



SafeBorders

Country Report

Romania



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1. Introduction

Under CSD's coordination, ADPARE participated at a comprehensive mapping and analysis exercise to identify key stakeholders involved in combating child trafficking and to assess the relevant legal, social, and economic contexts in Romania. This activity comprised desk research aimed at developing an overview of stakeholders, including governmental authorities, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant actors engaged in anti-trafficking efforts. In parallel, the desk research reviewed existing legislation and policies, as well as socio-economic factors contributing to children's vulnerability to trafficking, considering the specific national context. The findings, consolidated in country-level desk research report, provided an in-depth understanding of the child trafficking landscape in Romania.

Four focus groups were organized in Romania. Each focus group addressed a specific stakeholder category, namely judicial authorities, law enforcement authorities, civil society organizations, government agencies and persons with lived experience on child trafficking. In addition, ten in-depth interviews were done with key stakeholders selected from among the focus group participants, with the objective of collecting further qualitative insights into challenges, good practices, and opportunities in combating child trafficking. In total, 42 stakeholders participated in the research activities in Romania.

2. Legal and policy framework

2.1. Existing legal and policy framework on child trafficking

Romania predominantly it is a source country for trafficking in persons, but at the same time it is a country of origin for trafficking in persons in Europe and other regions, to a country of both origin and exploitation of Romanian victims. Currently, Romania has become a destination country for migrant victims, particularly those from third countries. The main vulnerabilities of the victims remain: search for better life opportunities, dysfunctional families or/and characterized by violence, previous emotional and sexual abuse for which the victims did not receive adequate support, lack of proper education, or lack of social life experience, single-parent families and children from placement centers. Most victims of Romanian nationality are recruited in Romania; the main method of recruiting being based on builds trust and creates dependency for the victim.

Romania's anti-trafficking efforts are primarily governed by Law no. 678/2001¹, which addresses the prevention and combating of human trafficking. This law, along with amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, forms the legal framework for combating trafficking. Romania also has a National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings, currently in its 2024-2028 iteration, which outlines the country's approach to tackling this issue. The law no. 678/2001

¹ [Law no. 678/2001 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings](#), published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE No. 783 of 11 December 2001



on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings was subsequently amended and supplemented. The Criminal Code has been amended also to include specific provisions regarding trafficking in human beings, including increased penalties for trafficking in minors. On 1 February 2014, a new Criminal Code came into force, bringing about changes to the anti-trafficking legislative framework. The New Criminal Code responds to the practical needs that have long been calling for criminal law adjustments, while also meeting the relevant European standards. The legal and social message of the new code is primarily grounded on the purpose of reforming punitive policy, and the conceptual approach includes a review of punishments, a logical order by compressing legislation (in this respect a series of offences under the special laws have been included under modified or unmodified form in the new code), as well as facts and sanctions adapted to current realities. The main amendments the New Criminal Code in the last period are: increase of the minimum punishment in the case of trafficking, including minors from 3 to 5 years, supplementing the aggravating variants of the crime of trafficking in minors with the following: the deed was committed by a family member or a person living with the victim, respectively, the deed was committed by a person in whose care, protection, education, guarding or treatment the minor was, or the perpetrator abused his position of trust or authority over the minor or took advantage of the minor's vulnerable situation, caused by a mental or physical disability, a situation of dependence, a state of physical or mental incapacity or other cause.

Law no. 39/2003, on the prevention and fight against organized crime, establishes the legal framework for preventing and fighting organized crime in Romania. It defines what constitutes organized crime, organized criminal groups and specific measures to prevent and fight these activities. The main aspects of the law are: establishes what organized crime means, including organized criminal groups and specific criminal activities; defines organized criminal group as a structure formed by several persons, with repeated and coordinated criminal activities, with the aim of obtaining material benefits or other advantages; establishes measures to prevent and fight organized crime, including investigations, criminal prosecutions and international cooperation; recognizes the importance of international cooperation in fighting cross-border crime and provides mechanisms for cooperation with other states; provides for a series of specific crimes, including trafficking in minors.

The National Identification and Referral Mechanism (MNIR)² in Romania is a framework designed to identify and assist victims of human trafficking. It ensures that victims' rights are protected, needs are assessed, and they are referred to appropriate specialized support and protection programs. The MNIR also coordinates victim participation in criminal proceedings and aids in their repatriation. Key aspects of the MNIR include: identification as the process begins with screening potential victims to determine if they have been trafficked, using specific indicators, referral to specialized services are provided to victims, including legal aid, medical care, psychological support, and shelter, tailored to their individual needs, coordination as facilitation of the collaboration between various actors, including state authorities and civil society organizations, to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to victim protection and assistance, protection mechanism for safeguards victims' rights, ensuring they are not retraumatized and are given appropriate support during criminal proceedings and repatriation measures to assist victims in the voluntary and safe return of victims to their home countries, if desired. MNIR includes a dedicated section to minor victims of human trafficking. Also,

² [Government Decision no. 88](#) of January 31, 2023, for the approval of the national mechanism for the identification and referral of victims of human trafficking, issued by the Government of Romania, published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 95 of February 3, 2023.



public institutions, international organizations and NGOs developed practical guides for professionals, outlining specific scenarios and actions for identifying and referring to potential trafficking cases. These guides provide information on human trafficking, relevant indicators, and how to report and respond to potential cases and include lists of useful contacts for reporting and notifications. The MNIR relies on strong collaboration between various institutions, including the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, and specialized NGOs. This collaboration is essential for ensuring effective intervention and protection of victims, especially minors. In essence, the MNIR in Romania is a comprehensive system designed to identify, protect, and assist victims of human trafficking, ensuring their access to specialized services and support throughout the process.

One of the most important instruments is the Practical Guide for Field Professionals on Identifying and Referring Child Trafficking Cases. The guide is intended for professionals responsible for managing child trafficking cases. It offers guidance on the consistent application of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), in line with existing procedures related to the trafficking of minors, specifically concerning Romanian minor victims. The guide also presents three scenarios for the implementation of the NIRM, which outlines the process of handling a potential child trafficking case. These scenarios consider the first professionals to contact the victim, as well as the country of exploitation. The guide was developed and validated with support from experts at the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (ANPDCA) and the National Agency Against Human Trafficking (ANITP)³.

The National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings (2024-2028)⁴, details the government's priorities and actions for preventing and combating trafficking, including strengthening cooperation between institutions and providing support for victims. Along with the Strategy, the National Action Plan was also approved. Key aspects of Romania's National Action Plan include: prevention actions to reduce the demand that drives human trafficking and to halt the exploitation of victims, providing support and protection for victims; combating trafficking by strengthening law enforcement efforts and improving the prosecution of traffickers, monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the effectiveness of anti-trafficking policies and activities and the inter-institutional and international cooperation between various agencies and with other countries.

Other national legislation on child trafficking, children's rights and the fight against all forms of child exploitation: Law no. 272 from 21 June 2004 on the protection and promotion of children's rights⁵. In section 5, protection of the child against abduction or any form of trafficking we will find article 109 Aimed to implement the necessary steps to adopt legislative, administrative and educational measures aimed at ensuring effective protection against any forms of internal or international trafficking of children, for any purpose or in any form, including by their own parents. To this end, the public authorities: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and the

³[PRACTICAL GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING AND REFERRING CHILD TRAFFICKING CASES FOR SPECIALISTS](#), National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2025.

⁴ [Government Decision no. 533](#) of May 16, 2024, on the approval of the National Strategy against Human Trafficking for the period 2024-2028, issued by the Government of Romania, published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE No. 467 of May 21, 2024.

⁵ [Law no. 272 from 21 June 2004 on the protection and promotion of children's rights](#), published on OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 159 from 5 March 2014



Elderly, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, have the responsibility of developing a national strategy to prevent and combat this phenomenon, including an internal mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the activities undertaken⁶; the Government Decision 1443/2004 on the methodology for repatriation of unaccompanied Romanian children and the provision of special protection measures for them; Government Decision no.867/2009 on the prohibition of unsafe work for children and the Government Decision no.49/2011 for the approval of the Framework Methodology on prevention and intervention in multidisciplinary teams and networks in situations of violence against children and domestic violence and of the Methodology for multidisciplinary and inter-institutional intervention on exploited children and children at risk of labor exploitation, child victims of trafficking, as well as Romanian migrant child victims in other countries.

One of the most important laws for respecting the rights of minors who are victims of child trafficking and child pornography is Law 211/2004, the "victims' law". Law 211/2004⁷ concerns all measures for informing, supporting, and protecting victims of crimes. It outlines provisions for informing victims about their rights, providing psychological counseling and other forms of assistance, offering legal aid, and potentially providing financial compensation from the state. The law covers various aspects of victim support, including the process for claiming compensation and the roles of different actors involved. Specifically, the law addresses: informing victims/ legal guardians about their rights and available support services; psychological counseling and other forms of assistance for victims of crimes, legal aid by specialized lawyers, and financial compensation from the state. The law also addresses the specific needs of minors and individuals under legal protection who are victims of crimes. This law is a significant step in ensuring that victims of crime receive the necessary support and protection during and after the criminal justice process.

2.2. Effectiveness of the framework

According to an analysis of the European Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, it was found that most of the substantive and procedural criminal law provisions contained in the Directive were already covered by Romanian law, not needing major interventions when transposing the Directive into Romanian law⁸.

Although Romania has a harmonized legal framework, it cannot be said that it is also an efficient one. The main challenges are those of insufficient financial and human resources allocated to prevent and combat trafficking in minors, but especially to protect and assist victims. The lack of specialized services within the public child protection services, as well as the lack of funding for NGOs, are systemic

⁶ [Government Decision no. 1443](#) of September 2, 2004, regarding the methodology for the repatriation of unaccompanied Romanian children and the provision of special protection measures in their favor, by the Romanian Government, published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE No. 873 of September 24, 2004.

⁷ [Law no 211/2004](#) on Certain Measures to Ensure the Protection of Victims of Crime, Issued by the Parliament of Romania, published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 505 of June 4, 2004

⁸ 2025 GRETA- Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. FOURTH EVALUATION ROUND- "Measures to prevent and detect vulnerabilities to human trafficking", [EVALUATION REPORT- ROMANIA](#), Published on 12 November 2025.



problems that complicate all other anti-trafficking actions and create new vulnerabilities and revictimizations for child victims.

The following emerged from the focus groups and interviews:

The specialists rated the current efforts as average. The identified challenges include lack of action, involvement, accountability, and availability, low civic engagement and desensitization to child exploitation indicators: “at the European level there is a lack of action by citizens, a lack of involvement and availability, a lack of responsibility and a lot of individualism” (specialized police). The destination countries often lack motivation to investigate due to unwillingness to allocate resources.

The positive identified practices are the sporadic use of child-friendly interview rooms, the application of the NICHD interview protocol when possible and the recovery and reflection period for child victims before proceeding with investigations.

3. Legal and policy framework

3.1. Public institutions

In Romania, the fight against human trafficking involves a coordinated effort among various public institutions, each with specific mandates and functions. Romania, being a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking, has developed a multi-faceted response to this issue. Specialized national actors in the field of human trafficking are:

The National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons⁹ (ANITP) fulfills the role of national rapporteur, collecting data from governmental and non-governmental actors that carry out activities in the field of combating human trafficking and is a focal point within the MNIR but also within transnational referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking. In cases of trafficking of minors at a transnational level, ANITP collaborates with ANPDCA.

Among the main tasks of ANITP are: develops, based on the proposals of the institutions with responsibilities in the field, the draft National Strategy against human trafficking, prepares, with the participation of the other structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and based on the data provided by the public institutions with responsibilities in the field and non-governmental organizations, the Annual Report on the evolution of human trafficking, develops campaigns to prevent human trafficking and programs to facilitate assistance to victims of human trafficking and collaborates with public, private institutions and non-governmental organizations to implement joint campaigns and programs, facilitates the participation of victims of human trafficking in criminal prosecution and trial activities in cooperation with institutions with responsibilities in the field, conducts studies and research on the diagnosis and evolution of the phenomenon of human trafficking.

The Interministerial Committee for Strategic Intersectoral Coordination of the Fight against Trafficking in Persons¹⁰ is a body without legal personality and is led by the State Counselor within the Chancellery

⁹ <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/>

¹⁰ https://lege5.ro/gratuit/geztenzqg42ds/decizia-nr-22-2023-privind-constituirea-si-atributiile-comitetului-interministerial-de-coordonare-strategica-intersectoriala-a-luptei-impotriva-traficului-de-persoane#google_vignette



of the Prime Minister. The purpose of the Committee is to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to the process of implementing public policies in the field of preventing and combating trafficking in persons and assisting victims of trafficking in persons.

The Committee has the following responsibilities: facilitating the process of developing the National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons; facilitating the collaboration of all involved and interested institutions in order to effectively implement the directions of action, general objectives and specific objectives within national and international public policies; collecting information on the status/method of implementing the National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons, as well as the results that achieving its objectives will produce; analyzing the way in which the tasks assumed by each institution are carried out and establishing the measures that are required in order to achieve the objectives of the strategy; coordinating the process of intersectoral implementation of international recommendations in the field of human trafficking and ensuring the collection of data and information necessary for reporting to international and European bodies; establishing and coordinating sectoral technical working groups in the field of human trafficking and/or the prevention of exploitation, sexual abuse and risks associated with human trafficking regarding Ukrainian citizens, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania. ANITP provides the secretariat of the Committee.

The National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption¹¹ (ANPDCA). The mission of the ANPDCA is to protect and promote the rights of children in Romania. ANPDCA methodologically coordinates public child protection services and cooperates with diplomatic missions in the case of the repatriation of trafficked and/or unaccompanied minors.

The Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism¹² (DIICOT) was established to respond to major challenges in the field of combating organized crime and terrorism. DIICOT is a Romanian law enforcement agency responsible for investigating and prosecuting organized crime, terrorism, and related serious offenses. It was established in 2004 and operates under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Public Ministry. DIICOT investigates a wide range of crimes, including human and child trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime (including child pornography), economic and financial crimes. The prosecutors specialize in the area of intervention.

The Directorate for Combating Organized Crime¹³ (DCCO) is also a Romanian law enforcement agency responsible for combating trafficking in persons, minors, child pornography and other related crimes. DCCO is the specialized police working under the coordination of DIICOT.

The General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection¹⁴ (DGASPCs) are responsible for managing and overseeing social services, child protection, and ensuring the welfare of vulnerable individuals, including those at risk of human trafficking. They operate at the counties level and in Bucharest territorially split into six distinct agencies for each sector of the capital.

3.2. Civil society organizations

¹¹ <https://copii.gov.ro/1/>

¹² <https://www.diicot.ro>

¹³ <https://politiaromana.ro/ro/politia-romana/unitati-centrale/directia-de-combatere-a-criminalitatii-organizate>

¹⁴ <https://www.dgas.ro>



The ProTECT Platform¹⁵ is a coalition of Romanian NGOs dedicated to combating human trafficking and protecting victims' rights. It was established in 2020 and gained legal status in 2024 as the ProTECT Federation. The Federation serves as a resource center for its members and other entities, facilitating collaboration in prevention, victim protection, advocacy, and public policy development. ProTECT's Key Activities and Goals are provided support and guidance to member organizations and other relevant bodies, fosters cooperation among NGOs, public, and private entities to enhance the effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts, works to prevent trafficking through various initiatives, including awareness campaigns and educational programs, offers support services, including legal aid, counseling, and shelter, to victims of trafficking both children and adults, engages in advocacy to promote policies that protect victims and combat trafficking and focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity of organizations involved in anti-trafficking work. All the NGOs part of the platform develop activities in the area of fighting against child trafficking.

ADPARE¹⁶ - Emergency accommodation and protected shelter; safe transportation; material support in crisis situations; coordination and support for victims involved in criminal proceedings; legal counselling and legal representation; psychological counselling and psychotherapy; medical, social, educational, and professional assistance; reintegration and repatriation support.

AIDrom¹⁷ - legal counseling; psychological counseling; social counseling; training courses and workshops; socio-professional integration mediation; mediation between beneficiaries and local authorities; social inclusion, vocational courses.

Salvation Army Romania¹⁸- material support; medical assistance; social assistance; assistance for educational reintegration; repatriation support.

Social Alternatives Association¹⁹ - psycho-social services; information and counseling for accessing rights (social assistance services and benefits, medical, educational services, etc.); vocational counseling; educational and recreational activities (including before/after school); development of independent living skills; mediation of the relationship with other institutions; material support.

ASSOC Association²⁰ - material support; guidance towards providing medical assistance; social assistance; psychological, legal, educational, vocational, professional counseling; professional training courses; support during criminal proceedings; support for finding a job.

Dignity Restored Association²¹– material and financial assistance; counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; legal counseling, court representation and emotional support; educational assistance; assistance for independent living, vocational/professional assistance, including professional qualification courses; socio-professional integration mediation; assistance in transit; group activities or support groups; repatriation support.

¹⁵ <https://traficdepersoane.ro/en/about-us/>

¹⁶ <https://adpare.eu/>

¹⁷ <https://www.aidrom.ro/>

¹⁸ <https://www.armatasalvarii.ro/>

¹⁹ <https://www.alternativesociale.ro/>

²⁰ <https://www.assoc.ro/>

²¹ <https://globaldignity.org/romania/>



eLiberare Association²² - accommodation facilitation and material support in crisis situations; social counseling; identification and detection support; psychotherapy; legal counseling/assistance; referral to specialized services, crisis text line, emergency medical assistance.

F.R.E.E Association²³- emergency accommodation; long-term hosting; material and financial support; legal counseling; psychological counseling; group therapy; personal development courses; mentoring; assistance with socio-professional reintegration; support provided to victims in legal procedures.

Restart Plus Association²⁴ - counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; legal counseling; court representation; coordination of criminal proceedings; educational assistance; assistance for independent living/vocational/professional assistance; socio-professional integration mediation; group activities or support groups.

MICU Foundation²⁵- emergency accommodation; material support; medical assistance, social assistance; psychological counseling; legal support; educational/vocational/professional counseling; qualification or professional retraining courses; socio-professional integration mediation; repatriation support.

People to People Foundation²⁶- residential assistance/facilitating access to housing/improving living conditions; material and financial assistance; counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; legal counseling, legal assistance, court representation; educational assistance; assistance for independent living/vocational/professional assistance; transit assistance; group activities or support groups; repatriation support.

Young Generation Association²⁷ - emergency accommodation and material support; medical assistance; psychological counseling and emotional support; legal counseling; social counseling and information; assistance for educational reintegration (with coverage of school costs); vocational counseling and professional guidance; socio-professional integration mediation; support during legal procedures; support for repatriation.

IJM Romania²⁸ - facilitating access to housing (center/shelter); material and financial assistance; counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; counseling and legal assistance; court representation; educational assistance; vocational/professional assistance (including professional qualification courses); socio-professional integration mediation; repatriation support; safe transportation; immigration status.

²² <https://www.eliberare.com/>

²³ <https://asociatiafree.org/>

²⁴ <https://restartplus.ro/>

²⁵ <https://www.fundatiamicu.org/>

²⁶ <https://www.people2people.ro/>

²⁷ <https://www.generatietanara.ro/>

²⁸ <https://www.ijm.org/stories/location/romania>



Bucovina Institut²⁹- legal and psychological counseling; independent living assistance/vocational/professional assistance; community assistance services; training courses; internal labor market mediation.

LOGS³⁰ (Social Initiative Group)- facilitating access to housing/improving living conditions; material and financial assistance; counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; legal counseling; educational assistance; assistance for independent living/vocational/professional assistance; assistance in transit; group activities or support groups; repatriation support.

Missio Link International³¹ (Romania) - residential assistance; counseling and social assistance; medical assistance; psychological assistance and psychotherapy; educational counseling; legal counseling, court representation; assistance for independent living/vocational/professional assistance; material and financial assistance; participation in the "social enterprise" effort (development of orchards, greenhouses, small farm animals) for economic support and educational/therapeutic benefits; socio-professional integration mediation.

These NGOs provide critical services such as victim identification, psychological support, legal assistance, reintegration programs, and advocacy for the protection of minors who are victims of human trafficking. Many of these organizations also engage in awareness campaigns and prevention programs to reduce the vulnerability of children to trafficking.

3.3. Coordination and cooperation

The National Identification and Referral Mechanism (MNIR) in Romania is a system designed to detect, identify, and refer potential victims of human trafficking, particularly minors, to specialized protection and assistance services. It involves a multi-agency approach, including the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC), and specialized NGOs. The MNIR aims to ensure that victims are identified, their needs are assessed, and they receive appropriate support and protection. The key aspects of the MNIR are detection and Identification by procedures for detecting potential victims of trafficking, including self-detection and reporting by various actors, It specifies the procedures for reporting cases to ANITP and referring minors to DGASPC or NGOs for further assessment and support, emphasizes the importance of collaboration between ANITP, DGASPC, law enforcement agencies, and specialized NGOs to ensure effective intervention, ensures that victims are referred to specialized services, including legal assistance, psychological support, and social reintegration programs, recognizes that victims of trafficking have unique needs and aims to tailor the support process to each individual.

Overall, the MNIR is a crucial framework for protecting vulnerable minors in Romania by ensuring that they are identified, referred to appropriate services, and provided with the support they need to recover from the trauma of trafficking.

²⁹ <https://bucovinainstitute.org/>

³⁰ <https://grupullogs.ro/>

³¹ <https://mli.ro/>



Cooperation with law enforcement in cases of trafficking in minors and indecent pornography is carried out throughout the implementation of the MNIR and a specific activity is that of offering support services throughout the judicial proceedings, so that minors under 18 years of age will be heard only in the presence of a psychologist who is either from the public child protection services, or from ANITP, or from NGOs. The same measure applies to children under 14 years of age, so that they will benefit from assistance during the hearing from any specialist in victim counseling, also from the entities mentioned above.

4. Child trafficking in context

4.1. Patterns and trends

The Integrated System for Monitoring and Evaluation of Victims of Trafficking in Persons (SIMEV) indicates some changes in the age and gender parameters of the victims as well as in the methods of exploitation. SIMEV is the national database with information on victims of human trafficking, trafficking in minors and child pornography, managed by ANITP and in which only with the informed consent of the victims and legal representatives in the case of minors, information regarding the trafficking situation and the protection and assistance services the victim has benefited from is entered. Based on information from SIMEV, ANITP annually develops studies and analyses³² regarding the phenomenon of human trafficking and trafficking in minors, including for online exploitation (child pornography).

Below are extracted characteristics of child trafficking per year, starting from 2016, until the half of 2025:

In the first 6 months of 2025, the Romanian anti-trafficking system was notified of 326 victims, registered through the SIMEV database, 136 of whom were minors. Of the 136 minor victims, 101 are girls and 35 are boys, the population of minor victims exploited in various forms reaching 42% of the total number of identified victims. Of the minor victims, 34 come from placement centers, family placement or in the care of relatives.

In 2024, sexual exploitation remains the most common form of exploitation of victims. Sexual exploitation, along with the crime of child pornography, is on the rise, in 2024, thus sexual exploitation remained the most common of all forms of exploitation (308 victims), followed by child pornography (150 victims). This data shows a diversification of exploitation methods, which requires the adaptation of prevention and intervention tools³³.

Like previous years, in 2023 the criminal interest was more oriented towards the exploitation of female persons, especially minors, in the sphere of prostitution and pornography. National statistical data

³² <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro//ro/docs/studii>

³³ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2024](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2024.



provide a share of 77% of the identified victims as female, the proportion of minors (40.4%), exceeding this year that of women (36.6%)³⁴.

In 2022, although the total number of identified victims did not undergo significant changes compared to the previous year (-1%), the number of exploited minors decreased by 17% (from 282 identified in 2021, to 234 in 2022), as a result of the significant decrease (-29%) in the number of victims in the 14-17 year old category (from 203 minors in 2021, to 144 minors in 2022). On the other hand, in the case of minors under 10 years old, their number increased in 2022 from 17 to 29 cases. This can be related to the increase in the number of identified male minors (from 27 in 2021 to 39 in 2022) and the number of cases of exploitation through forced begging (from 24 to 53 victims)³⁵.

In 2021, the increased proportion of minors in the total victim population can also be explained by the increased criminal interest in online exploitation and by forcing them to produce sexually explicit content (photo-video) and disseminate the content online. Most identified minors are between 12 and 17 years old (89%) and most minor victims are female, their share reaching 90% of minors registered as victims of human trafficking. Other known and recorded forms of exploitation among minor victims of Romanian citizenship were forced to do agricultural work or to raise and care for animals³⁶.

In 2019, the number of minor victims increased from 43% in 2018 to 47% in the reporting year, the majority being female. It is increasingly observed that certain ages of victims are “valued”. Over 70% of victims in 2019 were aged between 15-19. This can be explained by the high interest of traffickers in the sexual exploitation of victims and the ease with which young victims are manipulated and recruited, but also by age-specific psycho-social traits that make them vulnerable to trafficking³⁷.

In 2018, the vulnerability of women, especially minors, is reflected in their high share in the total number of identified victims. In percentage terms, 73% of the victims registered in the MNIR are female, so that the distribution by age is equal between adult women and minors (36.62% female, minors and 36.42% female, adults). Share of male victims: 27% of the total number of victims exploited in 2018, most of whom were adults. However, a share of 6.04% among males were minors³⁸.

In 2017, criminal groups were oriented towards the sexual exploitation of victims, domestically, with preference being given to minor victims, who are easy to recruit and exploit³⁹.

In 2016, the figures may indicate an increased adherence, justified by the emotional, relational and economic vulnerability of minors, towards the adult world in general and towards the false promises

³⁴ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2023](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2023.

³⁵ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2022](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2022.

³⁶ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2021](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2021.

³⁷ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2020](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2020.

³⁸ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2019](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2019.

³⁹ <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/ro/docs/Cercetare/RapoarteAnuale/Raport-national-2017final.pdf>



or recruitment strategies used by traffickers, given that 90.68% of minors were recruited in person, through direct approach and only 22% via the Internet⁴⁰.

Over the last decade, the number of identified trafficked persons in Romania has followed (with some variation) a generally descendent trend, with a high of 880 cases in 2015 and cases standing at their lowest so far in 2023 (451). Within this positive trend, however, the number of identified trafficked children has not followed a similar pattern: there are some visible variations in the last five years (212 cases in 2018, 327 in 2019, 255 in 2020, 282 in 2021, 234 in 2022, and 221 in 2023), but the numbers remain high. Moreover, the number of identified high and consistent⁴¹.

In conclusion, trafficking in minors and online exploitation of minors is a relatively equal phenomenon as adult human trafficking, with the population of minor victims representing on average 50% of the victims identified annually. Most are girls, sexually exploited internally and recruited both in person and via the internet. All identified minor victims are Romanian citizens.

According to specialists from focus groups and interviews, forced begging remains the most frequently unidentified form of child exploitation, particularly involving infants.

"Trafficking for forced begging is present in Romania and outside Romania, also the online sexual exploitation and child pornography have increased significantly in recent years. (independent expert, former judge)

"The growing phenomenon is the online sexual exploitation of minors." (specialized prosecutor)

Coercion into criminal activities was also noted as an emerging form. "Many children come from criminal backgrounds and stealing and begging are normal." (specialized prosecutor)

Respondents emphasized the growing scale of sexual exploitation among minors.

Also, all the persons with lived experience considered trafficking for forced begging remaining the most frequently identified form of child exploitation, particularly involving infants.

The second form for child exploitation was considered the sexual exploitation in online (child pornography) and in apartments (in door).

"I think that most of the trafficked children are exploited through forced begging and child pornography" D. 26 years old

"I tend to believe that child pornography is the main form, because lately, children have greater access to the online environment and become vulnerable if not properly supervised" A., 31 years old

"I would say that the main reason children are most often victims of child pornography is strictly related to their poor background, even in residential centers, where they are not emotionally stimulated or educated in this regard", M. 28 years old

"I also think that child pornography is the main form of child exploitation because these children don't find emotional support at home and become easy targets for traffickers.", I. 27 years old

"I would say that generational trauma is the main cause of children's vulnerability before being trafficked. Shortcomings of all kinds — financial, emotional, or otherwise — contribute significantly to child exploitation. Sexual exploitation and child pornography are the main consequences, but not the only ones.", L. 31 years old

⁴⁰ <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/raport-privind-evolutia-traficul-de-persoane-in-anul-2016/>

⁴¹ [Hidden Chains and Missing Links – Child Trafficking in Romania: A Comprehensive Study](#), published in February 2025.



The key insights from discussions with specialized professionals reflect the findings in the most common forms of child trafficking in Romania and recent changes: exploitation through forced begging – “that no one sees”, sexual exploitation, forced labour and slavery in internal trafficking “ for example, children working in remote shepherd camps” Also, the sexual exploitation, particularly through the “*Loverboy*” method, remains widespread but largely undetected and underreported. Participants noted that traffickers increasingly manipulate victims into marriage as a form of control.

4.2. Victim profile and groups at risk

Regarding the gender distribution of trafficked minors, most of the victims are girls, but also boys sexually exploited in person or online, in Romania or in other countries. Regarding the age distribution of trafficked minors, for the 2018-2022 period, age category is different between genders. For girls, the 15 to 17 age interval is the most numerous (with more than 200 cases for each year), as well, in the age 13 group (100) and age 14 group (160). In the case of boys, the 13 to 14 age interval is the most numerous (with 34 and 31 cases, respectively)⁴².

From judicial practice, the physical exploitation of minors occupies a smaller share compared to that encountered in the online environment, both components totaling approximately half of the cases of human trafficking registered at the level of police units and prosecutors. Regarding the trafficking of minors in the sense of physical exploitation, art. 211 in conjunction with art. 182 of the Criminal Code (sexual, forced labor or performance of services, forcing to practice begging or to commit crimes) at the level of the C.T.P. (Center for Combating Human Trafficking) structures at the beginning of 2025, a number of 270 criminal files were in progress, and in the first 3 quarters of the year another 72 criminal files were registered. The interaction of criminal investigation bodies with child victims of trafficking occurs frequently, given the casuistry regarding the trafficking of minors. “The share of exploitation is led by sexual exploitation (approximately 80% of cases), followed in order by labor exploitation (approximately 10% of cases), forced begging and other forms of slavery (the remaining percentage)”. (interview with specialized police)

In terms of combating child pornography, in practice, many cases involve mixed elements: “online grooming, production/distribution of materials, and sometimes associated physical trafficking (meetings for sexual purposes, internal/external travel)”, (interview specialized police)

4.3. Factors leading to vulnerability

The latest analysis by ANITP in 2024⁴³ shows that the number of identified victims has increased. This rise may be linked to the intensification of certain socio-economic vulnerabilities and the emergence of new methods of recruiting or exploiting victims. However, it is also due to proactive victim identification, improved reporting mechanisms, and greater public awareness of the dangers of

⁴² Idem, [Hidden Chains and Missing Links – Child Trafficking in Romania: A Comprehensive Study](#), published in February 2025.

⁴³ [Annual report on the evolution of human trafficking in Romania, 2024](#)- National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 2024.



human trafficking. The number of cases involving the exploitation of girls has increased. This highlights the need for tailored prevention and protection measures for children and adolescents, especially in vulnerable environments where recruitment methods are becoming increasingly sophisticated. There is also an observed increase in the number of victims reported or identified by public and private bodies involved in immigration or assistance to vulnerable individuals. This indicates that these institutions are improving their reporting and intervention capabilities. Most likely, this increase is the result of better inter-institutional collaboration. Most victims come from rural areas, suggesting that these regions are more vulnerable due to the lack of economic opportunities and lower levels of education. Based on studies and analysis made by ANITP, Justice and Care, conducted a study⁴⁴ that highlights vulnerability factors in the case of trafficked children. Those vulnerability factors are:

Family circumstances: The interim analysis for 2023 looking at the total number of registered victims of trafficking (both adults and minors) shows: the largest category by far is that of two-parent families (251 out of 451 cases), followed by single-parent families (92 out of 451 cases). Again, victims that were cared for by relatives are not very numerous (14 out of 451). In both sets of data, the number of victims that were in care (institutionalized and foster care taken together) form a substantial portion of the total number, which suggests the need for social services and child protection authorities to consider more effective mechanisms for reducing risks.

Education: The high rates of school abandonment (especially in rural areas) suggest that leaving education early generates a significant area of vulnerability for children. Thus, the role of education in reducing risks is clear, and preventative work requires strong and proactive engagement by schools and education authorities, not only in terms of the continuation of education, but also in terms of access and inclusion.

Social media as a problem: Lack of supervision in disorganized families gives children unbridled access. Elderly relatives caring for children whose parents are working abroad lack technical skills and awareness of the dangers children face. Even with the best intentions, parents and educators are technologically unequipped to support children in safely navigating the online space. Lack of parental education often prevents parents from forming a trusting relationship with their children. Two types of behaviors raise challenges: an overly permissive approach exposes children to risks that parents are not aware of, and, by contrast, a very restrictive approach alienates children, who then find refuge in “virtual friends”. Children in care are particularly exposed: while state-provided access to new technology for educational purposes is a positive development, difficulties in managing children’s access heighten the risks.

All the above vulnerability factors are common ones that can lead to both victimization and the development of antisocial behaviors. It is very important to look at the depth of these vulnerable children's need for positive attachment to adults who love and protect them.

The following emerged from the focus groups and interviews:

The specialists appreciated that poverty and lack of access to education are universal drivers across all types of exploitation. Additional vulnerabilities includes single-parent households, criminal environments within families; peer pressure and lack of parental attention/support and understanding; children in families with financial difficulties or unstable home environments;

⁴⁴ [Hidden Chains and Missing Links – Child Trafficking in Romania: A Comprehensive Study](#), published in February 2025.



technology and digital platforms (e.g., games, chat rooms, Snapchat) are increasingly used for grooming, recruitment and exploitation.

The people with lived experience mentioned that the contributing risk factors are mainly related with the emotional deprivation:

“I am sure that the problems come from emotional deprivation and, mainly, from the absence of families... at least when their parents are abroad for work or even worse, when one or both are absent... what hope does a child have not to fall into the trafficker’s trap who offers all these things?”
D.22, years old

“Love and family support are missing”, O.31 years old

“Children simply have no support mechanisms from those close to them...”, I, 27 years old

“If no one breaks the chain from one generation to another, children come to believe that abuse is normal, and that’s why they can no longer distinguish between what’s right and wrong... especially in cases of child trafficking.”, L., 31 years old

Additional vulnerabilities include:

- Children who leave residential care
- Criminal environment
- Lack of education: boy’s perception of women as sex object
- sexual abuses are becoming normalized

As a reinforcement of the above, one of the psychotherapists emphasizes the importance of intra-family relationships in the vulnerability of children to trafficking. "The challenges I face as a psychotherapist in working with minor victims come from the adults in the victim's family. Sources of vulnerability often also come from family relationships prior to exploitation, and a trafficking experience affects not only the minor victim, but the entire family system. These challenges vary in level of difficulty, from adults who cooperate in sessions to adults who refuse to attend sessions.", (psychotherapist interview)

5. Practical aspects of anti-trafficking efforts

5.1. Detection, investigation and prosecution

The specific aspects of identifying and referring child victims are described in the dedicated part of the MNIR.

Any victim who declares themselves to be a minor will benefit from specific primary services until their exact age is determined. Professionals who detect a case of child trafficking are obligated to report the case to DGASPC, to the national child protection emergency line 119, and the statement must be taken in the presence of a psychologist from DGASPC and a representative from the ANITP Regional Center (CR ANITP). The statement must be taken by professionals trained in child interviewing, in accordance with the provisions of Government Decision no. 49/2011. In the case of child victims, the notification is made exclusively to CR ANITP. The identification interview for minor victims is conducted by the CR ANITP representative, in cooperation with DGASPC and, where applicable, with the private provider of specialized services (NGOs). Consent for the interview is provided by the parents/legal guardian, only



if they are not involved in the trafficking situation. The statement and identification interview take place in the presence of the parents/legal guardian, only if they are not involved in the trafficking situation. The psychologist or DGASPC representative present during the statement or identification interview will self-report the trafficking case if DGASPC was not previously notified. The specialist who first meets the victim is responsible for informing them about their rights. Children are informed according to their age and level of maturity, and the parents/legal guardian are informed only if they are not involved in the trafficking situation. The case manager appointed by DGASPC, together with the multidisciplinary team conducting the detailed assessment (following the initial assessment), in accordance with Government Decision no. 49/2011, will include the provisions of the immediate risks and needs management plan in the individualized protection plan or in the rehabilitation and social reintegration plan. Referrals are carried out by CR ANITP to DGASPC using the official referral form.

The participation of the child victim as an injured party in the criminal investigation and court proceedings is the decision of the parent or the legal representative appointed.

Safe Repatriation: If the minor cannot travel alone, escort teams can be organized to ensure the victim's safe transport until they are received at the destination. These escort teams may include operational teams (IOM operations officers, social workers and psychologists from DGASPC and NGOs), for both minors and vulnerable adults, medical escorts, for minors and adults with health issues (doctors and/or nurses, upon request from specialists in the victim assistance and protection network), security escorts, for victims who may be in danger during the journey.

Investigating child trafficking in Romania is the exclusive responsibility of DIICOT (Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism Offences), working with specialized structures of the Romanian Police (BCCO/DCCO). The authorities are prioritizing modern recruitment methods, such as "Loverboy", where minors are emotionally manipulated through false promises of romantic relationships before being exploited. The investigation and prosecution of child trafficking in Romania underwent major legislative and operational reforms during 2024-2025, aiming to toughen penalties and increase protection for vulnerable victims. Among the most important are: the elimination of suspension of punishment, respectively, starting with June 2024, the legislation prohibits the suspension under supervision of the execution of the sentence for the crimes of human trafficking and trafficking of minors and all convicted traffickers must serve the sentence in detention, the sentences are harsher, such as for trafficking of minors, the special limits of the sentence are 5 to 10 years of imprisonment and the prohibition of certain rights.

The following emerged from the focus groups and interviews:

The main challenges encountered in identifying victims of child trafficking are both in relation to the traumatized child's profile, but also in relation to external obstacles.

Physical and emotional dependence created by the exploiter (the victim believes that he or she does not have the resources to live in the absence of the trafficker), reluctance to seek support from the authorities, unprofessional approaches from representatives of state authorities (police, prosecutor's office, social services): victims may hide the abuse due to shame.

Delays in accessing digital evidence led to the loss of essential information (deleted conversations, closed accounts).

Lack of effective collaboration with online platforms slows down investigations and reduces the number of criminal prosecutions.



Stigma, victims' fear of perpetrators, threats to victims or family members by suspects/defendants directly or through proxies, lack of prompt victim protection procedures and institutions (conspired accommodation units, specialized counseling services, funding programs to ensure a decent living and obtaining incentives) reduce cooperation and trust in the justice system, affecting the ability to build and complete files.

Insufficient resources (specialized police, shelters, therapists) limit both protection and the ability to support victims in the long term. To the extent that we are faced with the reluctance of victims to cooperate, judicial authorities exploit all technical means and evidentiary procedures delimited in the Code of Criminal Procedure and derived from the constitutive content of the crimes to obtain solid evidence that supports the exploitation. The statements of victims of trafficking are the pillar of a criminal investigation, but it can also be built on solid evidence other than statements.

Trained investigators apply interview techniques adapted to children (plain language, time, pre/post counseling), reducing revictimization.

Protective measures before cooperation: immediately offering a safety net (shelter, psychological assistance, anonymous protection) increases the likelihood that the victim will cooperate later.

Mediators and NGOs: using trusted NGOs to build the relationship between the victim and the authorities, as well as to strengthen their level of trust for participation in judicial procedures and the criminal trial—NGOs can facilitate trust, explain processes and ensure continuity.

Legal tools: procedures through which the minor can submit protected statements (closed camera, interrogations in the absence of the public) to reduce trauma.

Remaining challenges: fear of reprisals from traffickers, economic or family dependence, fear of being incriminated in ambiguous situations, and lack of family support”, (interviews with specialized police officers).

"Victims do not have as much trust in the National Police / Local Police as they do in these specialized institutions, often also because of the victim-blaming attitudes promoted by the communities they belong to and which some police officers unfortunately adopt.", (psychotherapist interview)

Proposals for improvement: Digital education programs in schools (students + parents + teachers) for recognition and reporting; anonymous telephone lines and chats for reporting; close collaboration with platforms for the detection of suspicious content and early warnings; educating professionals in the field and staff who come into contact with victims/potential victims for an approach centered on the trauma of victims, approaching them and increasing the degree of trust in the authorities.

Another part of the respondents appreciated that we have legal resources, but they are not applied uniformly.

"I believe that current legal provisions are sufficient to protect the interests of minors in the phenomenon of trafficking, but a mandatory continuous anti-trafficking training is necessary for key professions: police officers, prosecutors, social workers, teachers, medical personnel, as well as clear protocols for collaboration between institutions with designated responsible persons and documented reporting flows." (specialized lawyer)

Regarding the conduct of criminal proceedings, amendments to the criminal procedure code are necessary:



- In the victim summons procedure, the mention of the possibility of requesting a hearing as a victim of the crime of human trafficking, using audio-video means, should be added.
- Communication of the indictment and the minor victim, through a legal representative (injured person/civil party), in the preliminary chamber procedure.
- Exclusion of the possibility of concluding a plea agreement for the crimes of slavery, pimping, child pornography, exploitation begging.
- "Exclusion of the evidence requested by the defendants regarding the procedure of confronting the victim, treating it as inadmissible evidence.", (specialized lawyer).

Also, the people with lived experience appreciated that the current efforts take too much time for proper response and not all the victim rights can be respected, especially in the court in Romania and in the destination countries for Romanians too.

5.2. Victim support

In Romania, child trafficking victims receive assistance through a multi-agency approach involving the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), social services, and NGOs. This includes support services like shelter, healthcare, psychological counseling, legal assistance, and financial aid.

Romania has several laws and mechanisms in place to protect and assist child victims of trafficking. Key legislation includes Law no. 678/2001⁴⁵ on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and Law no. 272/2004 regarding the protection and promotion of children's rights. Law 678/2001 in Romania focuses on preventing and combating human trafficking and includes provisions for the protection and assistance of victims. It mandates special physical, legal, and social protection for victims of trafficking and other crimes, ensuring their privacy and identity are protected. Victims are entitled to information about their rights, including the right to recover and reflection period up to 90 days, physical, psychological and social recovery, free legal aid, and potential financial compensation from the state. Law no. 136/2023 was adopted, through which amendments were made to law no. 678/2001 in order to correctly and effectively transpose the European principle of non-criminalization and non-punishment of victims of trafficking in human beings including minors. Another amendment to the same law brought into question the clarification of the issue of the possibility of issuing identity/domicile documents for victims, according to the specific law.

Law 211/2004 in Romania, officially titled "Law on Certain Measures to Ensure the Protection of Victims of Crime," focuses on providing information, support, and protection to individuals who have been harmed by criminal acts. It outlines measures for informing victims about their rights, providing psychological counseling and other forms of assistance, and offering free legal aid. The law also addresses the state's role in providing financial compensation to victims of certain crimes,

⁴⁵ [Law no. 678/2001 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings](#), published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE No. 783 of 11 December 2001



including trafficking in minors and child pornography. In accordance with “the victim law”, Support Services for Victims of Crime (SSVI) are operational within DGASPC, where victims can receive social assistance, legal counselling and psychological counselling.

Most unspecialized respondents were unaware of NGOs offering specialized services for trafficked children. Functional examples on the child pornography line: formal local working groups (MOU (memorandum of understanding - written agreement) between police-social services-NGOs), common reporting lines, inter-institutional protocols for rapid reaction (procedures in the first 24–72 hours).

“At the IGPR (General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police)- ANPDCA (National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption) level, a collaboration protocol was concluded during 2021, establishing mechanisms for immediate notification of the anti-trafficking structures within the DCCO by the central/territorial DGASPCs in the event of the detection of potential cases of exploitation involving minors of any kind. The MNIR (national Identification and Referral Mechanism) - expressly provides for the stages of inter-institutional cooperation in trafficking cases”. (specialized police)

The people with lived experience appreciated the resources are not being sufficient, limited services on vulnerability and limited services after exploitation.

“Young people who leave foster care, even though they are no longer necessarily minors... but they are vulnerable, and no one sees them! Plus, those in the centers are not seen either!” M., 28 years old

The reluctance of some families to seek psychological services was also mentioned.

"People are reluctant when it comes to psychotherapy, although emotional support alone is not enough... maybe there is still the mentality that you are crazy if you go to a psychologist/psychotherapist, and especially a psychiatrist..." D. 27 years old

In addition to the known anti-trafficking actors, respondents would see greater involvement of the Orthodox church (both in prevention and protection), which is present in most communities in Romania.

“Not enough is said about the church's involvement and influence in the community. D.22 years old

"Unfortunately, the biggest challenges in supporting and reintegrating minor victims have come from some teachers in the schools where the victims study, through the punitive attitudes and behaviors they have expressed and demonstrated both towards students identified as victims and towards hypothetical victims in their discussions in schools. Some of the most common traumatic symptoms of minor victims are feelings of shame and self-blame, which cause strong emotional distress (even leading to suicidal ideation and even suicide attempts), which is why they also seek psychotherapeutic help. However, even in conditions where psychotherapy generates results, behaviors such as lowering grades for behavior (unfortunately, very often, on the grounds that "it would have brought shame to the school"), verbal defamation, jokes about sexual abuse, as well as other statements blaming the victims can strongly sabotage the psychotherapeutic process and pose the risk of hijacking the healthy psychological development of the future adult, from revictimization and even to the risk of choosing delinquent entourages where they would feel accepted. For this reason, I consider it absolutely necessary to impose standards of good practice among teachers, regarding their inevitable influence in the reintegration of minor victims.", (psychotherapist interview)

The identified necessary changes are related to proper human and financial resources and on the quality of specialized services for children, victims of human trafficking.



“I do not believe that the legal provisions are effectively transposed and implemented in practice, especially in the territory where the organization of measures requires well-managed resources and recognition of the phenomenon - budgets, clear inter-institutional collaboration, specialists, the existence of specialized assistance and protection providers. It would also be necessary for victims to receive psychological and legal assistance throughout the judicial procedures and in court, to have lawyers who understand the need and request measures that make the process experience easier”. (psychotherapist interview)

Areas for improvement:

-social services capable of providing early interventions in communities at risk, with vulnerable families, to prevent trafficking and child exploitation. Communities more aware and more involved in providing support to vulnerable groups that victims of human trafficking could be part of

-development of a wider network of private or state service providers capable of providing long-term specialized assistance to put the victim in safety, correct assessment of risk, intervention that also targets the victim's family, intervention for trauma processing/integration, legal assistance and coordination throughout the judicial procedures and case accompaniment until the completion of the trial in court

-focusing on the victim's recovery and strengthening the environment in which he returns (family, community, etc.)/his reintegration is achieved. Increasing access of victims and their families to specialized psychotherapy and counseling services

-depoliticization in the organization of state structures that provide services for minors, continuous training and enabling them to provide efficient assistance, protecting beneficiaries of revictimization centers or abuses that occurred in the centers

-“ less emphasis on victims' statements and physical presence at court hearings in the processing of trafficking in minors' cases and punishing traffickers, without revictimization/ secondary victimization”, (psychotherapist interview)

5.3. Prevention

ANITP carried out, individually and in partnership with other public institutions, national and international non-governmental organizations or with representatives of civil society, permanent national and local prevention campaigns⁴⁶. The anti-trafficking message reached different beneficiaries from various social and professional categories, including pupils, students, teachers, parents and carers, volunteers, priests, job seekers, institutionalized youth, asylum seekers, individuals engaged in prostitution, anti-trafficking professionals, as well as representatives of the public. The promotion of anti-trafficking messages in the online space, through platforms and social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok), was also very complex and substantial.

⁴⁶ <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/subiectele/activitati/>



The latest campaign was launched during the Open Doors Day for Children on International children's day, organized at the headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and enjoyed the participation of one of the most beloved stars of the little ones, Andra Gogan (singer and influencer), who interacted with the children, sang, took photos and conveyed an important message about protection, prudence and respecting their rights.

The campaign is one of the reactions of the authorities in the field of citizen safety to the alarming data on the trafficking of minors: according to ANITP, in 2024, 55% of the 610 identified victims were minors, most of them girls. Sexual exploitation (50.5%) and child pornography (24.5%) are the main forms of trafficking, and 82% of the victims suffered emotional abuse. Recruitment through the Loverboy method or through social networks continues to seriously affect the safety of children.

In the school environment, physical, verbal and sexual violence remains a serious problem. In the 2023–2024 school year, almost 4,000 crimes were reported in schools, of which 68 were sexual assaults, an increase of over 35% compared to the previous year.

The "Wishes fulfilled at the right ages"⁴⁷ campaign is dedicated to protecting children against abuse, trafficking and exploitation, promoting the fundamental rights of the child: the right to education, health, opinion, protection and non-discrimination.

The activities within the campaign will include information sessions for students, parents and teachers, educational materials, content adapted for the online environment, as well as interventions in local communities, with a focus on developing children's self-protection skills.

The campaign is implemented through a solid partnership between key institutions in the field of child safety and protection: the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons, the School Safety Directorate and the "Children have talent" Association

Another example of a campaign is the national one "Safe Fun!", an initiative developed by ANITP based on the General Plan of Measures to increase the safety of citizens and ensure public order during the summer season aimed to intensify efforts to inform and raise awareness of the public during large-scale public events with a high number of participants (music festivals).

An example of another national prevention campaign is "Spread your wings! Information means freedom", The campaign ran exclusively online via TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, targeting adults and minors at risk/vulnerability to human trafficking, as well as the general public. The anti-trafficking messages addressed three main segments: sexual exploitation, forced labour exploitation and online safety of minors. The central element of the online campaign was the promotion of anti-trafficking messages with the support of three well-known influencers in Romania. The messages consisted of recommendations to avoid risky situations offline, but especially online.

Another example of a national prevention and awareness campaign, targeted at the online environment was: "Your safety is not a game". This was run by ANITP in partnership with The Child's Telephone Association and was of particular importance in the context of raising information and awareness among children and young people. The main objective of the campaign was to prevent child trafficking and child pornography and to increase the safety of children in the virtual environment by

⁴⁷ <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/lansarea-campaniei-nationale-de-prevenire-a-traficului-de-minori-dorinte-indeplinite-la-varste-potrivate/>



sending anti-trafficking messages and information about the risks of the phenomenon and how to recruit online on social networks. More than 1,900 prevention activities (face-to-face meetings with pupils, teachers and other professionals who come or may meet victims or potential victims of trafficking) were carried out as part of the campaign, resulting in more than 129,000 direct beneficiaries. At the same time, more than 1,140 social media posts were made to promote anti-trafficking messages online.

National prevention campaign "Don't give up on yourself! Human trafficking is not an option for the future", implemented by ANITP with the support of students from the Alexandru Ioan Cuza Police Academy. The campaign runs from June 2023 to June 2024 and aims to raise awareness of the risks and implications of human trafficking, especially among young people aged 15 to 25, to adopt a preventive behavior that can avoid the dangers leading to situations of exploitation, by improving the level of information and awareness about these serious forms of abuse.

The awareness campaigns are also sustained by permanent preventive actions and activities run by NGOs and International Organizations:

Association FREE provides educational programs aimed at adolescents, such as: Digi Rights "Educates youth on online safety, cyber risks, and healthy online behaviors" and "Human Trafficking and Dangers of the Internet and Pornography" ;

Dorcas Aid Romania, in collaboration with local partners, has focused on creating a protective environment for vulnerable children, particularly within the Roma community. Since 2012, the organization has implemented programs designed to prevent trafficking through: After-School Programs: These programs keep children in school, reduce their risk of early marriage, and educate them about their rights and self-worth. Regular THB awareness sessions are also held; Parent Awareness Sessions: These sessions address harmful cultural practices such as early marriage, emphasizing children's rights to education and protection; Adult Education and Economic Empowerment: Programs designed for adults, especially Roma women, raise awareness about child protection and encourage the community to value education and health over harmful traditions like early marriage and Material and Psychosocial Support: Dorcas Aid provides vulnerable families with material aid (food, clothing, school supplies) and psychosocial support, thus reducing the children's vulnerability to trafficking.

Alternative Sociale highlights the importance of information campaigns and schooling in preventing trafficking. In vulnerable communities, where harmful customs like child marriage and forced begging are normalized, these campaigns help children recognize and reject exploitation. The organization also conducts awareness campaigns in technical high schools, focusing on career guidance and critical thinking development to reduce trafficking risks.

Since the onset of the Ukrainian crisis, numerous prevention campaigns have been organized by member organizations of the ProTECT Platform. ADPARE is one of the organizations conducting a prevention campaign in an educational HUB with 200 Ukrainian students. The organization also does prevention by assisting vulnerabilities (e.g. single mothers with many children, Roma families, elderly, parents and children with disabilities).

The specialists appreciated the prevention efforts to be carried out mainly by the School Safety Directorate, as part of the Romanian Police.

“There is a need for greater involvement of colleagues from School Safety who, in addition to information and awareness, should also be involved in detecting vulnerable children.” (specialized police). Also, the specialists suggested integrating more information into school curricula regarding the new forms of child trafficking: forced early marriage, illegal adoption and surrogacy. The proposal was that the discussions on this topic should be led by specialists or school counsellors.

Areas for improvement are the integration of specialized content in education and better training for educators and parents.

The people with lived experience emphasized the need to educate parents and caregivers about the real needs of children, especially the need for validation and appreciation.

“Love and family support are missing. I perceived happiness as receiving validation, which led me to the situation of being exploited.” O., 28 years old

“Introducing information campaigns in schools and communities, at a national level, for both students and adults (both parents, teachers and authorities) regarding vulnerabilities (personal/family/collective) that can favor exploitation (through abuse of these vulnerabilities), in order to understand, identify and reduce the risks of sexual crimes and trafficking in minors.

Another necessary change is the establishment of mandatory standards among teachers regarding the attitudes and behaviors they have towards victims (both towards students identified as victims in schools and towards victims in general).

From a legislative point of view, not "particularly" effective, but it was a constructive step, increasing the age from 14 to 16 years in redefining as rape the sexual act between a child and an adult 5 years older. In the future, the limit should be raised to 18 years old as the adolescent is still in a vulnerable period of personality development, even in the absence of previous trauma”, (psychotherapist interview)

6. International cooperation mechanisms

Romania actively participates in international cooperation through various channels, including bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as regional networks like EUROPOL, INTERPOL, and FRONTEX. This cooperation extends to joint investigations and cross-border task forces aimed at combating transnational crime and ensuring border security. Romania engages in numerous bilateral agreements with other countries, particularly those in its immediate geographic region, to facilitate information exchange and joint operations. Additionally, Romania is involved in multilateral agreements and frameworks, such as those within the EU, to address various aspects of security and crime.

EUROPOL:



As a member of the European Union, Romania participates in EUROPOL⁴⁸, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, which supports member states in combating serious international and organized crime. Romania's law enforcement agencies collaborate with EUROPOL to address issues like terrorism, cybercrime, and trafficking in human beings.

INTERPOL:

Romania is a founding member of INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) and has been actively involved since its establishment in 1923. INTERPOL serves as a global platform for police cooperation and information exchange, facilitating the fight against international crime.

FRONTEX:

Romania also collaborates with FRONTEX⁴⁹, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which focuses on border management and security within the EU. FRONTEX supports Romania in strengthening its border controls and combating irregular migration.

Romania actively participates in joint investigations and cross-border task forces with other countries and organizations. These efforts are crucial for addressing complex criminal activities that transcend national borders. For instance, Romania has participated in numerous operational actions within the framework of the EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) and in joint investigation teams targeting organized crime groups.

The specialists appreciated that each local police unit prioritizes minor-related cases, whether national or international.

“Cases involving minors are prioritized, but the few that reach us are. Proactivity is needed in detecting as many networks as possible.” (specialized police).

Identified barriers to cooperation are bureaucracy, lack of centralized communication and lack of human resources and funding.

Identified challenges in cross-border cooperation are legislative and procedural differences between states (definitions, deadlines), time required to obtain evidence/warrants in another jurisdiction, language barrier and limited resources for rapid translations, problems in maintaining confidentiality and protecting victims' data.

The specialists provided good practice examples:

“On the physical exploitation side, the establishment of joint investigation teams in the states that have established parallel/joint criminal investigations that shorten the time for criminal prosecution, following international police and judicial cooperation activities initiated through Europol and Eurojust. Cases that led to the dismantling of organized criminal groups that were recruiting in Romania and exploiting in a Western state. Cases related to child pornography in which rapid cooperation between the platform, the authority in country X and the local police blocked the distribution of the materials and allowed the minor to be protected. Regional partnerships between NGOs that provide temporary placement and cross-border psychological support.”, interviews with specialized police officers

⁴⁸ https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Europol_Programming_Document_2022-2024.pdf

⁴⁹ <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/en/main/pg-international-collaboration>



"In transnational cases, procedures can take longer, they are more expensive (involve more actors who collaborate/not with each other; translation of some documents; ineffective or missing risk assessment; longer response time of some institutions; minimal social investigation that does not help in establishing the risk of revictimization at home or in the community)", psychotherapist interview

7. Conclusion

Additional Insights and Recommendations

- Specialized police officers:

At the European level, there should be a dedicated institution like the "victim advocate" model.

Calls for: consistent and continuous funding, exchange of good practices across the EU, adapting effective interventions from other EU countries, learning from international experiences, investing in capacity building and professional training at local and cross-border levels.

The latest amendments to the Criminal Code regulating the increase in penalties, the modification of the content and legal classifications of the crimes of human trafficking, trafficking of minors and pimping came as a necessity and a prompt response to the dynamics of human trafficking crimes and as an update of the mechanisms for combating them.

Overall, the legal framework includes useful tools, but often lags the speed and sophistication of both the digital environment and the way in which the practice of trafficking in minors is changing (regarding the method of recruitment - especially in the online environment and subsequently to the actual exploitation).

The mandatory introduction of cooperation protocols between platforms and authorities (rapid reporting channels) has reduced the reaction time in several practical cases.

Protocols that facilitate the use of multi-disciplinary teams in the first 72 hours have improved the immediate protection of victims (medical assessment, psychological support, safety measures).

- Other antitrafficking actors and women with lived experience on child trafficking:

This collection of feedback paints a realistic yet concerning picture of Romania's current capacity to prevent, identify, and respond to child trafficking:

Key challenges:

- Forced begging, online exploitation, and child pornography remain widespread and growing
- Poverty, lack of education, and family instability are key vulnerability factors
- Online platforms (especially games and chat apps) are increasingly exploited by traffickers



- Detection and investigation efforts are perceived as average, with limited cross-border cooperation
- Specialized protection services and trained professionals are lacking, especially within child protection institutions.
- Civic disengagement and desensitization hinder early detection by communities

Opportunities for improvement:

- Stronger preventive education, starting in schools, with trained specialists
- Establishment of a cross-border child victim support mechanism, like a “victim advocate” model, to ensure consistent legal, psychological, and social assistance throughout judicial proceedings.
- Better cross-border and interagency cooperation
- More funding and long-term investment in anti-trafficking efforts
- Knowledge transfer from more advanced EU systems

While certain institutional mechanisms exist, they are insufficient in the face of complex and often transnational exploitation networks. There is an urgent need for enhanced prevention, coordinated response, cross-border cooperation, and child-centered support mechanisms.

"I consider it essential to provide continuous training for all professionals involved in this field, especially for communicating with traumatized minors; the need for continuity and stability in work teams and in the personnel with whom the minor comes into contact.

The importance of education and prevention; that there be reintegration. Often, after the file is finalized, victims are left without real support and are still vulnerable.", interview with a specialized lawyer

“Amendments that need to be implemented to make the fight against the phenomenon more efficient and to increase the degree of protection of children are related to the criminal procedural part, to massively reduce the time allocated for resolving cases in the trial phase (preliminary chamber, merits, appeal). Putting this solution into practice would exponentially increase the degree of trust of citizens in criminal justice and in the responsible authorities.

At the same time, another amendment that needs to be implemented is that regarding law 678/2001, namely the establishment of criteria that expressly delimit situations of non-criminalization, non-punishment and non-application of contravention sanctions regarding victims of human trafficking and the expansion of the scope of their non-criminalization/non-punishment.

The abolition of ANITP within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the establishment of a similar institution within the Ministry of Labor does not represent the optimal solution for the efficient approach to human trafficking situations and management of cases of victims of trafficking.

Regarding child pornography: clarification and harmonization of definitions (e.g. distinction between online sexual exploitation, production of materials and associated physical trafficking).

Specific regulations on the obligations of online platforms (rapid reporting, evidence preservation, cross-border cooperation) and coherent mechanisms for collaboration with authorities.

Legal procedures for rapid access to digital evidence (logs, IP, metadata) and protection of victims' data in trials”, interviews with specialized police officers

Specific practices that have proven effective in improving inter-institutional collaboration in trafficking cases:

“Joint inter-institutional training on case detection, minor hearings, trauma-focused victim hearings, organized on national/international cooperation partners, NGOs, etc.” (specialized police)

Collaborations between specialized NGOs and prosecutors' offices/police for procedures to protect minors in investigations.



Training dedicated to all actors involved in preventing and combating human trafficking (police, magistrates, social workers, educators, teachers, doctors): contributes to making the detection of THB cases more efficient, reduces revictimization and increases the quality of statements and the participation of victims in the criminal process:

- recognition of trafficking indicators, ways to approach presumed victims, the way to follow a notification regarding the existence of a THB case, signs of grooming, use of metadata, procedures for preserving digital evidence — useful to be extended to all units.
- joint exercises and intersectoral case studies develops interoperability.
- training of trainer's programme to multiply expertise at local level.
- psychological supervision of staff (vital to avoid burnout and vicarious trauma) — relevant for all sectors.

Annex: Case 1

<p>Case ID</p> <p><i>Full reference to the case, including a link if available.</i></p>	<p>Case 1 (transnational and internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of an organized criminal group (art. 367 NCP); usury (art. 351 NCP); continuous blackmail (art. 207 NCP), continuous human trafficking (art. 210 NCP), continuous trafficking in minors (art. 211 NCP), continuous child pornography (art. 374), sexual act with a minor (art. 220 NCP). - 18 defendants and 28 injured persons (9 minors and 19 adults). - Of the 9 minors: 2 are girls and 7 are boys <p>Data in media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROTV, “Membrii grupării de cămătari din Dâmbovița, reținuți de DIICOT, se laudau cu sume mari de bani pe rețelele de socializare”(Members of the loan shark group from Dâmbovița, detained by DIICOT, were bragging about large sums of money on social media) published on 29 September 2023 , accessed on 10 October 2025. - ADEVARUL “Proxeneți și cămătari care au îngrozit două județe, cu ramificații în Austria și Germania. Descinderi în forță” (Pimps and loan sharks who terrorized two counties, with ramifications in Austria and Germany. Forceful descents), published on 29 September 2023, accessed on 10 October 2025.
<p>Country</p> <p><i>Name of the country where the case occurred or was identified.</i></p>	<p>Romania: discovered and investigated. Also in Romania, part of the exploitation took place.</p> <p>Germany and Austria: the destination countries</p>
<p>Source of information</p> <p><i>Court decision, official report, NGO case file, media article, interview respondent (generalized to preserve confidentiality).</i></p>	<p>Official report, media articles and NGO (ADPARE) case file</p>
<p>Date of case (or period)</p> <p><i>Month/Year or date range if exact date is unknown.</i></p>	<p>The criminal activity began in 2018 and lasted in 2023.</p>

<p>Victim profile</p> <p><i>Age at time of trafficking, gender, nationality, vulnerability factors (e.g., poverty, family breakdown, prior abuse, migration status).</i></p>	<p>All the victims are Romanians. 28 injured persons (9 minors and 19 adults).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the 9 minors: 2 are girls and 7 are boys; aged between 12-17 years old - Of the 19 adults: 2 are women and 17 are men, aged 18-54 years old
<p>-17 Type of exploitation</p> <p><i>Sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, illegal adoption / sale of babies, removal of organs, other.</i></p>	<p>Most of the minor victims were exploited in a mixed way, namely: sexually, criminal activities and begging. One of the minor victims was also exploited online through child pornography.</p>
<p>Recruitment and control methods</p> <p><i>Means of recruitment (e.g., deception, coercion, abduction, online grooming), recruiter relationship to victim (if known) (e.g., family, acquaintance, organized group), control methods used (e.g., threats, debt bondage, confiscation of documents, violence, isolation).</i></p>	<p>The victims' families owed money to members of the organized crime network and to pay the debts, the families or the victims themselves were transported and housed in homes or makeshift houses in Austria and Germany, to then be exploited in the ways described above. The victims were constantly threatened with death and higher interest rates on their debts if they did not comply with the demands of the members of the organized crime network. Identity documents were withheld, and the victims were permanently under the control of the network members, having limited freedom of movement, being isolated and having no means of communication. Trafficked children were humiliated by being subjected to constant sexual abuse, forced to steal copper from warehouses at night, detained by the police in Germany for theft for a short time and then released. Even though they stated that they were forced to steal, the victims were treated as criminals, not victims.</p>
<p>Trafficking route</p> <p><i>Country of origin, transit countries, country of destination, internal trafficking</i></p>	<p>Romania-Hungary-Austria-Germany (by personal cars)</p>
<p>Identification and assistance</p> <p><i>How was the victim identified? (e.g., law enforcement operation, referral by NGO, self-report), was the victim formally recognized as a trafficking victim, type of support provided (e.g., shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support, family reunification), was the child referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).</i></p>	<p>The victims were identified by law enforcement after one woman complained to specialized police in Romania.</p> <p>24 of the victims, including the minors, received coordination in criminal procedures by ADPARE in cooperation with the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons and collaborative lawyers.</p> <p>The victims were psychosocially assisted by the Child Protection Services in cooperation with ADPARE.</p>

<p>Investigation and outcome</p> <p><i>Was the case investigated, number of suspects identified (if any), prosecution and outcome (if known) (e.g., conviction, pending, dismissed), barriers to justice or protection (e.g., fear of retaliation, lack of evidence, delays).</i></p>	<p>Yes. In the present the file is in the first court judgment in Romania.</p>
<p>General observations</p> <p><i>Summary of key insights, challenges, or promising practices from this case that could inform policy or capacity building</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficulties in identifying victims in destination countries even though there were a large number of victims - in direct relation to the lack of identification in destination countries, the impossibility of applying the non-punishment clause in the case of victims who have been coerced into criminal activities.

Annex: Case 2

<p>Case ID</p> <p><i>Full reference to the case, including a link if available.</i></p>	<p>Case 2 (internal)</p> <p>Trafficking in minors (art. 211 NCP) attempted trafficking in minors</p> <p>1 defendant</p> <p>7 injured persons (4 minors and 3 adults).</p> <p>Data in media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spy News, Cine este patronul fast food-ului din Braşov care racola copii pe internet pentru prostituţie “ (Who is the owner of the fast food restaurant in Braşov that recruits children for prostitution online?), published on 20 August 2021, accessed on 11 October 2025 - Ziaristii, “Un mare şef de la McDonald’s Braşov chema fete pentru angajare şi le racola să se prostitueze” (A big boss at McDonald's Braşov was calling girls for employment and recruiting them to prostitute themselves.), published on 20 august 2021, accessed on 11 October 2025
<p>Country</p> <p><i>Name of the country where the case occurred or was identified.</i></p>	<p>Romania</p>
<p>Source of information</p> <p><i>Court decision, official report, NGO case file, media article,</i></p>	<p>Court decision – First Court and Apel Court</p> <p>Media article</p>

<i>interview respondent (generalized to preserve confidentiality).</i>	
Date of case (or period) <i>Month/Year or date range if exact date is unknown.</i>	March 6 – July 23, 2021
Victim profile <i>Age at time of trafficking, gender, nationality, vulnerability factors (e.g., poverty, family breakdown, prior abuse, migration status).</i>	7 injured persons (4 minors and 3 adults), who posts online ads for job search
Type of exploitation <i>Sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, illegal adoption / sale of babies, removal of organs, other.</i>	Sexual exploitation
Recruitment and control methods <i>Means of recruitment (e.g., deception, coercion, abduction, online grooming), recruiter relationship to victim (if known) (e.g., family, acquaintance, organized group), control methods used (e.g., threats, debt bondage, confiscation of documents, violence, isolation).</i>	<p>The HR manager at a McDonald’s restaurant used his position within the company to call young women to so-called job interviews to recruit them for sexual exploitation.</p> <p>The HR manager at McDonald’s rented two apartments in the central Romanian city, and there he sent his “recruited” girls to have sexual relations with customers, acquaintances of the man. The victims were given small amounts of money and were constantly controlled by the man who blackmailed them and threatened them with public exposure if they spoke about sexual exploitation.</p>
Trafficking route <i>Country of origin, transit countries, country of destination, internal trafficking</i>	Internal trafficking
Identification and assistance <i>How was the victim identified? (e.g., law enforcement operation, referral by NGO, self-report), was the victim formally recognized as a trafficking victim, type of support provided (e.g., shelter, legal aid, psychosocial</i>	<p>Identification:</p> <p>The victims were identified after a parent of a minor victim learned about the sexual exploitation of his daughter and filed a complaint with the specialized police.</p> <p>The victims were referred to both the ONG and child protection unit (public service) from the victims’ geographical area of origin.</p> <p>All victims were referred to according to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). No shelter was needed. They received psychosocial support.</p>

<p><i>support, family reunification), was the child referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).</i></p>	
<p>Investigation and outcome <i>Was the case investigated, number of suspects identified (if any), prosecution and outcome (if known) (e.g., conviction, pending, dismissed), barriers to justice or protection (e.g., fear of retaliation, lack of evidence, delays).</i></p>	<p>Final conviction in 29.11.2023, but with the change of legal classification in the Appeal, from trafficking in minors, to pimping and with a resulting sentence of 2 years and 4 months in prison.</p>
<p>General observations <i>Summary of key insights, challenges, or promising practices from this case that could inform policy or capacity building</i></p>	<p>The change in classification is not one that respects the rights of the victims because the abuse of vulnerability given both the age of the victims, and the professional status of the perpetrator was not considered. Also, the case of blackmail as a means of enslaving exploited victims was not sufficiently investigated.</p>

Annex: Case 3

<p>Case ID <i>Full reference to the case, including a link if available.</i></p>	<p>Case 3 (internal and transnational) Establishment of an organized criminal group (art. 367 NCP); continuous trafficking in minors (art. 211 NCP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 defendants - 70 injured persons (all minors-children, boys and girls, under 14 years of age, without criminal liability)
<p>Country <i>Name of the country where the case occurred or was identified.</i></p>	<p>The case was identified in Romania. The investigation was carried out in a JIT with the French authorities. The procedural and investigative activities carried out in this case benefited from logistical support and funding from Eurojust.</p>
<p>Source of information <i>Court decision, official report, NGO case file, media article, interview respondent (generalised to preserve confidentiality).</i></p>	<p>Data in the justice portal: https://www.rejust.ro/ (case law portal - access only to registered users)</p> <p>Data in media:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitorul de Neamt, “Copii traficati în Franța, la furat” (Children trafficked into France to steal”, published on 22 January 2018, accessed on 12 October 2025 - DIGI 24, “Zeci de minori români obligați să fure în Franța” (Dozens of Romanian minors forced to steal in France), published on 20 June 2017, accessed on 12 October 2025.
Date of case (or period) <i>Month/Year or date range if exact date is unknown.</i>	2014-2017
Victim profile <i>Age at time of trafficking, gender, nationality, vulnerability factors (e.g., poverty, family breakdown, prior abuse, migration status).</i>	70 children, boys and girls, Romanians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The defendants are their parents or other relatives - Poor material condition - Lack or no education
Type of exploitation <i>Sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, illegal adoption / sale of babies, removal of organs, other.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forced criminality - Forced begging
Recruitment and control methods <i>Means of recruitment (e.g., deception, coercion, abduction, online grooming), recruiter relationship to victim (if known) (e.g., family, acquaintance, organized group), control methods used (e.g., threats, debt bondage, confiscation of documents, violence, isolation).</i>	The members of the criminal group exploited their own minor children both in a city in Romania and in the capital of France. They were determined and instructed to commit pickpocketing in public transport, public transport stations and the premises of large shopping complexes. The stolen goods consisting of wallets, telephones, sums of money or other valuables were handed over to the parents who used them. The parents organized the children's criminal activity in detail, including establishing the work schedule, the mode of action, the places where the stolen goods were hidden to be later recovered. The minors were also required to bring daily amounts of money home depending on the area where they were sent to steal. After being trained within the Iasi municipality, the minors were transported to Paris, to several camps inhabited by Roma, from where they were later guided by their own parents in their criminal activity.
Trafficking route	Romania- France

<p><i>Country of origin, transit countries, country of destination, internal trafficking</i></p>	
<p>Identification and assistance <i>How was the victim identified? (e.g., law enforcement operation, referral by NGO, self-report), was the victim formally recognised as a trafficking victim, type of support provided (e.g., shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support, family reunification), was the child referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).</i></p>	<p>Law enforcement operation after notification of the Romanian authorities by the French authorities. The victims were formally identified and referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). No info about the support received.</p>
<p>Investigation and outcome <i>Was the case investigated, number of suspects identified (if any), prosecution and outcome (if known) (e.g., conviction, pending, dismissed), barriers to justice or protection (e.g., fear of retaliation, lack of evidence, delays).</i></p>	<p>The final decision: 09.12.2020 Conviction: Between 2 years and 9 years and 8 months with execution in detention plus the complementary penalty of prohibition of certain civil rights for a period of 5 years. Remedies for victims: 5000 euro/ victim for moral damages</p>
<p>General observations <i>Summary of key insights, challenges, or promising practices from this case that could inform policy or capacity building</i></p>	<p>Difficulty in identifying, investigating and interviewing victims due to the kinship between victims and traffickers.</p>

Annex: Case 4

<p>Case ID <i>Full reference to the case, including a link if available.</i></p>	<p>Case 4 (internal and transnational)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trafficking in minors, under art. 211 NCP. (1 victim) - trafficking in persons, under art. 210 NCP (2 victims) - pimping, in continuous form art. 35 NCP. - money laundering, in continuous form. 18 defendants and 28 injured persons (9 minors and 19 adults).
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	<p>- 1 defendant</p> <p>Data in the justice portal: https://www.rejust.ro/ (case law portal - access only to registered users)</p> <p>Romanian police press release: Politia romana, "REȚINUT PENTRU TRAFIC DE MINORI" (DETENTION FOR CHILD TRAFFICKING), published on 10 April 2024, accessed on 13 October 2025.</p> <p>Data in media: Ziua de Constanta, "Minoră de 16 ani, forțată să se prostitueze în Germania. Se fac cercetări pentru infracțiunea de trafic de minori" ("16-year-old minor forced into prostitution in Germany. Investigation underway for the crime of trafficking in minors", published on 10 April 2024, accessed on 13 October 2025.</p>
Country <i>Name of the country where the case occurred or was identified.</i>	Romania: discovered and investigated. Also in Romania, part of the exploitation took place. Germany, Italy and Romania: the destination countries
Source of information <i>Court decision, official report, NGO case file, media article, interview respondent (generalized to preserve confidentiality).</i>	Court decision Case file Media article
Date of case (or period) <i>Month/Year or date range if exact date is unknown.</i>	The criminal activity began in 2011 and lasted in 2020.
Victim profile <i>Age at time of trafficking, gender, nationality, vulnerability factors (e.g., poverty, family breakdown, prior abuse, migration status).</i>	All the victims are Romanians: 1 girl and 2 women
-17 Type of exploitation <i>Sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, illegal adoption / sale of babies, removal of organs, other.</i>	The victims were exploited: sexually
Recruitment and control methods	The defendant recruited the injured persons by misleading them (promise of a common future - Loverboy method) and taking advantage of their obvious vulnerability (poor financial situation,

<p><i>Means of recruitment (e.g., deception, coercion, abduction, online grooming), recruiter relationship to victim (if known) (e.g., family, acquaintance, organized group), control methods used (e.g., threats, debt bondage, confiscation of documents, violence, isolation).</i></p>	<p>lack of education) and then forced them through acts of violence to prostitute themselves in Romania and abroad (Germany and Italy).</p> <p>The victims were constantly threatened, beaten, put in debt, and had their freedom of movement controlled.</p>
<p>Trafficking route <i>Country of origin, transit countries, country of destination, internal trafficking</i></p>	<p>Romania-Hungary-Austria-Germany- (by personal cars) Romania-Hungary- Austria- Italy-(by personal cars)</p>
<p>Identification and assistance <i>How was the victim identified? (e.g., law enforcement operation, referral by NGO, self-report), was the victim formally recognized as a trafficking victim, type of support provided (e.g., shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support, family reunification), was the child referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).</i></p>	<p>The victims were identified by law enforcement. The offender was also investigated for trafficking in drugs.</p> <p>The victims received coordination in criminal procedures by the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons and they were referred through the NRM. The victims were psychosocial, assisted by the child protection services and public social services.</p>
<p>Investigation and outcome <i>Was the case investigated, number of suspects identified (if any), prosecution and outcome (if known) (e.g., conviction, pending, dismissed), barriers to justice or protection (e.g., fear of retaliation, lack of evidence, delays).</i></p>	<p>Yes. Final decision and conviction on 07.05.2025</p> <p>7 years, 2 months and 20 days in prison for the trafficker and prohibition of certain civil rights for 4 years.</p> <p>Remedies for victims: 25.000 euro (moral damages)- for each injured party</p>
<p>General observations <i>Summary of key insights, challenges, or promising practices from this case that could inform policy or capacity building</i></p>	<p>Difficult identification of the victims since the defendant was known as a pimp and under the acts of pimping, he was able to hide the trafficking of minors and human trafficking. He used pimping as a camouflage method for the exploitation of the minor and the other 2 victims.</p>



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