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Report on the Trafficking in Persons Landscape in Romania

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Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an in-depth analysis of the trafficking in human beings landscape in Romania, especially with regard to recruitment methods and channels, with a focus the United Kingdom as a destination country for Romanian victims.

Research for this report, conducted between March and June 2013, includes a review of current literature in the field, on site interviews in Romania (Bucharest, Cernavoda, Iasi) and the United Kingdom (London, Birmingham) with relevant institutions, non governmental organizations and with victims of trafficking. The research includes as well a quantitative survey carried out in Romania to determine the level of vulnerability to trafficking in human beings.

The main findings, conclusions and recommendations are summarised hereafter and further detailed in the eight chapters of the report.

Statistics

According to Romanian statistics, 15 victims have been trafficked to the UK in 2011 and 22 in 2012. The UK ranks fifth in the hierarchy of destination countries for Romanian victims, with 2% of the total number of identified victims in 2012 (1041). However, there are discrepancies between the Romanian and the UK statistics which point out that Romania is a significant origin, ranking among the top three sending countries. British authorities have identified 79 cases of trafficking from Romania in 2011.

Recruitment

Most victims are recruited following a deceptive job offer abroad. Recruiters are commonly known to be acquaintances or, more rarely, relatives of the victims. While there is a wide diversity of counties and geographical areas of recruiting, the Romanian official data show that most victims are recruited from rural areas.

As recruiting purpose, the female victims are mainly exploited for forced prostitution, while men are victims of forced labour. The children are usually exploited for sexual and criminal activities such as begging or benefit fraud.

Transportation

Recruiters are the ones that generally arrange the conditions of travel and cover the expenses. Many victims of trafficking travel alone, unaware of the situation they will face upon arrival. Traffickers would meet the victims at airports or bus stations in the UK and accompany them to the exploitation site.

Exploitation

In terms of type of exploitation, of the different forms of human trafficking, sexual exploitation accounts for the highest number of victims from Romania. Nevertheless, significant numbers have been reported in relation to exploitation for forced labour.

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At the exploitation site, the victims are subjected to severe **physical abuses, threats and limitation of movement as methods of coercion and control**. However, the research shows a shift towards softer coercion methods such as the use of a debt, psychological dependency, postponing payment day or even paying the victim small amounts of money.

Moreover, the research shows that it takes two to three months for a victim exploited for labour purpose to escape from situation and eventually contact the police. Due to the increased profits from sexual exploitation the victims usually have a longer duration of trafficking situation as traffickers “cannot afford” to lose a victim.

Return and re-trafficking

Many victims who escape the trafficking situation return home. Given that, generally, the traffickers are acquaintances or friends, familiar with the victims’ origin area, return may raise considerable safety risks.

Vulnerability

It appears that trafficking from Romania is closely related to labour migration. Most victims, both men and women, are recruited following a job offer abroad. The survey carried out in May 2013, in Romania, shows that 58% of the persons aged 18 - 29 would agree on taking a well paid job abroad offered by a trustworthy person. This is a strong vulnerability risk factor, given that most traffickers are known to play on the social acceptability of job mediation through an acquaintance.

Conclusions and recommendations

While numbers are yet uncertain, trafficking of Romanian victims to the UK has clear recruitment, transportation and exploitation patterns. In our view, concerted efforts should focus on a stronger cooperation between the UK and Romania regarding data exchange, risk assessment, awareness raising campaigns for the categories of persons vulnerable to trafficking and assistance for victims.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Trafficking in human beings from Romania is mainly related to migration. Many victims of trafficking were intending migrants whose migration strategy went wrong. For the last decade, job offers abroad have been the most common recruitment strategy, traffickers relying on a constant migration poll. Since the opening of the borders after the fall of communism, Romania has been an origin country for migration, with only few immigrants entering the country (less than 1% of the total population). In April 2011, approximately 10% of the Romanian adult population was working abroad; 20% stated that at least one household member was at that time working abroad; 66% noted to have ever had a migrant relative¹. Italy and Spain have been the main destination countries for labour migration, accounting for more than 70% of the Romanian presence abroad.

In 2011, as much as 90% of all Romanians had a positive opinion of their fellow citizens working abroad². In 2012, Romanian migrants sent more than 6.5 billion EUR in Romania, remittances being even higher in the years preceding the economic crisis. Migrants' success is especially visible in rural communities where they built multi level houses standing out from the traditional lodgings. Migration is a highly regarded life strategy and, for many, it is the way to rapidly accede to a higher living standard. **The widespread positive opinion regarding labour migration enhances the vulnerability to human trafficking.**

As one IOM Bucharest research on trafficking in human beings from Romania shows, the phenomenon could be seen as "failed circular migration". This is because it starts with migration, but traffickers disrupt the regular exchange of labour and capital that normally happens in a full migration cycle³. **According to the latest Eurostat report, Romania is one of the main sending countries of victims trafficked to the EU member states⁴.**

The US State Department's Report on Trafficking in Persons notes that Romania is in Tier II⁵, which means that authorities did not meet the minimum standards in countering the phenomenon but are making significant efforts to reach this objective. There haven't been any changes as regards Romania's position in the USDS ranking system, compared to the pre-accession period, although some steady progress has been noted.

Destination countries for trafficking in human beings follow a pattern similar to that describing Romanian labour migration. A recent official report released by the Ministry of Interior (NAATP) shows that in 2011, out of the 1048 victims identified, 21% have been trafficked to Spain and 13% to

¹ IMAS, 2011

² *Id note*¹

³ Lazaroiu, 2000, 2003;

⁴ Eurostat, 2013

⁵ USDS, 2012



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Italy⁶. Twenty other European countries and Turkey have been recorded alongside Italy and Spain as destination countries for Romanian victims of trafficking⁷.

Out of five categories clustering destination countries for Romanian victims, the UK is classified in the second lowest category with only 4 to 18 Romanian victims⁸. However, according to the UK Serious Organised Crime Agency's Intelligence Assessment on Human Trafficking, Romania is a significant source country for victims trafficked within the UK. The UK National Referral Mechanism latest report points to a higher number of victims, with 79 reported in 2011⁹.

Who are the victims trafficked to the UK? What are the recruitment strategies? How do victims get to the UK? What are the exploitation patterns? What happens with victims after they escape trafficking? This paper will explore the answers to these questions.

1.2 Methodology

In order to understand the dimensions of trafficking in human beings in Romania and the UK, we followed trafficking paths from source to destination and back. To this effect, we used an approach based on qualitative and quantitative research, as follows:

Qualitative research

It relies on four targets: institutions, NGO's and International Organizations, victims of trafficking, and key experts. It follows a multi-sited research guideline (Marcus, 1995)¹⁰ by conducting in-depth field interviews in Romania (Bucharest, Iasi and Cernavoda) and the UK (London and Birmingham) based on the research questions in the report specifications.

We selected the three cities in Romania because they are an important source for trafficking in human beings and host relevant institutions or organizations in the field of counter trafficking.

Given the higher number of victims identified in the UK, the field research included several meetings and interviews with relevant stakeholders in London and Birmingham. The purpose was to collect diverse stories of trafficking of Romanian victims and obtain a comprehensive picture of the trafficking process.

⁶ Of the 1048 victims of trafficking 28% (296) have been trafficked internally.

⁷ Romanian National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATP), 2012

⁸ *Id*⁷

⁹ The Stationary Office, 2012

¹⁰ Marcus, George, E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the World System: *The Emergence of Multi Sited Ethnography*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, pp. 95-117. Multi-sited research develops while following people, goods or ideas and values from the origin country to destination in order to get a comprehensive picture of the selected phenomenon. The term emerged from the necessity to find appropriate methodologies for the study of people's mobility across the borders.

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Quantitative research

We included additional research questions in a brief quantitative survey. We assessed the social acceptability of several factors that may enhance the risk of becoming a victim. The survey also replicates vulnerability items firstly assessed in 2000, such as the propensity to break social norms and the willingness to accept a job offer abroad from an acquaintance.

IMAS Marketing and Polls conducted the research in May 2013 on a nationwide representative sample of adult persons aged 18+. 1010 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews have been conducted for this stage.

1.3 Caveats and limitations

One of the main focuses of this research has been to interview victims of trafficking. Knowing that there is only a small number of Romanian victims returned from the UK and currently monitored in Romania, we aimed at contacting them in the UK while visiting the relevant NGO's. At the time of this research, no victim of Romanian nationality was assisted in the NGO's shelters visited. Thus, most of the cases we analysed are only secondary accounts of trafficking as related by the case managers, psychologists and law enforcement representatives who worked with the victims. A full list of the interlocutors is included in the appendix.

Many of the cases presented here are stories of potential victims of trafficking. This means that there are solid grounds to consider that a person has been the subject of a trafficking crime but the case is still open or the Court has not yet taken a final decision following a lawsuit. However, given the severe infringements of human rights, we will use the term victim of trafficking whenever describing a relevant case. **The study should be read as a sociological approach of trafficking in human beings and does not aim to offer a judicial or numerical description of the phenomenon.**

The statistics included here refer to the number of cases officially recorded or supplied by intelligence evaluations. Given the underground development of trafficking in human beings, it is difficult to present a reliable assessment of human trafficking in figures. **Any numbers presented here offer significant insights into the phenomenon but should not be regarded as an exhaustive quantification.**

We have repeatedly stated that trafficking in human beings is related to migration considering the offer made to victims which generally refers to a job abroad. However, **we emphasise that trafficking in human beings should be clearly differentiated from migration or immigration. It is a severe infringement of human rights in a context of serious organised criminality. Traffickers use victims' aspirations for a better life abroad to trick them into slave like situations.**

This report is an outline of an extensive field research. Given space and time limitations, we only provided examples from some of the case studies and interviews conducted.

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1.4 Economic context

Whether a country becomes an origin or a destination for trafficking highly depends on the economic conditions. The lack of economic opportunities contributes to a higher vulnerability to human trafficking and therefore, generally, poorer countries are origin countries and wealthier countries are destination countries for victims.

The economic factors alone do not directly lead to trafficking. However, they may be push factors for migration creating a constant pool of would be economic migrants. **Organised crime networks thrive by introducing deceiving migration opportunities. Consequently, the same macro factors driving migration start shaping the trafficking landscape.** Romania's position as an origin country in the trafficking system can be explained if looking at its development path.

In late 1944, Romania came under the Soviet influence and aligned its policies to the communist ideology. After the 70s, the deficient economic management eventually led to extreme scarcity. During this time a positive orientation towards migration was already beginning to grow as some people were secretly listening to foreign radio stations or using goods brought from the West by suitcase traders. Few people managed to leave the country and settle abroad, especially in the USA, setting an example for what was to become a successful life strategy.

The economic environment, short after the fall of communism in 1989, continued to be disruptive. The transition to a market economy altered the old occupational structure. Many workers lost their jobs when large enterprises were restructured and construction sites closed. The drop in the number of employees by almost 50% in the last 20 years is one of the clearest figures evidencing the impact of transition. In the early '90s, the gross medium salary was approximately 100 EUR and GDP declined to -12.9% in 1992. The inflation rate hit three figures in 1993 – 256%. Romania acceded to the EU in 2007 after a period of massive economic reforms. Economic restructuring proved to be difficult and development lagged behind other Eastern European countries. **In 2012 Romania had a development index of 49¹¹, which is close to half of the EU average (graph A1).**

The economic distress and job insecurity made it easier for traffickers to target victims in vulnerable positions and to build recruitment strategies relying on the offer of a better life abroad. In the following chapters we will describe why and how this recruitment method thrives and what happens after the victims leave the country.

¹¹ Eurostat data 2012, accessed in June 2013



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2 Statistical overview

Due to the geographic position of Romania and to the weak border control in the early 90s, many victims were trafficked in the Balkan region. Countries such as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) ranked highest in the hierarchy of destinations. At the same time, these countries attracted some of the migrant workers and petty traders from Romania. When economic pull factors were more attractive in Europe than in the Balkans, trafficking networks rerouted. **Destination countries for trafficking in human beings seemed to have closely followed the same routes as Romanian labour migration.** Thus, starting with 2002, the number of victims trafficked to Italy and Spain had gradually begun to grow. The changing legislative framework imposing visa restriction for Yugoslavia but lifting them for the EU had also contributed to this change. By 2006¹², only one victim trafficked to FYROM was assisted, the majority being trafficked to Italy and Spain.

Sexual exploitation has generally accounted for the highest number of victims from Romania.

Most Romanian victims are trafficked to Italy or Spain but the number of destination countries in EU raises to 22.

According to Romanian statistics 2% (22) of the total number of victims had been trafficked to the UK in 2012.

In 2011, there are 1048 victims recorded, 57% coming from the rural area¹³. Most victims are women. Men account for 34% of the total number of cases. 28% of the victims had been trafficked internally and 72% to a foreign country mostly EU. 22 European states were recorded among the destination countries, with one third of the victims trafficked to Spain and Italy. Sexual exploitation has generally remained the most representative form of trafficking. Almost one half of the victims in 2011 (48%) had been exploited for sexual purpose. The second largest category refers to labour exploitation (39%). Other cases are associated with forced begging, stealing, or pornography. 31% are minor victims, mostly girls exploited for sexual purpose.

2.1 Romanian statistics

As Table 1 shows, **22 victims had been trafficked to the UK in 2012 (2% of the total number of victims). Most victims were forced to offer sexual services.** The age split indicates the following distribution: 15 victims in the 18 to 25 age category, 3 victims aged 26 to 40 and one victim older than 41. Traffickers were often part of the victims' network of acquaintances or friends. **The most common offer was a job abroad.** In some situations this job might have explicitly been prostitution (8 cases).

¹² Internal statistics from IOM Bucharest, 2006

¹³ NAATP, 2012



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Table 1 Romanian victims by purpose of exploitation

<i>No of. cases</i>	2011	2012
Sexual purpose	10	18
Attempt to commit human trafficking crime	4	2
Begging	0	1
Stealing	0	1
Construction	1	0
Total	15	22

Source: NAATP: 2013

According to the **Directorate for Combating Organized Crime (DCOC)** under the Romanian Police, **43 cases of Romanian victims coming from the UK were under investigation in 2012**. The figure cumulates cases whose investigation started before this reporting cut off point. Two thirds of the suspected traffickers were men, most of them charged for trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation¹⁴. **In 2012 two persons were prosecuted for trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation to the UK, both for the same case.**

2.2 United Kingdom statistics

The number of potential victims registered by the UK authorities is higher compared to the Romanian records. According to **National Referral Mechanism (NRM)**, **Romanian victims account for the largest share of European potential victims of trafficking and third in the overall hierarchy of origin countries after Nigeria and Vietnam.**

In 2011, Romania was among the top 9 priority source countries, considering the number of victims and the threats posed by the trafficking groups. Out of the 946 potential victims registered, 79 (8%) were Romanian citizens. Out of the 79 cases, 20 were minors generally exploited for criminal purpose (The Stationary Office, 2012).

A more inclusive assessment based on **NRM statistics and Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) intelligence information** points to an even higher number of victims coming from Romania with 216 (10%) of the 2077 estimated number of potential victims of trafficking. This assessment indicates **Romania as the most important source of victims trafficked in the UK**. Adult Romanians are mainly exploited for sexual purpose. 96 child victims are registered. No cases refer to exploitation for organ harvesting (SOCA, 2012).

Currently, there are no studies analysing the data reporting discrepancies between the two countries. Each country has individual registration procedures. There is no procedure between Romania, as country of origin, and destination countries aimed to collect standardized evidence on the number of potential victims of trafficking. However, both Romania and the UK point to similar recruitment and exploitation patterns that we will later describe in this study.

¹⁴ 33 cases were investigated for sexual exploitation, 7 for forced labour, 3 for begging, and 1 for stealing 10

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A closer cooperation between Romania and the UK in matters of data registration procedures, data dissemination and police investigations might lead to a more comprehensive picture of trafficking in human beings. Efforts to counter trafficking in human beings might be hindered by the lack of a common perspective on the extent and nature of human trafficking. **Romanian authorities interviewed had emphasised their determination to fight against trafficking in human beings and pleaded for stronger links with the UK in view of increasing the efficiency of case investigations and data gathering procedures.**

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3 Recruitment

3.1 Geographical hotspots

According to the Romanian National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATP, 2013), most victims are recruited from the rural area (22 out of the 37 victims identified in 2011 and 2012).

In 2011, Bacau (North – East) was the main origin county for victims trafficked to UK (3 victims).

In 2012, the highest number of victims were from Bistrița-Năsăud (North) and Constanța (South-East, seaside town), with 4 victims each.

Other counties with victims trafficked to the UK are: Teleorman, Gorj, Ilfov, Brăila, Galați, Sălaj, Mureș, Dâmbovița, Satu-Mare, Buzău, Brașov, Dolj, Timiș, Vaslui, Iași.

Thus, **17 of the 42 Romanian counties had been sources for victims trafficked to the UK. This shows a wide diversity of recruitment areas.** However, considering the low number of victims in the two year reference period, **it is not possible to determine a geographical pattern for recruitment if isolating the UK from other destination countries.**

Given the low number of victims trafficked to the UK, as per the national statistics, it is not possible to determine a regional vulnerability profile for the UK alone.

Most victims are recruited following a job offer abroad.

Generally the victims had known the recruiters prior to the trafficking history. Recruiters are commonly known to be acquaintances or, more rarely, relatives.

Official statistics from the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) including the most representative origin regions were not available at the moment of this research. However, the published intelligence report shows that most victims come from the Northern part of Romania and rural areas¹⁵.

Although the largest majority of victims is recruited from Romania, some vulnerable migrants may already be in the UK at the time of recruitment. There are hotspots in the UK where jobless immigrants would gather up to get an occasional job and might be vulnerable to trafficking or exploitative situations. However, according to Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) the recruitment of Romanian migrants already in the UK is more unlikely than the recruitment of other EU nationals. Evidence of such situations was not available at the time of this research.

Also, former victims of trafficking prolonging their stay in the UK may be vulnerable to re-trafficking given the difficulty of getting a labour permit and a regular job. In addition, some

¹⁵ SOCA, 2012



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interview evidence shows that victims of trafficking may already be migrants working in another EU state. As an example, the Medaille Trust Organization related that a Romanian migrant women having been working in Spain for several years as a chef was trafficked to the UK following her attempt to find a better job in another EU state.

3.2 What is the offer made to the victim?

The dominant recruitment pattern is similar for men and women: the opportunity of a job aboard. The offer is generally a low skilled job in constructions or agriculture for men and au pair, in restaurants or in clubs for women. These areas are strongly connected to labour migration.

In other situations, the victim may be convinced to work abroad as a sex worker, so as to make a better future for her and for her partner that sometimes becomes the trafficker. There are also cases of sex workers, who, while moving abroad become entrapped in trafficking situations, being coerced to continue working under difficult conditions, with limited or symbolic payment and forbidden to leave the slave-like position. The latter should be distinguished from the majority of trafficking situations where victims are forced to become prostitutes and had been ignorant regarding the nature of the job prior to arrival at the exploitation site. While both situations are equally important from a legislative and human rights perspective, the traumatic experience is generally more severe in cases when the victim is forced to become a prostitute¹⁶.

It is to be noted that the **victim may not always be in search of a job at the moment of recruitment. Thus, victims may be migrants already looking for a job or may start thinking about leaving abroad once the offer is presented.** Sometimes traffickers make potential victims aware of the opportunity and benefits of taking a job abroad by presenting successful migration stories. **They play on the promise of a better life. The positive perception of migration and Western life are important enablers for recruitment.** They try to increase the perceived disparities between the opportunities that a victim may have in Romania and those that they may find abroad, as shown in the testimony below:

They started to exploit women in Spain and later moved to UK. After a period in London, they now have a club in Birmingham. Ads are explicit. 26 women had been trafficked by this group. Some are minors. Women have been recruited by false promises. Some may have known what they were going to do abroad. They are emotionally involved with the trafficker. Most come from disorganized families, living in poor conditions but each has her own specific story, where she comes from, who she was before.

¹⁶ In one interview Eaves organization warned about the increasing number of sex workers of Eastern European origin, especially Romanian. The charity also noted that some might be working in the streets of London against their will. A recent report released by Eaves Charity provides more information about this aspect. The report can be accessed at <http://www.eavesforwomen.org.uk/campaigns-research/our-research/CapitalExploitsReport>



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Promises may sound like this: “It is good to be abroad; you can make a lot of money. You will not have to go through the same financial problems, as you do here. You will be able to support your family” (Interview The Prosecutor’s Office, Iasi).

3.3 Who are the recruiters?

Most recruiters are Romanians. Statistics show a very small number of foreign citizens among the total number of cases investigated (1.1% of 1281 in 2011 according to NAATP 2012 report). **Men account for the highest number of traffickers**, although the number of women has registered an increase. Former victims of trafficking may also become recruiters, returning to home communities and offering their example as a success story.

Recruiters are commonly part of the victims’ network of acquaintances or even relatives. The period from recruitment to exploitation varies depending on the purpose of exploitation and the particular life situation of the victim. It may happen quite sudden with the traffickers arranging everything for the travel or after repeated contact with the victims and their families. Whether job mediators or, less often, the so called “loverboys”, it is not uncommon that recruiters visit the victims’ family members to gain their trust. For minor victims, contacting the parents is essential since traffickers need a notarized affidavit of consent to cross the border.

Most are recruited by people who are part of their group of acquaintances and friends. This is a fact not only for the UK but for other destinations too. Most victims are offered jobs abroad. For Cyprus, labor mediation companies have also been involved. When referring to sexual exploitation only, there are usually no labor mediation companies (Interview NAATP, Bucharest).

3.4 Where and how does recruitment take place?

Sometimes recruiters would hang about places where they are likely to find vulnerable persons. In one case a woman, part of a trafficking network, stood outside a police station. She seized the opportunity to make acquaintance with a young girl who needed to have her ID issued. After overhearing that the victim did not have a principal residence address as her house had been destroyed by an accident, she offered her support not only to assist the procurement of the ID card but also to facilitate employment abroad.

Accumulating a debt may also be the start of a recruitment situation. In one recent trafficking case, a man had been compelled to work for the traffickers to repay a debt. His exploitation started in Romania and continued in the UK, where the traffickers had a rented house¹⁷.

¹⁷ More details about this case may be found at the following web addresses. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/like-cinderella-jail-for-couple-who-800213>; <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/cinderella-girl-7-forced-to-work-673945>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2096414/Romanian-Cinderella-7-trafficked-Britain-work-slave.html>. The case was also consistently reported by interviewees in UK and Romania. 14

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When the trafficker is unknown to the victim, job ads on the internet may serve as first link between the victim and the recruiter. Such ads may be posted by individual persons under the disguise of labour mediating companies or it may even be that an apparently legal labour mediation company recruits the victims. However, legal persons account for a significantly lower number of victims compared to individual recruitment strategies, probably due to their higher visibility profile of the former. As an example, a girl living in a small town near Bucharest had recently found an internet job ad, contacted the trafficker and met him in a restaurant. The e-advertisement remained public for several weeks, even after she managed to escape the trafficking situation, and later served as a proof for the police investigation.

Research evidence also shows that recruiters would sometimes go from village to village, inviting men to take jobs abroad. After recruiting one victim, the rumour of a labour opportunity spreads by word of mouth, a situation that we may identify as “snowball recruitment”¹⁸. It may thus happen that people from the same community or family get to be exploited by the same criminal group. Those who generally respond to such appeals do not usually have strong networks (relatives and friends already abroad) to rely on for migration, they live in very poor communities, have a modest education and face significant financial difficulties.

In the examples below, one key informant explained why recruitment from the rural areas is facilitated by the close community links and the ease of spreading the news about a job offer.

In some areas, recruitment is very easy when it comes to labor exploitation. For this particular case everybody knew that these persons were taking people to Germany. They even had their own minibus for transportation. They would take people wherever they would be needed: Germany, Holland, the UK. They were known to find people jobs abroad (Interview DCOC, Iasi).

It is what we call the snowball recruitment method. One person may find out about a job offer and spreads the rumor about it. They are unaware they had actually become recruiters. Recruitment methods could change from year to year. Victims may either know the recruiter beforehand or the first contact is made at the same moment as the job offer (Interview NAATP, Bucharest).

3.5 How are potential victims chosen?

Choosing the victims depends on the purpose of exploitation. **Young girls, aged 14 to 25, are especially targeted for sexual services, whereas men are selected for labour purposes.** The so called “loverboy” recruitment method may target younger girls, sometimes minors, who are more likely to become dependent on the trafficker. However, it may also happen with adult victims. For begging, traffickers may prefer victims that seem helpless or in need, such as children and people playing a musical instrument. This makes it easier to draw attention to them and ask for money.

¹⁸ Interview NAATP.



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In one interview, the informant explained how a man recruited for begging was taught to mechanically push the keyboards of an accordion so as to play an easy chord that would sound like music. For stealing, traffickers sometimes choose the most skillful children in pick-pocketing or other petty thefts. While for this later aspect there is no specific evidence from the UK as a destination, an older case dated back in 1998, in Germany, may give some insight about the situation¹⁹. This recruitment specialization confirms once again that **traffickers' acts are much similar to a marketing strategy aimed at finding the right persons to increase the profits of the criminal group.**

It has been reported that **sometimes traffickers would target better educated victims. They would develop slightly different recruitment strategies, making the victim aware of her language skills and presenting the ease of labour mobility in the UK.** One such case was presented by Medaille Trust. A young victim was trafficked for sexual services in the UK. Before leaving the country, the traffickers told her and her boyfriend that she stood high chances of succeeding in the UK:

She came for a short term job. Make some money during the summer. Well educated. She fell into this trap. The job offer seemed very legitimate. But she did tell her mother and her boyfriend everything that happened to her.

She was approached at a party by two guys. Got to know them. She started hanging out with them. Her boyfriend met them too. They started hanging around as a group and I think she maybe thought that at, some point, if she got herself established, her boyfriend could come as well. Unlike her boyfriend, she was very fluent in English and the idea behind it was that this guys said to her: "your English is very good, you can get a cleaning job over here but then you could work your way up and do something better". She came here just to see how things were but then she was immediately sold to a gang and put into prostitution. She came from the airport and then drove to a house and then locked her in. She was taken from here to various brothels and hotels but it didn't take place for a very long time. She managed to escape from the brothel on the premise of going to a shop and went to the police station. In the case of this particular woman her whole family was tricked into it (Interview Medaille Trust, London).

3.6 How long does recruitment take?

Recruitment duration is variable and generally depends on the purpose of trafficking, the nature of the relation with the trafficker and the strength of the family or community ties. Young women having a good relation with the family and strong friendship ties might take longer to decide on the moment of their leaving. That is one of the reasons **traffickers have specialized in contacting the family to get their consent on the job offer abroad.** Due to the variety of recruitment situations, it is however unlikely to get reliable information on the average recruitment duration. Such information is not currently available in a standardized format. It may last several days, weeks or even months.

¹⁹ <http://www.newsiasi.ro/v2/eveniment/politica/18784-istoria-clanului-cordonunilor-20-de-ani-de-razboi-mafiot-la-iasi.html>



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Interview evidence shows, however, that **traffickers usually aim for a short recruitment period so as to give the victims as little chances as possible to change their mind.**

It may all happen almost instantly, giving the victim only a short time to think about it so as to avoid her having second thoughts. Victims are not always sure about leaving abroad. They may have some doubts at some point but their wish to make more money, a lot more than in Romania, makes them ignorant to any dangers. [...] Sometimes parents encourage their daughter's leaving. They may not be accomplice but are simply unaware of the risk (Interview NAATP, Bucharest).

Some victims may wish to leave abroad as soon as possible. This is usually the case of young women coming from disorganized, poor families. It also happens when victims come to completely trust the trafficker, especially when they become emotionally involved. In other cases some weeks may pass by from the moment of recruitment to the moment the victims leave the country. In a recent trafficking case to the UK, the victim took about 5 weeks to consider leaving and she discussed her intention with the parents before eventually accepting the job offer. In another case, recruitment took several months as the first attempt failed when the trafficker found out that the victim, still a minor, was carrying a child. After the child's birth, the trafficker, who was actually the victim's cousin, made another offer, convincing her to come to the UK.

In most cases however, victims do not perceive the risks of a rapid decision, as **recruitment relies on deception. They would not spend time checking whether an offer is reliable or if the person making the offer is really trustworthy.** Their willingness to leave in an attempt to make a better life or as an immediate solution to severe financial problems hinders any possible doubts. This attitude is encouraged by their awareness of various successful stories of migrants who made a better life abroad. The sociologist quoted below explains how migration and the strong positive image of the Western life may have influenced vulnerability to trafficking.

Many left abroad and made a lot of money. They became a model for the people in the country. Nobody asked them how they managed to raise the money, whether they had to accept some undesirable situations. So it is easier to recruit such people. [...]. Vulnerability is also the result of economic and cultural disparities. Many have a positive perception about the Occident. They do not think that out there bad things might happen just as often as here. They see that society as an ideal, a well managed, orderly society (key expert, Presidential Administration, Bucharest).

Generally, **the duration of the recruitment process depends more on the traffickers' means to facilitate travel and host the victim at the planned exploitation site, than on the victims' intention to thoroughly consider the offer.** This is mostly due to the victims' likelihood of failing to perceive the risks associated to leaving abroad following an informal job offer from an acquaintance



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4 Transportation

4.1 How do victims get to the UK?

As borders became more porous, transportation means and routes diversified. Many victims travel unaccompanied by the traffickers, and, while still unaware of the trafficking situation, there are little or no indicators for the border agents to identify them and prevent trafficking. Buses, minibuses, personal vehicles owned by traffickers or flights, all transportation routes and means are equally accessible to victims as they are for ordinary travellers. It is common for victims to travel abroad by plane, especially since low cost flights now offer similar tariffs as land transportation companies. Since victims generally leave willingly, in hope of a better life, there are no limitations as regards transportation.

Most victims travel directly to the UK. There may be situations when indirect routes are also taken. In a case occurring approximately 3 years ago, the recruiter was a foreign citizen presenting himself as the would-be husband of the victim. Victims were first flown to France where they had been promised a vacation, taken over by other gang members who accompanied them to the UK. The exploitation had only happened in the UK. There were no indications at the time of the interview as regards the reasons for this indirect route. The research also provided evidence of victims trafficked to multiple destinations or of Romanian victims recruited from another EU country were they had previously migrated for labour. These cases can only serve as anecdotal evidence, as, due to the time limitation of this research, relevant examples were little numerous and briefly explored.

The opening of the borders and the increasing competitiveness among international transport companies made travelling easy and cheap.

Romanian victims generally consent to leaving the country. Unaware of having been entrapped in a trafficking network, any means of transport is equally accessible.

Many victims of trafficking travel alone by bus, minibuses or plane. Child victims travel accompanied by their parents or by a legal guardian.

Traffickers would generally arrange the conditions of travel and cover the expenses.

4.2 Facilitation of travel, travel costs and arrangements

Usually, the traffickers support the victim in getting the necessary travel documentation. When necessary, they cover the travel expenses. Trafficking networks spread from home to destination countries. Therefore, when victims travel alone, there will be somebody waiting at the airport or at the bus station in order to lead them to the exploitation site. In one recent case of trafficking to the UK, the traffickers owned a minibus that they used to transport groups of male victims abroad.

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4.3 Documents

Child victims of trafficking generally travel accompanied. By the time of the travel, the traffickers had already obtained the notarized expression of consent from victims' parents. Normally, there is no need for forged notarized certificates as traffickers mostly rely on trust based relationships with the families or, more rarely, on parents' agreement to the trafficking situation. It may also happen that the exploiters are actually the parents. *Tandarei* case, known as the Operation Golf, is relevant for this situation evidencing a less extended but nonetheless important side of trafficking when victims and traffickers are part of the same nuclear family or when the family consciously agrees to the trafficking situation.

4.4 Main destinations in the UK

According to Romanian statistics, of the 22 victims identified in 2012, 10 had been trafficked in London, 2 in Manchester and 1 in Bradford. Destinations for the remaining 9 are unknown. These data refer to the area where exploitation occurred and do not necessary suggest the transportation route. Data regarding the arrival point are not recorded (NAATP data).

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5 Exploitation

5.1 Gender and age differences in exploitation purpose

Generally, men are exploited for labour and women or children are recruited for sexual services. According to NAATP²⁰, most victims of trafficking from Romania to the UK are exploited for sexual purpose. Of the 22 victims identified in 2012, 20 were women and 2 were men. The majority, 19 victims, were over 18 years old. There were 18 cases of sexual exploitation, one for begging, one for theft, and 2 registered attempts to commit a human trafficking crime.

5.2 Hotspots of exploitation in the UK

Most victims are exploited in private apartments although some cases had been registered in brothels, clubs or for street prostitution. Street prostitution happens in more peripheral sites, while clubs, massage parlours, saunas or apartments hosting disguised brothels are located in central areas, mostly in London.

5.3 Multiple or single purpose exploitation

Organized networks of trafficking are generally either specialized in providing sexual services or in exploitation for labour. Exploitation for labour may more often involve multiple forms of trafficking, such as begging or theft. Here are some examples of such cases. Ioana, a victim in her mid 40s was forced to steal, beg and become a prostitute in the UK. A man in his 50s was exploited for begging, metal theft and labour.

Nevertheless, multiple purpose exploitation seems to be rare; out of total number of 1296 traffickers – all destinations - who were subject of police investigations in 2011, only 9 had been involved in trafficking cases for multiple exploitation purpose (NAATP, 2012)

In 2012, 22 Romanian victims, mostly women, were trafficked in the UK for sexual purpose.

Control strategies tend to shift from physical abuse to softer methods such as the use of a debt or the necessity to cover housing and food expenses for the stay in the UK.

Small amounts of money paid to the victim may also be a resort to gain consent and control the victim.

Physical abuse may however be a way to punish disobedience, for men, women and child victims of trafficking.

²⁰ NAATP interview, May 2013.



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5.4 Control strategies (debt, threat, limitation of movement)

Physical abuse, threats and limitation of movement remained important as methods of coercion and control. However, on repeated occasions during this study, NGO's and law enforcement authorities pointed that **constraint methods started to shift towards softer methods such as the reminder of a debt situation.** While the debt is not something new for trafficking patterns, this shift in coercion methods may point to the adaptability of the trafficking networks to the increasing number of men victims.

Since exploitation for labour generally happens in more opened spaces, traffickers find it harder to prevent a victim from escaping by use of threat and abuse. **Postponing payment on account of a debt may be prolonged by offering small amounts of money to the victims or even by allowing the victim to send money back home so as to prevent suspicions.** Small amounts of money do not only help to get the victims' consent for a longer period of time but are also a way to create a false perception that the situation is not necessary illegal.

Traffickers create a false image of an apparently normal situation that may, at most, be condemned for underpayment. Such situations may be quite common and, as a result, officials from the Romanian Embassy in the UK recommended that they should be viewed as a breach of the employment regulation, more specifically exploitation for labour, and not as trafficking in human beings. The interview quoted below is illustrative for what a key informant called **the use of a "perpetual debt"**²¹ **as a control and coercion method.** It refers to a recent case of trafficking in men to the UK.

They were recruited by a false promise of employment and forced to work for the trafficker: scrap metal, selling newspapers, domestic activities, child care, and begging. It happened in Newcastle. Traffickers took the money they made on account of having to pay transport, rents and other expenses. These people were left with nothing. This is how they usually do it to get their consent. When they do get paid, it is only small amounts of money. They try to postpone payment for as long as possible stating that is not going to happen this month but the following and so on. People would generally leave after two months. This situation is at the limit of illegality so people would not go to file a complaint. The vast majority sees it as being bad luck and they do not know they have been victims of trafficking (interview DCOC, Iasi)

Forget about it right now. I will pay you the money when we finish". They are very skilled. "I will give you the money; I will do this or that. They use deception. They make slaves out of these people using deception (interview DCOC, Iasi).

In one recent case of trafficking to the UK, the trafficker kept the victim's child as a means of control. Paradoxically, some victims are allowed to keep a cell phone, which is actually a method of strict

²¹ Interview Parchet Iasi, June 2013



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supervision. It has been reported that some traffickers made compromising pictures with the victims and threatened to mail them to their families in cases of disobedience.

Physical abuse is not only a method of coercing women victims to engage in sex work although it is more often associated to such cases. Men and children may also be victims of physical abuse. Men may especially suffer physical abuse when they rebel against the exploitative situation. Traffickers use violence to discourage similar attempts. In one case evaluated for this report, the male victim was severely abused, raped, had his teeth pulled out and his fingers smashed. **When there are more victims at the same location, the punishment of one victim may create a context of intimidation which facilitates control and submission.** Children victims of trafficking may also be physically abused for not making enough money or disobeying the rules imposed by the traffickers.

Food deprivation and poor housing condition are common in trafficking situations. Some victims may endure such difficult situations that they may require prolonged medical assistance after escaping the trafficking situation. **Drug use** has also been notified in relation to trafficking for sexual services. **When the victim is or becomes emotionally involved with the trafficker, psychological dependency replaces physical coercion methods.**

5.5 Duration of trafficking situation

There is no rule as to how long the trafficking situation may last although it tends to be longer in cases of exploitation for sexual purposes. Profits from sexual services are higher and, as one interviewee noted, traffickers “cannot afford” to lose a victim. Victims are often locked in an apartment or permanently accompanied when travelling to exploitation premises such as brothels or clubs. Traffickers may have their own drivers or may resort to local taxi drivers to transport the victim from one location to another.

Exit from a trafficking situation mainly depends on the level of coercion. **Key informants noted that it takes two to three months for a victim exploited for labour purpose to leave the exploitative situation and eventually contact the police.** By the end of these first couple of months they realise the job offer was deceitful and decide to file a complaint against the employers in an attempt to recover the money. This is generally the situation with male victims who are not locked in or strictly supervised. **The average number of months is higher for women victims of trafficking** as most of them are sexually exploited. It may also be higher for child victims who are totally dependent on police investigations to escape.

People sexually exploited are trafficked longer. The average number of months spent in trafficking is higher. They cannot stand against the trafficker and are afraid of running away. Abuses are different (Interview NAATP Bucharest).

Victims may escape trafficking situations with support from clients, by making themselves known to the police or by seizing an opportunity to run away. In one case evaluated for this project, the victim was released by the trafficker in an attempt to escape police investigations.

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6 Return and re-trafficking

NGO's interviewed in the UK reported that most Romanian victims of trafficking prefer to return home once they escape the trafficking situation. As table 2 below suggests, according to the National Salvation Army, 40% (29 persons) of the victims return to the country of origin and another 10% (14 victims) head to another destination. 7% resided in a specialised accommodation in the UK (NASS accommodation, local authority or supported housing). Some others were in the UK independently, with friends or their destination was unknown.

Table 2: Exit information of Romanian Nationals

Exit information (if known)	Count
Another country	14
Country of origin	29
Local authority housing	3
Staying with friends	5
Out of area	3
Staying in area	2
Absconded	3
Supported housing	5
NASS accommodation	1
Unknown	8
Total	73

Source: Salvation Army, UK 2012

Most victims willing to return home as soon as possible have supporting families. However, for victims lacking family support, **the decision to return may in some cases become a necessity not a choice. This happens due to legislative barriers against getting an employment** or to inaccessible social services beyond the 45 days reflection period in the UK. The Romanian Embassy in the UK warned that a **delayed process for the issuance of labour documents might leave some Romanians in vulnerable situations.**

For **this chapter we will only focus on victims returning to Romania or staying in the UK.** We have not targeted victims leaving the UK for another destination. However, future studies on the latter situation might lead to significant breakthroughs as regards vulnerability, resilience or victims' ability to integrate after a traumatic exploitation experience.

6.1 Victims returning to Romania

We noted that 29 victims registered by the Salvation Army in the UK returned to Romania. These victims, however, were not necessary included in the Romanian statistics unless their return was²³

A large share of the Romanian victims trafficked to the UK return home once they escape trafficking.

Some victims may face repeated exploitation.

To avoid re-trafficking assistance services at destination and in the home country should be improved.

Victims should be supported to return based on a referral mechanism from UK to Romania.

The maintenance of labour restrictions for Romanians may put some victims staying in UK in vulnerable situations.

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supported and organised by an NGO or law enforcement institution that further referred the victim to a national stakeholder. Therefore there are no records of what happened to each of the 29 victims upon arrival in Romania.

The only picture of re-trafficking that we had at the moment of this study was given by **the Romanian registration system. Of the 22 victims trafficked to the UK and registered in 2012, 2 had been re-trafficked.** One of them was trafficked in the UK twice and the other one was first trafficked repeatedly in Germany and later taken to the UK²². The data only refer to registered re-trafficking experiences and may thus be incomplete.

Victims may be vulnerable to re-trafficking because of deficient assistance services in the UK or Romania, lack of a supportive family or community environment, emotional dependence on the trafficker, post-traumatic stress disorders or even the contact with another recruiter.

In a recent human trafficking case to the UK, the victim returned to Romania. She kept in touch with another Romanian victim that she met at the exploitation site. This woman told her to come back to the UK. She mentioned that she had escaped from the traffickers and was well, working. She offered to find the victim a job in the UK. The offer was deceptive as the woman had started working as recruiter. In both trafficking situations suffered by this victim **the recruiters were persons that she relied on for help and support.** This is how the case manager in Romania describes how trafficking and re-trafficking happened²³.

*Case manager: She had a misunderstanding with her parents. The man [the first trafficker] offered to host her and her daughter. **They had known each other for years as they were from the same community. She was promised a job abroad.** Her little girl who was 5 years old was left with his parents. They left to the UK. The first time she tried to escape, she failed and was beaten for the attempt. Then she screamed out loud in the street as they drove her to the apartment and the people in the street contacted the police. **This is how she first escaped. She returned to Romania.** She entered an assistance program but she was unhappy with the support. She left the program. **She was in contact with another Romanian girl who had been exploited in the same apartment. They had some phone conversations. This woman told her that she was fine and asked whether she would be interested to come back to the UK for a job.** She took the little girl and left to the UK again. They were not expecting her to come with the child. The man [the second trafficker] had 3 apartments so he put the little girl in one of the apartments where his children were living. She managed to escape after one week. She seized an opportunity when they were bringing some furniture in the apartment, took the little girl and ran away bare foot. She screamed "Police" as she left the apartment. The Salvation Army took her case".*

²² NAATP, 2013

²³ For this interview the victim was beside the case manager and made valuable comments throughout the interview. The discussion was organized via phone. 24

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Interviewer: Why didn't you stay in the UK? Did somebody ask you about this possibility?

Victim: "They asked me whether I wanted to stay in the UK but they also said I will not be able to find a job because I do not know the language and it is very difficult to have the documents issued" (interview Adpare, Bucharest).

For this case, the first trafficker constantly threatened the victim and her child during the trafficking history and after return. As a result, the victim withdrew the complaint against him. **Living in this unsecure environment after the first trafficking history probably contributed to the acceptance of the second job offer abroad and to re-trafficking.** The victim is now in a safe house managed by an NGO. Her situation is exemplary for victims coming from the same locality as the trafficker. Other organizations and law enforcement authorities related similar cases regarding **the risk that victims met the trafficker or his acquaintances back in the origin community.** In such cases especially – but not only – return might not be advisable unless making sure the entire trafficking network had been arrested or victims can be relocated and closely supported by police and NGO's. **A closer cooperation between origin and destination countries in managing trafficking cases is essential for protecting the victims.**

With proper assistance and programs based on cooperation between the UK and Romania, successful integration is possible. In one such case, the victim was returned via the Human Trafficking Foundation. She had been forced to beg, steal and become a prostitute in the UK. Upon return, one of the main preoccupations of the case manager from the Nightingale Project was to prevent her return in the origin area where she faced the risk of meeting the traffickers. They hosted her in an open house in a different city. She attended training in beekeeping with support from the charity organization. After graduating this training with a maximum score, she received some hives. At the time of the interview she was preparing to start a business in beekeeping and also found seasonal employment in a hotel. **The cooperation between origin and destination organizations was essential for the success of this case.**

As a key informant pointed out, a victim coming back to Romania has not necessarily escaped the vulnerable situation. **Victims generally need continuous support to integrate²⁴. The assistance process may sometimes require several months and repeated meetings with the case workers. Most victims of trafficking may not face repeated exploitation but they fail to integrate and overcome the traumatic experiences. They may become addicted to social services and unable to live independently.** Integration may prove to be difficult when the victim lacks a supportive social network and proficient assistance services.

I think we should focus here on what happens with the assistance services once she gets home. It is not enough to support the victim to get home. We had seen victims with deficient case management. The victims left the assistance program. It is of great importance to prevent them from leaving again, to avoid that they come to be trafficked again. The victim should be assisted for at least 6 months after she came

²⁴ Interview, Social Alternatives Iasi



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back to the origin country. The quality of these services and the case management matters a lot [...] Maybe some do not leave again and do not get to be forced into sexual exploitation. However these are people whose resilience and coping abilities are deficient because case workers and family fail to support them.

The origin community is also unwelcoming. They live at the margins of society; they are still vulnerable and get to be addicted to some services. They are not socially integrated and have psychological disorders that may, at times, turn into psychiatric disorders. They do not necessary go back into trafficking but they cannot live, let's not say a healthy life, but a decent life (Interview Social Alternatives, Iasi).

6.2 Victims staying in the UK

Some Romanian victims of trafficking staying in the UK might also be vulnerable to re-trafficking or other exploitative situations. If not wishing to return home, they may find it impossible to get an employment due to difficulties in having the labour documentation issued. The case below has been assisted for several months by the Midland Hearts in the UK. The man was exploited for labour in a car wash. Case workers who received his case in UK could not help him get an employment. After prolonged accommodation in one of their houses, the victim eventually had to leave. A full description of this situation as reported by the victim is included in Box I.

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Box 1. Case study of a migrant man trafficked for labour purpose. Excerpt from the fieldwork study journal

*Mihai is 27 years old. I set a meeting with him in a fast food restaurant in London. He lived at a Baptist Church whose members' let him sleep somewhere outside the building. He got 10 pounds a week from the Church for doing small jobs whenever necessary. **His appearance and manner seemed closer to those of a young teenager than to an adult. He seemed to have a poor understanding of the living cost in London and his plans may suggest an innocent approach to reality: he would like to make movies in the USA or get a job as a Romanian translator at the UKBA.***

Before arriving in the UK he lived with his mother and siblings in one room and poor conditions. He went to a vocational school and learned carpentry. He used to miss classes. His father died a few years ago due to alcohol abuse. He often had conflicts with the parents; he thought this happened because of all his brothers he would generally fail when asked to do something. He came to London by coach in mid 2012. His mother got a phone call from a family friend, Vlad, offering him a job in the UK. At the time, he was unemployed. He got the money for the coach and passport from the same family friend. He was supposed to work in a car wash. At the same location he had seen sex workers coming in and out.

He had worked for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. He was given a small amount of money every week. He spent this money on clothes, poker and bets. He left his job there after getting into a fight with one of the supervisors at the car wash, a Kurdish person. The fight started after he had used the wrong solution to clean the interior of a car, staining the board and causing an argument with the car owners. He related that the car owners were from the Pakistani mob. He also said that they were already making arrangements with his supervisor regarding his job. They were planning to have him sell drugs in order to pay for the car damages. That is when he left the premises and went to the police. The supervisor at the car wash had taken his passport and his baggage as he tried to leave, shouting that he still owed them money for the trip and thus must keep on working. Mihai went to the police who informed him that he was a victim of human trafficking and that his work at the gas station was illegal. They accompanied him at the gas station to recover his passport and referred him to the Salvation Army. That is how he got to Midland Hearts.

*He asked for asylum in the UK but he was informed that EU nationals stand little or no chance of getting a positive answer. He claimed that he still feared the Pakistani mob who might find his whereabouts at any time. **He stated that he cannot return home since his mother would not forgive him for having denounced Vlad. He let me know that the mother is very upset and would probably not want him back home. He repeatedly made sure I was not going to write anything about the man who offered the job as he threatened to kill him. He is not on good terms with any of the few remaining relatives and has no one to ask for help if returning home.***

He stated that, upon arrival, he had no knowledge of the labour conditions in the UK and he did not know he was not allowed to work. He later understood that Romanians cannot work in London unless they get a permit. He tried to get a job but no one employed him because he didn't have documents. While we were discussing, he lifted his hands as if wearing handcuffs and told me that neither could he work in London, nor could he return home. His plan was to stay in London for another year until restrictions for labour were lifted. He imagined his life would be better if he found an English woman to be friend and stay at, if he won at the lottery or if he was admitted to continue his studies. He looked at me in wonder when I warned him to beware of deceptive job offers and irregular employment, as worse things might happen to him. We parted at a tube station after promising that I would send him some contacts of NGO's that might be able to assist him.

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7 Vulnerability profile revisited

In this chapter we analyse factors playing an important role in determining the vulnerability to trafficking in human beings. We posit that **the factors presented here have a significant contribution to some people's failure to discern risky situations leading to trafficking**. The analysis is based on the results of the quantitative survey carried out in Romania in May 2013.

7.1 Plans to migrate

The survey data shows that **the migration potential remains stable in Romania with 5% intention to leave for good and 20% planning to leave the country for labour**. Ten years earlier another national survey pointed to similar data: 5% intention to leave the country for good and 17% intention for labour migration (CURS, 2003). The question assesses **the unstructured intention to migrate**. It is an **approach to migration as a life plan** and should not be read as a direct indication of the number of future migrants. Previous studies show that, of the intending labour migrants, only few take some steps to achieve this purpose and even fewer eventually leave the country.

Table 3. Intention to leave abroad

Considering the following 2 years, do you intend to leave abroad for labour (temporary) or to permanently settle abroad?

<i>Base all sample 1010/ 18-29 sample 202</i>	<i>Valid percent All sample</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29</i>
Yes, for labour (temporary)	20	35
Yes, permanently	5	11
No	72	50
DK/NA	3	4

Source: IMAS, 2013

7.2 Vulnerability factors

The connection between labour migration and vulnerability to trafficking in human beings can be understood if looking at the willingness to accept a job offer from an acquaintance/informal intermediary. In the last decade **most Romanian migrants relied on personal contacts to leave the country and get an employment abroad**. Informal networks (friends, acquaintances and relatives) linking host and destination countries grew in strength and diversity making mobility possible for an increasing number of workers. This explains why so many people are willing to accept a job offer through an acquaintance and even let their child leave the country following such a job offer.

1 of every 2 parents interviewed would let their children leave abroad if a trustworthy person offered them a well paid job and promised to make all the necessary arrangements. The question did not refer to the child age, asking respondents to imagine a hypothetical situation. Given the situation – the likelihood to accept a job – most parents probably thought of their child being an adult at the time the offer was made. This, however, does not alter the strength of the indicator.

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We showed earlier that traffickers may contact the parents in order to prepare the travel documents or as part of the strategy to gain their trust. Within this context it is worth noting that **the percentage of parents likely to encourage their child leaving abroad after getting a job offer from an acquaintance is quite high (50%).**

Table 4. Parents' consent on letting their child leave abroad through an intermediary

Whether you have children or not, please consider what you would do in the following situation: Your children cannot find a job in Romania. A trustworthy person offered them a well paid job abroad and promised to make all the necessary arrangements for them to get there. How willing would you be to let them take that job?

<i>Base all sample 1010/ Household with children <18 401</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>	<i>Valid percent Households with children</i>
Very little	27	27
Little	18	18
Much	24	24
Very much	27	28
It depends on the job offer (do not read)	0	0
It depends on the person (do not read)	2	2
It depends on the children's' age (do not read)	0	0
DK/NA	2	1

Source: IMAS, 2013

We addressed the same question to assess the attitude towards a similar offer made to the respondent directly. Respondents evaluated what they would do if the well paid job abroad was for them, not for their children. The percentage of positive answers was still high. **As much as 58% of the young category and almost half of the mature category aged 30-45 stated that they would agree to get the job. This emphasises the wide social acceptability of using informal ties to get a job abroad.**

Table 5. Consent on leaving abroad through an intermediary

Now please think of your personal situation. If a trustworthy person offered you a well paid job abroad and promised to make all the necessary arrangements for you to get there, how willing would you be to accept it?

<i>Base: 30-45 sample 323 / 18-29 sample 202</i>	<i>Valid percent 30-44</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29</i>
Very little	34	21
Little	16	17
Much	19	22
Very much	29	36
It depends on the job offer (do not read)	1	0
It depends on the person (do not read)	1	2
DK/NA	0	2

Source: IMAS, 2013

In 2000 and 2003, two studies assessing vulnerability to trafficking had been published in an attempt to better understand why some young women are more at risk of being trafficked than others. The29

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conclusion was that 9% of the women aged 15 to 25 had a higher risk of being trafficked. **High risk vulnerability is a composite indicator based on the intention of accepting a job from an intermediary and the willingness to choose at least two improper means/ to break two social norms in order to achieve important goals**²⁵. Moderate vulnerability includes the people willing to accept a job from an intermediary who chose one improper social mean to get what they most wanted in life. Low risk means that people had either rejected all improper means or the job offer.

We replicated the model of vulnerability for the present study, extending it to the male population. **14% of the total young population fitted the profile of high vulnerability.** Just as in the case of the migration potential, **the percentage should not be read as estimating a number of potential victims** but as an indicator supporting a better understanding of the vulnerable groups from a psycho-social perspective. **Data may also be used for building awareness raising campaigns.**

Table 6. Vulnerability profile revisited

<i>Base: 30-44 sample 323/ 18-29 sample 202</i>	<i>Valid percent 30-44</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29</i>
High risk	5	14
Moderate risk	15	23
Low risk	80	63

Source: IMAS, 2013

As the table below shows, more than one third of the young population asserted to be willing to break all rules in order to obtain what they most wanted in life. Young people at risk are generally independent persons, willing to spend time away from the family. One out of four youths would also agree to leave the family for a long period of time. Rule breaking and spending time away from the family are rather weak in predicting vulnerability. The stronger vulnerability items are getting married to a person one does not love (5%), leaving the person most loved (1%) and lying about something (7%).

Table 7. Vulnerability indicators

How willing would you be to accept one of the following situations in order to obtain what you most want in life?

<i>Base : 30-44 sample 323/ 18-29 sample 202</i>		<i>Valid percent 30-44 sample</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29 sample</i>
Vulnerability	To disobey all rules	27	37
	To get married to a person you do not love	3	5
	To lie about something	7	7
	To leave your family for a long period of time	10	25
	To leave for good the person you most love	2	1
	To work abroad without a contract	13	20

Source: IMAS, 2013

²⁵ Lazarioiu, 2003



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7.3 Social acceptability of irregular or improper employment situations

We also assessed the social acceptability of situations that may create a context of vulnerability: these referred either to labour conditions or to the nature of employment. Some of the most relevant conclusions are :

- **13% of the 30-44 years old population and 2 out of 10 youths (20%) would accept working without a contract abroad** (table 7);
- **almost 1 out of every 2 adult persons (46%) would advise a close person to work anything under any circumstances if unable to find a job for a year;**
- **under the same circumstances 1 out of 10 respondents (10%) would advise a close person work without a labour permit abroad**
- also, approximately 1 out of 10 persons (9%) would advise a close person to work as a dancer/ entertainer in a pub if s/he could not find another job;
- some of the stronger indicators such as begging (3%), marrying a wealthier person one does not love (6%) or working as a prostitute (1%) receive little support.

Table 8. Social acceptability of risky labour arrangements

How much would you agree or not with each of the following situations regarding a close person (friend or relative) who could not find a job this year... To make a living, he/she should accept...

<i>Base all sample 1010/ 18-29 sample 202</i>	<i>Valid percent All sample</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29</i>
... to work anything, under whatever circumstances	46	37
...a job inferior to his/ her skills/ qualification	51	49
...a poorly paid job at least for a while	40	42
...to work without payment for a while/ test period, if he/she was made a promise of employment	24	28
...to work overtime/ extra hours if that's what the employer expects	18	16
...to get a job without a labour contract	11	18
...to work abroad without a labour permit	10	16
...to beg in order to make a living	3	3
...to work as a dancer/ entertainer in a pub if she could not find another job	9	13
... to get a wealthier husband/ partner even if she does not love him	6	6
...to work as a prostitute if she could not find another job	1	2

Source: IMAS, 2013

Education generally increases resilience against trafficking. Thus, **it is also worth noting that one third of the adult population believes that school is not a guarantee for the future.** The percentage is higher for the young population (39%). **There is also a notable tolerance as regards minors labour.** One quarter of all adults (27%) and more than one third (36%) of the young population agree that a young man aged 15 or 16 should start working if the parents could not make enough money.



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Table 9. Illegitimate means to secure financial security

How much do you agree or not with each of the following statements?

<i>Base all sample 1010/ 18-29 sample 202</i>	<i>Valid percent All sample</i>	<i>Valid percent 18-29</i>
Today school is no guarantee for the future	34	39
Young people should start working when they are 15 or 16 years old, especially when parents cannot make enough money	27	36

Source: IMAS, 2013

The desire to migrate, the willingness to accept a job offer from an intermediary, the propensity to break rules, the social acceptability of improper working conditions, and the attitudes towards school or child labour may contribute to higher vulnerability to human trafficking. These factors should not be ignored in future awareness raising campaigns regarding trafficking in human beings.

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8 Conclusions and recommendations

This report evaluated the trafficking landscape from Romania to the UK with a focus on statistics, recruitment, transportation, exploitation, return and vulnerability. Our main conclusions and recommendations are:

- 1. The number of victims identified by Romanian authorities as having been trafficked in the UK is low compared to other destinations. However, the extent of trafficking to the UK is yet uncertain. There are significant differences between the UK and the Romanian official statistics regarding victims of trafficking.**

Support for a standardized and transparent registration procedure should be a priority. By the same token, stakeholders should facilitate statistical information exchange between Romania and the UK on all cases of trafficking.

- 2. The recruitment process mainly relies on a job offer abroad. Most traffickers are part of the victims' network of acquaintances.**

The public awareness raising campaigns should specifically target recruitment through a **trusted** intermediary.

- 3. Transport and borders are not a barrier for traffickers, as adult victims are willingly travelling abroad, still ignorant regarding the nature of the job.**

Dissemination of short leaflets at airport points and bus stations should be done on a continuous basis not only as part of specific campaigns. For land transport, campaigns should not only focus on large coach companies but also on reaching the clients of small minibuses. These leaflets should include brief emergency information such as a phone number or the name and location of relevant NGOs assisting migrants.

- 4. Most victims trafficked to the UK are women exploited for sexual purpose, but a significant number of men has also been reported.**

Law enforcement and NGO's should continue to design gender sensitive awareness raising campaigns. Moreover, it is recommended to customize messages minding age factors. The campaign plot should consider the social and psychological profile of potential victims. Warnings and negative messages might not always lead to good results as young people at risk tend to be self-reliant and independent.

Sexual workers should be treated as a separate but notable group with a high risk of becoming victims of exploitative situations.

- 5. Generally, victims return to Romania. The fact that the traffickers are commonly acquaintances or friends, sometimes from the same locality, raises safety concerns.**

It is extremely important to improve assistance services at origin and destination. More, before allowing a victim return to Romania, law enforcement and NGO's should focus more on evaluating safety risks. The fact that the trafficker is generally an acquaintance or friend raises explicit safety concerns. To avoid re-trafficking or failure of the assistance efforts, Romania and the UK should

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improve cooperation as regards risks evaluation, police investigations, the inter-country referral system and the support services.

6. There is a wide acceptance of getting a job abroad through an intermediary.

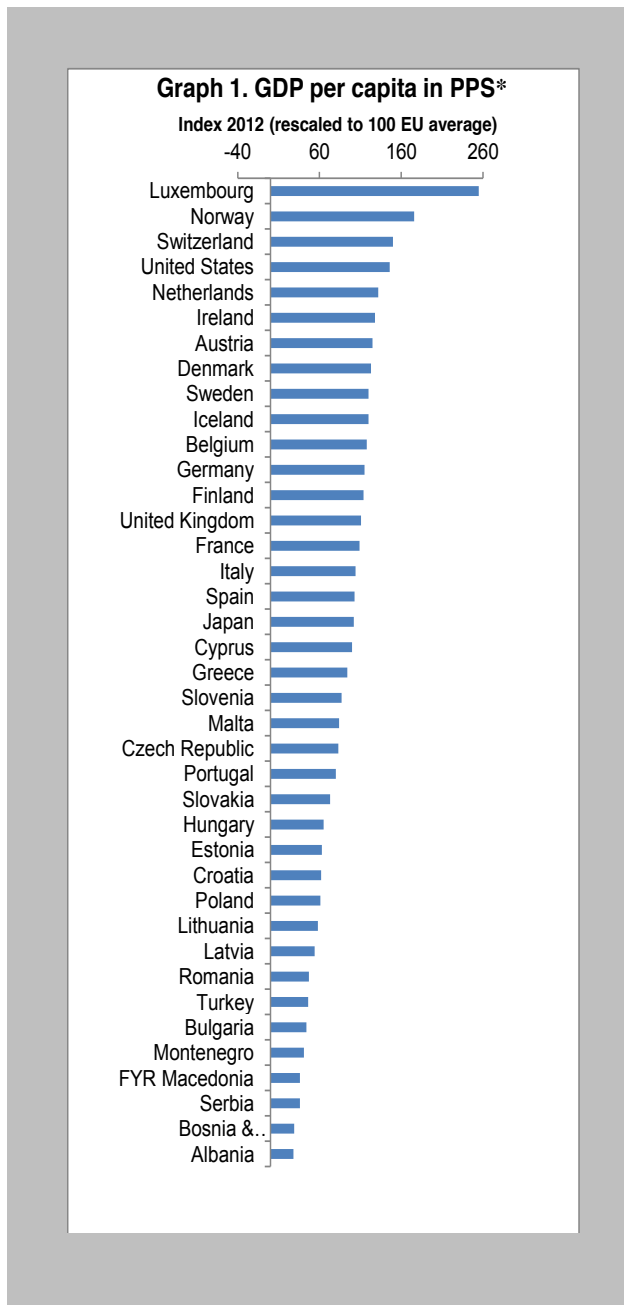
This approach to labour migration has a high risk potential which can result in many other victims. It should be thoroughly addressed in future awareness raising campaigns.

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9 Appendix



Graph A1. Country hierarchy by GDP per capita

Italy and Spain, the main destination countries for Romanian migrants, have far stronger development indexes with the values of GDP per capita twice as high compared to Romania in 2012. Due to the development differentials, whatever low migrants' salaries may be in the destination countries, they have a higher value in the home country where most migrants invest migration money. This contributes to building a positive image for migration, making labour abroad an attractive way out of the financial difficulties.

* Source EUROSTAT

GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) represented in relation to the European Union (EU27 = 100). An index below the 100 means that in this country the GDP per head is lower than the EU average. In 2012 Romania had a GDP index of 49, half of the EU average.

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List of interviews

TARGET	INTERVIEW LOCATION	INSTITUTION/ ORGANISATION	POSITION	NAME
NGO,s& international organizations	Iasi	Social Alternatives	Executive Manager	Catalin Luca
	Bucharest	ADPARE	Manager	Gina Stoian
	Bucharest	ARAS	Project Manager	Veronica Caunii
	Cernavoda	Nightingale Children's	Assistant Director	Ben Wells
	London	IOM	Counter Trafficking Unit	Chiar Gnoli
	London	Medaille Trust	Case manager	Rebecca Baul
	London	The Poppy Project, Eaves	Training and Capacity Building Worker	Sally Montier
	London	Hestia	HT Project	Sadia Wain
	Birmingham	Midland Heart	Manager Mental Health	Gwyn Wright
	Birmingham	The Salvation Army	Project Director	Anne-Marie Douglas
	London	ECPAT UK	EC Project Coordinator	Stana Buchowska
	London	Human Trafficking Foundation		Tatiana Jordan
Institutions	Bucharest	Labour Inspection (Ministry of Labour)	Labour Inspector, Bureau for Investigating Labour Relations	Radu Gabriela
	Bucharest	Directorate for Combating Organized Crime (Home Office)	Director, Bureau for Investigating Labour Relations	Larisa Papp
	Bucharest	National Agency Against Trafficking in Human Beings (Home Office)	Chief Inspector	Răzvan Letcanu Iulia Popescu
	Iasi	National Agency Against Trafficking in Human Beings (Home Office)	Inspector	Adelina Tamas
	Iasi	National Agency Against Trafficking in Human Beings (Home Office)	Psychologist	Adreea Sabetai
	Iasi	Directorate for Combating Organized Crime (Home Office)	Inspector	Bogdan Șoltuz
	Iasi	Prosecutor's Office	Prosecutor	Daniel Horodniceanu
Iasi	Court Law	Judge	Sonia Canachi	

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	London	Metropolitan Police Specialist Operations	Crime & Police	John O'Brien
	London	Romanian Embassy	Home Affairs & Police Attache	Robert Marin
	Birmingham	UKHTC	Social Attache Interview 3 Centre Head	Ileana Stanica *** ***
	Birmingham	GLA	Tactical Advisor Deputy Head Intelligence Manager	Vince Dean Liam Vernon Ian Walker
Experts	Bucharest	Presidential Administration	Sociologist, Presidential Adviser	Sebastian Lazaroiu
Victims	UK		Labour exploitation	one man
	Romania		Forced prostitution	two women*

* One victim was interviewed via phone; for most of the interview the victim asked the case worker to describe her story; she would intervene from the background from time to time;

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<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/cinderella-girl-7-forced-to-work-673945>;

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2096414/Romanian-Cinderella-7-trafficked-Britain-work-slave.html>

Corduneanu case (Ro)

<http://www.newsiasi.ro/v2/eveniment/politica/18784-istoria-clanului-cordunenilor-20-de-ani-de-razboi-mafiot-la-iasi.html>

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