexperienced reporters from badly organized editorial staffs originating from poor countries.

The importance of consistently respecting the protection of victims' rights is reinforced, despite an abundance of professional experience and basic preparation, by an example involving the author of this text.

Also in 2002, I published an article in the newspaper that contained the confessions of a trafficking victim who had managed to escape captivity. The victim's identity was maximally protected and she had returned to the Šibenik hinterland where she lived with her family. Several months later, a TV crew that was preparing to air a show about human trafficking, called me up and asked me to put them in contact with the victim so that they could do a segment on her.

Basic procedure in such cases is that neither the identity of the victim nor her address or telephone number are divulged – not even to fellow reporters. If the victim agrees to a meeting, I give her the telephone number of the journalist, tell her to call from a public phone that is far away from her residence, or a mobile phone that uses a calling card instead of a subscribed number, whose owner cannot be identified. Another option is to have someone, in whom the victim has total trust, call for her – while still taking the same precautions. The next piece of advice is to have the eventual meeting take place at a "neutral site" – away from the victim's residence, but also away from any television studio or editorial office. Even one witness is too many, and may prove to be fatal.

In this case I adhered to these strict procedures. Except one: I did not expect that both the victim and my colleague would ignore my advice. The victim forgot to be cautious, giving her full confidence to the reporter, and the TV crew did not stick to basic precautions. The result: the segment was filmed in the yard of the house that the victim was living in (including a wide view of the house, its surroundings, as well as of the city itself), the victim's voice was not altered, and her face was not blurred despite the fact that some of the scenes showed the victim's half-profile – which was sufficient for recognition.

After the airing of the segment, what was supposed to be encouragement to other victims who lived through a similar terror to be witnesses against human traffickers, instead became a situation where the victim had to flee from the place she had



been living and, with no job, scared and disillusioned, was forced to move away from her family which, until then, had been her only support. This story shows once again how fragile and risky every decision is to tell the tale of human trafficking through a story about a victim, or through the victim's own story.

However, cautionary tales almost certainly will not scare off reporters and editors from continuing to insist on stories about victims because they are the most interesting way of reporting on the theme of human trafficking. Thus, everyone who writes about victims should keep in mind some very important truths. The author of this text has condensed these into ten guidelines and presented these at the International Conference on Investigate Reporting in Copenhagen (May 1–4, 2003), where one of the topics was trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Editors are not interested in stories about trafficking in women?

**Offer them a victim's story.**

Authorities refuse to acknowledge that the issue of trafficking in women exists?

**Always and again, tell the victim's story.**

BUT...

You must always protect the victim.

**Reveal her identity to no one.**

The police, court authorities, social services...want to contact "your" victim?

**Make it possible for the victim to contact them if she wishes, but so that she stays protected.**

Other reporters would like to contact the victim?

**Treat them like any other interested party. The safety of the victim is paramount.**

You are on the trail of a possible victim?

**First contact her family and explain what you are doing and how much you know.**

What do you tell the police, or other interested parties, while you are working on the story?

**Allow the victim/her family to decide. Tell them upsides and downsides of every eventual decision.**

How to effectively report on human trafficking in the long term?

**Connect with an informed network of colleagues who deal with this topic in your own and in other countries.**

The victim has returned home. Is that the happy ending to the story?

**Not at all. Resocialization can be the hardest and longest part of her trauma.**

Is there ever a happy ending to the story of human trafficking?

**Because of what she has been through, a victim is always a victim. You should always keep that in mind.**

The victim should be understood, not pitied.

OThese guidelines resulted from journalistic and editorial experience coming from work on the stories about women and girls – victims of trafficking. The guidelines are not absolute and certainly not unchangeable. There is a whole list of possible suggestions that can be used in specific scenarios. The ten guidelines are just a reminder of common occurrences which can take place in any story about victims, without regard to their age, origin, education, social status, nationality or specific personal trauma.

Only after taking these factors into account, and if he/she is ready to adhere to this guideline that protects the victim, can the reporter begin to think of approaching a victim or her family. That still does not mean that he/she will get the story, and that her story will appeal to editors as well as to the public... When approaching a victim and writing about the issue of trafficking in women, along with other professional abilities, the reporter must be a good psychologist – along with being a good diplomat. And he/she has to be ready to do what can be the hardest thing for a reporter: give up the story. If the story could endanger the victim, then it is the responsibility of the reporter not to publish it.

Another big mistake that happens, almost imperceptibly, to many reporters is to go into an interview with a victim unprepared – they mix in sympathy (pity) and empathy (understanding their situation). Although every normal human being will feel sympathy for a human trafficking victim that has been put through great anguish, and will judge the behavior of a trafficker, the reporter who is facing the victim and her story must be utterly professional and neutral. If a reporter pities the victim without understanding her, the victim's story will be compassionate, but will not answer any important questions. The main goal of the reporter is to ask the right questions and find the most incisive answers.

The reporter must find out what happened to the victim, but he/she cannot feel sorry for her, comfort her, make promises that he/she can't keep, or give her special privileges. The reporter must carefully and unaggressively – but nevertheless still – try to find the story's logical trail, posing questions that require clarifying, not hinting at answers, not coming to any personal judgments, and not using any groundless accusations by the victim which are leveled at actual persons or institutions.

## THE GOLDEN RULE: DON'T BE AGGRESSIVE – LEARN TO LISTEN

A victim's motives for speaking with a reporter about her experiences and having them made public (even if the victim remains anonymous) can vary. The desire to help other potential victims, despair, or revenge are just a few of the possible motivations that are behind a victim's decision to speak out. Regardless of the motive, the reporter is given an enormous responsibility. Sometimes the life of the victim can directly depend upon the conduct of the reporter.

With that, maybe the best advice an experienced journalist can give to a younger colleague who wishes to write about trafficking in women, and especially victim's story, is: regardless of the attractiveness of the topic, think hard about whether you can live up to the standards (professional and ethical) that the situation will require.

Sometimes the more brave, practical and professional decision is *don't go into a topic that you cannot handle responsibly and professionally*. Many times, stories about trafficking in women are precisely that. If you do decide to tackle these types of stories, you should seek advice from colleagues who have experience in similar matters.

If at all possible, it may be best to form a team and work on the stories together. Formulate a plan of action and give everyone a different aspect of the story to work on. Check out facts between yourselves, control each other and be each others' "devil's advocates". Don't become self-satisfied but constantly question one another. Don't think in the direction of *I did a great job on this one* but think *did I do this properly? What did I fail to accomplish? What could I do better?*

Women trafficking victims are frequently more easily approached by female rather than male reporters. Women feel more comfortable talking with other women, it is easier to tell them intimate details, and they feel a sort of mutual connection and trust amongst themselves. After the hell that men put them through (there are women involved in trafficking in women

as well, but traffickers are mostly male], women victims are loath to, once again, be face to face with a man. They feel an aversion towards them, many times directed at all males, and therefore also toward a reporter that wants to talk about this subject with them.

However, this does not have to be the rule. A lot depends upon the experience and preparation of the reporter, the circumstances surrounding the meeting, and the quickness with which the reporter adjusts to the victim, and become someone she can talk to. While speaking with the trafficking victim the reporter should make use of one of the most important qualities a good reporter should have, something that is particularly meaningful in such delicate circumstances: he/she needs to know how to listen.

Without regard to the victim's motive for speaking out, the details of her traumatic experience, age or education, once she decides to speak, the victim will have a need say a great deal. A good reporter knows how to listen, knows when to be quiet and when to pose a question.

A few months ago I was witness to a conversation between a victim and a reporter when an, up to that point, seemingly productive interview turned into a complete disaster, and was subsequently ended. This happened after the reporter began to insist on detailed facts and concrete physical descriptions of the maltreatment that the victim had had to live through. The journalist's use of direct and very precise questions to extract from the victim as many concrete descriptions of the torture she went through as possible resulted in her ultimate resistance.

Feeling once again humiliated, she suddenly began to cry and from that moment on the reporter only elicited a feeling of disgust. This even though for the previous hour she exhaustively described everything that had happened to her, without any hesitation or discomfort. However, she was doing this spontaneously and with very little prompting from the reporter. The situation in which it was expected from her to exhaustively describe her humiliation and the too-obvious demands of the reporter clearly traumatized her more than the rest of the story's details. Finally, the insensitivity toward her by the reporter provoked her resistance to going on with the interview. For both the victim and the reporter it would have been better that he has never even approached the victim in the first place.

Stories about actual victims, so attractive to readers, viewers, and listeners, so important to journalists and editors, can also be very dangerous – for a reporter's professional reputation, as well as for the victims that come forth with their stories, allow their experiences to be written about or become "media stars" against their will.

## TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AS A LUCRATIVE BUSINESS

There are many other ways to report about trafficking in women. But many of these are not used in the transition countries of Southeastern Europe because serious investigative journalism is not represented, nor respected, by the mainstream – not even in the journalistic profession itself.

Many times it is enough to use elementary logic to come to the real answer to the question of: what would be a good theme. Human trafficking, along with the trafficking of drugs and weapons, is one of the most profitable activities of organized crime and one of the most lucrative jobs in general. Southeastern Europe is one of the largest markets for trafficking in women. Serbia is one of the intersections of the trafficking routes, but in the economic sections of the highest-selling newspapers a

whole year can go by without a single text that deals with trafficking in women!

Many times the “economic” element of this problem is simply not attractive enough. Indeed, the catalyst for writing about trafficking in women “in another way” (without detailed accounts and actual victims) can be found in different economic analyses, hard to understand statistics, and unreadable table charts...but, to be published in economic sections, the topic does not have to be written about in a boring and unintelligible fashion.

For example, analysis from an economic perspective centered around an ugly affair involving female illegal migrants or a news release from a police press conference about a few “foreign prostitutes” can shed light on the real story behind trafficking in women – that will be attractive enough, yet at the same time factually based. The most compelling and important stories about the phenomenon of trafficking in women begin in just such a fashion.

### DEAD END: USING ONLY ONE SOURCE

Most texts dealing with the topic of trafficking in women in Serbia are, just like in most SEE countries, based on facts gathered during police news conferences. These meetings with the press are mostly used by authorities to pat themselves on the back about what a good job they are doing, and include raids and the bringing in of women and girls who did not have proper documentation.

It cannot be denied that the main source for information that can shed light on trafficking in women. A much bigger problem is reporters settling for information put out by the police that frequently is more accusatory toward potential victims (they are in the country illegally, without valid documents), than potential perpetrators, including human traffickers themselves.

It is easier to write about the obvious and what is practically “served” to you. It is much simpler to simply relay information about undocumented women than to get down to the real story. By not researching further and not looking for new approaches to the topic, the reporters become mouthpieces for the police instead of offering the public a professionally researched story in which relevant questions are at least asked – if an adequate answer has not been uncovered in the meantime.

Of course, along with the authorities’ press release, other sources must be utilized in order to better inform the reporter about the topic. In the matter of trafficking in women, non-governmental organizations as well as international institutions which deal with this phenomenon, with women’s rights or which provide direct victim assistance can be a significant source of data.

Reporters, meanwhile, are making a mistake if they do not look at information in a critical manner and accept this as the only relevant source. This stance is as unprofessional as only repeating police press releases. A report must remain fair and balanced. Only taking into account, and relying upon, information gathered from one source makes a reporter do something he/she should never do – take sides.

This type of behavior unavoidably reduces the level of professionalism and the value of the finished product. It leaves the reporter only a small step away from catastrophic results: half-truths, exclusiveness, sensationalism... In the long run, a reporter who relies only on one source becomes more and more dependant upon that source and more susceptible to

manipulation. Instead of using the source for the purpose of complete and balanced information – the source then uses the reporter to put out a picture about trafficking in women that is in that source's interest.

In using a typical example we will try to show how the most ordinary police information can be the catalyst for a series of analytical stories connected to the topic of trafficking in women – or how it could turn out to be the path to professional catastrophe.

The path to one extreme or the other began long before the reporter arrived at a press conference, where the initial piece of information would be announced: the moment at which one of our three theoretical (but in fact very real) reporters decided to go about his business in a professional manner (he adopted a strict code of conduct, gathered and organized information, exchanged experiences with colleagues, widened his circle of sources, checks and re-checks fact...).

At the press conference, the police offered the following information:

*"In a routine check of the RUŽA club in town X in central Vojvodina, three female Ukrainian citizens were found with falsified travel documents and work permits. The owner of the club, A.A., stated that the girls worked for him as waitresses. After investigation, it was found that the Ukrainian girls offered sexual favors in exchange for money to a number of different men. Criminal reports were filed against a number of individuals."*

The first reporter relayed this exact information, at which point the editor "strengthened" the statement and gave it the headline: *THREE UKRAINIAN PROSTITUTES ARRESTED*.

Having given the editor the police information, the first reporter's work was done and he went out with his colleagues for drinks and football talk, enjoying his free time until the next press conference, to be held the following day.

The second reporter went out for a drink with his source from the police force after the press conference was over. In this way, in addition to the terse official information, he obtained juicy details about the raid, including photographs, the names of the Ukrainian girls, the fact that they were underage, copies of the false passports, visas and work permits. He found out a member of the force was suspected of being involved in the actual illegal transport of the girls over the border. He also did not know that his source was using him to get back at a colleague whom he had a dispute with.

The next day the newspaper of the second reporter ran a "screaming" headline:

*POLICE ALSO INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION SCANDAL*. The text, which, along with police information, contained everything that his police source had told him (named as a trusted source inside the force who chose to remain anonymous), included the name of the colleague he was in a dispute with, was "decorated" with photographs of the girls being arrested, with their faces uncovered, their names, and the copies of the documents with which they were found. Happy with the space in the paper given to his story and its actual placement, the second reporter celebrated by taking his colleagues from the desk out for drinks.

After the police spokesman read his prepared information, the third reporter started asking questions:

- What is the definition of a routine check?
- How often is the RUŽA club routinely checked, other clubs in town X, or other places within the jurisdiction of that

particular police office?

- What were the results of previous checks?
- Is the origin of these falsified document known, and where were they issued according to the documents themselves?
- Is this the first incidence in which the police found girls with false documentation, or without documents altogether, in RUŽA or any other establishment owned by A.A., if he owns any more?
- Were other girls also found and did they have valid documentation?
- How did the police find out that these girls were in prostitution (from the girls, from clients, anonymous sources...)?
- Against whom, specifically, criminal reports were filed and for the violation of what specific law?
- Did the police find out whether these girls had been beaten, were they allowed to move about freely, were they forced into prostitution?
- Did the police contact any non-governmental organization that ran the shelter for trafficking victims, and has anyone besides the police spoken with the girls, including the representatives of the Ukrainian consulate?

These are just a few of the questions asked by the third reporter at the press conference; this despite the answer he would get to most of the questions was that the facts could not be revealed due to the ongoing investigation. By asking these questions, the reporter let it be known that he would not be satisfied with the meager information given out by the police spokesman, and at the same time he began gathering information that would be essential in the continuation of his investigation.

Maybe in the end the third reporter will not succeed in proving the presence of trafficking in women, but by working in this manner, he will be able to focus on what can actually be documented, i.e., the minimal story. All remaining facts gathered will be useful to him at the time when he has enough for the maximal story – a story dealing with trafficking in women that will show that even the banal episode involving the RUŽA club played an important part.

The spokesman did actually tell the third reporter that he could not answer most of his questions due to the ongoing investigation. The reporter noted his own questions as well as the spokesman's answers to these questions. He already had answers to most of his questions (about the earlier events), because he had regularly gathered information, checked it, and organized it in a way so that he could find it when he needed to.

The third reporter's piece ran the next day, with the following headline: *PROSTITUTES OR SEXUAL SLAVES?* Along with the police's information, the most important questions asked by the reporter were also published, as well as the answers he received and facts connected to the topic that he had obtained earlier, but which the police spokesman had pronounced inaccessible due to the ongoing investigation. The spokesman did this because, as opposed to the third reporter, he had not come properly prepared for the news conference he himself had called. Actually, these facts had already been published earlier and the source was actually the spokesman himself – who let them out during a previous meeting with the press.

The third reporter ended his story by including questions that were still not answered, and at the same time sent them to the appropriate institutions (including the police department). Afterwards, he re-read his text, made sure it was accurately published, and compared it to the texts of the other two reporters. The names of the girls, those taken from the documents presented by the second reporter, along with his own story and a list of unanswered questions, he sent to a number of different places for the purpose of finding some help from his colleagues.

The third reporters "packet" arrived at the desk of a colleague in Ukraine, where, judging by the passports, the girls came

from originally. But it also was sent to a country where they seem to have obtained their visas. Through established procedure, each reporter will conduct their own investigation in their respective country at which point the gathered information will be exchanged, checked and coordinated amongst them.

In this way they will be helping each other, as well as at least have their own, albeit minimal story. The reporter in Ukraine will have a story about the plight of the Ukrainian girls (or girls who had fake Ukrainian passports). The reporter in the country from which the visas were given will have a story about falsified (or real?) visas. All three will be able to utilize the facts of the other two in the building up of their stories, and also in the continuation of their investigations.

They may never find proof that the three girls found in the club RUŽA, somewhere in central Vojvodina, were the victims of sex trafficking. However, by working in this fashion, they will have the greatest chance to find proof of this, if it exists. At the same time, they will develop other stories inspired by the meager information given out at a police press conference in Serbia. That way the path laid out by a daily press conference for reporters in Serbia will have been found by two journalists who have never even been to Serbia. At the same time, two reporters who received "firsthand information" will never utilize it.

Some of the stories that were begun on the basis of police information, to which most reporters do not even pay attention, will point the way toward key problems that enable or are even conducive to trafficking in women; some will show actual events, point to the routes used by traffickers, corruption scandals, links between human traffickers and the other activities of organized crime...

## ADVICE THAT CAN BE USEFUL FOR A GOOD STORY

- Trafficking in women can be approached through a series of aspects: economic, political, women's rights/human rights, legal, security, organized crime etc.  
Pick out an aspect that has been the least written about. There is a larger chance that you will say something new.
- **The most frequently written stories are those about victims' destinies**  
Pick out a less often explored aspect of the topic. Ex: an analysis of the control of the visa regime and the issuing of work visas. Even raw statistics associated with this can lead to uncovering possible corruption involving the trafficking of women.
- Potential victims of trafficking that are reported on are mainly foreign girls brought into your country due to the fact that the main source of information is the police, with the indicator being lack of valid documents.  
Trafficking victims – domestic nationals are harder to uncover, not because they do not exist, but because they usually end up in other countries. Check routine information given out by the police in other countries.
- Among the victims of trafficking there are persons who are officially listed as missing.  
Publishing information about missing women and girls, along with their photographs, can help in finding them, and can also lead to information about human trafficking channels.
- Information you have can often seem unimportant and useless.

Don't ever throw it away. Keep it so that it can be easily found. If it could not be used in one story, it may prove to be useful in another.

- **Most journalists write on this topic only when they are prompted by an actual event.**  
If you are seriously following this phenomenon, you will gather pieces of information, analyze and coordinate them. Ideas for a story will show up by themselves. You will be at an advantage, will have more time to work on the story, and will not be subject to the pressure of events.
- Trafficking in women, in the context of organized crime, is never an isolated incident involving only one country. Work together with journalists from other countries. Many times you will exchange information that will only become valuable once it is exchanged. Information that means nothing to a colleague in Macedonia or the USA can be of key importance to you. This way both of you actually get the real story.
- Women and girls who are the victims of human trafficking in Southeastern Europe are usually forced into prostitution, but not always.  
For example, individuals you may see begging or stealing on the street everyday are the property of human traffickers, constantly being watched and have no hope of escape.
- As a form of organized crime, trafficking in women is connected with other illegal activities, for example: drugs trafficking. There are more and more trafficking victims among the women who transport drugs. If they are arrested, the damage done to the actual criminals is minimal. As a source of information about traffickers, they are useless; but as human beings, they are sacrificed in advance. And this can be your story, too.

## ETHICAL DOUBTS: KRISTINA'S<sup>64</sup> STORY

WRITTEN BY: SAŠA LEKOVIĆ, A FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND A TRAINER OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

What kind of ethical problem a journalist can face while investigating the destiny of victims of human trafficking, from the disappearance to the finding of the victim

When I was approached by ASTRA to write a text for the second, expanded edition of the Manual for Journalists interested in reporting on human trafficking, I decided not to write the classic educational article with advice on what a reporter should, or shouldn't, do in certain situations. Instead, I decided to write a story about Kristina.

I honestly hope that every journalist who has the desire to write about human trafficking will learn at least something from this story. Especially those that have the desire to go the extra mile beyond simple reporting – to actual investigation.

As our story begins, Kristina was a fifteen year old student in her first year of high school. Today Kristina is 22 and a salesperson in her home town.

In the meantime, she had been the victim of human trafficking and was forced into prostitution.

<sup>64</sup> ALL VICTIM'S PERSONAL DATA CHANGED.



When it comes to Kristina, what happens from time to time to reporters who care about the subjects of their stories happened to me. This is particularly the case when these persons are in need of help: from an observer I turned into someone who has an effect on the broader unfolding of his own story.

One should try to avoid such situation, but it can happen to bad reporters as well as to those at the top of their profession.

Sometimes there is very little choice in the matter: either you will be more than a reporter or you will spend your whole life second guessing yourself about whether you were enough of a human being.

What happened to me in the case of Kristina is something that almost never happens, even to reporters who have been investigating human trafficking for years.

I rescued the victim.

Sometimes I pass through the town in which Kristina lives. In seven years, that's how much time has passed since her return home, I never stopped by to say hello, never stopped into the store where she works, never called her nor have ever even contacted her family.

I cannot look them in the eye.

When Kristina was rescued from the clutches of some very dangerous criminals, her whole family was thankful to me for helping to get Kristina home.

They had nothing against my writing about what happened to her in the paper, knowing that her story might help other girls and potential victims of human trafficking.

Even Kristina had nothing against my writing the story.

In the end, the writing of stories is my job.

That job is what led me into their lives.

Nevertheless, I am certain that Kristina and her family long ago realized that writing a story about her sexual enslavement was not the best idea.

I knew that the moment the story was published, but it was too late.

Because of the feeling that, with the best intentions, all possible precautions, experience and knowledge, I did not do everything in my power to prevent the victim from being traumatized again – and this publicly, I cannot look into the eyes of Kristina, her mother, stepfather, younger sister, grandmother...

The feeling of guilt has haunted me all these years and constantly evokes the "second guessing" in my head of hundreds of

situations in which I may have acted differently, more intelligently, more professionally...

Kristina disappeared on the seventh of February 2001.

In fact, that day was the first time that she did not come home at the usual time from nearby Petrinja, which is several kilometers away from the family home on the outskirts of Sisak.

A few days later, the local newspaper ran the most recent photo that her family had of her, along with a short description of the fifteen year old, whom the police had officially classified as missing.

### FALSE PRETENSES

No one had seen or heard anything about Kristina.

One month passed since her disappearance, then the second.

The mother and stepfather, tired of being asked the same questions yet never receiving any kind of answers from the police, decided to try to find their daughter on their own.

First they searched Sisak and Petrinja and later Zagreb upon finding out that some of Kristina's schoolmates had heard that she had gone there.

After a full two months of fruitlessly searching for their missing daughter, her parents made their way to my desk in the editorial offices of the weekly Arena, and asked me to help them find their daughter.

At that time, I was an editor at Arena, and practically ran the editorial staff.

Along with my editorial responsibilities, I was also a regular contributor.

To prevent the conflict of interest, I asked the editor-in-chief to take the decision himself whether the story would be written at all and, if so, how this should be gone about. Also, I wanted to be completely left out of this process and treated as any other reporter would be.

By the same token, the job that I was doing as the executive editor of the magazine would not make it possible to search for Kristina when taking into account that my duties forced me to be at work for at least ten hours a day.

Thus, I decided to devote all of my free time, mainly late nights and the early morning hours, to searching for Kristina.

My private life, which barely existed anyway, completely ceased to exist from that moment on.

The story about Kristina, who one day for no apparent reason did not return home and whom after two months of searching neither her parents nor the police could locate, was run over two pages in Arena.

In fact, before I even started on the story, I reminded Kristina's mother and stepfather that I was a journalist, that it was my job to write stories and not to expect that I would find their daughter.

This was a very important point which I repeat to all family members that ever decide to look for their missing loved ones through my stories.

Family members only turn to reporters after they have lost all hope that their daughters, sisters, fathers... will ever be found by the police.

Because they get the feeling that a reporter is devoting them more time and cares more about the destiny of their missing family member than does the police, these unhappy people many times have unrealistic expectations from the journalist.

Because of this, it is important to honestly and clearly warn them of what they can really expect from publicizing the story about their lost loved ones.

Mainly, they shouldn't expect too much and they should especially not talk themselves into thinking that publication of the story will automatically solve their problem.

## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Sometimes the unrealistic expectations of the family can cause problems, as well as unpleasant situations.

For example, one mother asked me to write about her missing daughter. After a few months of fruitless searching, the woman accused me of collaborating in a conspiracy involving criminals, the police and reporters who had supposedly participated in the abduction of her daughter and were keeping her hidden.

For this reason, I am very cautious when involving myself in a similar undertaking.

My rule is, before beginning to investigate into the missing person, to get to know the family or other interested party who is looking for the subject. To ask in detail about their motives for finding the subject, their relationship with the missing person, to uncover as many details as I can about the subject and the people around her. I also put together a psychological profile – of the victim and those around her.

Ultimately, I decide whether I will begin the investigation after the results of the preliminary research show that it is possible to work with the individuals who want to find out the destiny of their family member or friend, and that these people understand how limited a newspaper investigation can be and that the possibility that the person will be found, especially after the police could not find her, is even smaller.

After a few long and exhaustive conversations with Kristina's family, which involved some very intimate details of their lives, I concluded that I could work along with these people in the search for Kristina.

These were people of very little formal education who were nevertheless very aware of how small the chance was that

Kristina would return home.

At the same time, they truly loved this little girl and wanted to find her and accept her back regardless of the reasons behind her disappearance, including whatever she has lived through or done in the meantime.

The long article about the missing girl allowed for the re-publishing of her last photographs along with details that could help any readers to recognize her if they saw her.

The story was purposely written in a very sensitive way, bordering on being pathetic. I maximally used the emotional pleas of Kristina's family, who showed just how much they missed their little girl and how worried they were about her.

So, for the story to carry as much weight as possible I brought in a number of narrative elements – from using emotion-filled quotes instead of just paraphrasing what the family said – to a detailed description of how hard it was on Kristina's mother – to a detailed description of her room and favorite things inside the room.

While writing the first article, I had no way of knowing whether the girl was the victim of human trafficking, whether she left home because of some adolescent crisis or problem at school, whether she was the victim of some sick killer or if it involved all of these options.

### THE (AB)USE OF A CHILD

The story was headlined by a quote from Kristina's younger sister: "Come back home, sis."

Alongside was a photograph in which Kristina's younger sister could be seen drawing a picture with wooden pencils.

In the picture was a drawing of two girls holding hands in front of a house, one girl taller than the other, and above the picture in a child's unpracticed handwriting, could be seen the quote that was used in the headline.

I decided on this approach because Arena, the magazine in which the article was published, was a family oriented publication.

The magazine was read by all generations and I wanted to get their attention as well as their empathy – for Kristina and for her family.

This could only be accomplished by writing a warm story with many narrative and descriptive details, but also with photographs that were dramatic enough to emotionally reach the reader.

For this reason, and whenever it was possible, as a working partner I chose my colleague Toni Hnojčík. He is one of those people with a camera that an editorial staff considers to be not simply a photographer – but a photo journalist.

I always considered photo journalists as equal members of a news team, not colleagues who were there only so that the editorial staff would be able to get some photographs.

I have worked with Mr. Hnojčik on and off, for more than twelve years – covering everything from everyday stories to reports from the war front to stories involving human trafficking.

He was essential in presenting my story about Kristina not only because he knew how to capture the best possible photo in every situation, but because he knew how to act around people he was photographing so that he, as a photographer, and I, as a reporter, would get the most out of the situation.

Kristina's story, both textually and in photographs, was designed in such a way so that it would touch not only someone who knew something about her destiny, but would also touch Kristina herself in the event that she left of her own accord and could still move around and communicate of her own free will.

But trying to make our story as touching as possible hid a possible ethical trap – the further abuse of the child.

The way in which we decided to use Kristina's younger sister in the story could be considered unethical, despite the fact that we photographed and wrote only about things that really occurred.

We did not tell the little girl what to say nor did we make anything up.

To ensure that any potential harm was kept to a minimum, we explained to Kristina's family that using the child in this way was in fact bordering on the unethical. We also presented the possible positive and negative effects of our approach.

We asked the family to decide whether to allow us to use the little girl in the manner which we suggested.

This is the rule that I adhere to strictly in all similar circumstances: I let the victim's family know about all the potential positive and negative possibilities that can result from a reporter's activities during an investigation. I then require from them to decide whether I should go forward or stop where I am at.

## (NON)COOPERATION WITH THE POLICE

I had that conversation with Kristina's family, but I also included something about communications with police investigators: I will inform the family of all information obtained, and will consult with them in regard to any actions taken. But the family will decide whether said information will be passed on to the police.

I will not give information to the police, on my own initiative, about my investigation. If the police do call me in for a briefing, I will absolutely not give them any information about my sources, nor will I give them any information that Kristina's family does not want me to pass along.

Kristina's family promised to adhere to the rules I had insisted upon, and also decided that Kristina's younger sister would be included in the story in a way that would be the most effective in bringing Kristina home.

After the publishing of the story we took no action for ten days in the hope that Kristina would return home of her own accord,

or that someone that saw her would call.

When this didn't happen, I told Kristina's family that I would begin to look for their girl in, and around, Zagreb.

To tell you the truth, Kristina's parents had previously tried this tact, but a desperate couple who aimlessly wandered city and outlying streets that they had never previously been to had little hope of succeeding.

Kristina's last photograph, published in Arena, was photocopied in the hundreds and I began to make the rounds of the city and suburban cafés, along with other places that I was familiar with, or that were frequented by shady company: taxi stands, disco clubs, and late-night bars.

As I showed Kristina's photographs to people, I would explain to them that I was a friend of the family and that the girl's parents had asked me to help them find Kristina.

**Falsely representing oneself is a method not approved by journalistic ethics. However, an exception is made when this is the only method of gaining key information for the saving of a life or doing something for the effect of the greater good that would be much larger than the potential damage done by falsely representing oneself.**

I observed that (and Kristina's family approved) by representing myself as a reporter, I would never be able to get information that I would be able to get if I were just a friend of the family. Information that could save Kristina's life.

In fact, at that time I had slowly, but surely, begun to cross the line between sharing in their feelings and having sympathy for them – which in a way made me a friend of the family.

By this I was no less of a journalist, but I was potentially becoming less objective and careful.

Here passed two weeks of evening–late night–early morning making of the rounds, observation and conversations. These took place in locations that contained things that surprised, disturbed, shocked and even scared me despite my many years of investigative experience – the larger part of which was spent investigating organized crime.

It's better that Kristina's parents never saw these places.

In the end I was sure that Kristina had in fact actually come to Zagreb with a schoolmate that was two years older than her. That she had fallen in love with a young man who acted like he also loved her, and that she worked for more than a month as a waitress in a few cafés where the young man had employed her.

## ENTERING THE INTIMATE DOMAIN OF THE FAMILY

However, the moment that I arrived in Zagreb in the search for Kristina, she was quite surely no longer there.

This was a well traveled story that, at that time, had already begun to reek of human trafficking.

The victim [or potential victim, which Kristina still was at this point because she was there of her own free will – in love with a con-man linked to human trafficking] waitresses in this and that café, but all of them are linked to one actual owner and a group of his associates.

With that, when it was clear that the police were not on the missing girl's trail, Kristina was smuggled over the Italian border [she did not have papers] and sold there.

This was done in the same way she was originally recruited; she was in love with a young man who lied about being in love with her.

For a fifteen year old girl whose life experience had only reached the point of innocent outings with her friends and banal school excursions, an encounter with infinite possibilities tied to independence was a shock that she could not shake off.

Of course, it was quickly shown that there was nothing left of that independence.

Kristina had become sexual merchandise and was forced into prostitution.

At the time the police were not aware of this, or her parents, nor did I myself know.

This would have stayed the case if the person who had posed as Kristina's boyfriend had not made a key error.

He decided to allow Kristina to call her mother.

The idea was for Kristina to call, tell her mother that everything was fine, that she was living with her boyfriend, and had no desire to return home.

On the contrary, the attempt to pacify the parents and dampen the intensity of the police search turned out to be excellent for Kristina, but catastrophic to those that were keeping her enslaved.

Kristina's mother told me that Kristina had called her, and that the police were informed of this conversation.

I found out the number that Kristina had used from because Kristina gave it to her mother, with the caveat that the mother should not call her because either there would be no answer or her "boyfriend" would pick up, and that he did not speak Croatian.

The number was from an Italian mobile network but Kristina's captors were not completely stupid.

They had bought a pre-paid number at a kiosk, with no user identification.

I prepared Kristina's mother in the event that Kristina called again.

We practiced what she should say and how, and what she must not say under any circumstances.

We repeatedly simulated the potential conversation so that Kristina's mother would be able to extract as much information as possible in case Kristina called again.

It was important for the mother to relay some bit of information that would intrigue the girl.

We agreed that the mother would tell Kristina how some of her stepfather's friends from Zagreb would be going on a tourist excursion across Italy and that, along the way, they would be buying a few things for their café.

This made sense because Kristina's father delivered beverages to various cafés and had many friends that she had never met.

According to our agreement, the mother was to offer that her "stepfather's friends" bring her a letter from her mother along with her favorite toy – a stuffed teddy bear.

## HOW FAR DOES THE REPORTER DARE GO?

Two months later Kristina called her mother once again and they actually did talk along the lines of our agreement. She convinced her daughter that the "friends" had the intention of wandering around Italy for a while and it was not a problem for them to meet her wherever she was.

Kristina listened to what her mother had to say and told her that she would call back with an answer the next day, after she had talked to her "boyfriend".

The next day Kristina called again and stated that she would meet up with her father's "friends".

She stated the time and place: in front of the cathedral at the main entrance to the square in Milan.

Thinking that in this way he would get both the parents and the police off his back, Kristina's "boyfriend" made his second key mistake.

Kristina's family was extremely excited.

They couldn't sleep.

The hope that their daughter would be rescued rose with every second.

Rescued – because a normal, voluntary return no longer crossed anyone's mind.

Also, it was apparent to Kristina's family that she was being kept prisoner, regardless of the fact that she left of her own free will.

Kristina's family decided not to inform the police about our plan in which the stepfather's "friends" would meet Kristina and bring her the gifts from home.



They feared that the police would do something that would prevent the meeting from happening and subsequently forever keep Kristina from her family.

It was a very sensitive situation.

Kristina's family had less and less faith in the police department and put more and more faith in a reporter and photo-journalist that had neither police authority nor a strong support infrastructure standing behind him.

With that, our lie about "friends" was an undoubted misrepresentation, compared to which the story about the family friend making the rounds of the cafes on the outskirts of Zagreb with Kristina's photo was trivial.

This was one of the countless moments in which a reporter must decide whether he will continue his investigation or simply quit.

Logic said to QUIT, but the line between empathy and sympathy had already been crossed.

How would I tell the family that I have changed my mind and don't want to go any further?

That every outside activity can endanger Kristina's well being and it is not out of the question that she will be beaten, or even killed, if her captor's realize the trick and panic – or want to exact revenge.

That it is possible that after the exchange of gifts from home the human traffickers would conclude that they have completely pacified the family and neutralized the police and, therefore, decide to never allow Kristina to contact her family again.

That it is possible that if the Croatian police were notified about the planned meeting, that they could take the matter seriously and notify their Italian colleagues who, in turn, might organize Kristina's rescue in the event that she actually shows up at the agreed time and place.

So many POSSIBILITIES, and so little certainty.

Victims' family members, in these kinds of circumstances, usually listen to their heart instead of heeding the warnings in their head.

**I was aware of how dangerous it is for reporters, falsely identifying themselves, to start on this adventure on their own.**

This was like gambling with Kristina's life.

But, at the same time, this was really the only chance to find out more about Kristina's destiny and to possibly enable her rescue.

As long as it doesn't take a turn for the worse.

## WHAT IF IT TAKES A TURN FOR THE WORSE?

If it does take a turn for the worse, I will not be vindicated by all the hard work I put in to investigating the incident, or by the faith put into me by her parents, nor for the months of intense planning, nor my striving to resolve all ethical doubts in a supremely professional manner.

Logic would dictate that I should not take upon myself the responsibility of a situation that I cannot control. Even along with precise, supreme planning.

Nevertheless, we set out for Milan.

I did not want to betray Kristina's family nor the principles that I asked them to adhere to: I let them know all the possible good and bad consequences of any of my potential actions, and they would decide whether I should go forward with them or not.

They decided that Toni and I should depart, so we departed.

During the trip we talked about every possible scenario, then we thought about them in our own heads, then we talked them through again.

The first decision we came to, as soon as we got in the car, was: we have started and there is no turning back.

We had to have cool heads in order to be able to figure out all the possible scenarios that could be awaiting us in Milan. In order to do this we had to avoid any disagreements. We even had to avoid any thoughts about whether what we were doing was smart and whether we should be doing it at all.

We were aware that the line was crossed that kept the reporter as an objective observer as opposed to a participant in the event.

Something that never should happen had already happened.

We arrived in Milan hours before the scheduled meeting with Kristina completely convinced that she would come to the meeting with her alleged boyfriend.

We left the car in a large public parking lot, kilometers away from the town's main square in order not to draw any attention and knowing that Kristina's captors would check the square, as well as the surrounding streets, before they allowed her to show.

Toni's car was a beat up, twenty-year old Alfa Romeo.

Café owners do not drive this type of car.

We took a taxi most of the way, but walked the last kilometer.

We walked seemingly aimlessly around the square for more than half an hour, looking at displays and turning our heads for pretty girls, the same way the average café owners would have done, and appeared unconcerned about the impending and unimportant meeting with the fifteen year old that ran away from home.

We purposely gave this impression to possible observers while the entire time we were carefully noticing and remembering the faces of passers-by, any unusual behavior, along with the number and placement of the Carabinieri walking around the square.

Any information that we obtained, or suspected, could be crucial.

It was a minute until the agreed-to time of our meeting with Kristina.

Although Kristina was told by her mother what we looked like and how we would be dressed, and there were not many people at the square, we decided to stand in the middle – where there were the least amount of people in order for us to be more easily seen by the people that were watching us.

The agreement was that Kristina would approach us.

## DANCING ON A WIRE

We spent a few anxious minutes trying to appear like two carefree tourists who were just hanging out.

That was when, with nervous steps and a scared look, a girl accompanied by a rather short, grim young man approached us from the terrace of the nearest café. He was a little to the right and about twenty centimeters behind her, practically brushing against her with every step.

It was blatantly obvious that the story about the boyfriend was a lie.

Kristina had painted fingernails and hair that was colored and much longer than in the picture that was taken eight months ago – before her disappearance.

She wore a serious expression under all of her make-up.

The way she looked you would never guess that she hadn't even reached sixteen years of age.

The short conversation in the middle of the square was very indicative of the situation – a combination of Kristina attempting to appear carefree and two disguised reporters trying to appear naïve.

Throughout this time Kristina's "boyfriend", whom she introduced as Giovanni, was completely silent.

Kristina explained that Giovanni spoke neither Croatian nor English, but I wasn't sure whether he even spoke Italian well, because he did not look very Italian.

I asked Kristina how much time she had.

She said that she could stick around for about half an hour – an hour at the most.

I suggested that we have a seat in front of one of the cafés, at which point she immediately turned and headed toward the same café that she and the supposed Giovanni had just come out of to meet Toni and myself.

At this point the young man was firmly holding her right forearm in his left hand and didn't let her go for a moment.

After we sat down on the terrace of the café, I handed Kristina her mother's letter along with her stuffed teddy bear, and told her that her mom, stepdad, grandma and friends said hello, and that her younger sister had sent her the bear.

For a moment it looked as if she was going to cry, but she regained her composure.

She placed her mother's letter in her bag without even looking at it, but she kept the teddy bear in her hands throughout the whole conversation.

Over the next half hour we exhausted all the possible themes that a fifteen year old runaway and two bumpkins, who in fact had very little interest in the girl, could cover.

She had run away from home, but so what...

She's alive and healthy.

She lives with her boyfriend.

We had handed her the presents from home.

We had chatted with her.

It would be logical for us leave.

At that point Toni suggested taking a few photographs of her that we could show to her mother so that she would no longer have to worry.

The stage was carefully set.

We talked Kristina into feeding the pigeons, which were numerous in the square, owing to the fact that they were used to being fed by tourists with crumbs and corn that were bought at a premium from the surrounding kiosks.

Toni clicked, clicked and clicked away... telling Kristina to smile, and constantly suggesting new places to shoot from.

He was purposely loud and theatrical in order to draw attention from passers-by.

Maybe someone would remember this scene, the faces involved, and the mutual conversation.

You never know whether this will become important later.

Right when I thought that Toni was so “into” the photography that he had forgotten our plan, he suddenly grabbed himself by the head with both hands and let go of the camera so that it dangled around his neck. He then began to hit himself on the forehead with his right hand.

## LYING TO THE VICTIM

I asked Kristina to explain to her “boyfriend” that Toni was out of film but that he absolutely wanted to buy another roll in order to be able to photograph Kristina and him together – how would Kristina’s mother believe that she had a boyfriend if he wasn’t even in one picture?

After Kristina, in bad Italian, explained to her “boyfriend” what we were talking about, he became noticeably angry. At this point they had about a half a minute of quiet, but intense conversation, accompanied by much gesticulation of hands.

It was obvious that Kristina was convincing him that he had to be photographed.

In the end he agreed, but first we had to buy film.

Toni pretended as if he did not know where the nearest store was where he could buy more film, even though before the meeting with Kristina and her companion we took into account the moment of the running out of the camera film. Actually, we planned to be as far away from the store at the appropriate time as possible so that I would have all the more time alone with Kristina while Toni and Kristina’s companion went to hunt down the film.

It was obvious that Kristina was totally subject to the will of her companion.

With that in mind, after Toni and the companion, bags full of unused film, headed toward the kiosk, I nonchalantly told Kristina that her mother said that she would help her with whatever she needed. Also that she could come home at any time, with no repercussions, whenever she wanted. All she had to do was tell me what the problem was and what she wanted to do.

I took care that it appeared as if I was relaying a normal message, by way of a disinterested and unfamiliar man, from a very worried mother, delivered during a chance meeting.

A visibly shaken Kristina said that everything was all right, that she had no desire to return home, and that she did not need any help.

In that moment I thought a few times about an option that we had decided against during our planning: to take Kristina by the hand, lead her to the first Carabinieri we saw, and to tell him the whole story.

What if Kristina, in a panicked state, begins to shout and try to get away?

She had no idea who I was and could be more frightened by my unexpected action than staying enslaved.

Who would the Carabinieri believe first – me, her... or maybe Giovanni?

It would have been stupid to insist on anything other than that Kristina tell me anything more than that she was OK and living with her boyfriend.

With that, I offered to see her the next day, at the same place, when she could give me a letter for her mother along with whatever else she wanted to send home.

She said that she would be glad to do that but that she had to talk to Giovanni first.

We agreed that she would call me the next morning so I could find out whether she was coming to the square with a letter for her mother or not.

The next morning I called the mobile phone number that Kristina had given to her mother.

I called from a public telephone so that my mobile number would not be revealed.

Kristina answered very upset.

She shouted that Toni and I had tricked her and that we were the police.

She refused to listen to me. She hung up the phone.

I tried her about ten more times but there was no answer.

Obviously "Giovanni" had suspicions about our story.

Or he simply wanted to be more cautious.

## WHOM TO ASK FOR HELP?

Toni and I went to the Croatian consulate and told them the whole story.

We developed the film and gave it to the Consul so that Kristina would be able to be recognized in the event that someone saw her on the street or during a police raid.

We also asked the Consul to call Kristina's mother in order to speak with her.

She did that.

When we arrived back in Croatia, we had to tell Kristina's family the details of the meeting what seemed like hundreds of times over.

It was hard on them, but they asked me to recount the story, then again, then again...

In this way they felt closer to their daughter.

Not long after our return I got a call from the police.

They asked me to come in for an "informative conversation".

I went because I did not want the police to arrest me, but I decided I was not going to tell them anything except what I already wrote or that had already been publicized.

I told this to a young and embarrassed female inspector who admitted that she had not even read the texts that were the basis of why her bosses had called me in the first place.

I explained to her that I could forward her the texts if she wanted to read them, that Kristina's family had told the police everything they knew, and that I had already told everything to the Croatian consul in Milan.

When Kristina's mother found out that the police had called me in, along with Kristina calling her yelling about the fact that she had sent "police" after her (referring to Toni and myself), the woman decided to openly attack the police who had not done anything for her little girl but was in fact mistreating the family of a missing girl – along with the reporter who had actually located her.

I was not crazy about publishing a text in which Kristina's mother accuses the police because some of her accusations were hard prove. Also, it was not a smart move to publicly attack the police from whom you expect help in finding your missing daughter, even if you believe that they are not trying very hard.

Very soon, Kristina's mother received money from Milan, in the amount of about a few hundred euros, supposedly sent by Kristina – obviously to prove that she is working and doing OK.

The police told Kristina's mother that the money transfer couldn't help them uncover Kristina's trail. But I was able to find out where and when the money was deposited and, more importantly, that the person who deposited the money was using Kristina's personal identification. However, the Croatian I.D. number that was used along with Kristina's name did not match and therefore was clearly a fake.

The fake contained three fewer symbols than actual Croatian personal documents should have.

If any Italian policeman ever checked the I.D., he would have had to notice that something was not right.

I therefore decided to publish Kristina's mother's accusations against the police, but included only those accusations that were provable by me.

This could have been construed as putting pressure on the police and was on the edge of ethical boundaries. But I found justification for this action in the fact that the police had actually not found one piece of valuable information about Kristina's case. Information that they had gotten from Kristina's family and through my articles in the newspaper was not used for the purpose of really trying to find this unfortunate girl.

Maybe even ethically questionable pressure on the police would force that institution to finally do what they were paid to do – I thought.

I couldn't do anything else.

### HOW TO USE EMOTIONS?

I made sure that the desperate attack on the police by Kristina's mother was spiced with facts that, at least partly, justified her anger at them.

The article's headline read "I will find my daughter on my own", and next to a large photo of Kristina's mother with her younger daughter sitting in her lap, we ran Kristina's most sentimental photo – one that pictured her feeding pigeons in front of Milan's cathedral.

The melodramatic "packaging" that was on the border of being *kitsch* was quite deliberate.

**Undeniable fact, in combination with strong emotion, is a reporter's greatest weapon in this type of situation.**

I made sure that the story clearly talks about a mother that is demanding that her runaway daughter is brought back to her, but there was absolutely no mention of the possibility that she may be a victim of human trafficking.

Arena is read in many countries and a well organized group of human traffickers have many associates that understand Croatian.

Especially in Croatia itself, where Kristina was "recruited" into human trafficking.

Photographs are even more dangerous than actual text.

It would be enough for just one person linked with the criminal organization to stumble upon Kristina's picture for her to disappear forever.

An unidentified girl, approximately Kristina's age, was found massacred in Milan literally on the same day that we met with Kristina.



Several days after the third story on Kristina ran, the one in which her mother decries how the police are not searching for her daughter at all and how she will go to Milan herself to find her, I received a phone call that changed everything.

A man called me, representing himself as a construction worker from a Croatian town, and described to me how he had worked in Italy for a few months – “off the books”.

The boss whom he had worked for had organized for his workers to sleep at an old house in a small town near Milan. This was once a night club, but was later turned into an illegal flophouse.

The man described to me how on his return home, he was flipping through a stack of Arena magazines that had been piling up at his mother’s house for decades.

All of a sudden he noticed the photograph of a girl who, for weeks, he had seen in and around the illegal flophouse.

It was suspicious to him to be meeting the same girls every day. Girls who had tired faces, empty eyes, were heavily made up and obviously dressed in a provocative fashion. These girls were constantly coming in and out of the house accompanied by one or two frowning, silent men.

When he read the text that was alongside the photograph, he realized that the girl that he had recognized was not even sixteen years old.

At that moment he understood the reason for the tired faces, distant looks, heavy make up and “provocative” clothing.

My informant asked me not to reveal his identity to anyone under any circumstances.

Upon my asking him how he would know that he could trust me if I did indeed make this promise, he answered that he had asked many people about me, including other reporters, and that he wouldn’t have even made the call if he wasn’t sure that I could be trusted.

Many times it seems that, in the journalistic profession, there is no benefit to acting professionally and insisting on ethical principles. However, it looks as if it does pay off after all.

Aside from living with a clear conscience, sometimes you gain the trust of people you don’t even know and get information that can be key to your story.

This time even involving the rescue of a victim of human trafficking.

## THE SAFETY OF THE SOURCE

I asked the person on the other end of the phone line if we could meet in person, but he declined.

The only option that was left to me was to give me all the details that he could remember – about the girl that he recognized

from the photographs in Arena, about the rest of the group of girls, about the old house, the people that went there, whether the police ever came to the house and how they acted.

He spoke for a long time in great detail.

Even he wondered at all of the details he, even unconsciously, had remembered.

I told Kristina's mother everything and she, in turn, told the police.

The Zagreb branch of Interpol told her that they had sent all of the information to Italy, along with facts about her, and everything that they knew about her whereabouts.

However, nothing happened for days.

This was suspicious to me... how it was possible that the Croatian consulate in Milan had Kristina's photographs from the main square, exhaustive details gotten from reporters and statements from her mother, the Italian police having the exact location where Kristina was living – but Kristina was still in the hands of human traffickers.

The Croatian police were not interested in the destiny of a victim of human trafficking?

Are the Italian police in league with the human traffickers?

I decided that it was time for new, and more intense, pressure to be put on the police.

This time the Italian police.

After thorough preparation, during which we ran through all the scenarios of possible situations that could happen to us one once we arrived at the place where Kristina was being held, we set out on our way: Toni, who drove, Kristina's mother, Kristina's stepfather and I.

The trip lasted for hours.

We stopped two or three times, but only for a few minutes at a time. Long enough to go to the bathroom and swill down a cup of coffee from a standing position.

Almost the whole trip was passed in silence.

After that trip I no longer laugh when someone says "the tension could be cut with a knife".

The only stop that lasted for more than five minutes was the one at a gas station a few kilometers from the place where Kristina was supposed to be.

I asked Kristina's mother to call the Interpol office in Zagreb to tell them where we were, and to ask them whether they had ever passed on the information of Kristina's whereabouts to their colleagues in Italy.

Up until then, Kristina's mother had talked with officials in that branch more than a few times, and each time they had assured her that the information had been passed on.

This time there was a silence coming from the other end of the phone line, after which time the official said the boss was in a meeting but that she would pass the question on to him.

In less than a minute the head of the Interpol branch in Zagreb called back.

He nervously criticized Kristina's mother for interfering in police matters and told her to absolutely not go in search of her daughter.

She told him that she was going anyway and that nothing could stop her, now that she was so close to finding her daughter, particularly not the same police that for nine months have been doing nothing to bring back her daughter.

Of course we had no intention of confronting human traffickers, but we were not going to admit that to the police.

We wanted to make the police do their job.

Have you noticed that I now referred to us a WE?

The line between the reporter and an interested party had long ago been crossed.

Behavior that, in journalists' workshops or in front of young colleagues at the editorial office I would have judged harshly and in a coldly analytical manner as journalistically unacceptable and dangerous for their story's actors, I now did not give a second thought to.

I consoled myself that I was still in control of the situation.

But... until when?

## WHEN ARE YOU NO LONGER IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION?

I explained to Kristina's parents that we would not be stopping in to the police station that was closest to where she was staying because it was next to impossible that the human traffickers had been keeping their victims there for so long with no police knowledge.

If they had not already arrested the criminals and rescued their victims up to this point, then the local police likely wouldn't help now.

I suggested that we go to the nearest large town that had their own special police forces, the "squadra mobile".

Kristina's parents agreed to this.

**Do you remember the rule: I put forward the good and bad consequences, but the victim's family makes the final decision?**

We arrived at the end of working hours.

Of the four of us no one spoke Italian, except for a few words and phrases here and there.

The police clerk knew very little English.

Wonderful.

He didn't even let us into the building.

I started waving my hands around and yelling – half in English and half in Croatian.

Finally, a policewoman arrived who spoke English.

After I explained the situation to her, she coldly told me that working hours were over and we would have to come back – on Monday.

After all, it was Friday.

She was unmoved and only gave ground when we warned her that when we would go look for Kristina ourselves and that she would be responsible when something happened.

Notice – WHEN something happened, not IF.

Sometimes, only a small variation in tone or expression can have an impact on those that it is directed toward.

The policewoman told us to wait and went back into the building.

After a few moments she came back and brought us in to see the chief of the mobile police unit.

He listened to me patiently.

He asked Kristina's parents a few questions in English, I translated the questions into Croatian, and then answered the chief again in English.

I asked him if he had ever seen any information regarding Kristina's being held captive at the place in question, which was supposed to have been sent from the Zagreb Interpol office.

He said something to one of the other policemen, at which point his associate walked into the other room and came back with a fax message.

The fax contained a bulletin with minimal information about Kristina's possible location that was sent from the Croatian to the Italian Interpol office and then forwarded to all the police stations.

The indicated time on the fax copy showed that it was sent – ten minutes after the conversation between Kristina's mother and the Interpol office in Zagreb.

From the Italian Interpol office the fax message about Kristina had been forwarded to the station where we were trying to explain to the chief why we were disturbing him – while we were arguing with the uninterested clerk at the entrance.

In the next second the fine, composed chief of the 'squadra mobile' gave me another surprise.

He told us to check into a hotel, get some rest, and come back to see him – on Monday.

All of his people had already gone home or were out on assignment.

Maybe the chief was just another insensitive employee, but maybe he just wanted to have time to prepare for Kristina's rescue.

One thing was certain: the man was not stupid.

He knew that he didn't need any additional problems, but he also knew that before him stood a group of agitated people who would make a problem for him if he didn't do anything right away.

Just in case, I pointed this out to him.

It is not generally recommended for journalists to play this type of psychological game with the police, nor with anyone else that has the power to decide someone's fate in an instant – because the results can be catastrophic.

However, sometimes this type of psychological pressure can be successful, although it shouldn't be employed without a really good reason.

It is surely the case that this time the reason was very important.

## PRESSURE ON THE POLICE

The chief mulled things over for a bit, but this did not last for more than five or six seconds.

He showed us an area where we should wait, and offered us coffee, juice, crackers and cigarettes.

A full hour had passed and still no one had come into the room where the four of us were sitting, every one of us lost in our own thoughts.

We did not tell one another what we were thinking about, but it was obvious that we were all thinking about the same thing.

I got the impression that, in the complete silence, our thoughts could be heard.

All of a sudden, a commotion could be heard coming from the hallway.

The sound of quick steps.

Unintelligible voices.

Female, then male.

Then the voices mixed in with one another.

Then a female voice, noticeably younger than the rest.

A young girl kept repeating something in a raised voice that turned into hysterical screaming.

Once again, silence.

"Our" police chief cracked the door and, without coming into our room, told us that everything was all right and to just wait a little longer.

He closed the door and the sound of his steps disappeared down the hallway.

He returned after an extremely long twenty minutes.

This time he opened the door wide into the hallway. Standing next to him were three women.

Two police women in plain clothes and a third that looked like a common street prostitute that you see in movies and think the movie is bad because they overdid it with the stupid stereotypes.

This even though in the meantime the policewomen had wiped off some of her make-up and one of them had given her a jacket to wear.

For twenty minutes the women police officers had spent getting the girl ready for this meeting, but they did not tell the girl who she was going to meet.

Kristina and her mother let out a scream in unison.

As the mother ran to Kristina crying and with extended arms, all the time repeating Kristina's name, from the girl's mouth emitted the worst string of swear words that I had ever heard.

Hiding behind the policewomen so as to avoid her mother's embrace, Kristina began to swear at Toni and me, howling that we were the damned police.

She swore at her mother without any explanation.

She only let out the worst kind of insults.

A girl whose mother had never heard her utter a single bad word.

The woman was completely taken aback.

Confusion and fear mixed together.

In complete shock and open-mouthed, she rushed toward her child who had not ceased her hysterics.

From Kristina were emitted all of the frustrations of the previous nine months.

Along with shame.

Unending shame.

Because standing before her mother was something that Kristina had never wanted to become.

She was facing a hard truth that the girl had buried deep within herself, fooling herself inside of her still young, child's mind that the truth did not really exist.

I don't know how long this lasted because, being a part of this situation, I had lost all sense of time.

After Kristina had calmed down a bit the policewomen, each firmly holding one of Kristina's arms, brought her over to her mother – who was still helplessly, and no longer with any voice, standing in the doorway.

It was not a hug, but desperation. An inseparable embrace by two bodies that were shaking with emotion that is only seen in the blackest of comedies.

For a long time afterward, Kristina's mother still had the remnants of the loud red nail polish on her palms that became smeared as she caressed her daughter's hair and cheeks.

Even though she had taken off her pullover and was only wearing a short-sleeved shirt, the older of the two women continued to sweat uncontrollably.

Yes, here were now two women.

The younger still had a child's face, under smeared make-up, painted fingernails, fish-net stockings, high heels, and a low-cut blouse.

Kristina still had the face of child, but in her body, in her heart, and in her eyes, the child had died.

At that moment.

In her mother's embrace.

In the meantime the room became full of people, but none of us had noticed this.

## WHERE IS THE LINE BETWEEN EMPATHY AND SYMPATHY?

For the next hour and a half, Kristina, her parents, Toni and I, answered questions posed to us by the inspector. He marked everything down in his notebook, re-asked questions and asked for detailed answers.

Working hours had long since passed.

It was impossible to find a Croatian interpreter so the question and answer session lasted twice as long as it should have.

Kristina knew a little Italian, but not enough to be able to convey to the inspector everything that he wanted to know.

Kristina's parents spoke even less Italian.

Luckily, the police found someone who spoke excellent English.

In this way the inspectors questions were posed in Italian, translated to me in English, and in turn I translated them into Croatian.

With that I translated the answers from Kristina's parents from Croatian to English, so they could then be translated into Italian, and the inspector could jot them down.

We answered the inspector's questions truthfully, I was just not so sure about Kristina.

She had, it seemed to me, a need to keep some things from us – through the embarrassment of being in front of her mother and the rest of us, from fear of retribution from the human traffickers, from the irrational desire to protect "Giovanni" whom she, despite everything, in her confused state of mind still considered her boyfriend.

This was also indicated in her diary, which the police found after they had brought her to the provincial halfway house after



picking her up somewhere along the road.

There was one thing that I did not tell the inspector: who had told me where Kristina was.

I told him the complete truth about the whole investigation, including how a man called me up and told me that he recognized the photograph of Kristina in the paper.

I did not wish to divulge his name because I had promised the source anonymity.

The inspector smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and made a note.

After the taking of notes was finished I called the Croatian consul in Milan at the number she had given me in the case that there was any urgent news about Kristina.

Night was already falling and the consul was out of town, but she told us to go to the consulate and wait for an employee who would prepare some temporary travel documents that would enable Kristina to leave Italy and return to Croatia.

The only personal document that Kristina had was a fake Croatian identification card.

That fake I.D. not only had an unknown registration number, but it contained a made up address in Zagreb. It was not even the same size a proper I.D. would have been.

It was not even the right color.

According to the I.D., Kristina was twenty two years old.

On the way home, Kristina recounted how she had admitted to a policeman in Zagreb that she was not really from there and that she had run away from home.

He advised her to go get some sleep at the train station because that's what a lot of people did, and did not even ask her for any I.D.

At that time Kristina didn't even have I.D. to show.

She showed her fake I.D. to Italian policemen more than a few times when they checked her out, or when she was rounded up during raids, along with the other young girls who were "working" the street.

No one ever noticed that the I.D. was a fake.

Or they simply didn't care.

## CONTENDING WITH BUREAUCRACY

We got out of Italy with no problem, but at the Croatian border a policeman stopped us when Kristina showed him the temporary documents that were handed out to her by the Croatian consulate in Milan.

He requested that Kristina and her mother come with him into the guardhouse, but he did not allow Kristina's stepfather, me or Toni to accompany them.

Through the glass we could see the animated reactions of Kristina's mother, with Kristina joining her in these reactions after a few minutes.

They were vehemently explaining something to the policeman, who showed absolutely no emotion on his face – not even for a moment.

By reading his lips, we could see that he just kept repeating the same short phrases.

We were the only people at the border at this time – the three of us in Toni's car, and the two of them inside the guardhouse. Mother and daughter were there along with the persistent policeman with the stone face and a female colleague who was completely uninterested and was leafing through the newspaper.

About ten meters beyond, in his own little house, was an equally disinterested customs official.

It was already early morning and very cold – like the early mornings are known to be in the wintertime – and no one was coming over the border.

After the policeman had practically kept Kristina and her mother prisoner for more than half an hour in the guardhouse, not allowing us to enter nor answering any of our questions, I called the hotline of the Croatian Interior Ministry and tried to tell the on-duty operator what was happening.

I was looking for someone who would urgently explain to the officer that what he was doing was neither according to the law nor very smart.

If he had never seen a valid temporary travel document then he should ask someone who had.

If he didn't know how to handle an underage girl and her mother, then he should let them go on their way.

Or again – he should ask someone who knows.

But he had no right to keep mistreating them.

The Interior Ministry operator did not really understand me too well, but he kept repeating that the officer probably knew what he was doing and not to interfere in police business.

Thanking him for his time, before I hung up the phone, I told him that I had the mobile number to his minister and that I would call him right away – it didn't matter that it was 3:30 in the morning.

I knew that the ploy worked when, a few minutes later, the policeman in the little house picked up the phone and let Kristina and her mother leave, having previously silently listened to someone over the phone while crisply nodding his head in agreement.

For the first time that night his face showed some emotion.

It was true fear.

A few weeks later, Kristina's mother got a call from the police that they were investigating the incident with the border police and informed her that it would be recommended that she be reprimanded for verbal abuse and threatening a person in an official capacity.

I called Arena's attorney, who explained to me that he had called a higher-up at the Interior Ministry and that, taking into account everything the police had done – or not done – in connection with Kristina's disappearance, it would not be smart for MUP to expose themselves to additional embarrassment.

The police called Kristina and her mother in for questioning a few more times, but according to the two of them, they were asked the same pointless questions every time.

## ARE THERE ANY HAPPY ENDINGS?

"Giovanni" called a few times.

First he tried to convince Kristina to come back, and then he tried threatening her.

In the end Kristina's mother forbade her to answer the phone because she would be left shaking and crying after every conversation with "Giovanni".

The last of four stories about Kristina, recounting her being found and her return home, covered five pages in Arena and was headlined "Kristina back in her mother's embrace".

I offered Kristina and her parents to leave out the parts that describe where and how she was found, along with leaving out the part about what had happened to her.

The job of a reporter is to write stories and it took me nine months to write this story.

Still, I was aware of the possibility that publishing this story could damage Kristina.

A girl who has not even reached sixteen years of age cannot easily carry the burden of what had happened to

Kristina. Especially passing through the additional trauma of people reading about her experiences – and the probability that even more would read about them eventually.

There was even the possibility that I could lie and say that Kristina eventually decided to get away from her “boyfriend” and return home to her parents.

However, Kristina and her parents were for telling the story about Kristina as a victim of human trafficking, because they were convinced that if the story were told truthfully, it would prevent the same from happening to another girl.

Once again we played the game: FOR and AGAINST.

The decision of the parents was: publish it.

In order to lessen the potential damage, I suggested that I should lie a little in the story telling.

Kristina and her parents agreed.

This way in Kristina’s story, differing from her real life, she would have only been trained to be a prostitute, but it would never have gotten to the point that she actually became one.

The lie itself would have been the smallest problem.

The average reader would not have been fooled.

A much larger problem was that in that last key moment I strictly adhered to my rule in which, before both the victim’s parents and the victim herself, I lay out all of the possible positive and negative consequences, but that I leave the final decision to them.

This principle only functions properly as long as the victim and her family are in an appropriately rational state of mind to weigh all of the arguments FOR and AGAINST.

To the contrary, the decision by Kristina and her family that the story about her enslavement be publicized was not exclusively motivated by their conscious desire to warn new, potential victims.

The subconscious motive was being grateful to the reporter who helped in Kristina’s rescue.

The way that this gratitude could be shown was to enable the reporter to do what motivated him to become involved in her disappearance in the first place – to write the story.

If I had the chance to turn back time, I never would have published the last story about Kristina the way I did.

I broke an important rule that I had always staunchly adhered to: the reporter who writes the story is obligated to protect the

victim – even from herself.

I am well aware of the fact that I did not sufficiently protect Kristina from her own and her family's decision to publish the whole story (without taking into account the senseless alibi-lie).

For this reason, since Kristina's return home I have never knocked on the family door, dialed their number, nor walked into the store where Kristina works.

I swore that I would never again become a part of the story I was writing.

I often think about Kristina and her family just like about many other "Kristinas" that I never got to know.

Almost seven years have passed since.

I had flattered myself that I was finally strong enough to definitively stay an impartial witness-observer even while writing about some new "Kristina".

Until I came to the realization that Kristina's story has permanently changed me.

At the same moment I was handing over this text, I was starting a large regional project where I will lead a team of investigative reporters that will follow the trail of missing persons.

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## HOW TO INTERVIEW A TRAFFICKING VICTIM? – AS A JOURNALIST OR AS A HUMAN BEING?

WRITTEN BY: MIŠA STOJILJKOVIĆ, JOURNALIST FOR RTV B92

As an average consumer of the media, I heard about trafficking in women a few years ago, when I read about it in the newspaper. However, at that time, it didn't leave any kind of impression on me, maybe because I didn't know anything about it. Possibly, I didn't want to know anything about it, because it sounded like yet another "heavy topic", of which kind there are too many in this country. As a journalist, I began to be interested in the topic of trafficking in women around the beginning of the year 2002, when I was asked to participate in a seminar involving this topic, along with about twenty other colleagues of mine from Southeastern Europe. It wasn't until then that I became aware of the many facets of this phenomenon and realized what a big problem it was over the whole Balkans, particularly in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo. At the same time, I realized that this did not only involve "some Russian, Moldovan and Romanian girls", but that it involved women and girls from the whole of the former Yugoslavia, of course including Serbia itself. I probably had, subconsciously, the opinion that this was happening to someone else and far away from here. Definitively, I realized that these are not – as could be concluded by many newspaper articles – prostitutes which have come from some poor country to make a little money, but that it involved victims that were the subject of severe psychological and physical violence.

Although through the writing of articles I was able to speak with representatives from the police, the courts, and a number of non-governmental organizations that dealt with the education of women and the prevention of this phenomenon, it was only after about a year and half that I had an opportunity to speak with any actual victims. I was told several times that what made it more difficult was that fact that I was a man and that most of the victims were uncomfortable and fearful in the presence of a member of the opposite sex. At that point in time I thought that this was just an excuse and the easiest way for them to rebuff me. I believed that, much more than the sex of the reporter, it was more important whether one understood the essence of trafficking in women, the approach one took during the interview, and what kind of rapport one established with a victim. And, of course, this was all very important, but already in my first interview with a young woman, it was clear that the sex of the reporter played an important role. Subsequently, after a half hour of conversation, she said that even today – two years after she managed to escape from a brothel where she had been kept against her will – she felt uncomfortable in the company of men and that she still could not maintain normal contact with them. With that, she said that she began shaking when in the same room with one or more of them, at which point she lifted up her hand to show how it was shaking. My colleague and I, with whom I was conducting the interview, asked her if she would like to stop and she said that she would.

It is that very moment that illustrates best how an interview with a victim of any type of abuse differs from other interviews, and where journalist's dilemma is. It's one thing to ask whether they want to end the interview after you have run out of questions, but it is another to end it when there are things that you still want to find out. I don't know whether there is one answer to this question or whether there is one right way to go about situations such as this. Like a large number of my colleagues, I would probably have rejoiced at the prospect that someone we were questioning – a politician, official or the like – began to shake during an interview, but this was a completely different case. Even though in writing about trafficking in women it is very important – to invoke an overused phrase – that the truth comes out, it is even more important to protect the victim from being re-traumatized. Recounting her life story and remembering every physical and mental abuse that she has had to go through, represents for the victim a re-living of the source of her suffering and frustration. The truth is, only through talking about this can she come to terms with the "demons of her past" and, more or less, successfully get past her problems. But the journalist has no way of knowing how his subject will react to concrete questions.

I think that in light of this it is very important for us to first get informed, from the people who are in contact with our subject

(psychologists, social workers, etc.), about some very important moments of her life, so that we can plan the interview to be as painless as possible for the victim. In the end, she probably would not have even agreed to the interview if she didn't feel she was ready to talk about the trauma that she had to live through. But despite this, throughout the whole interview what is more important than our text or piece is the mental state of the subject. She should be listened to carefully, observing her non-verbal communication and body language, and when it is obvious that she is becoming increasingly upset or nervous, the conversation should perhaps be directed to a less painful theme, and then later returned to some harder questions. If it is at all possible, and if the subject is willing, it is better to do the interview in two or three shorter meetings.

Another dilemma in which I found myself was whether to talk with victims in a group setting or each one separately. One school of thought says that it is better separately, because you can establish a better rapport with the victim, no one would distract her, and maybe she would talk about things that she wouldn't talk about with other people present. The second school of thought, again, says that it is better to talk to all of the victims at once because they would feel more secure in the company of women and girls who have lived through the same, or similar, trauma and it would be easier for them to tell their own story. It does not seem to me that there is a clear way to solve this dilemma, and that the journalist must appraise the situation him/herself and come to a decision on the spot.

A particular dilemma in talking with victims of trafficking in women (just as in other cases of violence) is whether to be neutral and objective, as according to the rules of reporting, or to become involved in the situation, having sympathy and openly showing your emotions and reactions to what you have heard. In fact, this may not be a dilemma at all, because, can anyone stay cold and not show emotion when she/he hears how some drunken sailors put out their cigarettes and gang-raped a twenty year old girl all night; or when someone tells you how the "boss" forced her to stand outside in 15-below-zero weather wearing a mini-skirt to wait for "clients" to come along; or when she tell you how she saw many girls hacked to pieces and left in containers; or when she tells you that she would not have a problem killing any of her "clients" if she ever saw them again. It's one thing to read about this in the paper or watch it in a movie, but it is entirely a different matter when you get this "in the first person" from a girl who actually lived through this. In my own personal experience, I know that, twice, I barely kept myself from crying and that it still gives me the shivers when I recall parts of some conversations. I think that in these interviews a person can first of all react as a human being, and only secondly as a journalist.

It is much more important to think as a journalist after the interview, when the story is actually being written or the piece being edited. At that point also, we have to think about how we are going to protect the victim. This means that we must not show her face under any circumstances, that we cannot reveal her identity, nor any other facts that could put her in harm's way (the name of the club where she worked, the owner's name, or even the town in question) because it could happen that one of her tormentors may read the article, or be listening to or watching the piece. In the end, these facts are not the main point of our story.

It is important that the message reaches people that trafficking in women indeed does exist, that's it is happening in our own country, that it is happening all around us, that all women and girls are potential victims and that society must solve this problem. It is always important to underline the fact that this does not involve prostitutes, but victims who have been forced against their will to perform sexual services. This cannot be explained if the text of the story is accompanied by pictures of naked women wrapping themselves around stripper poles, just so that more readers would be attracted to the story or to improve circulation.

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In addition, as a journalist, I have a need to say something that has nothing to do with conversations with victims of trafficking or other forms of violence. Namely, I wondered whether the media approach in regard to human trafficking had changed at all in the last three or four years. Unfortunately, I came to conclusions that I did not all like. It seems to me that very little

is different today from the way it was in the past. It seems as if today, in the Serbian media, there exist the same false assumptions and the same mistakes are being made in reports about trafficking in women – not differentiating between voluntary and forced prostitution, equating victims of trafficking with prostitutes, using the term “white slavery” when talking about victims (as if they are only white and they are being abducted by pirates or highway bandits from the 18<sup>th</sup> century). Truth be told, there have been much fewer stories being accompanied by photographs of (almost) naked women that seem to be more connected with light male entertainment rather than the abuse of victims by organized crime. But it seems to me that there are much fewer articles being written altogether. It continues to be the case that most often stories about trafficking are written after police press conferences about the breaking up of a chain of traffickers or after their actual arrest or conviction, but usually only then. There are very few analytical, investigative texts. The case is similar when it comes to television. Here you see a documentary, usually of foreign origin, there you sometimes see a debate about the topic – and that’s it. We are still waiting for a TV drama serial about human trafficking, although at the end of 2006 it was announced that one would be aired in the last part of 2007 (this text was written in June 2008) and that the government of Serbia would help pay a part of its 6 million dinar budget. I hope there is a good reason behind this.

All of a sudden it’s like trafficking in women stopped being interesting (if it ever was). To be sure, the playing field has changed as well. Sexual exploitation of victims is now taking place behind closed doors, in much better protected buildings that are much harder to infiltrate. A few court convictions were announced and everyone involved in trafficking is much more careful and suspicious, which means that anyone who investigates this topic is much more exposed to danger than before. Unfortunately, something that has also changed is that, when it comes to registered victims, there are many more girls from Serbia than from surrounding countries. There seems to be much more internal trafficking, meaning a victim from one town in Serbia is taken to another town sometimes only a few dozen kilometers away. However, even this fact doesn’t seem to be provoking any strong reaction from journalists, nor from government functionaries. Will there be any organized reaction at all – I don’t know. I only know that most of these victims (excluding a certain number of those who will have a combination of luck, adequate professional help, and positive reactions by their family members and friends) will stay on the margins of life and society. They will mainly be discarded by their families and left to their own devices or, unfortunately, the devices of dangerous human traffickers.

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He worked as a web-journalist at b92.net, then at the information editorial desk of Radio B92, and has been a presenter and host on TV B92 since 2006.

Currently he is an author and a host of the show Uvećanje on TV B92 Info, which deals with various social themes and issues regarding human and minority rights. He has been following the topic of human trafficking and reporting on it since 2002.

## WILL THEY RECOGNIZE ME?

**WRITTEN BY: OLIVERA MILOŠ TODOROVIĆ, JOURNALIST, DIRECTOR OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND TV SERIES, PRODUCER FOR THE SHOCKART ARTISTIC PRODUCTIONS GROUP**

I feel a great sense of apprehension and responsibility when I film children, the elderly, or the sick for a documentary – regardless of the theme. I am preoccupied with the question of whether I have the right to disturb their privacy. The very fact that they are members of this group many times means that they do not have the ability to fathom the consequences of their appearance in a film or on a television show.

On the other hand, I wonder about the effects of the message on the viewer for whom the message was meant in the first



place. Sometimes it happens that I give the viewer too much credit, that I think that they can come to their own conclusions. I leave them free to do that. The only guiding I do is driven by fear of pathos and sensationalism, which would actually amount to the misuse of a child, and I am convinced that we are all normal and can think for ourselves. But sometimes, instead of using a metaphor during the filming, you should “shoot straight for the head” by showing truths that are so strong, that they of themselves elicit strong emotions.

In the last three years, as the author of video spots against child trafficking, I participated in a campaign for Save the Children. In a series of videos that were seen on all of the TV stations in Serbia and Montenegro, we presented a case involving a fifteen year old girl that was sold in Italy.

*...my name is Ivana. I am fifteen years old. Last year the older brother of a friend of mine invited me to their apartment to introduce me to a boy that I liked. When I walked in, there were five of them. They all raped me. They photographed all of it. They told me that if I did not want them to show the pictures to my mother, I would have to steal all of her gold jewelry. After that I had to get in a van with them that was headed to Italy, because they told me that they would kill my mother and my sister if I didn't.*

*The trip lasted eight days. We crossed the border illegally. I tried to call my mother two times. Then they beat me and tied me up with a wire.*

*I heard them as they were negotiating with someone to sell me in Italy.*

*Everyone who came along knew what was going on, they ignored the fact that I was a human being.*

*I wanted to kill myself, but I was kept alive by a feeling that my mother and sister knew I was alive.*

*The police know the whole story. They call me all the time to give testimony.*

*Three of the participants I still see around the town. The police cannot question them because they are now at sea.*

Of course, it was out of the question to film the actual victim. The hardest thing was to find a girl who would, in order to be believable, say the words in close-up, and look directly into the camera. Done in this way, this would force the audience to realize that the words spoken were true – that it **could be** someone close to them!

At the same time, the face of the child being filmed could not be shown. I decided to call on a drama group made up of children. We handed out the text that was to be spoken by the trafficking victim. After the reading of the text, the cameraman and I narrowed it down to three girls as possible participants in the segment. We sent the text to each parent and asked for written permission that stated that the child was allowed to participate in the filming. I could not promise the parents that their child, after the emotional reading required for this spot, would not be mistaken for the real victim in her neighborhood and school. This was precisely what the parents were most scared of.

I also utilized the second option, and that was using an adult actress whose face, up until that point, was not very recognizable, which was important so that the story would not lose the feel of a documentary.

As the campaign continued, after these video spots, the idea was to call attention to children that were between the ages of 5 and 10 who, according to statistics, belong to the most vulnerable age group in child trafficking. This group is exploited through forced labor, begging, performing acts of crime, and the selling of organs. In this case it was very difficult to use a child in a TV spot, once again because it may identify the child with a real occurrence. This time we didn't pick among actors, but used our own children, children of the members of the film crew that were of the appropriate age.

Along with the words and pictures, postproduction can add a lot of weight to a documentary film.

As the author of the documentary *The Tree of Life*, I investigated how children in foster or adoptive families live, as compared with children in institutions for the care of children without parents. The video montage and soundtrack function to punctuate emotion as well as the messages of the children, promoting the possibility that children, instead of being kept in government institutions, are given a normal family surrounding.

The whole time I am thinking about the consequences for the children that were filmed. It is important to me to say to them that they shouldn't expect any great power emanating from me, power that is, after all, limited to broadcasting the truth of their stories. Film needs to work toward the changing of attitudes – both individual and professional, to use the story for good, without any negative motivations, that from an authentic, non-intrusive, and direct point of view, it animates viewers that would otherwise never be interested in this theme.

Viewers often think that the journalist, through broadcasting or filming, doesn't really help children, expecting wonders and influence that go past the boundaries of their profession.

For the filming of *The Tree of Life*, we were given permission from the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, which allowed us entry into institutions for the social protection of children without parents. During our preparation for filming children who lived in child care institutions, without family protection, more vulnerable, and because of this easy prey for human traffickers, we were very much helped by psychologists and social workers who worked at these institutions that opened their doors to us. Their unwavering support was reflected in their talking with the children, explaining what the film was about, what we were talking about and why we were filming. I gave the children questions that were prepared in advance and thought to myself that I hoped that our conversation didn't leave them with the feeling that they were being laid bare yet again in the "best interest of the child". To lessen the chance of misuse, we talked only with older children (16 – 17 years old) and the only question they asked was, "Will they recognize me?"

"What do you think will happen when they do recognize you?" I ask them.

"Everyone thinks that we are the lowest level of society. That's exactly how they look at us, but when they get to know us they realize that we are normal kids and the only thing different about us is that we are here, that we live as wards of the state, and that they live at home. We are completely normal. No one recognizes that we don't live at home when we are out walking around on the street. It's not written on our foreheads."

"Generally, I avoid speaking with anyone about my past because I get the impression that people will treat me with more respect if I hide that part of my past. I know it's wrong, but that way it's much easier for me to meet new friends."

My entry card was trust and I look at everything from my own point of view. How would I react if someone asked me that question, would I be talking about this if I were in their place, or would I allow myself to be seen on a show that dealt with this theme? A theme that, according to our own mentality, is in itself sensational? I let the emotions flow into a previously prepared and conceived framework.

We are doing a trial shooting of Mira, and show her slightly dimmed footage that does not show her very clearly. I do not try to talk her into anything, do not pressure her; on the contrary, I tell her that she still might be recognized. If she thinks that this might affect her in a negative way, we won't film her. She agrees and the camera starts filming.

The filming of children, especially those raised under conditions where trust is not a given, should not be done with large

crews. There are three of us. Robert Klajn, an experienced radio sound man and Miodrag Trajković, director of photography and cameraman, both of whom I have been working with for about ten years, have a feeling for people, for emotions, they understand why we are filming something and why we are filming someone precisely in that way. With his approach to people and the way he sees them, my cameraman's photography reveals a sensibility of a discreet and genuine interest in the destinies of others. For the camera, which is already extra burdening someone who is telling his/her life's story to everyone, must, at the same time, catch that which is documentary as well as that "something" that distinguishes convincing stories from those that serve as sensationalist fill for an otherwise poor domestic news program.

The stories and lives of these children should be in the service of the fight against the prejudices that rule our mentality. These are the destinies of little, yet grown-up people who do not point fingers at anyone, do not accuse and do not ask for pity. Each airing of this film has to at least partially ease the life of all our children.

We are entering an institution for children without parental care. They are expecting us. We agree on who will do the talking. A smiling girl approaches us, the camera films the place where she sleeps, her friends, how she spends her free time. At one moment, the cameraman withdraws and the two of us are left alone. She is telling me something she does not want the camera to record, as though only in passing, and I know that I would never sell that sentence of hers. I cannot make use of her truth, because this girl needs to stay at this home for two more years. And while many children alter reality in order for it to become a reality show, filming staged fights with their mobile phones, these children's real lives sometimes should stay off camera. For, once the camera is turned off, each one of them is ultimately left by themselves.

*The author is a Belgrade-born law school graduate, with 25 years of experience in journalism. She was editor of the First Program of Radio Studio B, editor of a Radio B92 program. She authored TV serials in the video and film production of B92, TV Studio B, ART channel. Founder of the ShockArt artistic production group. She has directed 20 documentary films, participated in 50 international festivals and has received 10 foreign and domestic first prizes, among which the prize for investigative reporting for the Tree of Life project dealing with children without parental care. Her three-year serial Sofa has investigated the responsibility of the political elite for the current political state in Serbia. She is the author of a book of interviews, Fras se širi [The Fit is Spreading], and the multimedia presentation (book, CD and website) Nepristojanje [Dissent]. She produced and authored the campaigns against child trafficking, against child poverty, and against violence against children. She has written for the magazines "Vreme", "Košava", "XZabave", "Bis", "Reporter", "Prestup".*

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING, A TOPIC THAT REQUIRES A SPECIAL APPROACH – THE VICTIM FIRST

WRITTEN BY: MILOŠ TEODORVIĆ, JOURNALIST FOR RADIO FREE EUROPE

The scream that pierced the air almost didn't sound human. The sound of a little girl screaming in terror. At first I cannot understand what she is actually saying, only to realize that she said, "They took my brother away!"

This was my first encounter with human trafficking. A crime which I had read about, but had never covered. Purely by chance, I was witness to an incident that happened in the very center of Belgrade. Two males walked into the home of a family and took the boy away with them. The boy's frightened older sister ran after them, screaming and wailing, trying to attract the attention of someone who could help. She kept repeating, "They took my brother away, they are going to make

him beg...!" Soon a group of us had gathered and we called the police. But before the police arrived, a young woman came who was an activist for a non-government organization that specialized in children's rights.

The incident got all the way to the media, from whom I learned of the outcome. A few streets over, the police found the two males that had seized the boy. In one of the articles it was mentioned that those same two males, who were involved in organizing children to beg on the streets, had an agreement with the parents of the boy to take him with them. Still, even today it is still not clear to me what actually happened, just as where the boy is today, and whether the abductors have ever been charged.

My interest in this topic has continued to rise since then, and in a couple of instances, the opportunity to involve myself professionally in these matters has presented itself to me. I will now tell of two separate incidents which I have worked on, with the caveat that after the media treatment, it is unknown to me whether either incident was brought as far as a court decision.

She was only sixteen years old. She was taken to the Safe House after surviving a double rape. She agreed to the interview under the condition that only one reporter was present and no other members of the crew could attend. Taking into account that the interview was needed for a segment on the show "Tačka oslonca" that aired on Television Avala, the filming required that at least two people were present – the reporter and a cameraman. Negotiations over how this girl would be filmed lasted several days, and I will describe all the solutions that we came up with so that we could give a faithful picture of the destiny of a girl who, it would be shown later (with police confirmation), was able to get out from a human trafficking chain.

I ultimately went to the interview alone. By agreement, her words would be recorded on a mini-disk, a tool used by radio reporters. On the way to the interview, I am trying to think of what would be suitable as a first question. I am also trying to remember the basic rules that apply when interviewing a victim – whether or not it involved those that endured abuse, any kind of torture, war victims... A basic rule was not to attempt any pathetic questions that evoke strong emotions (crying, rage, and the like) and in this way try to avoid asking for more than the victim is willing to give. In other words, making an effort to make sure that through the recounting of the trauma, the victim does not experience any new trauma. Not asking direct questions such as "What was done to you?", "Where did he hit you?" or anything similar, but relying on impressions. With this, an essential question in this type of situation is "How did you feel?". It is important that you should not confuse the victim by cutting her short. If you see that she is becoming confused, you are only adding to it and it is recommended that you yourself show confusion, look away from time to time, nod your head to show that you understand what she is trying to tell you and to show her that she should continue... Most importantly – don't even try to talk to the victim if you don't empathize, if this is just another segment or interview for you. You must realize that before you is a person that will, for the rest of their life, every day, have to come to terms with and re-live the trauma that they have had to go through. The victim will be scarred for the rest of their life. I repeat all the rules to myself and feel ready for the interview.

Before me sat a little girl. With her was a psychologist. There was an uncomfortable silence after the introductions. I notice a look of childish curiosity while I am changing the battery in my mini-disk. At the same moment that I announce that the interview is starting, I realize that this is a mistake. Maybe (as often happens) the realization that we will be recording her words will make her tense and resistant. First question: "What would you like to tell me about yourself? How old are you?" "Sixteen," she answered – and not a word more. "How did you meet the man that attacked you?", realizing that I, myself, am afraid to use the word "rape". "When I was looking for a job." Again, not a word more. I wait, hoping that she will have

something to add. I don't see where this type of conversation will go. At that moment, she obviously recognized my hesitation and in a soft, unsure voice asked "Would you like for me to tell you everything that happened. From the beginning?"

Of course I agree. A monologue ensued. In short, this young girl from Belgrade, under pressure of poverty and the inability of her parents to earn enough to live on, found a job in a cafe in southern Serbia after calling a telephone number in the newspaper. The owner of the restaurant was looking for female workers in Belgrade. He got permission from the parents of my subject, whom he convinced that nothing bad would happen. Already on the way to her new place of work, he began making advances at her in the car, and began to grope her body. When they arrived, he handed her over to his colleague and announced that she would actually be working in his cafe. Two days later, without any notice or warning, he came and took her away to his own cafe with the explanation that from then on she would live and work there.

He raped her the first night. He came back again the next day, threatened that he would kill both her parents and her, and raped her again. In self-defense, she hit him with a blunt object and managed to get away. What set her case apart from that of many other girls whose trail is lost under similar circumstances, was that the heroine of our story had the small piece of luck that on that same day she was sent back to Belgrade. Her parents reported this incident to the police right away and sent their daughter to the Safe House. As we are speaking, she is still there hiding away from her assailant, who has been to her parents house three times looking for her. The police questioned him, but did not detain him. The timer on my mini-disk read 25 minutes and 26 seconds when she finished her story.

After the interview, I was left with only her voice. The editorial staff introduced an improvisation. A female colleague (who was a trained actress) sat in a chair facing a window. We filmed her from behind. The view was darkened so that all that was shown was a female outline. She simulated a person that was talking about something, from time to time lowering her head toward her chest and wiping away tears, that was synchronized with the movements of the interviewed victim. During editing it was apparent that the radio sound was not of good enough quality for television, particularly after the voice of the person (as promised to the subject) was modified – so as to be unrecognizable. There was no other choice than to put subtitles under the parts that were used in the segment. It was a feature four minute segment of the show. No one in the studio was left unaffected, but what was most important was that the identity of the person that was interviewed was kept hidden.

The rules are clear. When it comes to such a sensitive topic, there is no way that the victim's identity should be revealed unless she does so herself. In the case of a minor, even if the parents allow such a thing, it is the responsibility of the reporter to hide that identity. In the second example that I intend to put forward, I adhered to this rule strictly.

The subject is the "Paulik" case. A story that is full of unanswered questions and confusing omissions, involving a little girl from Vranje who has been suspected to be the victim of trafficking at all. This incident was brought to my attention by members of a non-government organization that was interested in this story, which blew up in Croatian newspapers and had received tragicomic coverage in local media in Vranje (where Paulik bought TV time to proclaim his innocence), he brought to a conclusion.

The Dubrovnik police brought Paulik in after a group of tourists noticed his unseemly behavior toward a little girl in a local restaurant. After being arrested, he was quickly released. He then went from Dubrovnik to Germany, then back to Vranje where he was once again taken into custody and then released the same evening. Even after two arrests and in the case being

turned over to court authorities, no precise finding or ruling was ever obtained. At the same time, in a report broadcasted by Radio Free Europe, I tried to follow the route that the child had to go, which included various institutions and international organizations, before she was returned to her family. According to the estimation of social workers, the treatment that she was subjected to was known in theory as "institutional terror".

The mistake frequently made by the Serbian media was that they cover problematic and particularly tragic stories mainly at their very beginning. Experience has shown that it is essential to constantly be included in the events of an incident so that court authorities cannot ignore these incidents and do not miss out on important details. This will eventually put alternative pressure on the courts as well as stimulate investigative organs to gather new evidence. If the Serbian media had taken this tact in regard to the "Paulik Case", maybe this story would have had its own court decision. In this way the case has remained unsolved and without any clear definition of whether Paulik is guilty of anything or not, whether he was connected with human traffickers or not, and whether or not he is a pedophile. There is not even any answer to suspicions regarding a number of other young girls and boys whom Paulik, with the permission of their parents, occasionally had "in his care".

My assignment was, therefore, reduced to following the story from Dubrovnik, through Belgrade, to Vranje. This was to be done through conversations with the people that had taken over guardianship of the child, as well as those that tried to pick up Paulik's trail.

In talking with social workers from Serbia and Croatia, representatives of non-government organizations – as well as the police, and comparing their statements, it can be concluded that the case has been passed from one instance to another, from the zone of responsibility of one to the zone of responsibility of another. Luckily, in the end the girl was returned to her family (which was, in the end, itself a victim of deceit) but, according to the facts, it becomes clear that this incident was covered up due to the indolence of the people that were involved in this case. Namely, whenever the job was handed over to a different agency, the previous one simply forgot about it. The impression given is that any matter connected to Paulik, taking into account the lack of evidence, has been closed and happily forgotten by many who are content with the fact that the police in Vranje succeeded in banning this German citizen from entering Serbia for the next ten years.

I would also underline the fact that in the last few years, the examples of violence against the weak, human trafficking (mostly in women), the abuse of children and similar incidents, have flooded the Serbian media. What should be considered to be good news, because the public has become more familiar with the risks that the weak must face, has unfortunately grown into the tragic and brutal abuse of human tragedy for the purpose of gaining in circulation and viewers. In a number of instances, the identities of victims have been uncovered, which no doubt demoralizes those that can still be helped. Along with this the reaction of the public frequently offends up with mere shock, without any solidarity with the victims. I will remind you that, for example, last year more than tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Portugal after the disappearance of a British girl. That type of solidarity does not exist here, for which the media shares responsibility. Namely, those that sensationalize these types of incidents publicize them in a tabloid manner, and the most that they accomplish is shock value as opposed to any educational value. Instead of this, a mechanism should be applied that would raise the public awareness about the potential dangers and how victims could be helped. Victims should be protected as much as possible and helped to get over their trauma. When the media is in question, it must be admitted that they have continually failed the test, partly because of tabloid journalism, partly because of lack of interest, partly because of shallowness.

*The author is a 34 year-old professional journalist. For the last eight years he has been working at the Belgrade bureau of*

*Radio Free Europe. For his report on human trafficking, which was aired on RFE, he received the "Zoran Mamula" award for 2006, also receiving an award from the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia for the same piece. He has also authored a series of documentary films for the independent TV production house "Arhitekt", as well as written for numerous daily publications including – "Blic", "Glas javnosti", and "Barba".*

## COMMERCIALS FOR THE SOUL

WRITTEN BY: NADEŽDA MILENKOVIĆ, CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Besides being commercial, commercials can have other goals. Okay, maybe they won't change the world, but they can make it better, dress it up, introduce more socially desirable or, as it is called today, more politically correct behavior. They can absolutely do that. Even when they are done with a commercial goal in mind, and especially when their goal is to promote certain social values. Thanks to advertising campaigns, real fur is "out", as it is out not to wear condoms.

My first big experience with a campaign in the category of "social and public awareness" was at the Cannes Advertising Festival – which takes place right after the one involving films. At that time, before the advent of the Internet, the only way to see the best ads from around the world was to go to one of these festivals and view a couple of thousand of these spots. Since most of the viewings were held in various halls, visitors distributed themselves the best way they could. They did their best to see what interested them the most, while at the same time trying not to miss the many "extra-curricular" activities that the organizers, agencies, and clients held at various beaches and hotels in the area. Despite this, there was one category that managed to get us all in one place. Social and Public Awareness Campaigns. Because this was where agencies showed campaigns that were not done for money, nor so that a client would be able to boost his profit margin. Here were campaigns that one did for his own soul. For salvation, if you will. As a small addition to the cosmic scale that is much heavier on the side that weighs your contributions to commercialization. For the same reason, these are more creative than the rest, which was proved out that year because the Grand Prix award was handed out for the first time to a spot from this category. And almost anything you could think of was being "advertised". Stay in school, say no to drugs, racists are stupid, call your aging parents... all in an unusual fashion. From "donate money" to "we are not asking for money, just for shoeboxes so that we can bury the children who died of starvation in them", from "don't drive drunk" to "if you don't care that you will kill someone because you are drunk, at least be worried that you might lose your driver's license".

Of course I came back shocked by the knowledge that ads are being made for every theme, and not only, like with us, one or two about giving blood. And, of course, I wished that I had the opportunity to participate in the creation of one. And that it makes it to a festival, of course.

Quickly, this came to pass. Unfortunately. Client: The International Red Cross Committee in Geneva. Request: That a campaign be done that would raise the awareness of the participants in "wartime activities" in Croatia that members of the Red Cross were neutral in order to keep them from attacking structures and representatives of the organization. Result: the "Don't shoot at us" campaign. And the awards came. A Silver from the New York Festival and a special award from the United Nations. An ugly cause for celebration.

At the same time, I realized why there is so much interest in these types of campaigns and why they are also the most creative. Exactly that. An ugly cause. An ugly occasion to give the most beautiful part of yourself. Because, to be able to do one of these campaigns the creators, just like journalists, have to learn details that they otherwise would rather not know. About the hungry, the discriminated, the killed, AIDS patients, cancer patients, the elderly, the infirm, the weak, the abducted,

people who were raped... Then they have to react, not with horror or pathos, but with creativity. In a way that will touch the audience, not in a way that will make them turn their heads or change the channel. To reach people that, by the same token, don't want to know all of these ugly things. To force them to do something about it, or at least be aware of a problem that they otherwise do not at all want to face. All this in 30 seconds.

This leads to another problem, at least when we are talking about this market. Broadcasting. Whether the subject involves soup kitchens, hospices, AIDS, women's reproductive health, incest or human trafficking, the key question is always the same: what is your media budget? The most common answer: we don't have one. Contrary to popular belief, non-governmental organizations, at least most of those I have had contact with, don't have any money. In any case, they do not have the many thousands of euros necessary for broadcasting. TV channels have an obligation to broadcast important public service announcements, but not necessarily to give the most viewed times of day. Ad space in the paper will begrudgingly be given free of charge, especially if they already have paying customers for that space. The same goes for billboards. Radio stations are a much more positive example, especially local stations, but most of the time just radio is not sufficient media exposure.

And so we come to the reason that I am writing all this to you. Media, your own, support for social campaigns. Just like you offered for the earlier "Naked Facts" campaign.<sup>65</sup> You helped it to be even more seen and noticed. Thank you for turning a commercial into news. Especially when others do the opposite – they turn news into commercials.

*Nadežda Milenkovič is one of the leading figures in domestic advertising, and has been creative director for numerous campaigns. She has been the recipient of many awards at domestic and international advertising festivals, one of which is the United Nations Department of Public Information Awards. She is especially involved in humanitarian and social campaigns (the campaign for the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, the campaign for the fight against AIDS, the anti-trafficking campaign for NAKED FACTS for NGO ASTRA, the campaign for the Incest Trauma Center). She was the creator of the campaign for the cult radio show "Peščanik". She is the author of the bestseller "How to Best Ruin your Child", published by the Creative Center.*

<sup>65</sup> NAKED FACTS/GOLE ČINJENICE IS THE FIFTH ANTI-TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY NGO ASTRA SINCE ITS FOUNDING. THE GOAL OF THE CAMPAIGN IS TO REMIND BOTH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND STATE INSTITUTIONS THAT THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS STILL PRESENT IN OUR COUNTRY, WHICH IS FREQUENTLY FORGOTTEN IN A SOCIETY BECOMING EVER MORE TOLERANT OF VIOLENCE AND THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE CAMPAIGN MESSAGE, "WOMEN ARE NOT MEAT. CHILDREN ARE NOT SLAVES. PEOPLE ARE NOT MERCHANDISE" IS SPOKEN BY JUGOSLAV ČOŠIĆ, MILUTIN PETROVIĆ, IVAN TAŠOVAČ, DEJAN ANASTASJEVIĆ, ŽELJKO BODROŽIĆ, BRANISLAV LEČIĆ AND VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ.





SOS TELEFON

# GOLE ČINJENICE.

Žene nisu meso. Deca nisu roblje. Ljudi nisu roba.

## Кривичне пријаве

анска мафија контролише  
„сексуално робље“

рифе „Сандеј телеграфа“ шокирало британског премијера

ОВИНЕ  
ДИМА

подвође људ

постављао две  
малолет

– робство в 21 век”, на която присъстваха учениците и преподавателите от гимназията.

– Целта на проекта е младите да се запознаят този сериозен проблем, понеже не малко хора, особено жени от страните в транзиция, често биват подведени и стават “бели роби”, подчертаха Сузана Антич Ристич и Сладжана Трайкович, координатори на

Кривичне пријаве  
за покушај трговине људима

ПРОЦЕС ЗА ТРГОВИНУ ДЕВОЈАКА

тужене Тетјане

12vek 7A7  
девојку са  
600 евра!

пододала ћерку да јој ваде органе

Прекинут ланац трговине људима

Пао први српски  
интернет педофил

Ради се о 19-годишњаку из Шапца чији идентитет полиција није објавила

ваз белим робљем  
Каве Макро подводио малолет  
живања орган





# MEDIA PRESENTATION OF TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS FIELD

## THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN SERBIA

"Modern-day slavery", the term often used for human trafficking, is a serious social problem because it represents the violation of basic human rights (right to life, to the freedom of choice and the freedom of movement). Although most countries in the world claim that they have ensured full respect for human rights and freedoms, the phenomenon of slavery has not disappeared. Unfortunately, it is still present today. Children, women and men are sold as commodities all over the world.

The media, as a powerful tool for spreading information and one of the decisive opinion making factors, is an important actor in combating human trafficking. As a prevention tool, the media can significantly affect decrease in the number of, above all, potential victims, but also of trafficking victims who are still in the stage of acute violence and exploitation.

Journalists are often in search for stories about the experience of "real" people and topics that are interesting to the broader public. However, human trafficking should not be reported about only when something happens – like the discovery of trafficking victims or the arrest of traffickers. The public should be accurately, comprehensively and continuously informed both about specific events that are connected to human trafficking and about human trafficking as a phenomenon.

Since trafficking in human beings is the organized criminal activity, it requires an organized societal response. Journalists play an important role here, but they are not the only ones that should be continually dealing with and addressing this problem. For primary prevention, media reporting is invaluable, because "timely information is the best prevention of human trafficking."

## DEFINING THE PROBLEM

This analysis is focused on the problem of human trafficking as described, processed and published by six Belgrade-based print media and journalists reporting for them.

The basis for the selection and analysis of articles that deal with this global social phenomenon is the definition of human trafficking as given in the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, i.e. in Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children. According to this definition, human trafficking shall mean "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation"/

## GOALS OF THE ANALYSIS

The analysis has been conducted in order to explore the print media reporting about the human trafficking problem and check

whether the way of reporting, which has been mostly sensationalistic in recent years, has changed. By the content analysis, we wanted to establish the main features of reporting and how the problem of human trafficking is presented in the leading print media in Serbia.

Theoretical goal of this analysis is to discover whether, to what extent and in what way the Belgrade print media reports on the human trafficking problem. Also, we wanted to see whether traditional patterns of journalists' treating the problem of human trafficking in previous years have changed.

The main objective of the analysis is the systematization of data based on which it will be determined whether the press publishes full information, clearly, simply and chronologically presented, whether the problem is explained in its entire complexity and whether the story is followed from the beginning to the end. If this is not the case, based on obtained data we will give recommendations that would contribute to more effective, systematic and accurate reporting of this important social problem, both in Belgrade and in the whole Serbia.

## SAMPLE

This analysis involves six-month monitoring of articles about the human trafficking problem, published in six dailies with large circulation.

The sample included newspapers of different profiles that are released on a daily basis: serious papers such as "Politika", "Danas" and "Blic" and tabloids such as "Večernje novosti", "Press" and "Kurir".

Why these particular papers?

Daily newspapers, although less popular than entertainment magazines, still have significant impact on public opinion making, they have large circulation and may serve as a good prevention tool in combating human trafficking.

The broader selection of articles published in the print media was made by EBART Media Documentation.

BELGRADE	Politika	dnevno
	Danas	dnevno
	Večernje novosti	dnevno
	Blic	dnevno
	Press	dnevno
	Kurir	dnevno

Table 8 – List of the print media included in the analysis

## METHODOLOGY

The content analysis method has been applied on the sample of 285 articles published in the period 1 May – 31 October 2008 in six Belgrade-based daily newspapers [Politika, Danas, Večernje novosti, Blic, Press, i Kurir].



Selected articles have been analyzed on the basis of the following topics:

- Trafficking in human beings (women and men)
- Trafficking in children
- Illegal migrations (smuggling, illegal transportation of persons)
- Internet and pornography
- NGO ASTRA

By combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis, we have examined the reporting on the human trafficking problem in the print media.

## VARIABLES

- 1) The total number of articles on the human trafficking problem:
  - According to the frequency of publishing
  - According to the observed print media
  - According to the category of articles (genre)
  - According to the topic (human trafficking, child trafficking, illegal migrations...)
  - According to authors
  - According to the territory the article refers to
  - According to the reason for addressing the problem of human trafficking (specific event/description of the phenomenon)
  
- 2) Quality of articles:
  - Answer to the basic journalist questions (who, what, when, how, why) given/not given
  - Objectivity/lack of objectivity
  - Providing information/ sensationalism
  - Specific event/description of the phenomenon

## PROBLEMS AND TASKS

Through this research, we have tried to answer the following questions:

- Are there any differences in the quantity of articles that address the problem of human trafficking with regard to the time period under consideration?
- Are there any qualitative differences in articles that address the problem of human trafficking between different print media?
- What are the most frequent qualitative errors the journalists make when reporting on the problem of human trafficking? To what extent are the articles objective, accurate, informative?
- Has the way of reporting by Belgrade journalists and the frequency of reporting about the problem of human trafficking changed (improved) compared with the previous survey<sup>66</sup>?

<sup>66</sup> UNPUBLISHED CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN SERBIA WITH REGARD TO REPORTING ON THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM IN THE PERIOD MARCH–NOVEMBER 2005 CONDUCTED FOR THE NEEDS OF NGO ASTRA.

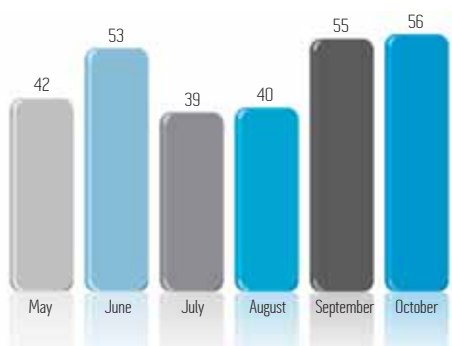
## Quantitative and qualitative analysis

In the period 1 May – 31 October 2008, 285 articles about the problem of human trafficking were published in the observed print media. If we compare these 285 articles (published during the six-month period) with 222 articles published in the Belgrade newspapers in the previously analyzed period (March–December 2005), we may be satisfied with the increase in the number of articles that treat this topic.

However, we should not be misguided only by increase in the number of published articles, because, besides quantity, it is very important what kind of articles were published, in which section and whether the same journalists are in charge of reporting on this topic or they are assigned from case to case.

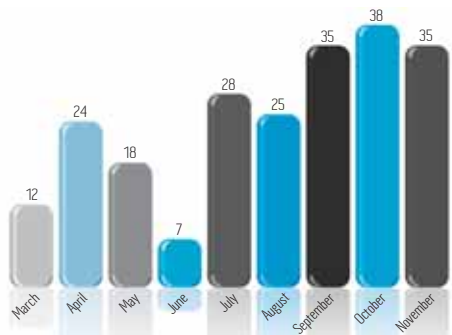
## THE FREQUENCY OF PUBLISHING

Chart 72 – Frequency of the number of articles about the human trafficking problem in the Belgrade papers by month



Of 285 articles published by Belgrade dailies that treated the problem of human trafficking, 42 were released in May, 53 in June, 39 in July, 40 in August, while the number of articles published in September and October slightly increased – 55 and 56 respectively.

Chart 73 – Frequency of the number of articles about human trafficking in the Belgrade papers by month, 2005



If we compare data obtained in this survey with those from the survey done in 2005<sup>67</sup>, shown in Chart 73, we may see that

67 Ibid



the human trafficking problem is still reported about sporadically, but oscillations in the frequency of reporting according to month were considerably smaller in 2008.

Reasons for increase, i.e. decrease in the number of articles are searched, like in the previous survey, both in specific content of articles in months in which considerable increase took place and in sociopolitical events in the country that may have affected observed differences.

Chart 72 shows a slight increase in June and fall in the number of articles in July. This was followed by steady (although tiny) growth in the number of articles in August, September and October.

One of the reason for growth in the number of published articles registered in June is US State Department's TIP Report that was released in this month, as well as successful action named "Beggar". This was a joint action by the Serbian and Montenegrin police, in which the entry of 22 beggars into Montenegro was prevented. In this way, the chain of organized begging was broken. Besides this action, journalists were reporting, mostly in the form of the news, other successful police actions, too. Provocative campaign by NGO ASTRA also attracted media attention.

August and September were marked by rise in the number of immigrants in Italy and Spain, violence against immigrants and immigrants' unrest in these countries. In addition, several persons suspected for collecting and distributing child pornography were arrested in August; while a people smuggling chain from Serbia to EU countries was discovered in September. Since this is a crime punished under Article 389 of the Criminal Code of Serbia, we included into the analysis articles that addressed this and similar events.

Besides articles about violence against immigrants and their protests, the October increase in the number of articles resulted from the arrest of informal leader of Mujahideen community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria-national Imad al-Husein, known under the name "Abu Hamya". The signing of the agreement on prevention and fight against crime between Serbia and Greece was another significant event in October.

When we make a cross-section of the frequency of articles and the dates of their publishing, we cannot determine any continuity in reporting. The print media mostly reported on the human trafficking problem when they had "an important" cause, when some tragic event took place or after large-scale actions by the police, the judiciary or international authorities.

## INDIVIDUAL PRINT MEDIA AND THE NUMBER OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES ABOUT THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM

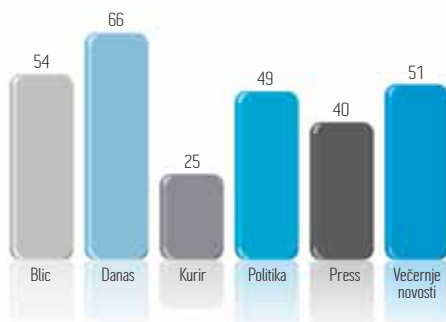


Chart 74 – Number of published articles by individual newspapers

"Danas" reported about the human trafficking problem most often – 66 times. It is followed by "Blic" – 54 times, "Večernje novosti" – 51 times, "Politika" – 49 times, "Press" – 40 times and "Kurir" only 25 times.

Chart 75 – Number of published articles by individual newspapers, 2005



If we compare the number of articles released in the Belgrade dailies in this period with the number of articles published in the same dailies during the nine-month period of 2005<sup>68</sup>, we may see that the number of articles increased considerably, especially in "Danas" and "Politika", while the smallest increase (but still an increase) was registered in "Kurir".

## THE CATEGORY OF ARTICLES

Journalist interpretation is seen best on the basis of frequency of use of specific journalist genres/ Information and messages may be published in different ways and forms.

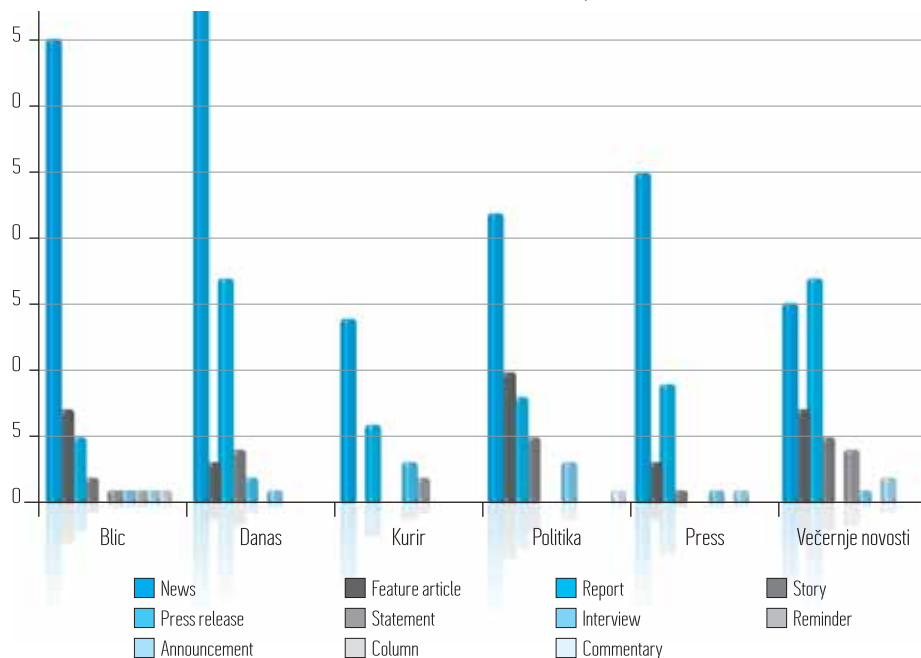
During the six-month period under consideration, the human trafficking problem was reported about mostly in the form of the news, report or feature article. Of the total number of different articles (285), there were 150 news, 62 reports, 30 feature articles, 17 field stories, 9 interviews, 8 statements, 4 announcements, 2 press releases and one reminder, column and commentary.

It can be observed that, as for factual genres, news (52.63%) and reports (21.75%) were the most frequent. Next come feature article (10.53%) as analytical genre, while field reports made up 5.96%.

Although the human trafficking problem may be presented through almost all genres in the print media, the Belgrade journalists prefer purely factual reporting, without real interpretation of events and social process and their deeper analysis. An analytical genre, which implies real argumentation and analysis of elements and consequences, rarely appears.

<sup>68</sup> IBID

Chart 76– Categories of articles in individual print media



As for the representation of journalist genres in individual papers, in the six-month period “Blic” published 35 news, 7 feature articles, 5 reports, 2 stories and one statement, interview, reminder, column and announcement.

“Danas” published 39 news, 17 reports, 4 stories, 3 feature articles, 2 press releases and one interview.

“Kurir” published 14 news, 6 reports, 3 statements and 2 interviews, while “Politika” published 22 news, 10 feature articles, 8 reports, 5 stories, 3 interviews and one commentary.

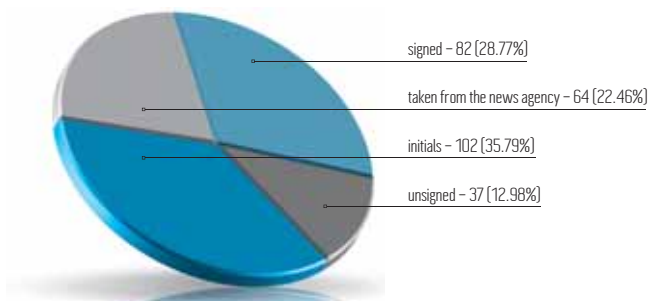
“Press” released 25 news, 9 reports, 3 feature articles, one story, one interview and one announcement, while in “Večernje novosti” one could find 15 news, 17 reports, 7 feature articles, 5 stories, 4 statements, 2 announcements and one interview.

Unfortunately, unstoppable trend of commercialization and tabloidization in the media have resulted in sensationalistic headlines, although articles themselves are not. It is editor who affects the formulation of the headline and not the journalist who wrote the text. The goal is to attract readers and increase circulation. Besides sensation, headlines are often characterized by incompleteness and lack of clarity, while unnecessary punctuation, as opposed to the previous survey<sup>69</sup>, do not appear.

69 Ibid

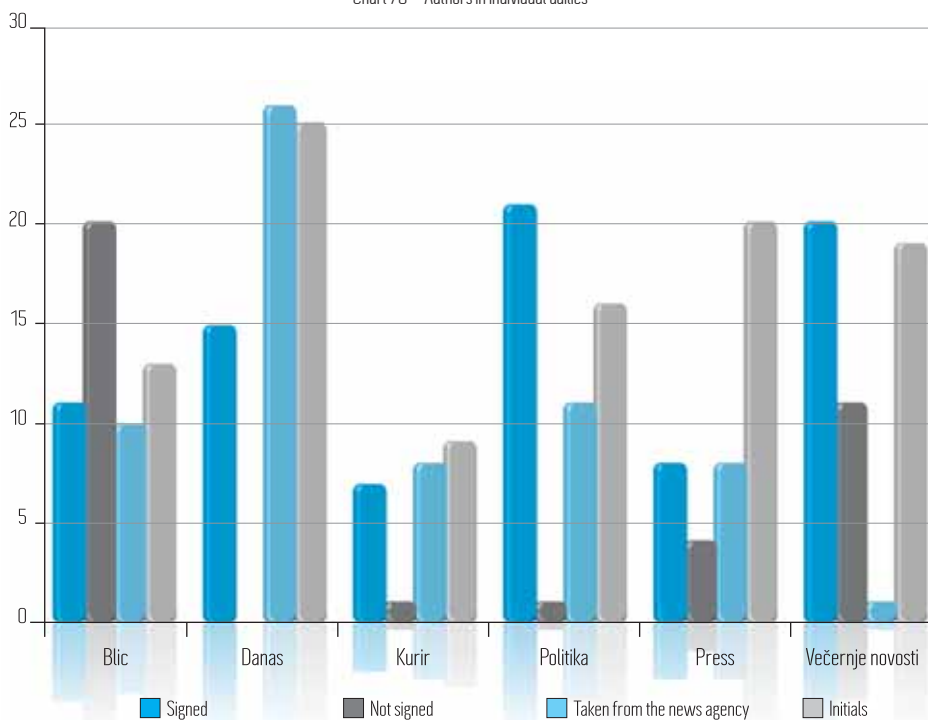
## AUTHORS OF THE ARTICLES ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Chart 77 – Authors



Even at first glance, the chart shows that a great number of journalists in the Belgrade dailies write about the problem of human trafficking and that they are mostly signed by initials (35.79%). 82 articles (28.77%) are signed with author's full name, while 64 articles are taken from news agencies Beta, Tanjug, Fonet or Srna (22.46%). There were 37 (12.98%) unsigned articles, which is the figure we could add to agency news, because the editorial staff did not bother to sign them.

Chart 78 – Authors in individual dailies



Besides 11 signed articles (6 feature articles, 2 stories and one report, announcement and column), "Blic" also published 13 articles signed with initials (11 news, 1 report and 1 feature article) and 10 news taken from news agencies (mostly Beta). For the majority of articles, as many as 20, the authorship is unknown (16 news, 2 reports, 1 interview and 1 reminder).

Articles about this topic published in "Danas" are either signed with initials (14 news, 8 reports, 2 stories and one press release) or are taken from news agencies (26). Other articles (15) are signed with the full name of the author.

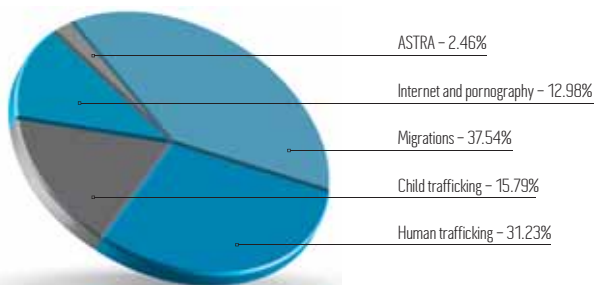
In "Kurur" the majority of news (9) and one report are signed with initials. Eight articles (5 news, 2 reports and one statement) are taken from news agencies, while 4 reports, 2 interviews and one statement are signed with the full name of the author.

"Politika" and "Press" have similar number of published news (22 and 25 respectively) and reports (8 and 9 respectively). Unlike "Press", "Politika" published slightly more articles (10 to 4), stories (4 to 1) and interviews (3 to 1). News published in "Politika", like those in "Press", are mostly signed with initials or are taken from news agencies.

"Večernje novosti" has the largest number of articles signed with the full name of the authors (20) or his/her initials (19). Authorship is unknown for 11 articles (8 news, 2 statements and one report), while one news is taken from Beta news agency.

### TOPIC OF THE ARTICLE

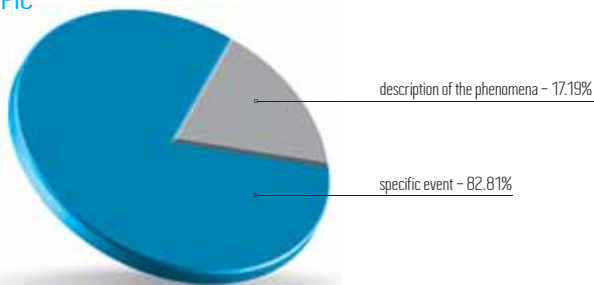
Chart 79 – Topic of the article



The articles published in the selected Belgrade print medial mostly addressed the topic of illegal migrations – 107 (37.45%) followed by human trafficking – 89 (31.23%). The problem of child trafficking was addressed in 45 articles (15.79%). 37 articles (12.98%) were focused on the topic of the Internet and its abuse. Seven articles (2.46%) were written about NGO ASTRA as an important anti-trafficking actor. Since increasing number of children appear to be child trafficking victims lately and since the Internet is increasingly used as recruitment tool in human trafficking, our opinion is that there should be much more articles that would discuss these topics in order to inform the readers about the possibilities of Internet abuse and the ways of its safe use.

### REASON FOR REPORTING ON THE TOPIC

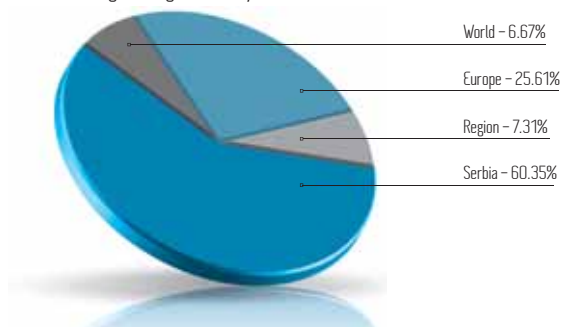
Chart 80 – Reason for addressing the topic in the article



As can be seen in chart 80, the majority of published articles were in response to specific events related to human trafficking (police actions in the country and abroad, significant sociopolitical events). Unfortunately, much smaller number of articles [17.19%] approaches the problem in an investigative manner, i.e. provides an in-depth examination of its different dimensions. The precise definition of human trafficking is not given in any article.

## WHERE IT IS HAPPENING

Chart 81 – Where is it happening?



As can be seen in the chart, 60.35% of published articles about the human trafficking problem address events that took place in Serbia, 25.61% refer to Europe, 7.31% to the countries in the region, while as little as 6.67% the events described in the article took place in the rest of the world

## TO CONCLUDE ...

The lack of interest, sensationalism and the publishing of someone else's information without their analysis have proven to be the trend in reporting about the problem of human trafficking. Journalists' initiative appears only rarely, while investigative approach is almost inexistent.

A great number of authors that write about human trafficking confirm that, unfortunately, no daily has consistent policy of reporting and quality and comprehensive writing on this dangerous and serious social problem. If there were such policy and approach, the number of authors would be much smaller; there would be less articles taken from news agencies compared to those with personal authorship; there would be considerably more feature articles, because they imply that the author is well acquainted with the topic and relies on fact that are well examined and checked with various sources. There would be more investigative journalism.

Although the majority of articles are written in the form of news or report, headlines are, unfortunately, sensationalistic, inadequate or incomplete. However, the articles themselves provide answers to basic journalistic questions; they are informative, but their form and structure is often problematic. Also, these forms of journalistic approach cover only certain aspects of the problem, but not the problem as a whole.

For one article to be good, its style is very important, too. Human trafficking is a serious, complex and socially dangerous topic. To cover such a topic, the style of reporting must be clear, concise and balance. In order to avoid supporting stereotypes and prejudice about trafficking victims among the readers, and consequently to prevent an opinion that "this can't happen to them..." to be formed, affectation and words of foreign origin should be avoided, as well as the terms that affect accuracy [e.g. "white slavery", prostitutes (if you want to say victims), pimps or "warm-blooded guys" (if you want to say human traffickers)...], clichés ("the oldest trade in the world", "naïve trafficking victim"), too long and confused sentences, grammar

errors, ending the article with question mark and the like.

Journalists should focus their work on promoting investigative journalism that would raise public awareness of a serious, widespread problem of human trafficking, which is a necessary first step in primary prevention.

## TERMINOLOGY RELATED TO TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

PROFESSOR DR. SVENKA SAVIĆ

Discussion on human trafficking in the last few years has opened a series of theoretical and practical issues when language is concerned. The first question is what kind of terminology suits to this phenomenon. Whether our language adequately marks terms, actors and processes in connection with trafficking. If it is a new phenomenon, does the language which communicates it has enough strength to express such significance. Do the new phenomena express old meanings through language, while the way that our cognitive mechanisms operate do not allow that a new phenomenon in the society is properly conceived. One such phenomena is human trafficking. When we say human trafficking we have in mind the recruitment and/or transportation of people by use of force or threat of force, the abuse of authority or position of the superior, deception and other forms of coercion, for the purposes of sexual or economic exploitation to make a profit or gain for the benefit of the pimp, procurer or pander, trafficker, owner of the brothels, and other employers, clients or criminal groups. One of the purposes of such benefit is forced prostitution of women (and men), beside illegal work, sex tourism and entertainment, pornography, begging, etc. When prostitution is in question, the source of earnings is a woman's body, thus, the basic question is to what extent do women have the right to control their own body, if their body is a commodity just like any other commodity to be spent, and is source of enrichment of others – primarily men (but women as well).

This issue is not new in theoretical discussion, although its practical aspects are much more complex than one century ago, when, for example, in 1893 in Novi Sad "Prostitution Statute" was adopted in the time of Maria Theresa's rule. In the Prostitution Statute, we can analyze legislation terminology of that time used to regulate the phenomenon of prostitution.

This paper aims to prove how language (in this case Serbian) is a powerful instrument to preserve stereotypes and discrimination, in this case against women; and how the media of today do (not) contribute sufficiently to bringing the language into conformity with its purpose – the elimination of stereotypes and discrimination.

I will analyze first of all how the legislator used certain terms in the Prostitution Statute for persons directly included by the co-operation chain for the purpose of making a profit. Consequently, I will then analyze how the authors of texts in the print media use terms for identifying the same actors, and I will compare the meaning of terms offered in the Serbian Dictionary of Serbian<sup>70</sup>(hereinafter referred to as the Dictionary).

### ONCE THERE WAS THE PROSTITUTION STATUTE

In this analysis, I am interested in terms used for persons who participate in the trafficking process. In the Statute, they were designated as follows:

person who provides services,  
person who receives services,

<sup>70</sup> REČNIK SRPSKOG JEZIKA (NOVI SAD, MATICA SRPSKA, 2007)

person who places at disposal premises for such services,  
 term for the very premises,  
 the rule of behavior in such premises.

*Brothels* were buildings where *women* were available. Brothels were supposed to be only in specified locations. (“In the streets where a church or school is found, a *brothel* may not be.”)

*Ženskinje* (pluralia tantum, an archaic term no longer in use, with the meaning female person) is used in the Statute to designate a woman who manages the brothel under certain conditions, or persons who work in it. In the Dictionary, the term *ženskinje* [female person] stands for women, females, but when the term refers to women in the public sphere, the term used is a prostitute (p. 369).

When the legislator determined who must not be in the brothel, more precisely, who must stay away from the building, then it used the term *čeljade* [person]. Dictionary defines *čeljade* as: human being, man, person in general (p. 1509). “*Ženskinje* [female person] under the age of 30 years] must not be held as *čeljade* [person] in the brothel.” A person who did not enter this “invisible” place, but stayed outside was a human being and a person [*čeljade*]. And what happens to that person once she got registered at the brothel?

But, when the *ženskinje* [female person] became property of the brothel, the legislator identified it as a *wanton woman* – socially unacceptable. “Each brothel owner is obliged, before accepting any female person in his home, to bring her into the captancy, where her documents shall be reviewed, and where a report shall be made on her intention to join the brothel; upon this she shall be examined by a district doctor, and on the basis of the medical certificate, a health booklet is issued, with a photograph of the respective *wanton woman*, and then her name is entered in the genealogical records”. Thus, the Statute confirmed that a woman changed her status – that she became a *wanton woman* by entering her name into the records; *bludnica/ wanton woman* is in the Dictionary described as a promiscuous *woman*, lewd or licentious, sexually unrestrained (p. 95). However the Statute did not mention a wanton man, while the Dictionary says that a wanton man is a lewd person; lustful; lascivious; libidinous; lecherous (p. 95).

The Statute regulated professional relationship of the brothel owner. (“The brothel owner is obliged to provide to the *wanton woman* accepted in his home decent food, accommodation and healthy resting place.”). The legislator had a seemingly correct attitude toward this female person, because care for her body was ordered; however, a term was applied for her because of which both the ones who interpreted the law as those who applied it could have easily violated the rights of such a woman considering her sinful, because *wanton* behaviour and *wanton woman* are a sin. Namely, the term did not reflect the possibility that such woman could have been pushed, recruited, bought, sold, transferred or hidden for the purposes of sexual or economic exploitation to make a profit or benefit for other (primarily male) persons, and not herself.

The Statute specified when women are *wanton women*; their behaviour was strictly controlled and they had to be invisible to public and hidden from it. (“It is prohibited to *wanton women* to stand and walk in front of the brothel, ... to walk down streets or public places, or scandalize the public in *any way* or *any place*; they are prohibited to address *men passing by the brothel, either from the window or door, and call them to come in.*”)

The analysis of this document shows that for the legislator, the basic matrix was founded in the patriarchal model, where classification between inside–outside exists; the ones who were outside, in this case in the place where forbidden activities happened, bore the names which violated and destroyed their identity, and when they were outside of this area, they were



closer 'to us', i.e. the legislators themselves, and terms indicating such persons had no negative dimensions.

One form of this complex social problem such as human trafficking has to do with (forced) prostitution, beside illegal labour, servitude, coercive marriage, pornography, begging or exploiting with the purpose of performing criminal activities. According to definition, human trafficking is "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a *person having control over another person*, for the purpose of exploitation".

The basic theme here is *control over another person*, as expression of interhuman relations in which one person wears out and destroys another person for profit. Today, we do not have a law, but we have data in the media, today's basic form of presentation and informing of the public on phenomena happening in society. Is such reporting under the influence of the basic patriarchal inside-outside model of thinking, as we have proved to be legislative practice one century ago, or has something changed about it?

If we look at today's newspapers<sup>71</sup>, we can see that the phenomenon itself has not changed a bit, while relationships and meanings when language is in question have gone through substantial change.

In the original scheme, in which a *person has control over another person*, as described in the 1893 Statute: there are female persons (ženskinje) – wanton woman – brothel – master of the house – the police, while in today's scheme there are also some other links in the chain of human trafficking. The basic characteristics of both schemes, however, is that the persons in the chain are directed towards one another.

Table 9. Names found in the media for actors in the human trafficking chain

person	person	person	person
<i>under control</i>	<i>whacatnrls</i>	<i>who uses services</i>	<i>who represents the law</i>
girl underage girl lady of the night prostitute victim white slave love seller easy woman human flesh sex worker	pimp owner pander employer procurer organizer	client customer consumers of sex services	the police guardians of the order (law enforcement officers) members of the public order and peace department

We can see that a process (chain) is in question, which directly or indirectly includes people who do not do good for one another. Human trafficking may be considered as a process where personality and human traits are eliminated and destroyed.

<sup>71</sup> THIS PAPER ALSO INCLUDES THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRINTED MEDIA FROM THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH. THE METHOD OF THE ANALYSIS IS BASED ON A SAMPLE OF 285 TEXTS PUBLISHED IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 MAY TO 31 OCTOBER 2008 IN SIX BELGRADE DAILY NEWSPAPERS (POLITIKA, DANAS, VEČERNJE NOVOSTI, BLIC, PRESS AND KURIR).

We can see that the largest number of terms is reserved for the commodity – i.e. person under control. For the names found in the newspapers, we looked up in the Dictionary to make an assessment to what extent the meanings are at the same time the property of the community which uses them and a part of a patriarchal matrix, which the authors of newspaper articles subconsciously transfer into their texts on trafficking in women<sup>72</sup>.

**Girl** – Pursuant to the aforementioned Prostitution Statute, we can see that a female person younger than 16 years of age cannot be in the brothel, while *ženskinja* [female person] who manages the brothel may not be younger than 40 years of age, which means that the *girls* were forbidden to be in the brothel.

Today, mainly girls or underage girls are victims of the human trafficking chain, in which they are found against their own free will. If we study the way in which the author of the text uses this word, then we can see that at the beginning of the newspaper text, a person under control is designated as a *girl*. In the Dictionary, according to the main meaning of the word, it is "a young unmarried female person" (p. 257). The author of the text continues to identify her as a girl until she is enslaved in the trafficking chain, when her status is changed most frequently into *victim*.

**Pimp** – The Dictionary<sup>73</sup> says that the main meaning it is a "procurer, pander, the one who profits from earnings of easy women", while the other is "owner of a brothel; bawd" (p.671). The newspaper article says that the "pimp arranges prostitutes for potential clients." All terms related to persons who control a woman are reserved for male persons (there is no word for female pimp in Serbian), and the pimp has all the time all characteristics of a human being.

**Prostitute v.** – 1. "to induce another to sexual intercourse"; 2. "to disgrace; to dishonor" (p.1076)

**Prostitute oneself v.** – 1. "to [be] get[ting] engaged in prostitution"; 2. "to be disgraced; to be dishonored" (p.1076)

**Prostitute n.** – the one engaged in prostitution, wanton woman, whore; corrupt, deceitful person having no principles (p. 1076). In the Dictionary, the pimp and the prostitute are considered to be two professions. From the description of the meaning of **pimp** and **prostitute**, we can see that his profession is connected to her work (profits from earnings of easy women), and his personality is not degraded. Thus, the word pimp, today, does not have such negative connotation as the word prostitute. We can establish this from the term employer or the organizer of trafficking, a term which indicate social approval of a job. It is probably out of desire to provide the same treatment for prostitutes that the use of the term sex workers is promoted".

**The police** – "public authority in charge of maintaining peace, the system in power and order" (p. 966)

In the text we can find the example for the use of this word ("The police are powerless if the victim does not wish to cooperate"), from which it can be seen that those who are supposed to maintain order and peace for all citizens may perform their duties only if a prostitute lets them do it, which brings into question meaning of their work. There are also other terms for these persons that exercise control over other persons.

**Guardians of the order (Law enforcement officers)** – A guardian of the order is defined in the Dictionary as a "person in charge of maintaining, upholding something, protector, safeguard; a guardian angel, who protects and guides a particular person" (p. 1521). If we know that the police is a link in the chain of maintaining and expanding of trafficking in women, than the explanation in the Dictionary makes us believe that the illusion of maintaining order is within their power.

("In spite of the efforts of law enforcement, there is a danger that the prostitution shall always find a way to survive.")

From the examples in texts and from the Dictionary definition, one could conclude that the police is also the part of trafficking in the terms that it does not maintain order, but protects sometimes the pimps and those who control women. We need a different determinant of these authorities, by which it could be demonstrated that they do not perform well their duty of maintaining order.

**Lady of the night** – A girl becomes a lady of the night in the text to indicate the time when the ones who control her engage her.

72 GOLDMAN, EMMA, 2001, ANARCHISM AND OTHER ESSAYS, «THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN»: AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S CENTRE, BELGRADE, 81–97 (TEXT PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1910).

73 FROM OTHER ARTICLES WE KNOW THAT A WOMAN MAY ALSO BE A PIMP, IN WHICH CASE FRENCH WORD MADAM IS USED

**Women** – “a human being able to give birth, opposite sex of men, married person, wife, an adult female person” (p. 369). Only in several cases the term women is used for persons under control (“Although these women are engaged in illicit activities, the police treat them attentively and correctly”). The term was used to justify police activities.

**Easy woman** – “a woman of loose morals in relation to men” (p. 369). We can see that even here the criterion of her behaviour is a man.

**Victim** – what is offered as a gift to god as a sign of gratitude or for asking mercy; someone who suffers harm; unselfish giving, helping someone, self-sacrifice (p. 375). A girl becomes a victim in the author’s text when she is enslaved in the chain of trafficking (“Trafficking *victim* generally does not want to reveal her “employers”).

This means the end of a process in which she loses the characteristics of youth and femininity (the noun *victim* is used both for male and female persons).

**Slaves** – A slave is a person who without any resistance suffers unlimited domination of another person. In slavery, the owner had *complete property* rights to the slave (p.1168), he could kill and cripple the slave not being accountable to anyone. A slave is a person who silently works and suffers disempowerment, humiliation, injustice, brutality. Thus, the slave is no more a person (in the sense from the heading in the table above). The term designates the last stage in the process of a person under control when such person is not enabled to demonstrate her personality or femininity.

In the process of trafficking in human beings, in this case women, she loses all characteristics of a person, but is still alive. Can we expect any changes regarding this? In one of the newspaper texts we have read, given these facts, it probably will not be possible.

(“The white slavery path is changeable, because it helps it to survive.”)

**Live flesh** – A term used for women and girls in the trafficking process aimed to demonstrate that it is the last stage when a person under control and influence of violent control measures becomes something similar to unlive matter and only an echo of a human being.

Terms

*sex worker*

*consumers of sexual services*

*members of the public order and peace department*

have originated in an effort to change through the language or with the help of the language the mental presentation, primarily of the actors in the prostitution process, but also in the whole chain of human trafficking. To offer a term which suggests that a job is in question. In some countries, prostitution is legalized and the issue settled in this way. In this example, I would like to draw attention that a team of experts is necessary to provide another terminology related to human trafficking, that would reflect relationships which exist between the persons in the chain.

The analyzed texts show that the authors of newspaper articles document in fact their personal position when this process is in question, because in their memory are kept meanings of the words generally accepted in the community, and this thesis is proven with the help of the Dictionary. A good deal of texts demonstrate negative attitude of the author toward persons under control, in this case women, and almost positive one when the police and persons who control women are in question.

In order to change the angle of the journalists on the phenomenon of trafficked women, their attention should be drawn to several processes which happen concurrently with the text writing. Firstly, they understand a woman in the chain of trafficking to be a person who has lost human characteristics, while the ones who control her never do; the destroying of a woman until she becomes a victim and commodity or flesh goes exactly through maintaining the one who controls her.

It could be concluded that the basic cognitive matrix copied in the text of the authors or the meanings given in the sentences have not changed a lot when the media communicate facts on phenomena related to sale and trafficking in women. The moment a person enters into the trafficking chain, she loses characteristics that she belongs to us, human characteristics, because subjected to trade are exactly characteristics of a human being: body, honour, reputation, power. She loses this. In their texts, authors confirm that human traits of a person are lost under control of another person, in this case a male person, for profit. Tangible assets are a driving force when torturing of other people is in question. A considerable number of texts have been published by ASTRA, but also other women NGOs, to educate and explain what trafficking in people really is, how young persons can easily fall into the trafficking chain and how to prepare them not to fall into the chain. In such texts, the terminology is cautious and the women in the chain respected. Such texts are an example to others how to write on the same phenomenon.

If we would like to recommend how human trafficking should be addressed in the print media, in fact we really do not know who we are giving recommendations to. It is not transparent who the authors really are. We are concerned because only a few articles are signed with the full name of the author, while there are much more those in which the authorship is invisible [either author's initials are found under the texts or there are only information on the news agency source]. Do the authors fear the control of those who are part of the trafficking chain?

- Where did you invested your voucher?
- In a strong company



One more thing deserves our attention, i.e. the photos which accompany the articles. They mostly back up the stereotype of women in the trafficking chain. The photos show women in mini skirts and deep cut neckline blouses, high heel shoes, mostly without a face or head. However, the analysis of photographs requires other knowledges than the linguistic ones, and should be made by photography experts in the newspapers.

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## USEFUL INFORMATION

The role of the media in the world is very important when we talk about the awareness raising and public opinion making, especially with regard to sensitive topics such as human trafficking. This role is even greater when we know that media reporting may have enormous impact on individual cases, and sometimes even on the course of trial. Sensationalistic approach often means revealing trafficking victims' identity, which leads to their stigmatization in society and revictimization, while stereotypes and prejudice on the profile of the victim prevail over investigative journalism.

In many cases, journalists do not recognize difference between human trafficking and illegal migrations or prostitution. The link between poverty, gender discrimination, globalization and economic inequalities on one side, and human trafficking on the other are almost not investigated at all. Inadequate terminology makes confusion with regard to what this problem is all about and adds to prejudice and stereotypes that are anyhow deeply rooted in our society. Also, some of the terms such as "white slavery" bring racist connotation, making an allusion to the problems from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and thus contributing to the invisibility of human trafficking in modern society which does not affect only the members of specific ethnic groups.

On the following pages, we are giving a few guidelines that journalists should pay attention to when they are writing about trafficking victims.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

In no case may a journalist reveal the identity of a trafficking victim. Names, the place of residence and other data that may help the identification of the victim must be left out from any printed or audio-visual material. The most important is that the trafficking victim cannot be recognized from the photo or the video. This kind of confidentiality must be respected even when the victim gives his/her consent to the interview or photographing, and especially when the trafficking victim is a child. Children are sometimes unaware of danger and possible impact that this kind of exposure may have on them or their families. The need for protection and confidentiality relates to all trafficking victims and their families, but also to persons that directly work with them.

### INTEGRITY

Try to maintain ethical standards while interviewing a trafficking victim and never put pressure on him/her that can be harmful. Ask questions that are adequate for the age of the victim. Do not ask questions about sexual exploitation (especially if the victim is a child). If the victim asks you to, be ready to stop the interview. Do not release material that may directly or indirectly harm the victim or someone close to her/him. Avoid stereotypes and sensationalistic approach. Do not release photographs in which the trafficking victim is shown in a sexual context, and especially if she/he is a child.

The trafficking victim that gives an interview has right:

- To know who is interviewing him/her, for what media and for what purpose the interview will be used.
- To refuse to answer to any question or to give only those information he/she finds relevant.
- To have insight into information that are recorded and to erase or change any information he/she has given.

## LIST OF LITERATURE AND WEBSITES RELEVANT FOR THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM

On the following pages, you may find a list of websites that contain interesting documents and more detailed information on the problem of human trafficking. Also, you can find information on organizations involved in fight against human trafficking that you may contact if you want to learn about new trends in human trafficking.

- 1) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime <http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2003/Texts/treaty2E.pdf>
- 2) Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/197.htm>
- 3) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm>
- 4) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/dopchild.htm>
- 5) *Human Rights Standards for the Treatment of Trafficked Persons* [http://gaatw.org/books\\_pdf/hrs\\_eng1.pdf](http://gaatw.org/books_pdf/hrs_eng1.pdf)
- 6) WHO – Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women [www.who.int/gender/documents/en/final%20recommendations%2023%20oct.pdf](http://www.who.int/gender/documents/en/final%20recommendations%2023%20oct.pdf)
- 7) Women’s Rights are Human Rights, Special Issue on Women’s Rights – Spring 2000 <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/womenpub2000.htm>
- 8) The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy Trafficking in women, women’s migration and violence against women, submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/44 E/CN.4/2000/68, 29. February 2000 <http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/e29d45a105cd8143802568be0051fcfb?Opendocument>
- 9) Getting at the Roots: Stopping Exploitation of Migrant Workers by Organized Crime Patrick A. Taran and Gloria Moreno-Fontes <http://www.december18.net/paper44ILOUNICRI.pdf>
- 10) Human Rights Standards for the Treatment of Trafficked Persons [http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking\\_persons/](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking_persons/)
- 11) Human Traffic, Human Rights: Redefining victim protection, Anti-Slavery International [2002] <http://www.antislavery.org/>
- 12) Domestic Slavery, prepared by John Connor, Ireland, Group of the European Peoples Party for the Council of Europe Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Document 9102, 17 May 2001 [http://usmex.ucsd.edu/research/justice\\_pdfs/richard\\_trafficking\\_biblio.pdf](http://usmex.ucsd.edu/research/justice_pdfs/richard_trafficking_biblio.pdf)
- 13) The Trafficking and smuggling of refugees: the end game in European asylum policy? John Morrison, July 2000 <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3af66c9b4.pdf>
- 14) Trafficking in Women in Germany, KOK, <http://www.kok-buero.de/index.php?idcatart=2&lang=3> order at: kok.potsdam@t-online.de



- 15) Human (Child) Trafficking: A Look Through The Internet Window, ASTRA [2006] [http://www.astra.org.yu/novi/eng/?page\\_id=17](http://www.astra.org.yu/novi/eng/?page_id=17)
- 16) National Referral Mechanism for Assistance and Protection of Trafficked Persons, La Strada Express Moldova [2005]
- 17) Identification of Trafficked Persons, La Strada Express, Moldova, [2006]
- 18) (Re)integration of the trafficked persons: a process or result? La Strada Express, Moldova, [2007] <http://www.lastrada.md/date/rapoarte/en.html>

## LITERATURE ON THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

- 1) Human (Child) Trafficking – A Look through the Internet Window, ASTRA [2006] <http://www.astra.org.rs>
- 2) Human Trafficking in Serbia, Victimology Society of Serbia and OSCE Mission to Serbia, [2004] <http://www.vds.org.yu/lzdanjaVDS.htm>
- 3) Exploitation of Children. A Short Guide with Special Emphasis on the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Children's Rights Center [2006] [http://www.cpd.org.yu/pdok\\_sad\\_eksplatacijadece.htm](http://www.cpd.org.yu/pdok_sad_eksplatacijadece.htm)  
State Violence in Serbia and Montenegro, OMCT [2004] [http://www.astra.org.yu/novi/?page\\_id=65](http://www.astra.org.yu/novi/?page_id=65)
- 4) Trafficking In Children For Sexual Purposes From Eastern Europe To Western Europe ECPAT EUROPE LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUP [2001] [http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/ariadne/loader.php/nl/ecpat/Rapporten/trafficking1/Trafficking\\_1\\_Introduction.pdf/](http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/ariadne/loader.php/nl/ecpat/Rapporten/trafficking1/Trafficking_1_Introduction.pdf/)
- 5) National Referral Mechanism for Trafficking Victims, OSCE ODIHR, Poland [2006]
- 6) Hopes Betrayed: Trafficking of Women and Girls to Post–Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina for Forced Prostitution, Human Rights Watch (Martina Vandenberg), November 2002. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/11/bosnia1126.htm>
- 7) Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeaster Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Romania), Barbara Limanowska with support from UNICEF, UNHCHR and OSCE/ODIHR [http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2005/04/13771\\_211\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2005/04/13771_211_en.pdf)
- 8) Reference Guide for Anti–Trafficking Legislative Review with Particular Emphasis on South Eastern Europe, Angelica Kartusch, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights [2001] [http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2001/09/12357\\_136\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2001/09/12357_136_en.pdf)
- 9) Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans, International Organization for Migration [2001] <http://www.iom.hu/PDFs/VoT%20in%20the%20Balkans.pdf>
- 10) Reports on Czech, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine – International Standards, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (Vienna 1999) [http://usmex.ucsd.edu/research/justice\\_pdfs/richard\\_trafficking\\_biblio.pdf](http://usmex.ucsd.edu/research/justice_pdfs/richard_trafficking_biblio.pdf)
- 11) Turkey: The „Natasha“ Experience: Migrant Sex Workers from the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in Turkey, Leyla Gulcur and Pinal Ilkcaracan, Women's Studies International Forum, Vol.225, No.4, pp.411–421 [2002]

## MOVIES THAT TREAT THE TOPIC OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

1. *Trading woman (2003)* – “Trading Women” is a film by documentary filmmaker David A. Feingold, produced by Dean W. Slotar, and narrated by Angelina Jolie. “Trading Women” shatters the myths about the Southeast Asian sex trade. Narrated by Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie, the documentary investigates the trade in minority girls and women from the hill tribes of Burma, Laos and China, into the Thai sex industry. Filmed on location in China, Thailand and Burma, “Trading Women” follows the trade of women in all its complexity, entering the worlds of brothel owners, trafficked girls, voluntary sex-workers, corrupt police and anxious politicians. The film also explores the international community’s response to the issue. The culmination of five years of field research, Trading Women is the first film to demonstrate to viewers the relationship of the trade in drugs to the trade of women.
2. *Human Trafficking I and II, RTS (2005)* – Three-part documentary dealing with the routes of illegal migrations, trafficking in women and trafficking in children. A special authenticity is added by testimonies of direct trafficking actors (members of criminal gangs, trafficking victims, their families), with uncompromised presentation of the problems of corruption and personnel and technical obsolescence of the police and the judiciary. Directed by Dušan Vojvodić.
3. *Bought and Sold (2003)* – Jersey City teen Ray Ray Morales is wasting time in a low paying job until a local loan shark offers him a job – making sure that Ray Ray’s friend, an immigrant pawnbroker makes his weekly payments. Directed by Michael Tolajian. Casts: Cristina Ablaza, Mike Benitez, Anthony Chisholm, Angel David.
4. *LILJA 4-EVER (2002)* – Lilya (Oksana Akinshina) lives a fairly bleak life with her mother in a rundown apartment block, but for all intents and purposes is a normal teenage girl. Lilya’s mother tells her they are emigrating to the United States with her new boyfriend, but at the last minute Lilya is left behind, in the care of her aunt. As Lilya has been abandoned, she now has to prostitute herself for money to live. One glimmer of hope is her friend Volodya (Artyom Bogucharsky), abused and rejected by his alcoholic father, with whom she forms a tender protective relationship. Another glimmer of hope is Andrei (Pavel Ponomaryov), who becomes her boyfriend and offers her a job in Sweden. But all is not what it seems, and only bad things await Lilya when she arrives there. After arriving in Sweden, she is greeted by her future “employer” (in reality, a pimp) and taken to a nearly empty apartment where he imprisons her. Lilya is raped by the pimp and she is then forced to perform sexual acts for her pimp’s clients, while he reaps all the financial gain; all the abuse is seen from Lilya’s point of view... Casts: Oksana Akinshina, Artyom Bogucharsky, Lyubov Agapova. Directed by Lukas Moodysson.
5. *The Routes of Slavery in Sothern Serbia (2005)* – A documentary produced by the news agency Vranje Press from Vranje. AVP, in cooperation with Vranje Human Rights Committee – ASTRA Network member and with ASTRA’s support, produced a TV series “The Routes of Slavery in Southern Serbia” composed of six thematic units in Serbian and Albanian language. The series was broadcasted in December 2005 on local TV stations: TV Vranje, TV Focus –Vranje, TV Spektri-Bujanovac, TV Kodal–Bosilegrad and TV Majdanpek.
6. *Inhuman Traffic (2004)* – MTV EXIT presents “Inhuman Traffic”, a special program presented by Angelina Jolie. “Inhuman Traffic” is a fast-moving and compelling documentary that provides an introduction to the human rights tragedy of trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation in Europe. Featuring Anna, a woman from Romania who was trafficked by her neighbor to the Balkans where she was forced to be a prostitute for 2.5 years, and Tatiana, a

victim who spent six months as a sex slave in Amsterdam after being sold by her boyfriend. Their harrowing stories are told alongside other characters in the trafficking chain, including a potential victim, a young man who pays for sex, an anti-trafficking police officer, and prevention and assistance organizations. “Inhuman Traffic” gives an insight into the trafficking chain and how we can help break that chain.

7. *Human Trafficking (2005)* – Television mini-series about an agent going undercover to stop an organization from trafficking people, and shows the struggles of three trafficked women. In Prague, Czech Republic, the single mother Helena is seduced by a successful handsome man and travels with him to spend a weekend in Vienna, Austria; in Kiev, Ukraine, the sixteen-year-old Nadia is selected by a model agency and travels to the United States with the other selected candidates; in Manila, Philippines, the twelve-year-old American tourist Annie Gray is abducted in front of her parents. In common, the girls become victims of a powerful international network of sex traffickers led by the powerful Sergei Karpovich. In New York, after the third death of young Eastern European prostitutes, the obstinate Russian-American NYPD agent Kate Morozov convinces the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Chief Bill Meehan to hire her, promising him that she would fight against this type of crime and that he would not regret. Casts: Mira Sorvino, Donald Sutherland, Rémy Girard and Robert Carlyle.
8. *Trade (2007)* – When 13-year-old Adriana [Paulina Gaitan] is kidnapped by sex traffickers in Mexico City, her 17-year-old brother, Jorge [Cesar Ramos], sets off on a desperate mission to save her. Trapped by an underground network of international thugs who earn millions exploiting their human cargo, Adriana’s only friend throughout her ordeal is Veronica [Alicja Bachleda], a young Polish woman captured by the same criminal gang. As Jorge dodges overwhelming obstacles to track the girl’s abductors, he meets Ray [Kevin Kline], a Texas cop whose own family loss leads him to become an ally. From the barrios of Mexico City and the treacherous Rio Grande border, to a secret internet sex slave auction and a tense confrontation at a stash house in suburban New Jersey, Ray and Jorge forge a close bond as they frantically pursue Adriana’s kidnappers before she is sold and disappears into a brutal underworld from which few victims ever return. Inspired by Peter Landesman’s chilling NY Times Magazine story on the U.S. sex trade, “The Girls Next Door”, “Trade” is a thrilling story of courage and a devastating expose of one of the world’s most heinous crimes. Casts: Kevin Kline, Cesar Ramos, Alicja Bachleda, Paulina Gaitan, Marco Perez, Kate Del Castillo. Directed by Marco Kreuzpaintner.
9. *One Life No Price, UNODC (2007)* – Some of Bollywood’s biggest stars have joined UNODC’s efforts to curb human trafficking in India. Millions of moviegoers in India and world-wide have seen a two-minute video called “One Life, No Price”, aiming to sensitize viewers to this crime – which preceded the premiere of the new film, *Welcome*. The UNODC Regional Office for South Asia produced the video spot to galvanize civil society and law enforcement partners to combat human trafficking.
10. *The Jammed (2007)* – Inspired by court transcripts and actual events, “The Jammed” is a social thriller about trafficking and the sex slave trade in Melbourne. When a Chinese mother arrives in Melbourne to find her missing daughter, she enlists the help of Ashley Hudson. Ashley reluctantly agrees to help search, and is soon drawn into the dark underworld of this cultured city as she tries to rescue three girls from a trafficking syndicate. As the story unravels the sinister workings of illegal prostitution and governmental deportation is filled with twists and surprises. Casts: Emma Lung, Veronica Sywak, Saskia Burmeister, Sun Park. Directed by Dee McLachlan.

## LIST OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

### NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- 1) ASTRA Anti Trafficking Action [www.astra.org.rs](http://www.astra.org.rs) +381-11-33-47-817
- 2) Children's Rights Center [www.cpd.org.rs](http://www.cpd.org.rs) +381-11-33-44-170
- 3) Counseling against Family Violence [www.savetovalisteprotivnasilja.org](http://www.savetovalisteprotivnasilja.org) +381-11-27-69-466
- 4) Atina [www.atina.org.rs](http://www.atina.org.rs) +381-11-32-47-619
- 5) Victimology Society of Serbia [www.vds.org.rs](http://www.vds.org.rs) +381-11-30-34-232
- 6) Beosupport [www.beosupport.org.rs](http://www.beosupport.org.rs) +381-11-33-43-635
- 7) Anti Trafficking Center [www.atc.org.rs](http://www.atc.org.rs) +381-11-32-39-002
- 8) Center for Women's Rights, Vršac +381-13-822-795
- 9) Taboo, Zrenjanin [www.reaguj.co.yu](http://www.reaguj.co.yu)
- 10) Women in Action, Velika Plana, [www.zeneuakciji.org.yu](http://www.zeneuakciji.org.yu)
- 11) Association of Women and Mothers ANNA, Novi Pazar +381-20-312-402
- 12) Center for Girls, Užice +381-31-515-290
- 13) Human Rights Committee, Vranje +381-17-410-822
- 14) SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Vlasotince +381-16-874-744

### GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

- 1) Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia [www.mup.sr.gov.yu](http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu); Section for Suppressing Cross Border Crime, Border Police Department +381-11-30-08-156
- 2) Ministry of Labor and Social Policy [www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu/](http://www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu/) +381-11-313-09-45; Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, +381-11-309-67-45
- 3) Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.mpravde.sr.gov.yu/> +381-11-36-20-497
- 4) Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu/> +381-11-361-37-34
- 5) Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu/> +381-11-36-13-734

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- 1) OSCE Mission to Serbia [www.osce.org/serbia/](http://www.osce.org/serbia/)
- 2) Save the Children [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)
- 3) UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency <http://www.unhcr.org/country/yug.html>
- 4) UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)
- 5) IOM, International Organization For Migration, Mission to Serbia [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

### NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REGION

- 1) Counseling Center for Women and Girls, Tirana, Albania, [www.stopvaw.org/21Dec200462.html](http://www.stopvaw.org/21Dec200462.html)
- 2) The Hearth, Vlora, Albania, [qvatra@icc-al.org](mailto:qvatra@icc-al.org) [qps-vatra@aul.sanx.net](mailto:qps-vatra@aul.sanx.net)
- 3) LEFO, Vienna, Austria, [www.lefoe.at](http://www.lefoe.at)
- 4) "Animus Association", Foundation/La Strada Programme, Sofia, Bulgaria, [www.animusassociation.org](http://www.animusassociation.org)
- 5) La Strada, Czech Republic, [www.strada.cz](http://www.strada.cz)
- 6) Open Gate – SOS Helpline for information and prevention of trafficking in women, Skopje, Macedonia, [www.lastrada.org.mk](http://www.lastrada.org.mk)

- 7) La Strada, Kishinev, Moldova, [www.lastrada.md](http://www.lastrada.md)
- 8) Safe Women's House, Podgorica, Montenegro, [www.sigurna-zenska-kuca.cg.yu](http://www.sigurna-zenska-kuca.cg.yu)
- 9) KLJUČ, Ljubljana, Slovenia, [www.drustvo-kljuc.si](http://www.drustvo-kljuc.si)
- 10) LARA, Bijeljina, BiH, [www.zenskiforum.com](http://www.zenskiforum.com)
- 11) La Strada BiH, Mostar, BiH, [www.lastrada.ba](http://www.lastrada.ba)
- 12) Women to Women, Sarajevo, BiH, [www.zenezenama.com.ba](http://www.zenezenama.com.ba)
- 13) Women's Room, Zagreb, Croatia, [www.zenskasoba.hr](http://www.zenskasoba.hr)
- 14) Reaching Out, Pitesti, Romania, [reachingoutrom@yahoo.com](mailto:reachingoutrom@yahoo.com)

## FRAGMENTS OF DIFFERENT JOURNALISTS' CODES OF ETHICS

### A. FROM THE CODE OF ETHICS OF PCC (UK PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION) ([www.pcc.org.uk/cop/practice.html](http://www.pcc.org.uk/cop/practice.html))

[...]

#### 3. Privacy

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications. Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent.
- ii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals in a private place without their consent.  
*Note – Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.*

#### 4. Harassment

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them.
- iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

[...]

#### 6. Children

[...]

- ii) A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iii) Pupils must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- iv) Minors must not be paid for material involving children's welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

#### 7. Children in sex cases

1. The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.
2. In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child –
  - i) The child must not be identified.
  - ii) The adult may be identified.

- iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.
- iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

[...]

### 9. Reporting of Crime

- (i) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.
- (ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children who witness, or are victims of, crime. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

[...]

### 11. Victims of sexual assault

The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

### 12. Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story

## B. FROM THE CODE OF ETHICS OF THE UNION OF PUBLISHERS

([WWW.MEDIA-ACCOUNTABILITY.ORG/LIBRARY/CZECH\\_REPUBLIC.DOC](http://WWW.MEDIA-ACCOUNTABILITY.ORG/LIBRARY/CZECH_REPUBLIC.DOC))

[...]

### 3. Protection of personality

Any kind of discrimination or offence due to sex, race, colour of skin, language, faith or religion, political or other views, national or social origin, pertinence to a national or ethnic minority, property, kind or other position is not in accordance with ethics

### 4. Protection of privacy

- 4.1. The press respects privacy including the intimate sphere.
- 4.2. If the privacy of a certain person touches public interest, and this person due to its social activity or position has become a person of public interest, the privacy of such a person may be, in individual cases, discussed in the press. Nevertheless it is necessary to observe, that personality rights of other people are not infringed.
- 4.3. Special protection must be given to victims of criminal acts and accidents. Respect for the victims and their relatives has priority before release of identifying information or photographs.

[...]

### 7. Children

- 7.1. Protection of the privacy of children has priority over the value of the information. When reporting the press must always have consideration for the interests of children and teenagers.
- 7.2. Reports on offenses of teenagers must not make it more difficult or prevent their possible return to society.

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C. FROM THE CODE OF ETHICS OF THE INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS OF SERBIA  
([www.nuns.org.yu/dokumenti/index.jsp](http://www.nuns.org.yu/dokumenti/index.jsp))

[...]

This Code particularly condemns any advocacy and/or justification of the use of violence to any end.

[...]

The use of inadequate, disturbing, pornographic contents and contents that may have detrimental effect on children is strictly forbidden.







