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TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS:
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**Trafficking in Women from Central and Eastern Europe:
A Review of Statistical Data**

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Introduction

An increasing number of studies describe and compare trends in migration in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), some with a more general overview (OECD, 2000, 2001; Salt, 2000), others with more specific thematic or subregional focus (Rudolph and Morokvasic, 1993; Stalker, 1994; Ghosh, 1998). Despite many gaps in the quality and comparability of data on migration flows in Central and Eastern Europe, the main migration trends in the region are already reasonably well known (IOM, 2000a; OECD, 2000). Most significantly, there has been a decline in overall levels of emigration from CEE in recent years and an intensification of migration flows within CEE.

One trend, however, which is often overlooked by those who study international migration in the CEE region is the trafficking of women. This trend has not been fully recognized by those who study international migration because of a lack of official concern about the problem and the subsequent absence of statistical data. Most recent reports on migration trends in CEE tend to overlook the substantial increase in trafficking of women in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) since 1989 (IOM, 2000). Trafficking from the CEECs has tended to feature in reports on trafficking to the European Union, but is not a focus of migration studies on the CEECs themselves.

This omission is surprising for several reasons – not only is trafficking rising in prominence as an issue of concern to the international community, particularly in the European Union and the United States, but trafficking is an important issue in current European Union (EU) negotiations with Candidate Countries, with combating trafficking a key priority for the EU.¹

On 8 March 2001, in celebration of International Women's Day, for example, the European Commission published a paper entitled "Preventing And Combating Trafficking in Women: A Comprehensive European Strategy", which indicates ways for EU Member States and Candidate Countries to address the problem of trafficking. The document places particular emphasis on the need to combat trafficking from CEE.

In describing human trafficking trends in Europe, the Commission comments that "the most striking factor [in recent trends in trafficking], which gives rise to great concern,

¹The ten Central and East European Candidate Countries are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Of these, following the EU summit meeting in Gothenburg in June 2001, it is expected that the first round of Candidate Countries (probably the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) will accede in 2004.

is the increase in the numbers of women and children trafficked into the EU from Central and Eastern European countries” (EC, 2001b: 2).

As a result, the Commission has frequently underlined the need for the authorities in CEE transit and origin countries to give higher priority to combating trafficking in women and to “intervene at various levels to combat traffickers, warn potential victims and re-integrate the victims that return” (EC, 2001b: 13). In an earlier Communication on “Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Sexual Exploitation of Children: Two Proposals for Framework Decisions”, the Commission also stated clearly that trafficking must be targeted: “the Commission believes that a further response to the issue of trafficking is required at the level of the European Union” (EC, 2001a: 8). These statements have repercussions for the EU Candidate Countries and the significance of their fight against trafficking.

Trafficking of women from Central and Eastern Europe is not restricted to the EU; Central and Eastern European women are trafficked to North America as well and, as in Europe, the trafficking of women to the US and Canada is not a recent phenomenon. In the US, there have been recent reports of cases of trafficking in at least 20 different states, with most cases occurring in New York, California and Florida. In the latter state, some law enforcement officials claim that they are being “inundated with trafficked women from Russia, Ukraine and Central Europe” (Richard, 1999: 3). Source countries for women trafficked to the US are primarily in South-East Asia and Latin America, although there are also several countries from CEE and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), notably Russia, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic (Richard, 1999: 3). Although Asia remains the single largest region of origin for trafficked women in the United States, the number of women trafficked from CEE and the CIS is increasing rapidly.

In December 2000, the United Nations *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, accompanied by protocols on trafficking and smuggling (the Protocols),² was signed by 124 states, the smuggling protocol by 78 and the trafficking protocol by 81.

Discussed in detail below, these new Protocols symbolize growing international recognition of the problem of trafficking and indicate a commitment to take effective measures to combat trafficking. In its 1999 annual situation report on trafficking in human beings in EU Member States, Europol states that “trafficking in human beings poses one of the most dangerous threats in the Member States of the European Union (EU)” (Europol, 2000: 3). The signing of the Convention and the Protocols, as well as the issuing of the Commission’s communication, confirm the increasing importance given to combating trafficking.

Given this background, states in Europe will probably be called upon more and more to produce better data on the extent of trafficking in human beings and trafficking in

² The full titles are the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*.

women in particular – until now, areas in which data have been notoriously scarce. This chapter examines what current data sources reveal about the patterns of trafficking from Central and Eastern Europe, highlighting in particular the growth of trafficking within the region itself. It discusses the reasons for this apparent growth in inter-regional trafficking and examines the factors explaining this trend and concludes with a discussion of the ways in which data on trafficking in CEE might be improved. The chapter draws in part on the results from a recent IOM study entitled “Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans”. This study collected data on the trafficking of women from 28 European countries and more in-depth information from 11 key source and destination countries in Europe.

What is Trafficking?

During the second half of the 1990s, there was much debate about the concepts of “trafficking” and “smuggling”, with many bodies arguing that a much clearer distinction needs to be made between these two terms (see, for instance, IOM, 2000b; and Laczko and Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2000). At international level, the most important discussions took place in 1999 and 2000, when the UN prepared the *Convention against Transnational Crime* and the associated trafficking and smuggling protocols, setting new definitions for trafficking and smuggling in international law. Most CEECs have signed the Convention and the Protocols on smuggling and trafficking (see Annex 2 in the main annexes for a full list of signatories).

In the Protocols, the UN defines the distinct terms of trafficking and smuggling as follows:

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

“Smuggling of migrants” shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.

Thus, “smuggling” refers to the illegal transport of a person or persons across state borders which results in a benefit for the smuggler. The definition refers only to the transport of a person across borders for profit. While “smuggling” does not inherently involve exploitation, smuggled persons are very often at risk of injury or death. Thus, smuggling may involve grave human rights abuses, but the abuse of a person is not the fundamental intent of smuggling.

“Trafficking”, on the other hand, specifically targets the trafficked person as an object of exploitation. The purpose from the beginning of the process is to exploit this person and to gain a profit. “Deception” and “coercion” both play a role in trafficking. Trafficking often does include an element of smuggling, namely the illicit crossing of a border. However, according to the UN definition, trafficking does not necessarily have to involve international migration. Trafficking can occur within a country, for instance, from a more rural or a poorer area to a more urban or well-to-do area, whereas smuggling is defined from the outset as a migration issue involving crossing an international border.

Thus, according to the UN definition, the person who assists a friend or relative to cross a border illegally, but does not take payment for the service, is neither a trafficker nor a smuggler.

Some commentators, however, have expressed reservations about these definitions and have argued that, in practice, it may in some cases be quite difficult to make a distinction between smuggling and trafficking. Although the main purpose of migrant smuggling may be to facilitate the illegal entry of the migrant into another country, there are many instances where smuggled migrants are exposed to violation and exploitation either during transportation to the destination country or upon arrival. Such exploitation or abuse can even result in the loss of life, usually due to the negligence of the smuggler, as occurred in the case of 58 Chinese migrants dying in Dover in June 2000. Likewise, the case of 25 Sri Lankans who were told by smugglers that they needed to walk only a few metres to reach Germany, but who had been, in reality, left in Siberia near the Russian-Kazakh border in December 2000 under bitter cold conditions, was due to the deception of smugglers. One died. It is estimated that at least 1,574 migrants have lost their lives in smuggling incidents in Europe since 1993.³

In the case of women, drawing distinctions between those who are trafficked and those who are smuggled can be difficult. The young Ukrainian woman who is promised a job in Italy as a nanny, but ends up as a prostitute in Kosovo, was undeniably trafficked. So, too, was the young Moldovan woman who knew she would work as a prostitute, but believed she would earn a decent wage and be able to help support her family at home. She had not reckoned with being locked up and not paid. She was a victim of trafficking.

However, trafficking victims exclude those women who pay a smuggler once or twice a year to help them cross the border into Italy, for example, to work as prostitutes. These women do not depend on anyone and, after a few months, return home with enough money to support their families for another six months. The existence of such consensual migrant prostitution greatly complicates the matter of identifying trafficking as well as data collection, but should not, in any way, lessen the importance given to combating trafficking or play down the very real suffering and human rights abuses of trafficking victims.

³ “Trafficking in Migrants”, No. 21, Summer 2000, IOM, Geneva.

Lack of Data on Trafficking at the European Level

Although there is a growing literature on the subject of trafficking in women, few studies are based on any extensive research, and data on the numbers of persons trafficked are very limited. For example, Europol comments that:

The overall number of victims trafficked in the EU is still unknown, and only estimates are available. What is clear is the fact that the number of victims is much higher than the official statistics from investigated cases in Member States (Europol, 2000: 18).

Nonetheless, various statistics have been cited concerning the scale of trafficking in women. For example, the European Commission reported in March 2001 that “estimates of up to 120,000 women and children being trafficked into Western Europe each year have been made” (EC, 2001b: 2). However, it is not clear how this estimate was calculated.

The EU has sponsored research on trafficking under its STOP (Sexual Trafficking of Persons) Programme, while Europol prepares regular situation reports on trafficking in each Member State in addition to its annual reports. Europol’s reports, however, rely on information supplied by national law enforcement agencies in Member States, which, in turn, rely on local or regional law enforcement offices. Since many of these local or regional offices often give little priority to combating trafficking, and also have incompatible data sources, relatively few statistics on trafficking are produced by national police forces, thus restricting Europol’s ability to produce internationally comparable statistics.

No systematically collected and scientifically reliable statistics on the scale of trafficking in European Union Member States are published. Eurostat, the EU’s statistical office, does collect data on border apprehensions and smuggling cases in each Member State, but these data are not made publicly available and do not, in any case, provide indicators of trafficking in women. States are able to provide considerable data on illegal border crossings and people smuggling, but often do not segregate the data by gender, and sometimes not even by nationality. Furthermore, there are no data available on the subsequent situation of the migrants in the destination country, which is, as noted above, essential in establishing whether trafficking has occurred. Trafficking and smuggling often cannot be distinguished at the border since, as noted, much trafficking involves an element of smuggling, namely crossing a border, often illicitly.

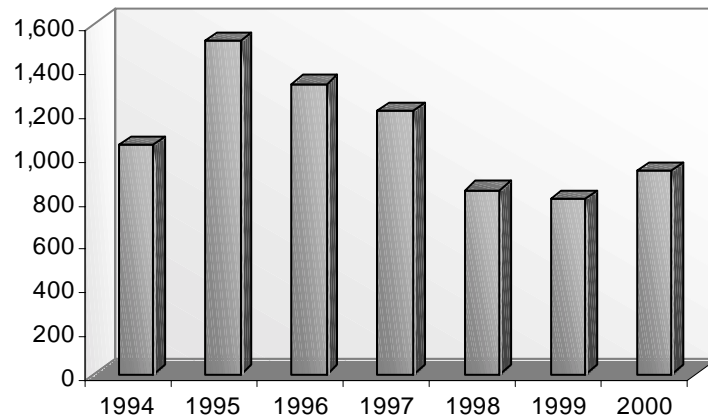
Data Sources

It is common for those writing about trafficking to suggest that the lack of data on trafficking is partly due to the relatively low priority given to combating trafficking among law enforcement agencies. The low priority appears to arise from two main factors: first, legislation is often non-existent, inadequate, or not implemented (see Annex 4 in the main annexes), making the prosecution of traffickers very difficult or even impossible; secondly, all trafficking convictions must be based upon witness/victim testimony. Such testimony is rare as victims of trafficking are either deported as illegal migrants or, if identified as trafficked women and given assistance, are often too frightened to testify against traffickers. Indeed, many women request to be deported (or wish to return voluntarily via programmes such as those offered by IOM) as they fear the retribution of traffickers (Kelly and Regan, 2000: 32). Inadequate legislation, both for prosecution and for victim protection, means that police often prefer not to prosecute traffickers at all, knowing that a great deal of effort only seldom produces a conviction.

In one of the most comprehensive studies on the trafficking of women to date, conducted in the UK in 1999 on behalf of the Home Office, it was found that the degree of priority given to combating trafficking by local police forces has an impact on whether or not data are gathered (Kelly and Regan, 2000). This study found that trafficking statistics are only produced where the local police forces monitor the local sex industry as part of their remit to combat vice-related crime. Unfortunately, such monitoring is rare, leading to the view that “a problem unseen does not exist” (Kelly and Regan, 2000: 29). Kelly and Regan’s study shows that most police forces in the UK have limited knowledge of, and thus give limited attention to, trafficking. Of 36 police forces surveyed in 1998, 13 had a vice unit and 23 did not. Of the 13 with a vice unit, 5 were aware of trafficking in migrant women, while just 2 of the 23 police forces without vice units were aware of migrant women involved in prostitution (Kelly and Regan, 2000: 17). Thus, no data are available on trafficking in the areas covered by these police forces, but this is not to say that trafficking does not exist in those areas.

Similarly, in Germany, official statistics on the scale of trafficking depend on the degree to which the police are prepared to invest time and effort into investigating trafficking offences. Germany is one of the few countries in Western Europe that collects official data over time on the victims of trafficking discovered in Germany. The latest report from the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) registered 801 victims of trafficking in 1999, which is well below the figure for 1995 of 1,753, suggesting a more than 50 per cent drop in trafficked women. However, drawing such a conclusion from these data may be inaccurate.

Figure 1: Victims of trafficking in Germany



Source: Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) Germany, 2001.

The data published in the BKA's annual situation report are based exclusively on the numbers of trafficked women involved in police investigations of suspected trafficking cases.⁴ As the BKA points out in its 1999 report, the drop in number of victims registered is partly a reflection of the lower number of police investigations of trafficking in 1999. The number of investigations in 1999 (257) was 19.2 per cent lower than in 1998 (318), but the number of cases of trafficking dropped just 5 per cent from 1998 to 1999. The BKA suggests that there are several possible reasons for the drop in the number of police investigations in Germany:

- lack of staff in the police forces responsible for trafficking;
- the police responsible for trafficking have a wide range of duties, making it almost impossible to detect and prosecute offences of trafficking in human beings properly;
- a larger proportion of (large-scale) investigations are conducted by organized crime units rather than trafficking units;
- there has been a shift of attention to associated elements of crime that are easier to address (BKA, 2000: 4).

However, the BKA's report for 2000 shows a rise both in trafficking cases (of 16 per cent, to 926) as well as in trafficking investigations (a rise of 25 per cent, to 321). These increases do not necessarily indicate an increase in trafficking, but rather improved investigation techniques. Indeed, the BKA provides two reasons for the rise:

- more intensive and extensive investigations;
- the development of offices specialized on counter-trafficking, with appropriate personnel (BKA, 2001: 3).

⁴ These cases refer to Sections 180b (trafficking in human beings) and 181 (aggravated trafficking in human beings) of the German Penal Code (Strafgesetzbuch).

Despite the lack of official data from police sources, there are other indicators of trafficking in women. In fact, as we show below, there are more data available on the scale of trafficking than is commonly believed.

In addition to police data, other data are available from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), government sources and from IOM. NGOs assist victims of trafficking in a variety of ways, by providing shelter, counselling, assistance during a trial, etc., either in the countries to which they were trafficked, or in their home countries upon return. A wide range of government sources record different aspects of trafficking, such as investigations, as described above, “staying permits” issued to women testifying in trials, women receiving assistance, etc. The International Office for Migration's (IOM) Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programmes also collect data on women assisted in returning home.

Although these three sets of sources are often in agreement, cases also arise in which each of them shows variations in scale and even in origin of trafficked persons, variations which have different bases. In most cases, trafficked women are discovered when police raid a brothel or bar. The trafficked women may then, depending upon the awareness of the police, be put in contact with NGOs, with other governmental bodies, such as prosecutor's offices, or may simply be deported. At each stage of this process, information may or may not be collected.

Thus, in a hypothetical case, a trafficked woman could be discovered by police; referred to an NGO, which then assists the woman in her testimony against a trafficker; and then be assisted to return by IOM. Thus, the same woman would appear in the NGO data, generally in some form of government data – either as receiving assistance, or as testifying in a case – and in IOM data. In this case, the woman could be reflected in each of the three sets of data. The other end of the range is the case of a trafficked woman discovered by the police, and immediately deported as an illegal migrant, thus not appearing in any data set at all. Other cases range in between, with NGOs registering women who neither receive official assistance nor testify and who also do not qualify for an IOM return programme or who choose not to take advantage of such a programme.

Some NGOs record the first contact made – such as after a police raid – or hotline calls, while others record only those trafficked persons actually assisted with advice, shelter, medical care or financial support. Likewise, official figures differ as well: Austrian data refer to women in deportation custody, German data to women who are taking part in prosecution of traffickers, Italian data to women who have received assistance, and Dutch data to women who have received “staying permits,” permission to stay while they are testifying in the prosecution of a trafficker.

Finally, IOM data reflect only those trafficked women assisted in returning home. The data do not, for instance, consistently show those who made a first contact with IOM and then decided to return unassisted or not to return. Nor are those (few) women shown who contacted IOM but were not accepted for the return programme.

Despite these disparities, better data are increasingly available. This is partially due to increasing involvement by NGOs and international organizations such as IOM in

recent years in developing and implementing programmes to combat trafficking. One of the by-products of these programmes is better data on trafficking, which, in turn, raise awareness of the problem. For example, since 1999 (including preliminary data for 2001), IOM has assisted well over 1,000 victims of trafficking from the CEECs to return to their countries of origin (see Table 1).

Table 1: IOM assisted returns of Central and Eastern European trafficked women

	Number of assisted women
1999	87
2000	697
2001 (From Albania, BiH, FYROM, Kosovo, Bulgaria to end of May, Germany to end of April)	366
Total	1150

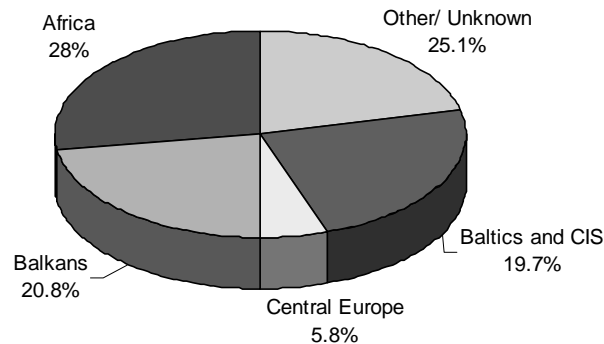
Despite the great variance in data sources, even within countries, indicators from a variety of sources, both official and unofficial, provide evidence of recent trends in trafficking from and to the CEECs.

Extent of Trafficking from Central and Eastern Europe to Western Europe

Most studies agree that the trafficking of women into Western Europe from CEE emerged as a problem in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and has since increased. Women trafficked from this region are gradually replacing women trafficked from Asia, Latin America and Africa in Western Europe and the United States. During the 1990s, although not yet the largest group of trafficked women, women from CEE and CIS appear to represent the fastest-growing region of origin in the world.

Figure 2: Regions of origin of trafficked women identified by official sources in selected Western European countries in 1999 or 2000*

Total=5887**



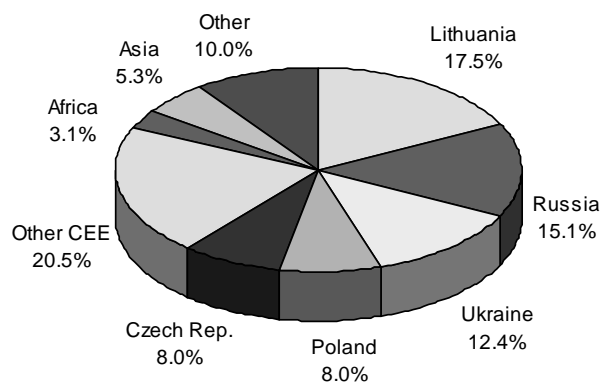
**Data gathered from NGOs in: Austria (2000), Belgium (1999/2000), Bulgaria (2000), Germany (1999/2000), Greece (2000), Italy (March–Nov 2000), Kosovo (Feb–Dec 2000), Luxembourg (2000), the Netherlands (1999), Spain (Jan 1999–Nov 2000).*

***2951 trafficked women from Italy are double counted both as NGO and official figures due to collaboration between the Ministry of Equal Opportunities and NGOs, (see Figure 8).*

Patterns differ from country to country: in some countries, women from the CEECs represent nearly all the trafficked women; in others, they are less well represented. According to the BKA, in 2000, nearly 85 per cent of the 926 trafficking victims in Germany were from CEECs (55.8 per cent) and the CIS (27.5 per cent) (BKA, 2001).

Figure 3: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women identified by the BKA* in Germany, 2000

Total=926



**Bundeskriminalamt*

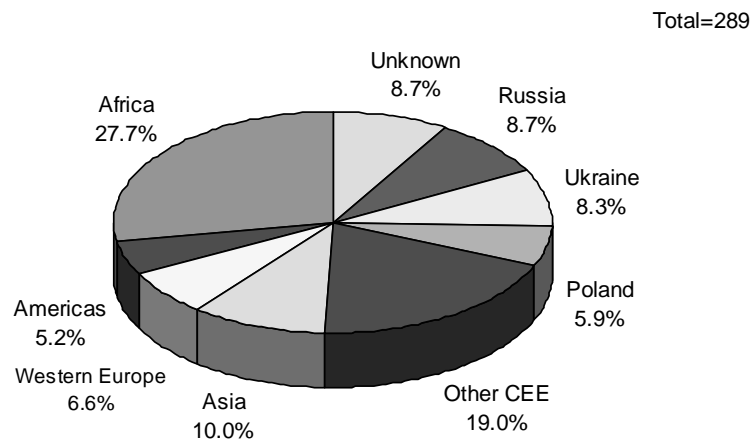
Only a few trafficked women come from Africa or Asia. Figures from German NGOs confirm this trend, with just 21 of 544 trafficked women assisted originating from

Africa, the Americas, or Asia. One interesting element introduced in the 2000 BKA report is a measure of the ratio of number of victims from a particular country to the overall population of that country, or a measure of trafficking intensity. Lithuania has by far the highest such ratio, with a 34.8 “Opferbelastungszahl”, or “Victim Burden Figure”, followed by Latvia with a ratio of 15.5, and Belarus, with 3.5. These figures indicate the seriousness of the trafficking of Lithuanian women to Germany, particularly in relation to the very small population of Lithuania. While there were 162 Lithuanian women in the 2000 BKA data, and 140 Russian women, the differing proportions to the relative population size are staggering (BKA, 2001: 5-6).

In the UK, there are clear signs that most migrant women trafficked into the UK are from the CEECs and, furthermore, that the flow of women from this region, and in particular from the Balkans, has been increasing (Kelly and Regan, 2000). In the UK, currently only the Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit (CO14) has a specific focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation. According to information from this unit, the number of trafficked women from Central and Eastern Europe to London has increased considerably over the last five years, but the unit cannot provide exact figures. CO14 state that their intelligence surveys of premises used for prostitution in central London indicate that between 70 and 80 per cent of women working there are foreign, the vast majority from the Balkans, especially from Kosovo and Albania. Police intelligence figures indicate that the number of foreign women working as prostitutes in London has increased 20 per cent each year during the past five years. It is, however, unclear how many of these women can be defined as “trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation”. There are no specialized NGOs working with trafficking victims in the UK.

According to data from STV (Stichting tegen Vrouwenhandel – Foundation Against Trafficking) in the Netherlands, there were 289 female victims of trafficking in 1999 and 205 in 1998. In 1999, 41.9 per cent of trafficked women in the Netherlands were from Central and Eastern Europe.

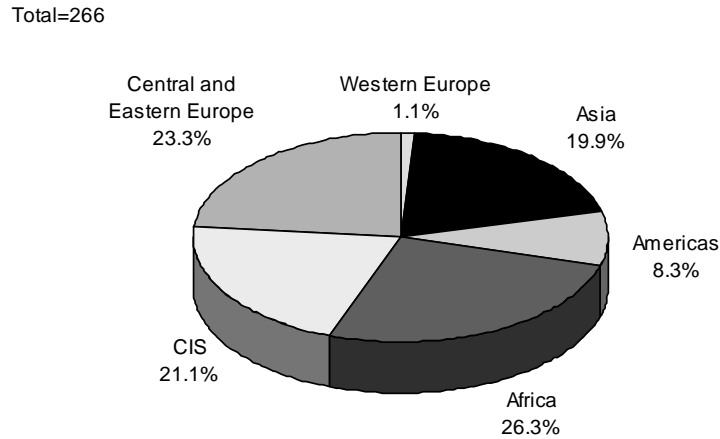
Figure 4: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by STV in the Netherlands in 1999



In the Netherlands, there is a great discrepancy between official and NGO data, as official data reflect only those women granted “staying permits” residence permits issued when a trafficked woman has consented to testify in a trafficking prosecution. In 2000, 51 such permits were issued, yet the 41 Nigerians reflected in STV data are not present in government data. The oaths into which Nigerian women are said to be forced before being trafficked, promising them death if they testify, may discourage them from being willing to testify, thus accounting for their absence in official data. In the Netherlands, as in many countries, there is no central registration of all victims; each police district maintains its own registration of reports of trafficked women. Only those cases of trafficked women which lead to police investigations are included in country-wide data.

In Belgium, for the ca. 270 persons identified as victims of trafficking and assisted by NGOs in 1999 or 2000, nearly half are from the former Soviet Union or Central and Eastern Europe. Africa, the Americas and Asia are also significant regions of origin for trafficking victims.

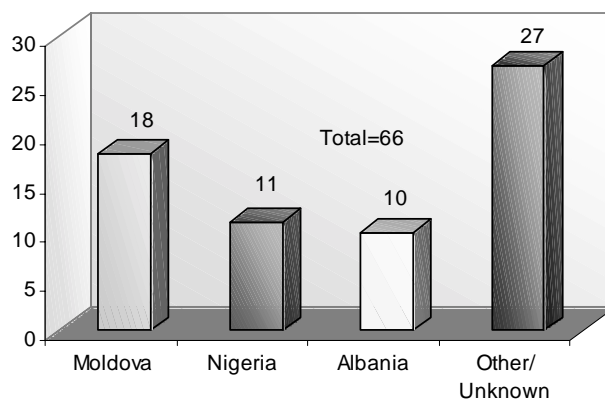
Figure 5: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by NGOs in Belgium in 1999/2000*



**Data from two of the three primary NGOs: Pag-Asa (1999) and Payoke (2000)*

Official figures from Belgium confirm the distribution of trafficking victims among many regions, showing Moldovans and Nigerians to be the largest groups of trafficked women.

Figure 6: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women identified by the Belgian Foreign Ministry in 2000

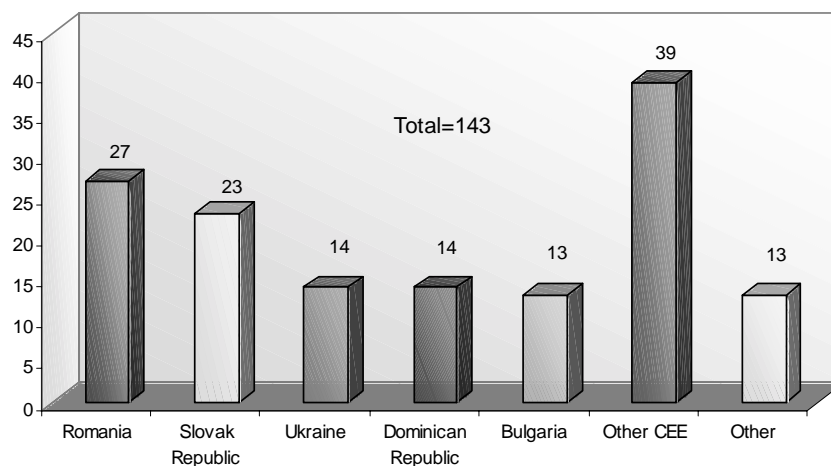


Austria, again, seems to have many more trafficking victims from CEE, with a large number from the Dominican Republic. Data from a project⁵ by the NGO Lateinamerikanische Emigrierte Frauen in Österreich (Latin American Emigrated

⁵ The project “Interventionsstelle für Betroffene des Frauenhandels” is their only project offering help to all trafficked women, regardless of origin.

Women in Austria) show that nearly all of the 150 trafficking victims were from CEE.

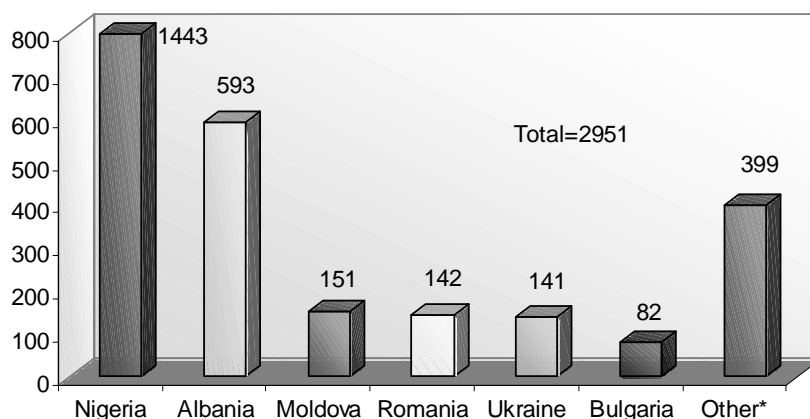
Figure 7: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by LEFÖ in Austria in 2000



The official data in Austria, which reflect only women in deportation custody, are considerably lower than the NGO data. In the Austrian case in particular, it is clear that the methodology for data collection is a very important factor.

On the other hand, Italy remains a significant destination for both trafficked women from Africa (Nigeria) and from CEE (Albania, Moldova). It does appear to be the case, however, that trafficking from the Balkans and CEE to Italy is increasing. The data reflect those women assisted by NGOs under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Figure 8: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by NGOs in Italy in 2000 (Mar-Nov)



* incl. Morocco 77, Russia 54, Colombia 52, Italy 43

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Italy.

Other figures in Italy are from a special telephone hotline established for victims of trafficking. During the period 18 July 2000 to 22 March 2001, monitoring calls revealed that some 4,317 “victims of trafficking” called the hotline. Nearly half (44 per cent) of the calls were from women from Central and Eastern Europe, with nearly 20 per cent from Albanian women. Nearly three-quarters of callers were aged 25 and under.

Given the limited amount of data on trafficking in Western Europe and the variety of data sources, some care needs to be taken in comparing the extent of trafficking in different destination countries. Italy, for instance, has a more developed assistance network for trafficked women, but is not, as a first glance at the data might suggest, necessarily the destination of so much more trafficking than other countries. However, existing data do suggest quite different trends and patterns of trafficking. Differences, for example, between the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, require further explanation.

Trafficking to and through the CEECs

An important new trend that has emerged is that the CEECs are not only sending countries of trafficked women, but have also become increasingly key transit and destination countries, as trafficking from such countries as Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova has increased sharply. Another marked change in trafficking patterns in Central and Eastern Europe has been the growth of trafficking to the Balkans, although it is important to note that not all countries in the region have been affected in the same way. Trafficking to parts of the Balkan region, especially to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, has grown rapidly; other countries in the Balkan region, particularly Albania and Romania, are more important as countries of origin.

Countries or regions such as Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Albania⁶ are also significant countries of transit, with traffickers using routes through these countries to traffic women from the CEECs to Italy and beyond.

Trafficking to the Balkans, in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, is due to several factors, including the presence of international troops, which has increased the demand for migrant prostitutes. However, the presence of international troops is certainly just one factor in the growth of trafficking; other factors include the breakdown of social structures in the wake of the wars and economic crisis in the region. The weak legal and political situation, which has encouraged the growth of organized crime, whose activities include prostitution and trafficking, is also seen as a key factor.

While trafficking in and of itself is viewed as a particularly cruel and exploitative crime,

Trafficking to the Balkans is viewed as particularly brutal with trafficking victims citing being resold repeatedly; raped by the traffickers, bar owners, or their relatives; denied food periodically; and compelled to have unprotected sex (Richard, 2001).

This description of trafficking to the Balkans is one reason for the increased emphasis upon trafficking to the Balkans on the international level.

Even with the assistance of the data in this report, it is difficult to establish the extent to which trafficking has increased or whether data are simply better, owing to greater emphasis being placed upon counter-trafficking efforts. It is clear, however, that trafficking to the Balkans has increased dramatically since the wars in the region in the mid-1990s.

Moldova is the poorest country in Europe with an average per capita monthly income of US\$ 40 in 1996; salaries have only fallen further since then. Romania and Ukraine had somewhat higher salaries in 1996, at average per capita monthly incomes of US\$ 75. However, there is much more regional differentiation within both Romania and Ukraine than in Moldova, with some regions much better off than others. In Moldova, however, no region is “better off” than others; it is a question of some regions being somewhat less desperate. As of the end of 1998, some 46 per cent of the population lived in “absolute poverty”, living on less than US\$ 220 per year.

In Romania and Ukraine, parts of the country are in similar situations: Romanian women from the south of the country – the poorest region of Romania – are more often trafficked than women from the north or the big cities; in Ukraine, the phenomenon is most common in small towns and villages. Bulgaria and Albania are lesser sources of trafficked women, but there, too, lack of economic opportunities and poverty play a role.

⁶ For Albania, the case is somewhat complicated in that it is also, as noted, a sending country, while trafficked women en route to Italy are also exploited in Albania for periods of several weeks to several months, thus making it somewhat of a destination country as well.

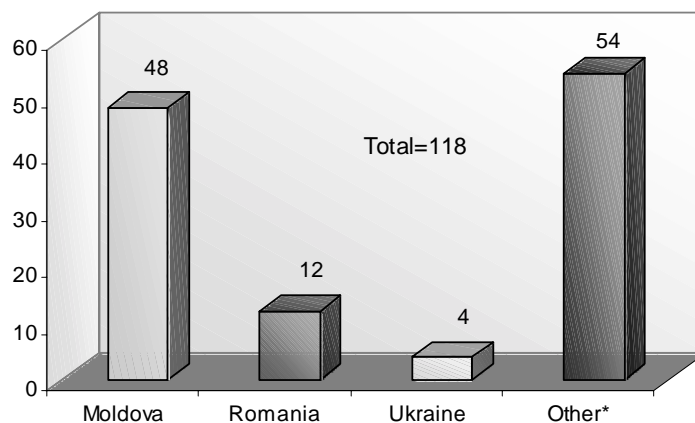
It is widely believed that many Eastern European countries are so poor – as described above – that young women will accept any job in the West. It is also clear that only a minority of young women in these countries seek jobs in Western Europe, despite a recent poll by the Romanian Center for Opinion and Market Studies (CSOP), which shows that 36 per cent of Moldovans would like to leave the country and make money abroad for some time, while 26 per cent would like to leave “for good” (“Majority of Moldovans Want to Leave Country”). Although some 600,000 to 1 million Moldovans are estimated to be abroad currently, the majority of the population remains at home. Thus, what are the distinguishing characteristics of young women who accept job offers in other parts of Europe?

Most women seek to support families; statistics vary, but many of the trafficked women are single mothers and have children they must support. Others have ageing parents whose pension payments have not kept up with inflation and who need financial support. With opportunities exhausted, women not surprisingly grab at seemingly golden opportunities offered them by traffickers.

Main Source Countries

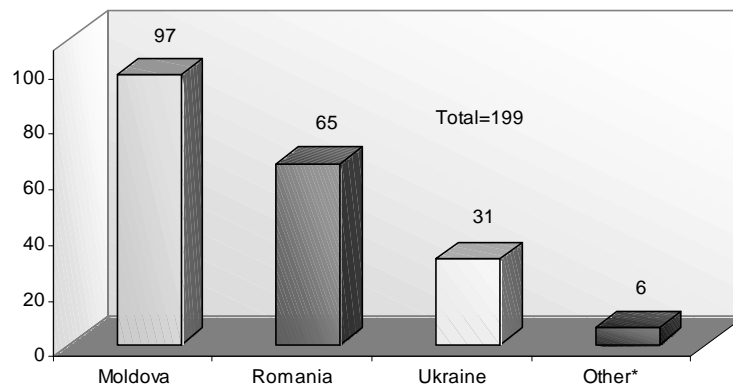
The major source countries for trafficked women vary according to destination country, within Western Europe (see above) as well as within the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe. In Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the major source countries are Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. There are also reports of Moldovan and Romanian women trafficked to Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Figure 9: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by UMCOR in Kosovo in 2000 (Feb-Dec)



*incl. Unknown: 49

Figure 10: Most significant nationalities of trafficked women assisted by International Police Task Force in BiH in 2000



**incl. Belarus/Russia: 3, Bosnia/Croatia/FRY: 2, Hungary: 1*

Like Russian women, Ukrainian women are trafficked to many regions worldwide, including Western Europe and the United States. Likewise, Moldovan women make up a large number of the women trafficked in the Balkans, and are also trafficked on to Italy.

However, neither Moldovan nor Albanian women appear in German data. In Germany, Ukrainians and Lithuanians, followed by Russians and Polish women (with some variation between NGO data, BKA data and IOM data) are the significant groups. Lithuanians are one of the largest groups trafficked to Germany, and, given the small population in Lithuania, especially compared to the other major sending countries, the trafficking of Lithuanian women has to be viewed as a very serious problem indeed. As noted above, the BKA has developed a measure of trafficking intensity with respect to individual sending countries, which shows Lithuania clearly much more affected than any other country.

Russia is also a very important source country, with women trafficked to Western Europe, the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and the United States, although Russian women are not the largest group of women trafficked to any country.

According to the latest EU trafficking in human beings situation report from Europol, Polish police intelligence reports suggest that cases of trafficking in Polish women are decreasing each year. The reasons for this are unknown but may include an improvement in economic conditions in the country and accompanied increase in opportunities for women, as well as greater awareness of the risks of trafficking among young Polish women.

To sum up, it is currently difficult to compare trafficking trends between countries given the paucity of reliable and comparable data. Within the CEECs, for example, the available data suggests that the problem of trafficking is greater in Eastern Europe and the Balkans than it is in Central Europe. It is not clear to what extent this is due to the

efforts taken on behalf of Central European states such as Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to combat trafficking (see Annexes 3 and 4 in the main annexes for a description of the measures that CEE states have taken to combat trafficking in 2000-2001). It may simply be the case that the “push” factors are greater in poorer countries such as Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. However, other factors such as the influence of organized crime are also likely to be important – there is also considerable trafficking from the Baltic states, which are by no means the poorest states in Central and Eastern Europe. The case of Lithuania and the very high level of trafficking primarily to Germany, may, for instance, indicate the presence of an organized crime network between the two countries.

Concluding Remarks

There is a growing amount of statistical data on trafficking from a variety of different sources. Only in the last year or two have many organizations begun to collect data; previously, many of the data were anecdotal, and still are. Although many of the data are not comparable, they do suggest a growing problem and indicate some new trends, such as increasing trafficking of women from Eastern Europe rather than Central Europe. There is an urgent need to develop better indicators of the scale and magnitude of trafficking, which can, in turn, assist in the development of counter-trafficking programmes.

This review of data on trafficking from the CEECs suggests that it is important to take many different sources of data into account, and not restrict data-gathering to one source of information. Both NGO and official data combine to provide a more complete picture of trafficking. It is likely that data will improve, as further action is taken by NGOs, Intergovernmental Organizations and others to combat trafficking. However, a mechanism to coordinate and standardize these disparate data collection systems and various indicators of trafficking continues to be needed. It may take some time before the necessary anti-trafficking legislation is in place and even longer before such legislation is actually implemented effectively. In the meantime, much more needs to be done to standardize and share the limited amount of statistical data currently available from a wide-range of agencies. In the long run, better data will only emerge when the seriousness of trafficking is recognized by all the authorities concerned.

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