



**THE THIRD SECTOR AGAINST
PUSHED BEGGINGS
PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME
Final Manual**



PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME

Final Manual



"Co-funded by the Prevention of the Fight against Crime Programme of the European Union"

THE THIRD SECTOR AGAINST PUSHED BAGGING CRIME PROJECT

- THB HOME/2012/ISEC/AG/THB/4000003901.

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Finito di Stampare presso Tipografia Menegazzo, Guamo (LU),
Giugno 2015

Impaginazione e grafica: Sara Valle

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1

Project Presentation

By Stefano Carboni Network
coordinator

“The 3rd sector against pushed begging” is a project financed by European Commission in the frame of the Programme “Prevention of and Fight against Crime”. The project lasts 2 years from September 2013 until August 2015.

The main issue of the project is the phenomenon of human trafficking for forced begging.

The present project focuses on the phenomenon of human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation through forced begging. Since the early 90's and with a marked increase in recent years many Italian and European cities have seen a steady increase of foreigners beggars, either men and women, children (underage) and adults. Those who begs, or are forced to, are often involved in illegal activities such as pick-pocketing, apartments theft, drug pushing, or are sexually exploited.

They are foreigners, recruited in very different ways, from (nomadic, gipsyes) Eastern Europe and also from North Africa and South America.

The 2000 Italian Report on Human Trafficking by the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on Mafia and other similar associations – that is the only existing inquiry in Italy on the topic- underlined the extremely harsh conditions of life to which children and adolescents were subjected by criminal organizations usually coming from the same exploited's home country.

Beggars exploitation often implies the instrumental use either of persons with physical injuries and of pregnant women with the aim to obtain greater financial gain and a more indulgent treatment by the police and judiciary authorities.

By the analysis of the scarce literature existing on human trafficking for forced begging, becomes clear the need to develop the subject in order to collect more detailed information about the dynamics that characterize the phenomenon and the conditions of life and work of the people involved.

The activities carried out with the target group of forced beggars both by actors of the private social sector and of social institutions has highlighted on the one hand the need to contact directly these people in order to reduce the risk for health and to improve their living conditions in the short time, and on the other end the need to favour the surface of the phenomenon and to encourage denunciation of exploitation.

Since several years the various players in the field of marginality have to contend with a growing nuisance, by public opinion, against those who are socially weak or who are easily labeled as “different”. A nuisance which in some moments and situations, becomes open hostility, partly because of political exploitation and print campaigns that increase these emotions and fears.

Even the beggar has thus become a bogeyman for the citizens and even for some government departments, through the figure of begging “disturbing”. With it is intended not only to punish those who “exaggerate” in the begging, embarrassing or scaring - so they say - especially women and elderly, but an entire category of people living in conditions of extreme marginalization and, in some cases, violence and blackmail. Begging harassing justified administrative measures to exclude beggars from the most prestigious areas of the city, removing them from view, making them even more invisible, without any corresponding responsibility or a simple act of solidarity.

In such a mobilization of opinion - and administrative acts - must be answered, therefore, also with targeted communication actions that are able to challenge prejudice and support positive interventions of recovery and integration, rather than push out more or less criminalizing measures. It is needed to make visible, in public opinion, people who beg - or are forced to do so - in the effectiveness of their condition.

The project “The third sector against begging pusher” really want to produce a data base of more appropriate informations about the realities of begging, in order to get to plan and implement effective interventions to help and combat trafficking and exploitation, if any.

This goal will be pursued through a series of communication actions that will help the research and construction of network promoted by the project.

The project was conceived and promoted by a group of NGOs that represent, in the European scene, some of the most significant players involved in the implementation of social interventions in favor of people, groups and communities, in situations of social marginalization.

The members of the partnership – Project Coordinator CNCA, National Coordination of Community Services (Italy), Asociatia Romania Anti-SIDA (Romania), Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje (Poland), European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN- Portugal), Anti-Poverty Information Centre EAPN Bulgaria and TAMPEP Italy – have been experienced for years, in their daily activities, the complexity of the phenomena of social marginalization and the need for innovation of the sector policies and of the practices of intervention, in order to provide appropriate responses.

These organizations have been able to constantly monitor the evolution of the phenomena affecting the weaker sections of the population and have found, each from its specific point of view, that the phenomenon of begging in Europe has grown steadily in recent years and that it is often associated with dynamics of coercion, violence, exploitation, trafficking, involving some of the most vulnerable groups.

The sudden development of begging phenomenon is definitely tied to the social disaster provoked by the economic crisis and the rising of unemployment figures, that plunged into poverty tens of millions of people in Europe. For those already living a precarious economic situation, often made worse by other factors of vulnerability and risk (physical or psychological problems, addictions, belonging to stigmatized groups, etc ..), the crisis worsening and the simultaneous decrease of investment in social policies, have caused a rapid descent into the hell of poverty and the complete loss of their to self-determination capacities.

For criminal networks already rooted in European countries, after decades of exploitation of prostitution, often related to other sources of illicit gain (trafficking and smuggling of drugs, weapons, eco business, smuggling, etc ..), the presence of people in a situation of great weakness, often burdened by debts, or migrants without residence permits, has become an important opportunity for gain. The areas of exploitation (sexual, labor, begging, crime) and the territories and targets involved have multiplied. The dynamics of coercion can be up to enslavement and have heavy impact in the lives of those involved. The large number of foreign nationals, who need to move from the south or east towards the north and west of the world, provides criminal networks of traffickers and exploiters countless opportunities to gain.

Despite begging is increasingly visible, particularly in town centers, transit areas and other places, and it is considered an element of social alarm that stimulates the sense of insecurity among citizens, the knowledge collected and systematized on the phenomenon is not sufficient to promote innovative interventions.

Many researchers conducted at European level have demonstrated that among people involved in these activities children, teenagers live in awful conditions, and frequently they are controlled or exploited in illegal labor market by criminal organizations that come from the same countries of the victims.

The partners have therefore designed a project focused on the need to:

- Define and understand the phenomenon, its dynamics, the cultural and legislative framework
- Building knowledge through a participatory process with stakeholders and target
- Co-design and test innovative pilot interventions to achieve and provide assistance to victims of trafficking exploited in begging

Partners defined a methodology of intervention that would:

- allow to use their ability to enter in contact with the target and stakeholders
- stimulate synergies between existing resources
- entitled target and social workers a pivotal role in the search for solutions.

The project includes two phases.

In the first phase, the project foresees the realization of the research on the phenomenon in the country partners in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data and have a general picture at local level of the characteristics of the begging. The research includes both the analysis of the legal framework on the phenomenon in each country partner and the fieldwork that includes the mapping of the area in which are carried out the activities of forced begging, a series of semi-structured interviews with the target group, with professionals that work with persons involved in begging activities.

In the second phase, on the base of the suggestions and recommendations elaborated during the fieldwork, the project foresees to implement experimental actions addressed to the victims of pushed begging with the aim to promote the process of social reintegration through the existing educational, social and health programmes in each country partner.

Moreover, the project intends to promote the dissemination of the project results and to share them with Public institutions and private organizations that work on the phenomenon in each country.

The two phases of the project are accompanied by training and networking activities in order to provide, both at local and national level, a participatory, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach. At international level the aim is to create a European Forum on pushed begging, a platform for the monitoring of the phenomenon, the exchange of information

and best practices, lobbying and advocacy shared activities, to promote effective interventions in the identification and protection of trafficked persons, particularly those involved in pushed begging.

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. Increase the knowledge about the phenomenon of pushed begging at European level in way to involve the project partners and the social actors that deal with this issue;
2. Support and help victims of the human trafficking by contacting people in the street in order to provide information about health, rights, employment with the goal to advise them on the social services at local level;
3. Emphasize the gravity of the phenomenon and denounce the exploitation of people involved in begging activities; underline the legal framework and the legislation in force about the phenomenon in the countries involved in the project.

Expected results:

The project had this expected results:

1. Implementation of a research-action on begging phenomenon, which describes the phenomenon in terms of areas of involvement and exploitation, both quantitatively and qualitatively (5000 questionnaires)
2. Creation of a network of organizations for the exchange of best practices and knowledge (5 Countries)
3. Organization of a European Forum on the phenomenon of forced begging (10 Countries)
4. Street contact and /or places of begging with the target group (about 7000 contacts)
5. Information of the target group on their human rights, health and social services and living standards of the regular
6. Start to health and social services and/or humanitarian (30% of contacts)
7. Increase accessibility to routes of leakage, and the denunciation of exploitation(3% of contacts).



2

Survey Comparative Report

By Fabio Sorgoni and Piera Viale

**Introduction:
Why a research on pushed
begging in Europe?**

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The partners have also gained extensive experience of working with other agencies within national anti-trafficking systems or European networks against poverty, they are NGOs and NGOs coordination and networks, they offer assistance, sheltering, help, counseling, harm reduction measures; their target groups are vulnerable ones: children, migrants, ethnic minorities, persons involved in prostitution, refugees and asylum seekers, homeless or persons suffering from psychiatric problems or suffering related to alcohol or drug addiction.

These organizations have been able to constantly monitor the evolution of the phenomena affecting the weaker sections of the population and have found, each from its specific point of view, that the phenomenon of begging in Europe has grown steadily in recent years and that it is often associated with dynamics of coercion, violence, exploitation, trafficking, involving some of the most vulnerable groups.

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Moreover, the project intends to promote the dissemination of the project results and to share them with Public institutions and private organizations that work on the phenomenon in each country.

The two phases of the project are accompanied by training and networking activities in order to provide, both at local and national level, a participatory, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach. At international level the aim is to create a European Forum on pushed begging, a platform for the monitoring of the phenomenon, the exchange of information and best practices, lobbying and advocacy shared activities, to promote effective interventions in the identification and protection of trafficked persons, particularly those involved in pushed begging.

The specific objectives of the project are:

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3. Emphasize the gravity of the phenomenon and denounce the exploitation of people involved in begging activities; underline the legal framework and the legislation in force about the phenomenon in the countries involved in the project.

In order to guarantee a widespread diffusion of the project' results a series of activities has been planned. They include seminars to share best practices and knowledge on the phenomenon, an event to present the research results in each country partner and the creation of web tools linked to the partner' sites.

The comparative report, that is one of the results of the first stage of the project, summarizes and compares the results of the national researches stressing the specificity of each national context and in the same time designs the general framework of the phenomenon integrating it with the conclusions of the already realized projects.

The research intends to contribute to the knowledge about the phenomenon of human trafficking taking into consideration a particular form of the trafficking that is the human trafficking with the aim of begging. Moreover, the research intends to promote the exchange of best practices among the actors involved at European level in activities realized to prevent and combat the forced begging.

On the base of the data and information collected, the research intends also to provide recommendations in order to elaborate concrete measures and deal with the phenomenon in a more comprehensive and global way.

The definition of human trafficking generally accepted reports to the definition of Palermo Protocol: "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt persons with the aim to oblige them to carry out activities, including illegal activities, in order to get a profit".

The exploitation includes different aspects, from the exploitation for

sexual purposes, the exploitation in the labor market and with the purpose of forced begging.

The research referred to the commonly accepted definition of exploitation: “gaining an unfair advantage from the activities or actions carried out by others after an imposition which limits the ability to self-determination of the victim.” For that reason, the different forms of begging are considered a form of exploitation.

In addition, the present research is based on the research conducted in 2012 in 15 European countries “Study Typology and Policy Responses to the Child Begging in the European Union”.

The main activities included in forced begging are:

1. Ask money because the person is poor or needs some charity or ask money for religious purposes. The way to ask money is considered the classic form of begging;
2. Ask money for small things (flowers, sponges or tissues) that have little to do with the value of the object sold;
3. Provide services or performances as sing a song and play music. These last activities are considered auxiliary activities of begging.

The research conducted under this project has paid particular attention to the specific phenomenon of begging carried out by children. Even when children are with adults or their parents, the researchers were focused on the examination of the specific situation of the children.



Methodological framework

*Transnational research within the
project: objectives and foreseen
methodological approach*

The project goal was defined as: “ preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings, with regard to the exploitation by begging with special regard to foreign people as particularly vulnerable victims”

In order to achieve this goal, the project aims “to increase the knowledge and the training of all the institutional and social private subjects dealing with the phenomenon, by means of qualitative and quantitative research about the phenomenon itself in the countries involved in the project, and by the diffusion of related data”.

As a consequential stage, a number of experimental actions are undertaken to fight directly trafficking in human beings, with regard to exploitation by begging and to reintegrate the victims through the existing social, educational and health programmes. The project adopt the method of the action-research.

Main methodological frame work were defined in the project proposal:

- Action research approach
- Use of questionnaires as research instruments
- Involvement and interview of beggars and social workers

Moreover, it was determined that the involvement of partners in transnational research would have helped to create:

- a transnational network for cooperation and exchange of knowledge and practices, involving organizations working with the target of the project (persons exploited in begging). The network could provide assistance to these organizations at European level.

- a European Forum on the exploitation of begging, with the function of exchanging information and working practices.

European evaluators who analyzed and approved the project proposal gave their opinion on the research foreseen within the project:

“The comprehensive research on forced begging, its social backgrounds and modus operandi can have a positive impact on policy making towards this still not fully apprehended phenomenon and direct social care for victims. The research findings can serve for policy making in the longer term while victims of trafficking can benefit from direct social care in medium term”

The research team

The project has established a research team organized on two levels:

- a transnational research coordination, composed of staff of the institution leading the project, the National Coordination of Community Services (CNCA), staff of the other Italian project partners, TAMPEP, and the coordinators of the 5 national research groups.
- At national level, the national research teams, under the responsibility of project partners, each in his own country. In Italy the national research was conducted by the CNCA.

In each country senior and junior researchers have been contracted to implement research activities. Particular attention was given to the identification of the researchers who were to make field observations (mapping) and interviews with the target.

The process of shared construction of the research protocol

Research hypothesis, proposed evidences/areas of the research

The research has defined its research hypotheses, to be verified by collecting data and information (evidences) and their analysis.

The basic hypothesis was that the increased presence of persons who practice begging in the streets of the cities of Europe is due (also) to the decision of individual pimps and criminal networks, more or less large and organized, to use the exploitation of begging as a source of income.

So it is assumed that people in need, belonging to vulnerable groups, have been recruited (by force, deception, blackmail, or other means), transferred (in another country, but also within the same country) and hosted, with the intent of being exploited in begging. These people would be forced to give their exploiters almost all their earnings, they would see their freedom of movement and contacts to their family and friends strongly limited or completely denied, and would live in a state of subjugation, control, command, by their exploiters. This control can also be exercised with extortion, blackmail, threats, physical and psychological violence.

The observations made in the field by the project partners and their national and transnational networks, which led to the creation and presentation of the project proposal, coincide with the statement made by many institutional bodies, national and transnational: begging, involving in particular people foreign and belonging to vulnerable categories, is a growing phenomenon and linked to the dynamics of trafficking and exploitation, although its size and features have not been sufficiently studied. Hence the need to observe the dynamics and variances which the begging phenomenon occurs in different countries and in different situations, and find within it elements that help us to understand who is the victim of this crime, who is entangled and subdued and forced other people to beg, and through which dynamics the persons become victims.

Observation and information gathering from stakeholders, key informant and targets, will provide project, and the European Network which is established within the activities of the project, with many elements to better plan interventions with this kind of victims, to identify them and offer social protection and reintegration programs suited to the specific needs of this composite target.

The definition of a research protocol has been a shared process in which the partnership has defined a hypothesis (to focus the questions that guide the research and guidelines to lead) and has built an empirical basis, that has defined what will be considered empirical evidence, and the tools and methodologies to make this evidence observable.

The evidences and areas of the research

The coordination of transnational research proposed to the international research group a common path to create a shared methodology that would have respected national specificities and contribute to the overall objective. Instead of providing partners a transnational research plan based on the symmetry of the interventions (same activities in 5 countries), it was decided to enhance a heuristic approach, which would allow a wide freedom to partners.

Areas of research identified provided to partners to create national research plans can be grouped into three main areas:

1. Definition of the phenomenon and the legislative framework
2. Policies, intervention systems, practices
3. Phenomenological Indicators

Within these macro areas were provided the following elements:

- 1 Definition of the phenomenon: the legislative frame work
 - Definition of begging in the country
 - Definition of trafficking for begging in the country
 - National legislation on begging
 - National legislation on trafficking in human beings and in particular on trafficking for begging
- 2 The policies, systems intervention, practices
 - Services for victims of trafficking for begging (eg. street work, information desks, interventions of peer education, sheltering, vocational training, job placement, etc ...)

- Multiagency networks operating (law enforcements, local authorities, the judiciary, health agencies, NGO's, ...)

3 Phenomenological Indicators

- Indicators with respect to target groups: age, gender, nationality, belonging to ethnic minorities
- The routes of trafficking for begging
- The types of begging (asking money, offer gadgets, services)
- Places of begging (eg. crossroads, shopping centers, public transport / metro, etc ...)
- The living conditions of persons trafficked for begging (eg. control, problems with police, lack of social networks, etc ...)
- Other forms of discomfort interconnected with exploitation for begging (eg. addiction, psychiatric problems, violence, physical disability, child labor, etc ...)
- Connections with asylum seekers, homeless, discriminated minorities, etc ...

General methodological indication

The partners were invited to create national research plans that take into account:

- the methodological approaches already decided during the presentation of the project proposal (action research, questionnaires, a minimum number of final beneficiaries to contact)
- the need to analyze background elements (legislative framework and the position of public on begging and its exploitation)
- the will to stimulate, through research, participation in the project of institutional stakeholders and the third sector, in order to build a European network of support for those who deal with this phenomenon (exchange of information, best practices, collaboration on cases) and a European Forum, to share the results of the project and plan operations from good practices observed and experienced in the project.

National research plans and their harmonization

Once the national research groups have received the necessary methodological indications and the list of evidence to observe and collect, they started the process of drafting the five national plans for research. Although designed within a single methodological and conceptual framework, plans were created by national research groups focusing on the elements that characterize forced begging in their country.

The specific objectives identified by the five national research plans are:

- Define begging in their own country: from the perspective of cultural anthropology and legislative framework
- Increase knowledge on the dynamics of the phenomenon of begging in their respective countries, in particular:
 - Target involved (age, gender, nationality, living conditions)
 - the socio-economic dimension of the phenomenon
 - Phenomenology: type of begging, areas of the city in which the phenomenon appears
 - connections with other phenomena of marginality and social deviance
 - connections with other target groups: asylum seekers, homeless, minorities discriminated
 - Trafficking and exploitation of begging
- Collect data and information on the policies and practices already implemented in countries
- Investigate the perception of begging from the population and stakeholders in their respective countries
- Provide stakeholders and the project with elements to design experimental measures to help people involved in general and for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking exploited in begging.

Polish research plan established to focus only on child begging and the Bulgarian plan has provided a comparative study of the dynamics of begging within the country and of “export” of Bulgarian beggars to other European countries

Indications for harmonization of activities

The drafts of national plans were analyzed and validated by the transnational coordination of research, which suggested some changes to harmonize the research design and produce analyzes that could be comparable.

As for the desk review, partners were encouraged to collect and analyze:

- Phenomenon: recent studies, data, information, research, on begging in the country or involving citizens of that country but carried out in other countries. Specifically related to trafficking and exploitation of begging.

- Policies: national laws on trafficking and begging, the national action plans, the actions of local or regional, guidelines, etc ..
- Practices: examples of practices implemented in the countries concerning the offer of services to people involved in begging, the identification and protection of victims of trafficking.

Partners were invited to limit to 10-15 pages of research reports relating to the national desk review.

As for the composition of the sample of persons to be contacted and interviewed, the indications were:

- Experts, stakeholders, policy-makers, the implementers of the practices in the field
- Key informants, people in contact with the target
- People involved in the practice of begging
- General population through online survey techniques

It was proposed to apply to experts, policy makers and professionals to share their ideas with respect to the following areas:

- how to improve policies and measures (laws, intervention systems, practices, networks)
- how to work to inform and raise awareness among operators and decision makers
- the role of the target, the involvement of peer operators, for example

Mapping phase

It has been suggested that all five national research activities would provide a mapping of the begging phenomenon in at least one city in the country, through techniques of ethnographic research (observation, use of grids of data collection). Finally, transnational research coordination provided a general outline of reporting of national research

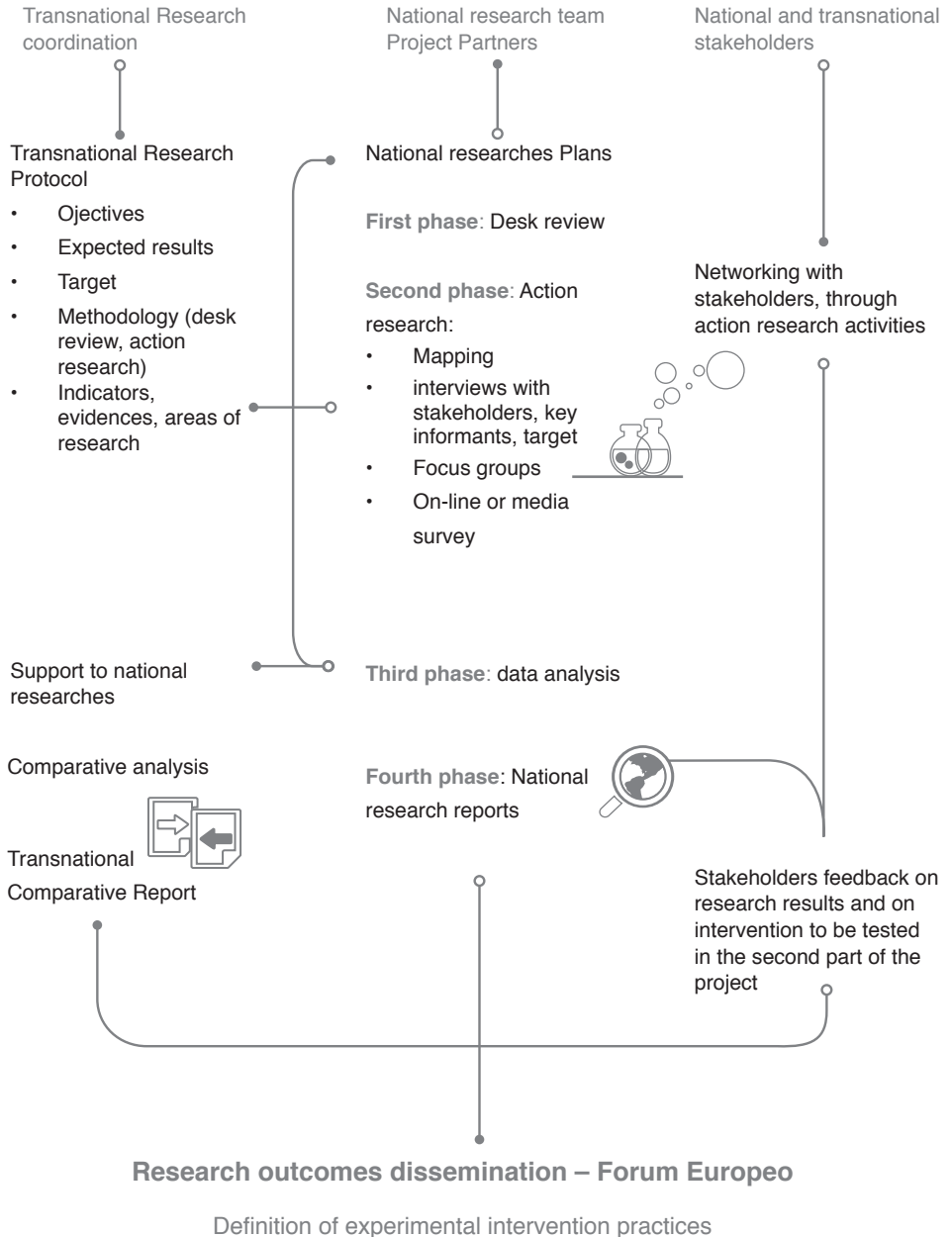
General transnational research methodology

Once the national research teams have shared the indication provided by the transnational coordination, the research assumed a uniform methodology in order to facilitate the final comparative analysis of the results.

The figure on the side shows the flow chart of the methodology of the research

Transnational Research Flow Chart

Transnational Research Flow Chart



The three vertical arrows represent the actions implemented and the 3 subjects involved in the research: the transnational coordination of research, the national research groups and national stakeholders.

Transnational coordination ensures the consistence of Research Protocol with the defined objectives of the project, ensures a balance between the specificity of national researches and the need for methodological uniformity and complementarity of the data collected. It also supervises the activities of the national researches, provides support and encourages exchanges between the partners on the methodologies adopted. Coordination is also responsible for the preparation of a final comparative report. The coordination of research, in collaboration with the national staff and the coordinators of other project actions, implements actions of networking among stakeholders involved in the research.

Research national teams create national research plans and implement research activities, participating in national and international dissemination of the results. Through research action they get in contact with stakeholders, collect their point of view on the phenomenon and involve them in a network of data exchange and practice between institutions and organizations in the third sector that operate on the phenomenon. Through field activities researchers enter in contact with the target and engage them into the project, asking them to provide feedbacks to improve their situation, and de facto, preparing the field for the second phase of the project

The stakeholders are contacted, interviewed, involved in the mission of the project. At the local level multi agency approach is promoted, also through other project activities (seminars, meetings) and focus group research. Project teams engage stakeholders in the designing and implementation of experimental activities foreseen in the second phase of the project. A national and international level are invited to participate in the European Network in progress, share information and participate in exchange activities (European Forum) to find the best approaches to reach and help people who are victims of trafficking and exploitation in begging and to share analysis and interventions on the phenomenon of begging in general and other related phenomena.

The methods adopted by national surveys have followed the directions provided by the coordination of uniformity and exposed previously.

Although with some differences, also due to the specificities of national and local contexts, the research in the five countries partners was developed in four phases.

First phase – two months

Each research team has considered the literature and publications on this issue and the legislation in force in the specific country in order to understand how the phenomenon is perceived in the national context and to verify the concrete measures adopted to combat the forced begging. In this phase the researchers have also identify the stakeholders and social workers to be interviewed and have elaborated the different questionnaires.

Second phase – three months

It was devoted to the interviews and to the organization of focus groups with the intent to define the phenomenon locally, in order to collect the opinions from professionals and other key figures of institutional entities that are in direct contact with the target group. In this phase, the researchers have also carried out the interviews to the persons directly involved in the phenomenon of begging and have realized the mapping of the areas where some of the begging activities took place. The research did not cover the totality of the partner countries, but the fieldwork was in particular concentrated on some cities and areas, observing the way in which these different activities took place.

Third phase – three months

The researchers have transcript the interviews, analyzed and systematize the information, and they have conduct the focus groups. The collected information were very useful in order to understand the socio-economical context, the characteristics of the target group and the life conditions of the people involved in begging activities.

Fourth phase – two months

Each research team has examined the collected data and has prepared the national report with the dissemination of the research results.

In order to carry out the research each partner has adopted the following tools:

- Literature desk review of recent publications on forced begging in the specific context of countries partners and the analysis of the legislation in force in each country;
- Grids to collect indicators during the mapping of begging in the cities where observations have been implemented
- Semi-structured questionnaire to be administered to stakeholders who deal with the phenomenon of forced begging;
- Semi-structured questionnaires to be administered to social workers and people who work in close contact with the target group;
- Guidelines for focus groups with stakeholders and social workers that are in contact with persons involved in forced begging activities.

All instruments used took into consideration the specificity of the target group, their particular vulnerability and the necessity to protect their interests and their privacy.

The instruments used have been defined in a way that it is possible to compare the data and materials produced by the field research.

Initially, all partners have defined the issues to be investigated and they have shared a list of questions to be used during the interviews. Each partner then has adapted the questionnaires in according to the contingent situations that they had to face, and the specificities of national and local context.

The researchers who conducted the interviews with the target group in some cases have been specifically trained in order to be able to establish a relationship of trust with the persons practicing begging activities. The people responded to the interview voluntarily and have been informed in advance about the objectives of the research and the importance of their contribution. The partners have decided not provide incentives such as cash refunds for the participation at the interview, but in Romania it was decided to distribute some food or drinks to persons interviewed.

The research teams in Romania, Portugal and Poland have used an on-line survey with the aim to gather information about the public perception of the phenomenon of begging, in general on the knowledge in the population about this issue and on the attitudes toward people involved in begging activities.

Methodologies, instruments, target: a brief comparative analysis

Desk review

All national research teams studied the international and national definition of trafficking and begging. The documents quoted are mainly

- International protocols, UE decisions and directives
- National laws
- National Action Plans

The national legislations on begging and trafficking, in some cases also their evolution and aligning with UE legislation, have been analyzed.

As for the description of the phenomenon the national research teams referred to mainly to these typologies of documents:

- International studies carried out by IOM, IOL, Save the Children, UNODOC, UNICEF, ICMPD, reports from GRETA groups of experts
- Results of transnational projects, in particular funded by UE Commission Programmes
- National researches developed by third sector and universities
- Local researches, for example the research on child begging in the city of Poznan, Poland
- Data and statistics provided by institutional bodies, for example specialized anti-trafficking departments in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria,

Researchers analyzed policies and practices implemented in each country both through literature review and interviews with relevant national stakeholders. They provide descriptions of national and local public bodies and institutions who are in charge to investigate suspected cases of trafficking, or to support the victims. Examples of Referral Mechanisms and protection programmes have been reported, in particular regarding minors engaged in begging in East European Countries.

Also description of on-the-field practices to outreach and help beggars and description of the work of NGOs and public services have been reported.

Mapping

The five national researches implemented mapping and observation activities of the presence of beggars in one or more cities of the country. The researchers have defined the areas of observation and specific methodologies to be used and indicators to be gathered. All of them went to the places to observe during during different hours in different days of the week.

In Poland non-participant observations have been made in Warsaw and Wroclaw, focusing child begging. They observed 61 children begging. In Portugal the city of Porto has been mapped and 197 beggars have been seen.

In Romania some areas of central Bucarest have been observed and 225 persons who were begging were recorded in a first stage and 130 in a second phase of the mapping exercise.

In Bulgarian mapping phase was conducted in Sofia main roads.

In Italy the mapping activities were carried out in Florence, Pisa and Pontedera (Tuscany) and Perugia (Umbria). The researcher observed 484 persons in a situation of begging or selling small items and offering services in change of a few coins.

Their scope was to have both quantitative and qualitative data. They report the results of their observations in terms of:

- Number of beggars met during mapping activities
- Typologies of begging activity (ask for money as a pure donation or in exchange of items or services)
- Age, gender, nationality, ethnic origin, special physical or psychological visible characteristics, including physical disabilities, pregnancy
- Techniques of begging (single, in groups, family members)
- Presence of someone driving the beggars to the place and pick them up, or passing and collecting their income, or patrolling the area
- reactions of passers-by

Places where the researchers decided to map beggars presence were:

- City centers, main squares
- Churches
- Touristic routes
- Hospitals
- Supermarkets, shopping centers
- Public services
- Train and bus stations
- Cross roads, fire lamps

Stakeholders and key informant interviews

The national teams, on the basis of the information collected on phenomenon, policies and practices during the literature review, planned and realized interviews with relevant or local stakeholders, in order to obtain more information and points of view and to involve them in the project, promoting networking and exchange of information.

In Italy the 22 stakeholders interviewed were mainly NGOs representatives, from different areas of social work in order to have a multidisciplinary view of the phenomenon.

In Portugal first phase of meetings with national stakeholders, representatives of national bodies in charge of anti-trafficking policies and child protection, took place in Lisbon. Then, as the field research was to be made in Porto, the main representatives of anti-trafficking police, local authorities and third sector organizations have been met. In total 10 national stakeholders were interviewed.

In Poland 8 interviews with relevant stakeholders (mainly NGOs representatives) and 9 interviews with social workers have been made. In Bulgaria 15 taxi drivers have been interviewed as key informant.

Interviews with the target

Most of the people involved in begging who have been interviewed within the research activities were people who had been observed during the mapping phase.

In Oporto the team interviewed 52 persons involved in begging. They have been supported by an intercultural mediator to enter in contact with Romanian beggars.

In Italy the team carried out 7 in-deep interviews with beggars in Florence. In Romania 89 beggars among the 130 observed accepted to talk with the researchers.

In Italy the researchers gave to the persons interviewed a 25 euro shopping card to reward the time spent during the interview. In Romania they gave them small goods such as food.

Online survey on social representation of begging and media role

All the national teams planned a research phase where the objective was to collect data in order to understand the population perception of begging and citizens' attitude towards beggars.

In Italy representatives of media (journalists) were interviewed on how the phenomenon is told in the media and which social representation of begging is being widespread.

In Bulgaria the team analyzed online articles regarding begging in Bulgaria and begging abroad involving Bulgarian persons. They also promoted and observed social forum discussion on begging and reported the attitude of the respondents toward the issue.

In Poland an online survey was made, with 8 questions regarding what the respondents think of them. The survey lasted 4 months and 245 filled questionnaires were gathered.

In Portugal the online survey lasted 2 months and gathered 506 completed questionnaires.

In Romania 709 valid questionnaires were gathered using the online platform survey monkey.



Comparative analysis

The report compares the researches of project partners focusing in particular on the results of fieldwork. The project partners have defined the format of the national report jointly. The reports are divided in two sections.

Each partner has devoted the first section to illustrate the national context and has analyzed the legislation in force and the political measures to combat the phenomenon of forced begging and the measures adopted to protect the victims.

The partners have also examined the researches and the recent publications realized before the present project, taking into consideration both researches at local level and the researches at European level. This could be considered the necessary work to prepare the fieldwork.

Moreover, in the first section each partner has presented actors and networks, institutions and organizations of civic society involved in combating the phenomenon of forced begging and in the victims' protection.

The second section is focused on the field research, the central phase of the project. From the comparison of the quantitative and qualitative results and from the discussion between the partners have to be developed the approaches and the concrete measures to facilitate the process of social inclusion of the victims involved in begging activities.

The research in Poland

The research in Poland has been carried out in the period between January and September 2014. The fieldwork took place between March and September in two cities, Warsaw and Wroclaw that were chosen because the phenomenon of begging children is particularly significant in these contexts.

From March to May, eight in-depth interviews with experts in the field of human trafficking have been conducted. In particular five representatives of non-governmental organizations, one official member of an international organization, one university teacher and one civil servant were involved. The interview was designed to collect information on children involved in the phenomenon of forced begging in Poland, on the prevention of the phenomenon and on the identification of victims and procedures for intervention supporting child victims of trafficking.

According to experts, people involved in forced begging in Poland are mainly Roma from Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Moldova. The reason behind the activity of begging is the desire to improve the economic conditions of the family to which they belong. The various forms of begging are perceived as an activity necessary to pay off the debt contracted for the journey. Since these sums are very high, begging activities are mainly used to collect the money to pay off the debt and not to earn or to achieve a particular project of life (e.g. build a house, etc.).

It also became known that very often women with minor children are involved in the various forms of begging. It occurs that, in order to convince families to beg, passports or even a family member as hostage are held. It also emerged cases in which women use children of other women for begging.

Generally, people involved in forced begging feel they have no other choice; children learn from adults these behaviors, sometimes by their own parents, and they cannot even conceive alternative ways of life.

Experts interviewed pointed out that people are not aware of the existence of the phenomenon of forced begging, especially in small cities or in remote areas of the country. Generally, human trafficking is associated with the exploitation of women in prostitution or for organ trafficking. The experts also stressed the role played by the media that often bring to the fore only the most eye-catching cases and they do not deal in a professional manner the phenomenon. According to experts, the lack of awareness of people compared to the phenomenon of forced begging is evident in the reactions in the street: compassion, disapprovals, disgust, indifference are in fact the most common behaviors.

The experts, however, also said that there is, in general, an improvement of awareness about the phenomenon of trafficking, especially in large cities, where people have more opportunities to access to information. Nevertheless, forced begging is not considered a problem related to the phenomenon of trafficking. Finally, all experts affirmed the need to raise awareness among young people, from the school, on these phenomena, in particular on forced begging. Professionals and practitioners working in close contact with children and migrants should not be left aside, because they need regular updating on the dynamics and on methods of reception. During the interviews, it was asked for the experts' opinion about the involvement of minors in the phenomenon of trafficking in prevention and awareness activities. Opinions were discordant; on the one hand some experts said that it would be considered a good idea in order to make the intervention credible. On the other hand, we are dealing with fragile and sometimes traumatized people and it could be difficult for them to hear about their situation publicly, because they could feel further stigmatized.

Experts said that the procedures for the identification of the victims of trafficking are shared and adopted by law enforcement, public institutions and non-governmental organizations. However, according to people interviewed, the police is not always able to take appropriate actions because they are not sufficiently aware of the phenomenon. Undeniable, it is more difficult to identify trafficked children rather than adults, perhaps also because in Poland there is no specific procedure for minors.

In the period between April and August, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with educators and street workers working in seven districts of Warsaw. These operators are personally committed with children at risk of social exclusion. The interview aimed to collect operators' work experience on the road, in particular gathering their point of view on the conditions, forms and types of begging among children.

The observation activities on children involved in forced begging were held in the two cities already indicated between May and August 2014. 35 outreach activities aimed to the observation were organized and 61 children involved in forced begging were observed.

Each outreach activity had an average duration of 1 hour. The outreach activities were held at different moments of the day, on different days of the week, including holidays. The operator engaged in the observation activity, at the end of the work session, filled out a form including a range of information: how the minor appeared in the forced begging activity, what was the activity, if an adult was with them, there was someone who controlled the minor, how was the reaction of passers-by.

The mapping activity was developed from the 18th to the 31st August in 12 districts of Warsaw. The transits were carried out at different times of the day, in the morning (9-12 am), in the afternoon (12-15 pm and 15-18 pm) and in the evening (18-21 pm). During the mapping activities 47 children, including 13 females were observed. Most of them were in the city center (old town, close to the subway), the others in the most peripheral districts.

Regarding the age, most of them were adolescents (15-18 years). Children were always accompanied by an adult, although have been reported some cases of children aged 4-6 years alone, probably occasionally monitored by adults. 23 boys were Roma and the 24 others Poles. Regarding the activities, 19 children were asking money, 17 were playing a musical instrument, 4 were asking money on the public transport, 3 minors were selling their old toys, 2 were selling flowers and 2 were washing windows. Most of them have been observed in the afternoon between 15 and 18 pm.

The research in Romania

Fieldwork in Romania has been developed in particular in some areas of Bucharest identified thanks to the Aras Association's experience of outreach activities (mobile street unit). The mapping of the forced begging phenomenon in Bucharest is not complete, both for the areas affected by the phenomenon and for the number of people actually involved in these activities. Operators have observed in particular some crossroads, markets, parking lots near public institutions and churches.

The research sought to collect data and information that could be significant in terms of quantity and tried to explore some aspects that could describe the context in detail, problems and personal stories of those who practice begging.

In relation to the qualitative aspects, the research has focused on five main themes:

1. Family, social group, network of the person involved in begging;
2. Begging activity (how it began and reasons), use of the money earned;
3. Situation at the time of the interview of the person involved (needs and access to public services);
4. Relationship with the police;
5. Personal projects for the future.

As for the quantitative aspects, the research collected information through a questionnaire consisting of 75 questions grouped into 8 themes: history of life, family and education, social relations, the house, the personal experience in the activity of begging, drugs addiction, health and access to public services, needs and solutions to the problem of begging.

The interviews lasted an average of about 30 minutes.

The working group has conducted 8 interviews and an interview with a small group (3 youths involved in begging). The aim was to reconstruct the way of life of people met and to explore the interpersonal relationships within the relationships built in the activity of begging. The interviews were conducted in the period July- August 2014.

Those interviewed were mostly men aged between 25 and 34 years, originating in Bucharest. As for education, in most cases, the interviewees have at least 8 years of school attendance and approximately only 10% never went to school.

The majority of the target group has met their parents and 50 % have one parent still living. In many cases, interviewees still live with the parent.

At the time of the interview, people claimed not to be married but living with a partner and in many cases, they do not have a stable relationship. The majority of people said to have one or two young children.

Among the interviewees, everyone claim to share the money received in the activity in the street with “friends” or “husband”. None of the people interviewed said they felt compelled to share with others their earnings or to be exploited by someone.

Other people interviewed stated that they help the family with the money earned. In this case, since they were teenagers, it is very likely that the family pushed for begging and that the activity is not the result of a free choice. Three persons interviewed said they had chosen this activity independently: an older person living in a rural area, that comes to the town to sell medicinal herbs in order to supplement his small pension; a person aged 58 years that after many years of unemployment has decided to beg to survive and a man who lives with his mother and brother because in this way he can contribute to the modest family budget. The researchers considered these cases as cases of “classic” begging, as they seem to express a more informed choice.

The time dedicated to this activity varies from a few hours per day to 8 hours. In the case where the interviewees offer small services (e.g. glass washing or sale of small objects), they define the activity of begging as “work”.

As for the areas in which the activity takes place, people concerned claimed to be present in the same place for several years. Only a small percentage of the interviewees were in the area observed by a few months.

Respondents stated that in general the earnings made through the begging activity are used to cover personal expenses: food, cigarettes and, in some cases, alcoholic beverages. In rare cases, the interviewees said they use the money to pay the rent of the house or to incur other expenses. Generally, they stated that the daily total profit fluctuates between 5 and 20 euro.

In Romania, the main reasons that led to the involvement in activities of begging can be attributed to the loss of family, home, work. People often have a poor education, they are drugs addicted or they have had difficulty re-entering in the society after a period spent in jail. Others have reported the loss of jobs following the fall of the communist regime. In particular, the disintegration of the agriculture collectivization, the privatization of land, the loss of manufacturing jobs due to changes in the economy system have led to the general impoverishment and increased vulnerability of society.

Among the issues that emerged from the interviews, there is the one of the possession of the essential documents to gain access to public services. Over 20% of respondents were not, at the time of the interview, in possession of the documents (never owned, expired or lost). A 20% stated they have only temporary documents or birth certificate. In fact, these people are unable to access public services and this makes their position even weaker. Respondents indicated two main hospitals in Bucharest and mentioned services provided by the associations Aras and Carusel.

The working group in Romania decided to publish and distribute a questionnaire (May-June 2014) through social media and Aras Association's contacts, with the aim of collecting information about the image of the phenomenon of begging among the population and how the people involved in these activities are considered. The valid questionnaires were 709, filled out in 70% of cases by women living in urban areas, primarily Bucharest, and in other urban centers of the country. The majority of interviewees said to be aged less than 24 years; the other significant age group is the one between 25 and 34 years.

To summarize the research results in Romania:

- it is not possible to evaluate in quantitative terms the phenomenon of begging in Bucharest;
- from the observations activities carried out in the street it is clear the prevalence of male;
- people interviewed agreed to answer the questionnaire after the offering of food and drink;
- interviewees are generally not very educated, without valid documents, with lacking access to local services;

- in the group of people interviewed there is probably - according to researchers - an overestimate of the people who are drugs addicted, because the observations and interviews were conducted in areas frequented by professionals of the Aras association;
- poverty, job and/or family loss, social changes following the fall of the communist regime are the reasons for the activity of begging;
- the activities carried out in the street are perceived by the respondents as a "job" when they offer small services or products for sale;
- none of the respondents said to be forced to carry out this activity, even in the case of children who said they use the money to help the family;
- bad relationship with the police and law enforcement.

The research in Italy

The research in Italy has been carried out on the base of the plan defined by the partners, adapting it to the specific social context. The team involved in the field research included: one expert in the field of politics and interventions in the sphere of trafficking of human being, as research coordinator also appointed in the research supervision, and five researchers that carried out the fieldwork in two regions: Tuscany and Umbria. In Tuscany, the field research has been focused on the cities of Florence and Pisa, while in Umbria the fieldwork has been concentrated only in one city, Perugia.

The general objectives:

- Deepen the knowledge on the phenomenon of forced begging by gathering qualitative and quantitative data on the life conditions of the persons involved in begging activities, and the mechanisms that govern the phenomenon.
- Define hypothesis of intervention to be experimented in the second phase of the project to facilitate the social reintegration of the victims of forced begging.

At the beginning of the field work Italian researchers have carried out the mapping of three particular areas collecting information about the existing services and the projects realized in order to support people living in very disadvantaged conditions.

In this period, researchers have also observed people involved in begging activities.

The observation sessions took place in 2013 based on several indicators as gender, age, nationality, place and kind of begging activity. In total have been observed 484 persons. As for the gender, the 75% are male. The phenomenon of begging is in particularly widespread in Florence also because it is an important touristic destination.

There are many nationalities involved in begging activities: people from East Europe, North Africa (Maghreb countries) and from other African countries (Senegal, Nigeria). The researchers underlined that in many case they could not ask the nationality, but they indicated the nationality on the base of their knowledge and work experience with the target group. In general, Senegalese is overall the biggest group and mainly in Florence, but there is a numerous group of Croatian and Bengali in Perugia.

As for the age, the Italian researchers have considered three groups: minors, people from 18 to 45 years and over 46. The minors represent a percentage very low among people involved in begging activities. The researchers observed only six minors (1,24% of the total target group), but the life conditions of these minors that practice begging activities are very difficult. In general, it is possible to identify five categories of minors: minors alone, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and exploitation, minors from disadvantaged groups (for example Rom) and minors exploited in the labor market and in illegal street activities.

The majority of the target group (85%) are between 18 and 45 years. These persons are involved in all kind of begging activities, classic begging and auxiliary activities. In general, people over 46 years are involved in classic begging activities, which is ask money in the street. The persons observed by the researchers are 32 and all come from East Europe.

The typical sites of the begging are shopping centers, medical centers, public transport as bus or railway stations, markets and central streets. In general, the central streets are the place in which begging activities are concentrated, especially where there are many tourists.

In the fieldwork in Italy, seven different forms of begging have been identified, that are: ask money, to sell small items, sell flowers, and ask money for the supermarket trolley, washing care windscreens, playing music and illegal parking.

The majority of the persons observed asks money (48,76%) or sells small items (43,18%). The rest of the people is involved in other begging activities (7,85%). Men (39,46%) mainly sell small items and souvenirs. In general, if the potential clients do not buy nothing, people involved in this activity ask some money. In this sense, there is a connection with the begging activity. Persons who sells come from African or Asian countries.

The researchers underline that the majority of women ask money and come from East European countries.

The fact that women even in this situation of strong disadvantage are relegated to ask money raises the question of gender-based discrimination because it seems impossible for women to be involved in other activities as sell small items or provide small services.

In general, women ask money in old town centers or in proximity of churches, while men ask money or provide services in suburban areas or in railway and bus stations.

The second section of the research has been devoted to the in deep-interviews to 20 stakeholders and key figures in order to gather information on the impact of the phenomenon of forced begging on a specific area from different professionals, lawyers, social workers, civil servants and journalists.

According to the Italian legislation, the begging activities are legal in the country, but in the last ten years, Municipalities, in order to prevent security problems, have adopted ordinances that have juridical competence in a specific area. Moreover, have been established penalties for people that do not respect the rules and consequently begging activities have been limited.

As for Roma people, the researchers highlight that it is very difficult to identify among them the cases of forced begging because these activities are a real family strategies to survive in a situation of a deep social and economic disadvantage. Therefore, it is possible that in the family unit there are cases of exploitation through the begging activities. For that reason, it seems that the begging reflects specific cultural habits of the target group. During the observation sessions, the researchers noted also that Roma girls ask money together, sometimes there is an adult woman but in any case, there is always a man with the function to control the begging activity or he could be a part of the theft.

As for the interventions in favor of people involved in begging activities, there are two possibilities:

- Consider people involved in begging activities as a victim of human trafficking to labour exploitation, that means to refer to the articles 13 and 18 in the framework of the Italian Law of Immigration;
- Consider people involved in begging activities particularly vulnerable, for that reason in order to help them it is necessary to refer to the local social services.

Since begging is a relatively recent phenomenon, it is difficult to measure and evaluate the social impact in relation with other forms of exploitation. At the moment, the organization of civic society do not provide specific help to people involved in begging activities or to Roma people involved in these activities.

In the frame of Italian research have been interviewed two journalists in order to consider a different point of view on the phenomenon. Often the published articles give a particular attention to the nationality of the people involved in these activities and this fact can reinforce the prejudice of public opinion about this issue. Moreover, in the newspapers the tendency is to underline the effects of the phenomenon rather than the reasons that have determined the phenomenon.

The research in Portugal

The research in Portugal has been carried out on the base of the research plan agreed at the start of the project among the five partners.

Regarding the position of Portugal on begging, it must be said that this activity is not considered a crime, unless it is developed for the purpose of labor exploitation. In 2007 came into force the immigration law with a specific section on human trafficking. In 2013, Portugal has therefore inserted a norm in the Criminal Code to consider forced begging as one of the forms of exploitation covered by human trafficking. The current law also provides strong protection for children involved in the practice of begging.

In 2008 was established the Observatory on human trafficking with the task of monitoring, systematically collect and analyze data on the phenomenon. Between 2008 and 2013 were reported 912 victims, 736 of whom live in the country and are Portuguese citizens or foreigners, mostly from Romania. Among other nationalities, there are people from Brazil, Mozambique, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Moldova.

In 2013, 299 victims have been identified and 22 cases of suspected trafficking were reported. The cases of children victims of trafficking for the 2013 were seven. The cases of begging reported by the various institutions dealing with the phenomenon are increasing compared to 2004 when 1.155 cases were reported.

Until 2011, cases of trafficking mainly concerned sexual exploitation, whereas from 2012 the cases of trafficking for labor exploitation are increasing.

Among the initiatives undertaken by Portugal it must be noticed the opening of shelters for victims of trafficking. Centers have been opened for men and women with children, but the shelters addressed to minors are not yet sufficient.

As well as other European partners, in the first phase of the fieldwork, the Portuguese research team has made a series of interviews with stakeholders with different skills and different roles in organizations engaged in the fight of trafficking, begging and exploitation activities. The objective was to know in detail the characteristics of the phenomenon in the country and learn about the possible types of interventions put in place to address the problem.

The interviews were carried out in Lisbon and Oporto.

Although the stakeholders interviewed belong to organizations that have to deal with the phenomenon of trafficking, the information available on the phenomenon of begging are not very detailed. Researchers suggested that there is not great sensitivity and interest in the problem. It is possible that the difficulty in identifying cases of forced begging within the broader phenomenon of trafficking can make almost invisible phenomenon.

Between 2008 and 2013 16 cases of trafficking for forced begging were reported, 9 of which were reported in 2013.

In the second phase of the fieldwork, the city of Oporto was first selected as specific territory to explore the themes of the research. They were contacted people involved in the activities of begging in order to gather depositions and information to better understand the dynamics of phenomenon.

As for the observation of people involved in begging activities, some specific places were chosen: cemeteries, hospitals, churches, markets and supermarkets, railway stations and bus stations, shopping centers, tourist areas and public services.

The mapping activity took place in few days (from June 17 to July 3), at different times. A person of the research group has participated in all outreach activities in order to avoid the detecting of the same person twice. Whenever possible it was asked the name of the person who practiced the activity of begging. The mapping activities at night took place only in the center of the city of Oporto. This work led to identify 197 people involved in begging. However, researchers have shown that the number detected does not fully describe the dimension of the phenomenon in Oporto.

For the interviews, the working group was composed of three sociologists: two of them were responsible for the contact with the person engaged in the activity of begging and a person was employed to record information. A detailed list of the places where it was possible to identify people involved in begging had been previously prepared; in reality, however, the places were much more varied and, for the limits of the research, it was not possible to detect all the places of the city affected by the phenomenon.

During the mapping werereported: the place of the begging business, day, time, type of activity, sex, age, nationality, presence of disability and pregnancy.

In interviews and during the observation activities of those involved in begging, both the real activity of begging and the auxiliary ones have been taken into account. However, classic sales activities of small items where the price was not determined a priori but it was asked to passersby to offer the sum that felt they could give were assimilated into begging. Researchers sought to understand if there are any links between the homeless and people who practice begging, because in the city of Oporto about 300 people living on the street had already been identified. During observations, researchers have attempted to verify if these people had, for example, a glass or a small container, or any other sign that could be linked to the begging activities.

People reported through mapping phase are mostly males falling in the age group between 30 and 49 and between 50 and 64 years.

Regarding the type of activity performed, the majority of people observed asked for money and, thereafter, were engaged in activities linked to abusive parking. Portuguese citizens are mostly involved in parking activities, while foreign people are more often involved in classic begging activities.

Regarding gender, women are engaged in classic begging (request for money) and much more rarely in abusive parking activity.

It was reported that the presence and the ostentation of disability or pregnancy might be useful indicators to identify the victim of trafficking for forced begging. Between the 24 persons reported, 23 had a disability and one woman was pregnant. 19 had Portuguese nationality and 5 were foreigners. During the mapping activity, have been observed also musicians and street artists, but the research team has decided do not interview these people.

After the mapping activity, it began the activity related to the interviews, it was held during the month of July for five non-consecutive days. Two sociologists conducted the interviews. After the first three days of interviews, considering the difficulty of establishing a dialogue with people involved in the activity of begging, a mediator of Romanian nationality was involved. In Oporto around 50 people directly involved in begging (34 Portuguese, 14 Romanian Roma, 1 Danish, 1 Spanish) were interviewed. Two incomplete interviews were not considered in the data processing for this research.

Most of the interviews were administered to males with more than 30 years, based on a semi-structured questionnaire with open questions. The research group has attempted an interview with a minor Rom, but it was not possible to accomplish it because of the difficulty of communication.

During the mapping activity, were observed and interviewed musicians and street performers.

62% of people surveyed said they in the past had work experiences. 43% of respondents of Romanian nationality worked in their country of origin, but has never worked legally in Portugal, performing only odd jobs in the fishing and construction industry. 36% of people surveyed who had never worked had disabilities.

All respondents stated that they arrived in the country by bus (only one person said to have arrived by foot). 31% of foreign people interviewed was in charge of travel expenses, 25% was helped by the family and another 25 % have applied for a loan to pay for the journey from Romania, 13% said that it was the trafficker to bear the costs of the trip. Only 6% said to have arrived in the country by foot.

For all respondents, emigration seems to be a rather recent phenomenon: 44% said to be in Portugal for less than year, 31% less than two years, 6 % from 3-4- years and 13% from more than 5 years.

An interesting element of the Portuguese research is the travel-planning: the foreign persons interviewed started their travel for begging reasons in Italy, then, when they felt under pressure, they moved to France, and they have moved further from France, first in Spain, before arriving in Portugal. Therefore, Portugal is in some ways the culmination of a long journey that began in central Europe. In any case, people involved in begging activities move to those localities where they perceive a greater tolerance towards them. The Romanian target group is particularly well adapted to local conditions; people engaged in begging know how to deal with the police, they know in which cases they can be brought to the police station, etc.

According to the research team, some of the information gathered from some people observed both in the mapping phase and during interviews are not true, although it is very difficult to quantify the percentage.

Regarding the living conditions of people who practice begging, it was shown a slight improvement. Portuguese live mostly in apartments or rooms for rent in shared houses, whereas foreign persons, in particular Roma, live in shops or abandoned buildings and in some cases, they live in gypsy camps, lacking the basic facilities, or they live in the streets. In the fields were detected cases of people and children in very bad health conditions, cases of tuberculosis, nervous disorders and depressions. Children do not attend school.

The majority of people who live with family members (wife, husband, and children) or friends are living in apartments or rooms for rent.

People engaged in the request for money on the street were generally more willing to the interview compared to those engaged in illegal parking. Roma people were mainly involved in the request for money on the street. 8 % of people involved in classic begging said they occasionally perform other jobs in the construction industry or in the markets.

The majority of people (30 %) seems to have a well-defined routine in terms of places where to ask money from passers-by and in terms of time during the day. Instead, Romanians seem to have a steady job. This is emphasized by the researchers and it may be due to a number of factors: people do not want to be too visible by hanging out in the same place, do not want to saturate the possible customers or they can also have conflict with other people dedicated to this activity. Many respondents stated that they have to respect the limits of the place in which to practice begging activities.

The majority of Portuguese people have reported that are involved in begging activities from more than 6 years, while foreigners have reported that are in these conditions around 3 years. As for the schedule, it depends on the place where people beg. The activity of illegal parking in general takes place early in the morning. In any case, it seems that begging activities are similar to a “normal” job. No one that workat night.

As for the daily earnings, the researchers collect following data: only the 64% are the valid responses. 42% have reported that they earn less than 11 Euros per day, 12% less than 5 Euros; only 20% said that they earn more than 20 Euros per day. The majority has reported that independently manage the money, but the percentage is higher among Portuguese, while Roma people have reported that the family manages the money.

As for the access to social services, medical services and education, it is very important to verify the level of social exclusion of respondents. The 91% of Portuguese have reported that they have access to social services while only 7% of foreigners have reported to use the social services. Another 7% said that not profit associations have helped them. In any case, Portugueses seem to know better than Roma people the social services and the not profit associations. The 71% of Portuguese have reported that in the family there is at least one person who receive a subsidy or aid from the public institutions.

In general, respondents have a good relation with the police, although Portuguese have reported they have a more positive relation than Roma. In some cases, Roma people said that they have been expelled from a particular place probably following complaints.

In Portugal, there are special trained groups in order to deal with cases of forced begging. The activities carried out are legal orientation, social assistance and identification of the victims. When minors are involved in begging activities, it is necessary to verify their family context and the parents’ capacity to take care of their children. However, when the forced begging is linked with the phenomenon of human trafficking and victims are minors, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach foreseeing both legal and social measures.

The researchers asked to the beggars what kind of help they need. The 48% answered that they need a job in order to enhance their life conditions and money for the housing that it seems to be the more important need. People who receive public subsidies said that the money do not cover all urgencies.

As for the stakeholders, they have underlined the situation of specific target group. For example, the homeless are at risk to fall in the mechanism of human trafficking and exploitation. There are many cases of young people and minors that are involved in begging and this activity represents a strategy of survival since they cannot count on help from adults or a structured family. Moreover, stakeholders have highlight the fact that victims of forced begging do not collaborate enough with social services or police. Among the factors that influence the construction of a relation based on the trust and the collaboration, there are linguistic difficulties.

For that reason, it is important to prevent the human trafficking sensitizing public institutions, civic society and public opinion on the phenomenon and at the same time to enhance the local and European networks dealing with this issue. It is important furthermore reinforce the training of professionals that closely work with the persons involved in begging activities or with the victims of trafficking.

In order to understand better the attitude of the population regarding the phenomenon of begging, the researcher team has launched an on-line survey that took place from 1st of July until 31st August 2014 in 18 districts of the country. The valid questionnaires have been 506 from 526 questionnaires sent. 77% of respondents are women, in the majority of the cases people live in urban or suburban areas and 15% live in rural area of the country. As for the age, the majority falls in the category from 35 to 44 years. Many respondents said to note daily people involved in begging activities in the streets, while only 15% have reported do not have contact with this phenomenon. Furthermore, the questionnaire includes a question about the frequency of help to beggars.

The 11% have reported that they give every day some money to beggars, while the majority said that they rarely offer some money. It seems that persons who have contact with not profit associations or if they work with not profit organizations are more sensible regarding beggars; in many cases, they offer food, clothes, shoes or money. Many respondents said that they are poor and for this reason they cannot give money to beggars. When among beggars there are minors or disable persons the reaction is more positive and collaborative.

The questionnaire have examined the perception of the respondents regarding the reasons that can push people to begging activities. The main reasons reported are unemployment, economic crisis in Portugal, social exclusion and the difficulty to have access to social services. In general, the perception of respondents regarding the on-line survey of the phenomenon of begging corresponds to the results of the semi-structured interviews.

As for the responsibility to find a solution for this issue, respondents said that the society has to find a solution or policy decision makers and social services have to define a strategy to face the phenomenon of begging. In general, respondents do not believe that people involved in begging activities are responsible for this situation. The 54,5% of respondents have reported that police have the responsibility to control the phenomenon, to guarantee the public security and to punish the guilty party.

The 27% of the respondents thinks that begging is a free individual choice; only when there are minors involved in these activities respondents think that minors are obliged to beg from a family member. 80% of respondents is convinced that Portugal is affected by the phenomenon of human trafficking.

In particular, in the last years the cases of Roma people, including minors, involved in begging activities are increased and this represents a worrying situation. In Portugal, law punishes the exploitation of minors for begging, but even if the police constantly controls this situation, Roma community adapted the way to beg to the local conditions in order to by-pass the legislation.

The researchers underlined that the knowledge of the phenomenon is the first stage allowing the sensitization of the organizations in order to face the issue. In particular, the phenomenon of forced begging is not well known and for that reason it is included in the question of trafficking of human beings. It is now very difficult to identify the cases of trafficking in human beings for forced begging. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an approach in order to contact people involved in begging activities, to build a trust relationship in a way that it will be possible to gather information and to examine in deep the phenomenon.

The research in Bulgaria

In the introduction of the national report the researchers in Bulgaria have highlighted the fact that begging behavior from one side can be considered as a form of violation of the actual social order, and from the other side can be considered a kind of criticism of the social order that have not the capability to include people. The begging activities could have also the capability to multiply the effect of the critiques to the actual social order. Policy decision makers have a propensity for constructing a specific image of begging activities and beggars. For example, they consider the begging activities a result of a free individual choice and consequently to minimize the question. Also for that reason, the phenomenon is not well known.

In this context, the researchers would like to understand if the begging activity is a result of a free individual choice or is a consequence of the context that could influence this decision. They take also into consideration if the context can influence the different forms of begging activities. Moreover, the researchers believe that the analysis of begging phenomenon can give useful information about the social context in general, about its welfare system and its internal dynamics.

Also in Bulgaria, the phenomenon of forced begging is quite new. The existence of this phenomenon can corrode the trust in the social system and in the political decision makers from the side of the public opinion. The researchers tried to explain why the number of persons involved in begging activities is increasing, in which sense it is possible to see this phenomenon as a “normal” issue, or it is possible to believe that people involved are victims of the social context. Finally, the researchers have investigated how the same people practicing these activities consider begging.

First, in Bulgaria at the beginning of the fieldwork, the researchers started to systematize existing information on the phenomenon and then they have observed the target group during 3 days in a several Sofia streets. Moreover, the researchers have carried out 150 interviews by phone and 30 interviews with people directly involved in the phenomenon of begging. As for the interviewed, there are 5 minors (10-15 years), 15 women and 10 men. Among them, there are 17 persons of age from 18-65 years and 13 persons over 65 years.

As for the nationality, in the target group interviewed there are 10 Roma people and 20 Bulgarians.

As for the stakeholders, the researchers interviewed taxi drivers (13 men and 2 women), and people working in bars, restaurants, etc.

The researchers have analyzed the phenomenon of begging on the base of its components: who asks help, who offers help and the social context in which the phenomenon exists. The researchers affirm that the society has the moral obligation to protect its members.

For that reason, the behavior of people involved in begging activities and the behavior of people offering some help is justified ethically and rationally. Moreover, the researchers have identified persons that are involved in begging activities and persons that potentially can practice these activities because they have fallen in poverty and they do not have access to the social services. There are also 'masked' forms of begging activities as, for example, musicians playing in the streets or illegal sellers.

As for the definition, the researchers consider begging all forms of individual request for help to meet basic needs. Nevertheless, researchers distinguish a form of begging so-called opportunistic, a kind of exploitation of poverty by people who did not make any effort to overcome their situation of disadvantage. The aggressive begging refers to the request for help particularly insistent, when the beggar makes a pressure on the person from whom expects help. Finally, researchers have identified forced begging, when a person is forced to carry out this activity by third parties (family, other addicts begging, and criminal organizations).

The previous researches in Bulgaria have focused on begging activities carried out by minors, on poverty and on the monitoring of the phenomenon. Minors ask money because they are poor or they have health problems; in some cases, they ask money for religious reasons. Sometimes children ask some money and offer a flower or a small thing in exchange, but in effect, it is not a real sale activity.

As for the begging activity among Roma minors, this activity often is associated with other illegal activities as pickpocketing or theft.

The reasons that push minors to practice begging activities are different: poverty, familiar milieu, lack of a positive educational model, personal or psychological aspects, but also the fact that the specific legislation about minors' protection is not efficient.

As for the perception of the phenomenon of the public opinion, there are two main attitudes: people who offer money to beggars and people who never offer money to beggars. People who do not offer money have also a negative image of begging behavior, because beggars abuse of their kindness and morality. People that do not offer money to beggars believe that the State has the responsibility to help citizens.

People who are ready to offer some money are more pitiful especially regarding minors or disabled adults. This attitude is typical for persons between 55-70 years. People interviewed on this issue have answered that the decision to give or not to give money to beggars depends also on a concrete situation, on age, nationality or the condition of the beggar.

There is another aspect linked to the attitude of refuse to give money to beggars. That is the discrimination regarding Roma people in general. In the group of persons interviewed, several explain the refusal with the fact that they are poor and they cannot help other people.

The disabled beggars are not the majority of the observed group. From the 78 registered people involved in begging activities, only five have visible disabilities. Nevertheless, almost all respondents suffer from serious health disorders not visible (for example, diabetes, and tuberculosis). It is possible that the diseases are among the reasons conducting respondents to practice begging activities but there are no concrete proofs that diseases or disabilities are the main reason for recourse to begging.

The reasons that conduct persons begging are different.

There are situations in which persons are not responsible for the decision of begging. Sometimes a concurrence of circumstances determined the fact that people started to beg.

None of the interviewed reports that they like to beg but they beg to survive and prefer to work if there was a 'normal' salary.

As for the income from begging, the existing data are not completely credible. Most sources of information tend to present begging as a very beneficial and profitable activity. Beggars also contribute to this image.

As for the expenditures, people involved in begging activities reported that in some cases, they receive a social assistance but this is not enough to cover the basic needs. Other items of expenditure are alcohol, cigarettes and medicines. There are cases where people beg not for themselves but for others.



Final Recommendations

The fieldwork in each country have underlined following questions:

- In the countries of the project partners, Roma people involved in begging activities represent the target group more significant from the quantitative point of view.
- The survey have analyzed the target group – persons involved in begging activities – on the base of following indicators: gender, age, education, relationship with the family, present family composition, n. of children.
- The survey has considered the type of begging activity, daily duration of the activity and daily amount earned.
- The research has examined the perception of the phenomenon from the point of view of the interviewed persons (stakeholders, social workers, lawyers, journalists and public opinion).
- Health is a very crucial issue linked to the phenomenon of begging as well as the question of the access to the local medical services.

- The phenomenon increased in all countries of project partners. The researchers have verified that it is linked to the poverty and the social exclusion that is a consequence also of the economic crisis.
- The begging is not a result of an individual free choice but it is determined by the poverty and by the fact that society has not the capability to include people, especially foreign people that represent the more vulnerable target group.

These recommendations summarize the observations reported by each partner that have considered their specific social context. However, these recommendations refer to a wide and long-term perspective:

1. Sensitize all the actors of public institutions and private organizations that deal with the phenomenon of human trafficking and, in specific, of forced begging on the gravity of this issue as well as the civic society.
2. Enhance local network existing among the actors that in different way deal with this phenomenon in order to better use the available resources and multiply the effect of the interventions.
3. Increase the outreach activities in order to contact people in the street involved in begging activities, inform and provide them first health assistance and to advise about their rights.
4. Increase the programmes active at the local level in order to combat the human trafficking with a particular attention to the minors.
5. Define at regional and national level programmes and specific measures in favor of disadvantaged people involved in begging activities.
6. Define concrete measures, for example providing social houses, facilitating the procedure to entry into the labor market, in order to overtake the condition of extreme poverty of the target group.



3

Operative Action Phase, Activity Report Portugal

By Elizabeth Santos

November 2014 - May 2015

Based on the conclusions of the national research and the 3rd Transnational Meeting, EAPN Portugal developed an operative plan. The operative plan was produced as a guiding document for the operative phase and to be negotiated with the national partners.

In this way, it was developed a simple document covering four main parts: aims of the operative phase; activities areas in the scope of the project; activities in Portugal; timetable.

The umbrella activity defined in the operative plan was the constitution of a Working Group (WG) with stakeholders working in THB process. The aim of this WG was to promote the networking in the design and organization of the project activities and for combat THB for forced begging exploitation. It was identified 9 organizations to be invited to take part in the working group, including NGOs, public institutions, observatories and police forces (criminal and public security).

The other activities identified in the operative plan were dependent of the partner's agreement and it included: raise awareness activities for professional or volunteers that contacts with beggars or homeless persons; construction of products, such as video or a project catalogue; and the organization of a final seminar of the project at national level.

Working Group constitution

1st meeting – 15th of January

The first meet had the aim to present the main results of the first phase of the project (research); to constitute the working group; and to discuss the operative plan.

It was selected the following organizations to participate in the first meeting of the WG:

- CIG - Gender Equality and Citizenship Commission responsible for the Fighting and Prevention of THB National Plan (Public entity) / National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings
- Observatório do Tráfico dos Seres Humanos – TBH Observatory (Public entity)
- Associação para o Planeamento da Família – Association for Family Planning (NGO)
- Saúde em Português – Healthy in Portuguese (NGO)
- Instituto de Apoio à Criança – Child Support Institute (NGO)

- Comissão de Protecção das Crianças e Jovens (Porto Oriental, Central e Ocidental) – Protection Commission for Children and Young People (public entity)
- ISS – Estratégia Nacional para a Integração de Pessoas Sem-abrigo (Porto) – National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless Population (public entity)
- PSP – Public Security Police
- PJ – Criminal Police
- SEF – Boarder and Foreigner Services

The meeting it had the nonattendance of four organizations (CIG; Observatório TSH; Saúde em Português; PJ). Despite this absence, all organizations showed their interesting in participate in the working group in upcoming meetings or by distance.

Only one organization showed their unavailability to participate in the working group, namely the organization that represents the National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People in Oporto city (ISS- NPISA). Despite this, the NIPSA was responsible to inform volunteers organizations working with homeless groups about the willingness of the working group to organize raise awareness sessions about THB. On the other hand it was stressed the need to enlarge the group inviting one delegate from judges and public prosecutors.

2nd meeting – 19th of February

The second meeting had the attendance of eight organizations, with the new attendance of three organizations: CIG; PJ; Observatório TSH. As a result of the first meeting, it was also invited judicial institutions/delegates, through the invitation of Centre for Judicial Studies and Supreme Judicial Council. Consequently, the second meeting have the attendance of the president of the Oporto's Court of Appeal.

The main aim of this meeting was to brainstorm on the needs of intervention in fighting of THB for begging exploitation and integration of its victims. With the information gathered in this meeting it was possible to work on WG's product – the catalogue of projects. The main project's areas identified were:

- Promotion of working team for the identification of victims, involving police forces, NGOs, health services; etc;
- Promotion of mediation in volunteers networks to support the identification of victims and to support the social inclusion of victims;
- Information and awareness activities;
- Qualification of the shelters for children and youngsters that receives children victims of THB;
- Language training for professionals working with THB;
- Promoting a better understanding of the countries of origin of this victims;
- Coordination and cooperation activities with Consulates and Embassies;
- International cooperation activities (support the return of victims from EU Member States countries);
- Promote a better liaison with judges and public prosecutors;

As a result of this meeting, it was agreed the organization of a seminar in the Oporto's Court of Appeal targeting the judges and public prosecutors.

3rd meeting – 21st of April

The meeting had the attendance of eight organizations and its agenda had three main discussion topics: organization of the seminar in Oporto's Court of Appeal; organization of the final seminar of the project in Oporto; presentation and discussion of the catalogue of projects.

With the meeting it was possible to close the date and the agenda for the meeting in the Court of Appeal. The date of the final seminar was also defined and it was discussed a draft agenda. The meeting also allowed for a presentation of the contents of the catalogue of projects and a first the debate on its content.



Last meeting – date to confirm

A last meeting of the working group will be schedule with the aim to close the debate on the agenda for the final seminar and on the catalogue of project. This meeting will also allow for a discussion on the future of the working group with the ending of the project.

Integration of EAPN Portugal in the Northern Regional Network of Support and Protecting Human Trafficking Victims

As a result of the activities developed at national level and the organization of the WG, EAPN Portugal was invited to integrate the Northern Regional Network of Support and Protecting Human Trafficking Victims. This is a network of organizations working with the phenomenon of THB and aims on the promotion of cooperation and sharing of information, in the northern region of the country, to promote the prevention, protection and reintegration of THB's victims.

The participation on this network allowed for a better dissemination of The Third Sector Against Pushed Begging's project and results.

On the other hand, it also promoted the organisation of the raise awareness session on THB in other districts and regions of the country. It is being organized five sessions to be developed in the second semester of 2015 in the following districts: Guarda (session with stakeholders from areas in the borders with Spain); Setúbal (one session with profession of the town hall;

one session with members of public security police); Évora (people vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion); Beja (to be defined). The EAPN Portugal's integration in this network will be formalized with the signature of a protocol. The signature of the protocol is foreseen to be held in June 2015.

Raise Awareness session on Trafficking in Human Beings for volunteers working with homeless people

Although the organization that represents the National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People wasn't available to participate in the working group meetings, ISS has committed itself with the articulation with volunteer work's NGO to organize a raise awareness session. One volunteer organization showed their interesting in raising awareness of their volunteers about THB.

The Grupo de Acção Social do Porto – GAS Porto is a NGO with a volunteer group (R.U.A.) aiming in stablishing a direct contact with the homeless population, to acquire more and better knowledge of their needs and to develop strategies to promote human dignity and social inclusion of these citizens.

The session was organized in partnership between EAPN Portugal, GAS Porto and Associação para o Planeamento da Família (APF). GAS Porto was responsible for the identification of the volunteers and APF was responsible for facilitating the session.

The raise awareness session took place in the 13th of May, in the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto. The meeting had the attendance of 24 volunteers and it lasted for two hours and a half. During the session it was discussed the following issues:

- What is THB?
- The different exploitations associated with THB
- How to identify a victim of THB? The signs that the volunteers should be alert.
- How to deal with a THB situation? (The signalling process; the institutions that should be contact when it is identified a THB situation; the risks of giving false promises to the victim)
- The homeless population and vulnerability to THB
- Brief presentation of the project The Third Sector Against Pushed Begging and the online availability of the national research.

At the end of the meeting, it was discussed the need for a second session to deeper the discussion and to provide more information on the issue.

Organization of conference on human trafficking for begging exploitation in partnership with Oporto’s Court of Appeal (for judges)

As stated previously, the need for a better articulation with judges and public prosecutors was identified by the members of the working group, leading to the presence of the President of Oporto’s Court of Appeal in the second meeting of this working group.

The seminar on Trafficking in Human Being for the Purpose of Begging Exploitation will take place on the 17th of June, on Oporto’s Court of Appeal. The agenda of the meeting is closed and all the speakers are confirmed.

<p>14.00 - 14.15</p>	<p>Well Come President of Oporto Court of Appeal President of EAPN Portugal / Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza – Pe Jardim Moreira National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings – Manuel Albano</p>
<p>14.15 - 15.30</p>	<p>Tráfico de Seres Humanos para a Mendicidade Forçada Chairwoman: Rita Baptista da Silva Penedo (Team leader of the THB Observatory) Associação para o Planeamento da Família (NGO) – Marta Pereira (Coordinator of the shelter for women victims of trafficking in human beings and their young children) Protection Commission for Children and Young People – Oporto Occidental – Joana Trigo (President) Department for Investigation and Penal Action – Sofia Rocha (Assistant Prosecutor) Oporto Court of Appeal - Elsa Paixão (Judge from Criminal Division) Foreigners and Borders Service – José Van Der Kellen (National Deputy Director Director) Criminal Police – Sebastião Sousa (Chief Inspector)</p>

15.30 - 16.00	Comments and reflexions - Euclides José Dâmaso Simões (District Attorney-general of Coimbra)
16.00 - 17.00	Debate
17.00	Closing session Sérgio Aires (National coordinator of The Third Sector Against Pushed Begging project)

It is being finalised the image of the seminar and the programme. With the programme image finalised, it will be released through the Oporto Court of Appeal, Centre for Judicial Studies and Courts of first instance.

Organization of the final seminar of the project in Porto

The final seminar of the project will take place on the 14th of July, in Oporto (Atmosfera M). The seminar agenda was discussed in the third meeting of the WG and it was agreed the organization of a full day seminar, divided in two main parts: a plenary section during the morning to show the main results of the project and to promote a discussion on the links between fighting THB and fighting poverty and social exclusion; during the afternoon will be promoted three workshops based on the catalogue of project to promote the production



of partnerships and design of activities to fight THB and promote the social inclusion of its victims.

Here's the draft agenda of the meeting. It's provisional proposal still under analysis also taking in consideration the on-going development of the project.

9.30 - 9.45	Well Come President of EAPN Portugal / Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza – Pe Jardim Moreira National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings – Manuel Albano
9.45 - 10.15	The Third Sector Against Pushed Begging – Products and Results EAPN Portugal – Elizabeth Santos Member of the Working Group – to be confirmed
10.15 - 10.30	Coffee break
10.30-11.30	Fighting THB for begging exploitation. Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion – Building bridges and strategies EAPN Portugal – Sergio National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings – Manuel Albano CPCJ Porto Ocidental– Joana Trigó IAC – Paula Paço / Matilde Sirgado APF – Rita Moreira / Marta Pereira NPISA – Paula França
11.30-12.00	Debate
12.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-16.30	Workshops on the catalogue of projects
16.30-17.00	Workshops conclusions and debate
17.00	Closing session

Production of a catalogue of projects

The catalogue of projects is the main product of the WG and it aims at presenting ideas of actions to promote the integration of victims of THB, the prevention and the raise awareness on this kind of crime.

A first draft of the document was presented in the third meeting of the working group and it was given two weeks for the partner send their comments and suggestions for the improvement of the document. The comments and suggestions are being incorporated. After this process, another meeting of the WG will be promoted to approve the final document. The final version of this product will be a working document for final seminar to promote the discussion on projects to be held in this field of action and on the partnership.

The document is structured in four parts:

- Introduction to the product – Explanation of the product framework, namely Third Sector Against Pushed Begging project and the WG;
- Presentation of the partnership – Identification of the members of the WG with a brief presentation of their role in fighting THB;
- The Catalogue of Project – Brief explanation of the aim of the document and the action needs identified during the research and by the working group;
- Projects' Information Sheet – Presentation of projects/intervention areas. For each project it is made a brief needs assessment; the identification of the project's aims; its main activities; the project length; the partnership; and other observations that should be take into account in the intervention.

In the first draft of the Catalogue of Project, it was identified nine projects:

- Street work with beggars to prevent THB;
- Reinforcement networking in signaling process;
- To inform and to raise awareness on THB for forced begging exploitation;
- Research on integration of children victims of THB in Portugal;

- Promoting Portuguese and Romanian language skills and social and cultural information exchange;
- Integration of Eastern Roma communities;
- Pilot project to support the assisted voluntary return of TSH victims from EU member state origin;
- To qualify Children and Youth Shelters to promote a better integration of victims of TBH;
- To support the integration of THB's victims in Portugal

These projects are being rearranged and the final version of this product will mix different activities in a smaller number of project's intervention.



Operative Action Phase, Activity Report Poland

By Katarzyna Makaruk

*Research-based guidelines
on counteracting child begging*

Research studies conducted in Poland under the project entitled “The third sector against pushed begging” indicated that there are several areas calling for improvement. Importantly, such improvement can only be accomplished, if various organizations and institutions on a local and national level work hand in hand.

1. Creating a database listing cases of child trafficking and forced child begging reported by a variety of institutions. It would facilitate a more thorough analysis of available statistical data, thus giving a more realistic overview of child begging in Poland.
2. Raising awareness of the general public as regards begging – awareness-raising activities should target the general public, children and youth in particular, along with parents, professionals working with at-risk children and youth, professionals working with migrants and coming into contact with individuals potentially forced to begging, as well as police officers and officers of the municipal guard.
 - a. Educational and awareness campaign aimed at the general public and explaining what begging is and how to react when witnessing it. The campaign message should be present on the media (print media, radio stations, TV or Internet), as well as in public transport vehicles – trams, buses, metro trains and taxis. Campaign message should not be limited to an appeal for not giving money to beggars; it ought to make the public sensitive to the problem of begging and should suggest specific actions that can be undertaken when faced with the issue.
 - b. Educating children and youth about potential threats associated with human trafficking and begging, as well as about the nature of the problem itself. Educational seminars could be held in schools or community centers; they could utilize available materials regarding human trafficking, as well as new educational content (to be developed) focusing solely on begging.
 - c. Educating parents about the consequences of involving children in begging.
 - d. Educating professionals working with at-risk children and youth, or with migrants, as well as employees of prevention services who may in their daily practice encounter children and adults forced to begging. Raising their awareness of begging may facilitate faster and more effective identification of victims, as well as proper intervention and support for victims.
3. Providing tools for individuals who notice begging children, enabling them to intervene and notify appropriate services – e.g. establishing a telephone hotline and developing procedures clearly instructing what to do when faced with children being exploited for begging.

4. Activities targeting at-risk children and youth

- a. Offering at-risk children and youth more choices for spending their free time by developing local institutions, such as community centers. Promoting positive alternatives and low-cost or free-of-charge forms of utilizing one's free time.
- b. Using street-working strategies to connect with adolescents and young adults active in begging, as well as to come into contact with young people spending their free time in the streets, facing marginalization or social exclusion. Such groups might include young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We should bear in mind that reaching culturally-divergent groups may require specific knowledge of cultural differences and being able to communicate in a foreign language.

Activities of street educators and neighborhood educators carried out in the community of children spending their time in the streets, aimed at organizing their free time and preventing their involvement in begging. Street educators focus in their work directly on children from the communities deemed to be “educationally insufficient”, where children are encouraged to participate in activities organized by institutions. It is an effective way of reaching young people and truly altering their situation and their behavior.

5. Disseminating information among beggars (both children and adults) about available help and support – financial, legal or psychological. As well as this, informing children that they can take part in extracurricular activities provided by NGOs, community centers, etc.
6. Providing care to small children (according to research – of Roma origin), who are on a daily basis forced to accompany adults during begging, which may lead to a number of unfavorable consequences for their physical and mental health.
7. Introducing city ordinances regulating implementation of programs counteracting the problem of begging, which would clearly specify the scope of competence of specific institutions and entities, as well as the manner in which any bystander witnessing the situation of begging should react and help.



Operative Action Phase, Activity Report Romania

By Mihai Lizandur

September 2014 - May 2015

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Romanian national research ARAS – The Romanian Association Against-AIDS has developed an operative action plan. The operative plan was produced as a guiding document for the operative phase and was implemented in the action phase of the project.

For the action phase of the project, ARAS has focused on one of the recommendations of the Romanian national research:

“To develop medical and social (as well as harm reduction) services for the disadvantaged persons and to strengthen the referral system among service providers working with beggars.”

Having in mind the recommendations of the Romanian national research, conducted in the first part of the project, and following the international regulations, recommendations and best practices, plus having over 15 years of experience working with most vulnerable population (Injectable Drug Users, Sex Workers, Roma etc.), we have concluded that developing an outreach intervention accompanied by services offered in drop-in centres is the best intervention for the operative action phase of the project.

The action phase was implemented from September 2014 to May 2015, in Bucharest, by a ten member multidisciplinary team of ARAS composed of 6 outreach workers, 2 social workers and 2 medical assistants (nurses) working in the outreach service and in the two drop-in centres.

The outreach interventions targeted 14 different areas of Bucharest where the research had demonstrated the presence of people involved in begging activities: Dinicu Golescu, Gara de Nord, Ferentari, Ferentari-Valtoare, Grozavesti, Lizeanu, Luica, Maria Rosetti, Piata Sudului, Piata Unirii, Petre Tunsu, Stefan Furtuna, Vacaresti, Zabrauti.

The operative action phase intervention reached approximately 150 beneficiaries¹ in outreach interventions and drop-in centres, having had more than 1150 contacts in this period of the project. All beneficiaries received services tailored to their specific needs: information, education and counselling; primary medical care; social assistance; orientation to other specialised services (hospitals, shelters, social soup etc.); health products distribution (condoms, needles etc.); HIV, HBV and HCV counselling and testing; accompanying to other services; etc.

¹ Data recorded between September 2014 – April 2015

Year	Month	Number of beneficiaries	Number of contacts
2014	September	148	259
2014	October	62	96
2014	November	55	65
2014	December	115	160
2015	January	103	151
2015	February	107	172
2015	March	117	150
2015	April	88	104
	TOTAL	795	1157

Many of the beneficiaries of the project were identified to have a drug addiction problem, mostly the use of inhalants, but lots of them use injectable drugs such as heroin, but also new substances with psychoactive properties (commonly known as ethnobotanical drugs).

Year	Month	Number of beneficiaries	Number of beneficiaries using drugs
2014	September	148	128
2014	October	62	58
2014	November	55	51
2014	December	115	98

2015	January	103	95
2015	February	107	101
2015	March	117	109
2015	April	88	81
	TOTAL	795	721

“The third sector against pushed begging” project has allowed ARAS to extend its intervention, and to include among the existing areas new ones, populated mostly by people who are involved in begging activities, but also to intensify the activity in areas where our teams had already been present.

One of the areas where ARAS has intensified its activity is Bucharest North Railway Station (Gara de Nord), an area that is vastly populated by homeless and beggars. The activity in this area was not only intensified, but “Gara de Nord” became a priority in our outreach interventions.

In this area of Bucharest can be identified approximately 200 persons from different vulnerable groups. From this 200, about 80 - 100 persons are “permanent residents” of “Gara de Nord”, living in the streets or near the station, in the sewerages (sleeping inside the railway station or in the sewerages), and earning their living by begging.

“Gara de Nord” has received a lot of attention lately, from the national and international press, revealing once again the need for social and health services in this area:

“In shocking scenes, the tunnel-dwellers are seen injecting drugs and inhaling paint fumes. Most of the people in the tunnels have HIV and a quarter have TB. Some look like children yet are teenagers, stunted by the drug abuse.” Channel 4 News, UK

At the beginning of the year (2015) the news team of Channel 4 returned to Bucharest and contacted ARAS for a report on the activity conducted by the mobile unit. The news crew accompanied the outreach team for one week, filming the day by day activity with vulnerable groups, resulting in a 10 minute news report that aired on the 29th of May. The report focuses on the activity with injectable drug users from Gara de Nord and Ferentari, two of the areas included in the action phase of our project, being also populated by beggars.

The news report can be seen on: <http://www.channel4.com/news/bucharest-romania-hiv-drug-addicts-needles-death-metal>



Outreach activity – overview

Every day a multidisciplinary team of ARAS consisting of outreach workers, social workers and medical assistants (nurses) go in different areas of Bucharest to provide services for most vulnerable population including beggars.

The outreach activity is done using the 2 mobile units of ARAS, equipped as ambulances, offering different services according to the specific needs of every beneficiary:

- Information, education and counselling;
- Primary medical care;
- Social assistance;
- Health products distribution (condoms, needles etc.)
- HIV, HBV and HCV counselling and testing;
- Orientation to other specialised services (hospitals, shelters, soup kitchen etc.)
- Accompanying to other services; etc.

DROP-IN Centres TITAN and ARENA - overview

The mobile units involved in the outreach activities can only be present for a limited amount of time in a place and this raised the need for developing Drop-in centres, where beggars could come and receive the needed services.

Another advantage of the drop-in centres is that they offer a safe and friendly environment where the beneficiaries can open up and share their difficulties and where we can find solutions for their problems.

The centres offer also a range of resources that in outreach are not available: computers, printers, office supplies, telephone, internet connection, etc.

Having all this we are able to offer, besides the services available in outreach, support for obtaining documents and social support (birth certificate, ID, social welfare etc.).

** For the use of this project we used the definitions of Healy C. and Rogoz M. (ICMPD) 2012, in the Report for the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Child Begging in the EU, pages 18-19. The mentioned authors and their Study use the definition of begging given by ILO (A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan, 2004) as: "a range of activities whereby an individual asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donations for health or religious reasons. Beggars may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale."*

NOTE: At the date when this report was produced the data from May 2015 was not collected and centralised by the Monitoring and Evaluation team of ARAS.



Operative Action Phase, Activity Report Bulgaria

By Maria Yelanokova

The Operative plan in Bulgaria followed the main conclusions of the national research.

Begging is increasingly dispersed in the country and there are Bulgarian people traveling abroad in order to beg. However begging is a problem not because some people are sitting in the streets, stretching a hand for alms and ruin the view of the passers-by.

Begging is an extreme form of social exclusion, a specific social phenomenon, and its expansion is symptomatic for disturbances within societal dynamics and policies.

Against this background the current policies (measures) and reactions to begging and beggars seem to be extremely one-sided, narrow, constrained and addressing the consequences instead of begging generators.

The measures implicate rather attempts to ban (suppress) or at least – hide, begging and beggars (raids waiting at bus stops for beggars to get them on buses back; provision of brief shelter in winter in order people not to freeze, declaring people in very difficult and vulnerable situations criminals, offenders and lazy and organizing media campaigns against beggars and begging) rather than searching for the roots of phenomenon and more effective measures if begging is not a voluntary choice.

The effects of this prohibitive-sanctioning character of the current policy response, reminding the atmosphere of 18-19 century, are highly questionable.

Regarding begging as a quasi-criminal state and beggars merely as morally degenerates does not contribute to solving problems and alleviating conflicts.

What seems to be equally important – reactions to begging and beggars rise questions about Third sector (how our reactions to beggars and begging describe ourselves?) and about society we are living in (how far society and policies correspond to the concept of “good society” as it is usually discussed (for instance by Amitai Etzioni, Jonathan Sacks, Andrea Nahles etc.)

Thus the basic framework of the operative phase in Bulgaria is to support development of a specific civil society’s vision, attitude and approach to beggars and begging, based on the concept for “Good society”.

Within this framework, the main agreed interconnected aims of the operative action phase include:

- discussing existing knowledge about beggars and begging as a basis (framework) for assessments, attitudes and policies to beggars and begging;
- introducing “informational enlargement” (larger knowledge/informational framework, derived from the research) and discussing changes of morally based assessments of the phenomenon.
work of social inclusion and anti-poverty measures;

More concretely – adding information about causes and consequences of begging, and embedding the approach to begging within the framework of social inclusion and anti-poverty measures;

- (re)assessing the current attitudes and policies to beggars and begging;
- working out some ideas and proposals for policies and measures.

The action plan includes:

Time	Activity
November – December, 2014	1. Discussing the social and personal aspects of begging and beggars 2. Identification and discussing the basic stereotypes in the area concerned
January – February, 2015	3. Addressing main changes needed in policies and political measures.
March – April, 2015	4. Incorporating ‘good society’ concept in the field 5. Elaborating scenario for a documentary film
April - June, 2015	6. Preparation and production of the film, including meetings with journalists and practical arrangements with a team (scriptwriter and operators).
June – July, 2015	7. National public event – discussion on the necessary further actions and dissemination of messages

Consecutive meetings and discussions with partners sharing the necessity of a new civil society approach took place: representatives of EAPN, Union of Economists in Bulgaria; “Best 2 Be” Foundation; Cultural Association “St. Sokolova”; SIPTO NGO; NGO “21 century”, Alternativa 2000, academic researchers from different universities and research institutes, social work students, privileged witnesses, journalists, etc.

Activity 1: Discussing the social and personal aspects of begging and beggars

The following results of the study of beggars were presented, discussed and developed.

1. Beggars are people whose situation could be described as combination of extreme poverty and total lack of personal capacity to overcome the extreme poverty. From this point of view it is possible to perceive beggars situation as “zero capability level”.

2. But there are at least two other specific features of beggars. One of them is that these people are almost completely dislodged from their social environment.

Participants in discussions suggested that there is another situation very similar to that of beggar where individuals are completely dislodged from the social environment. In this other situation individual is considered as “socially dead” because he/she has no binding moral relations with anyone else: he/she is alienated from his ancestors, community, family, clan, city; he/she cannot make contracts or meaningful promises. The only one ultimate relation of this individual is a relation deprived of any moral component and purely based on violence – it is a relationship between a slave and his/her master. He/she must obey because if he/she doesn't he/she can be beaten, tortured or killed.

This description is provided by one of the most prominent researchers of this institution - Orlando Paterson..What makes the difference (as far as it exists) between beggar and slave is a partially conserved morally based relationship between beggar and those that give him the alms. Without this difference the beggar would be a slave. Sometimes the tiny difference disappears.

3. When individuals beg in order to survive, the process is very similar to enslaving – it is always connected with different forms of violence and coercion. In more concrete terms – begging is a result of different social pressures on the individual. Most of these pressures are direct or indirect effects of policies.

Activity 2. Identification and discussing the basic stereotypes in the area of begging and beggars

The following most common stereotypes that support the current approach to begging and beggars are identified: lazy people who do not want to work have chosen to survive by begging; as a rule they are deliberately and forcefully organized by some bosses who deceive and use them; this is a part of unwarranted human trafficking operated by others for the sake of profits; thus people could be saved from begging by sanctions and penalties and awareness raising for the public is needed so as people should not provide help to beggars.

Although there are certainly cases in which these allegations are true, the pressure this logic to be presented as a comprehensive framework for discussion of begging is very doubtful. Even more important is that this pressure makes impossible to discuss many important questions related to the phenomenon, such as:

1. The problem of “lazy people”. Any rational evaluation would prove that begging is too often connected with activity under quite unfavorable “labor conditions” - prolonged sitting in one place, regardless of the conditions; rummaging through the garbage; playing against pittance; selling handmade cards, etc. these are all quite unattractive activities. Thus there are hardly grounds to insist on begging as laziness, understood as disinclination to activity. Attributing laziness to begging is much more propaganda than a real feature of the phenomenon.
2. The “free choice” problem. There are no evidences that people prefer begging while they have multiple choices or at least opportunity to have a decent life. On the contrary, plenty of research depict that people who beg are victims of social circumstances – like unemployment, disability, mental problems, very low incomes, etc. Begging is much more an indicator of a lack of freedom to make decisions about one’s own (and of the family) life. Nevertheless a sustainable and stubborn propaganda cliché deliberately uses “the free will” as a precondition to beg.

3. The “free choice of lazy people” mantra prevents clear identification of the real problems and humanistic attitude to people deprived from satisfaction of basic needs and forced to beg. By the way, there are evidences that asking for help could be considered as a basic component of communities of living beings, not only humans. Recent studies claim that begging behaviour is observed not only in human societies but also in many animals groups. The very fact that such data are never considered when begging is discussed supports the unwillingness to consider it as a natural and justified reaction of deprived individuals forced to beg in order to survive.
4. Trafficking of human beings? The wave of emigration from Bulgaria in the last 25 years includes various groups and layers. The phenomenon of travelling abroad to beg is in the context of the powerful flow out of the country of people seeking livelihood and is part of the emigration phenomenon.

Against this background, we could hardly speak of human trafficking against the will of the people themselves. Rather it comes to organized (long or short term) emigration, where “operators” are needed to carry out specific activities, like logistics and financial support, necessary for the emigration of most vulnerable individuals. (In many cases this undoubtedly creates indebtedness.)

However, it is difficult to estimate what share of the incomes from begging are deducted later for these “services”. But there is no doubt that organized labor emigration, including begging abroad, is a response to the economic, social and living conditions in which people live in Bulgaria. Instead to address the real problems, human trafficking is defined as regardless of the will of people concerned and neglects the fact that in most of the cases emigration is voluntary and initiated by the individuals that accept to beg abroad, because of lack of better alternative.

Similarly, a report of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2013 states that there is “an increase in the number of victims who voluntarily seek organizers of trafficking for the exercise of prostitution” (p. 53)¹

¹*Report of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2013, National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the Council of Ministers*

5. Begging is possible because some people respond positively to the demands of beggars. They respond voluntarily and positively because they are connected with beggars as members of one society - by morally based obligations. It could be claimed that begging is also an effect of basic type of solidarity. Campaigns against begging and policies prohibiting begging (Safe Streets Acts) suppress spontaneous behavior based on social solidarity.

6. Indeed, there are data that people traveling to beg abroad are sometimes unaware why they are going abroad and in some cases they are told that they will be employed abroad, for example “to pick strawberries.” But it is very uncertain whether this lie is not just for the public, and whether at least some of the beggars are not informed about the action to perform.
Moreover, data were published that in different cases those who are not willing to beg and were cheated when leaving Bulgaria, decided to return. However according to the same data most of the people decided to stay and beg. As one of them said “if I stay in Bulgaria, I have to die”. The conditions in which these people live and the money they earn by begging abroad, far exceed those they would be if staying in Bulgaria. Against this background, we could hardly speak of human trafficking against the will of the people themselves.

7. The issue of exploitation could be considered similarly. Against the background of the general picture in Bulgaria, there is hardly a reason to talk about an ‘unacceptable’ exploitation. In any case, to consider unacceptable exploitation we should be able to compare the level of this exploitation (understood as money derived from the beggars by the “providers of services”) with the exploitation at the ‘normal’ working places. In principle – if we have reliable data - it could turn out that the level of exploitation in begging is similar or even lower than that at the ‘normal’ working places, for example in comparison with the working poor jobs.
Even more important is, that at least according to some data beggars abroad seem to satisfy their basic needs – of food, clothing, housing and heating. Staying in Bulgaria these people risk not meeting these basic needs. For example, people in working age have to work 14 days 4 hours a day in order to receive the so called minimum income - around 23 euro per month. What is more, the working poor, employed with their very low salaries could not satisfy their and their families’ very basic needs like these of food, clothes, house and heating.

Activities 3: Addressing main changes needed in policies and political measures.

Following the arguments mentioned above and many similar, an agreement was reached between NGOs and academic researchers that a different much more humanistic approach should be elaborated and disseminated as far as begging and beggars are concerned.

The current approach relies too much on police and patriarchal social work, aimed at concealing the existence of the phenomenon or at least its most “ugly” consequences.

The new approach should identify the true generators of the phenomenon and propose a wider range of measures able to create opportunities to relatively neutralize the main generators of begging, which are deep poverty and intensified social exclusion. The very fact that there are so many people in Bulgaria discarded in this way and converted into redundant population needs to be faced. Such a trend has nothing to do with the officially stated transition aims - democracy, market & a functioning market economy. Rather it illustrates the failure of policies to contribute to officially proclaimed aims. It is important as well to ask when such a phenomenon occurs.

Our hypothesis is that it could occur when there is an excessive concentration of power and wealth. Begging and beggars are the reverse side of this process leading to extreme impoverishment and powerlessness. In this regard:

1. The main measure is the improvement of the social protection network, both in terms of access and coverage, and in terms of the levels of support. The need to introduce adequate minimum standards and on this basis to reconstruct the whole system of social assistance in the country is an essential element of the adequate approach to begging;
2. Another very important measure is the provision of normal employment that is labor whose incomes are able to cover basic needs. The qualities of jobs, as well as bridging the minimum wage level with the cost of living are extremely important.
3. Such measures are linked with a change in the central complex of stakeholders. The current central roles of the police and the criminal justice system have to be reconsidered. Instead the different approach depends highly on a different constellation of stakeholders: policy makers, civil society, knowledge producers and public opinion guides.

4. However, while reorienting the approach could take a longer time, some urgent steps are necessary that could follow available outside Bulgaria good practices in the field. One such example could be found in Cordoba, Spain: "... The municipality implements a social intervention project for the prevention of child begging .. The project consists of contacting, informing and sensitising Roma mothers, providing social support and a nursery service where children up to three years of age can be left in care of professionals during the time mothers go to begging." (The situation of Roma EU citizens moving to and settling in other EU Member States, Selected positive initiatives, November 2009, FRA). Particularly essential is to take measures to break the intergenerational transfer of begging from parents to children and to implement legal and policy measures to improve the health care for the begging people, including treatment of mental problems;

Activities 4: Incorporating 'good society' concept in the field

On the basis of 'good society' concept important questions in reference to begging and beggars to be addressed are:

1. Whether society refers to beggars as members of the community and is the relationship based on empathy, altruism, compassion, solidarity?
2. Does society recognize its own responsibility for turning people into beggars or simply attributes blame to them, releasing itself from any liability?
3. Whether society makes efforts to really help beggars or care just to limit and hide them away from public spaces thus preventing them to save themselves as they could?
4. The 'good society' approach suggests basing attitudes and measures towards begging and beggars on a relevant mix of moral values and social knowledge instead on blaming people and police comes first approach.

Activity 5: Elaborating scenario for a documentary film

As proofed by the research, media are quite active in presenting the current approach to begging and beggars and disseminating the official response to the phenomenon. That is why the necessity to re-orient the approach is linked with the necessity to try to produce a different vision on the problems concerned and to engage media in public awareness campaign. On this ground a scenario for a documentary film was developed to be discussed and agreed with interested journalists.

Activity 6: Preparation and production of the film including meetings with journalists and practical arrangements with a team (scriptwriter and operators)

Contacts with journalists to discuss possible products were established. Meetings with journalists (from Solidarity Bulgaria and Magazine ‘Tema’) and practical arrangements with a team (scriptwriter and operators) took place.

Discussions concerned: the necessity to mitigate the pressure on begging and to release public opinion of its extremely negative aspects and their absolutely unacceptable roots in reference to begging and beggars; sharing ideas for the scenario; agreement on individualised and humanistic approach based on social concern was reached;

Activities 7: National public event and disseminating the film

National public event will take place in July with the participation of various stakeholders. The event will consider the points mentioned above; the film will be screened and the search for new approach and future interactions between different actors of civil society will be discussed.



Operative Action Phase, Activity Report Italy

by Silvia Ciofi Baffoni

Experimental actions in Florence were conducted in the last ten months by two member organizations of CNCA (CAT Cooperativa Sociale Onlus and Associazione Progetto Arcobaleno Onlus)¹

¹Special thanks to social workers of CAT Cooperativa Sociale, Valentina Menzella, Phan Thi Lan Dai, Arianna Del Guerra, Nicoletta Zocco, Madalina Gavra, for their commitment and their professionalism in the relationship with people who practice begging in the streets and suburbs of Florence.

Operational objectives of this action were:

- Implement the knowledge of the target group (life stories, analyzing the needs and demands etc.);
- Contact with target people in Florence;
- Support the needs of the target group (in terms of health care, from housing, legal, business) facilitating access to services/opportunities of the territory;
- Facilitate the identification of victims of forced begging and the access to protection programs for victims of trafficking and exploitation.

and consisted in the following activities:

- **Networking with the local services, formal and informal agencies to let them know about the present project and the offered opportunities (November-April 2015)**

After an evaluation and mapping of low-threshold services, public and private bodies in the area of Florence, we contacted and identified all those who are in a daily relationship with the target people (canteens, public showers, public dormitories, public or private services as La Fenice, S. Paolino, A.C.I.S.J.F. - *Associazione Cattolica Internazionale al servizio della Gioventù, International Red Cross, Medical-Dental Center N. Stenone, Caritas, MEDU, etc.*).

We proceeded first to contact them via e-mail presenting the aim of the project, the research report and requiring an appointment to introduce and promote a drop-in service that we opened from April to June (see below) as a place dedicated to specific target (beggars), providing listening and guidance and as a place specifically focused for the identification of trafficking and exploitation.

So we met some of the leaders of the private voluntary organizations. The majority responded positively to the meetings by confronting and discussing together about various experiences / criticalities of the specific target and possible / desirable interventions. In every meeting we presented the activities of project (particularly street units activities and drop-in service) as an added value (specifically on trafficking and exploitation) within a network of organizations that enter into relationship with all those people in the area who practice begging as the only possible strategy of survival.

During that time we also tried hard, to get in touch with public health service, police and local authorities.

Some of them have never answered about the possibility of a meeting and debate on the issue. We didn't receive a formal response from Police, Carabinieri and Polfer. Also through the "informal" channels, we were told that operators needed authorization from their superiors,

with long response times. Conversely we were received by a public prosecutor of the District Anti-Mafia (Dr. Angela Pietrousti) that deals with trafficking and exploitation lawsuits in the Tuscany Region. We were able to arrange a meeting with the Head of Department Urban Security of the Local Police Station.

The aim of this action was to increase awareness of the phenomenon of begging and forced begging and facilitate access to services for these people.

Many of the easy access services are supported by volunteers and workers, poorly trained on trafficking and exploitation, and these meetings have been the occasion for exchange and discussion and a source of “awareness” on the topic.

- **Production of materials to be used for contact phase with target people, specifically we produced the following materials (November-February):**

a) a leaflet on public services and opportunities about the main needs that emerged from research phase (health, home, work, documents),

b) a card with the references of the Anti-Trafficking Toll²,

c) a flyer with information about low-threshold services in Florence as canteens, public toilets, voluntary associations,

d) information brochure with information about the drop-in service soon opening. All materials were translated into Romanian, Albanian, Roman and Italian and supported by photos, maps and images.

- **Contacts and relationships with people who practice begging in the street and in the public areas of Florence (February-June) through a mobile street unit** composed by one social operator and two different linguistic and cultural mediator trained on the issues of poverty, immigration, begging and labour exploitation. Specifically we contacted three very different types of target (for a total of 44 people): **a)** people from eastern Europe (mostly from Romania) who beg at traffic lights or in midtown **b)** people from Senegal who beg as unlicensed car-park attendant near hospitals **c)** italian people who live in the streets. During the last months we contacted regularly 15 persons from Romania; 8 of these are Roma people. They are largely regularly residing in possession of passports as people of European Union and they come in Italy about every six months, practicing begging as a way to earn some money, living in the streets and then they used to return to Romania or Bulgaria without any migration plan defined.

²Anti-Trafficking Toll is a free and anonymous toll number that can provide ready assistance and shelter, health, psychological, linguistic and legal assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings or exploitation, financed by italian government.

Some of these come from very poor areas of Romania (especially from Dambovită Costanța, Zimnicea, Sibiu Altona) are illiterate and in their countries they have not guaranteed any kind of health care because of their low income and their poverty. Some of these have severe physical deformities (phocomelia, polio) and we suppose they are trafficked or exploited by some kind of criminal organization (they obviously need someone to accompany them in the morning in the street and bring them in the evening; they all together live in a squatting area near Florence Airport), but they never said anything about it to our social operators. They need above all health services and we provided, within the limits of the Italian legislation, to their access to health public services. The second target people we contacted were people from Senegal, specifically from the urban area of Dakar. We have established trusted relationships with some 25 persons. They come in Florence from northern Italy or France, following the economic crisis. They have generally an high school degree and someone attended university. Unlike the Romanians they want to live in Italy and they practice begging walking around the city or near hospitals selling small items (lighters, paper towels, etc ..) bought at low prices in supermarkets. Their main problem is job or, sometimes, regular documents. They have strong ties of solidarity and reciprocity with compatriots. Finally we contacted also 4 Italian people who usually live in the street begging because of drug problems or mental health or poverty. We sought to investigate about forced begging thanks to good relationships established with these people. The suspicion seems emerge exclusively with people with disabilities, but none of them never said to be exploited.

- **Accompaniments to public services or services offered by local Ngos (February-June).** We provide to accompany to public services people who need health care, legal counselling or simply the satisfaction of basic needs (primarily public toilets, showers, canteens). Our social operators accompanied around 10 people to these services and so they can to have access primarily to health care.

- **Activating an experimental drop-in service aimed at who, in the Florence area, are practicing begging (April to June).** The drop-in provided support, guidance and information of individual needs and the assessment of indicators of trafficking and exploitation.

The main operational measures are:

- Individualized assessment of needs.
 - Guidance to local services in public and private healthcare, legal, from housing.
 - Analysis of skills and active job search.
 - Evaluation of the set indicators of “trafficking and exploitation” within the phenomenon of begging.
 - Accompaniment to the local services
- **Participation (on 06.18.2015) at CTM (Consorzio Toscano Marginalità),** an unit on poverty and social exclusion composed by local Authorities and Ngos with the following aims:
 - Presenting the research report and action phase activities for a better awareness of the issue of trafficking and exploitation of begging by public authorities and private Ngos
 - Promoting and encouraging, with a view to a “need” multi-agency approach to the phenomenon of begging, a networking between agencies and different professionals involved
 - Promoting a “network” of experties about the identification of indicators of trafficking and exploitation in the context of people who practice begging.

- **Organization of a focus group in Florence (on 06.03.2015) with 10 senegalese men and boys who practice begging in the parking of the Florentine hospital of Careggi to best investigate their migratory paths, their needs and their expectations and possible presence of exploitation or forced begging.** The focus was held in the headquarters of the CAT social cooperative and has been led by a conductor, an observer and a linguistic and cultural mediator of wolof origin. At the end of the meeting we provided legal advice of a lawyer in the field of migration. The focus was attended by 10 Senegalese boys aged between 18 and 30 years old, previously contacted during outings (3) in the parking of Careggi hospital.

The focus was structured according to a lineup that included three aspects: origin, travel and current living conditions.

Almost all come from urban areas and in Senegal were employed when they decided to leave: three in the education sector and one in the transport and logistic sector, four were farmers, one was a plumber, one was a trader. Most of them has a wife and children in Senegal. All those have migrated thank to an economic support of the original families who see migration as family investment (eg. Yade said his mother had sold her owned lands to pay 6,000 euro for his travel). All of them have chosen Italy because they have here fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles.

Almost all they arrived with the EU visa and only 3 crossed overland to Morocco and then the sea. The cost of the crossing by land is around 6,000 Euros with payments made step by step and the final balance on arrival to an illegal trafficking organization. Now seven of them have a residence permit, the others are illegal immigrant.

They live in Pontedera, Santa Croce sull'Arno, Empoli and some in Florence in apartments shared with other relatives or countrymen: they pay around € 1,000 per month as rent. Living in the province is an economic choice but everyone would like to move to Florence in the future. They earn about 5-6 euros a day and they pay 70 euros per month for the ticket train. Many of them in summer move to the coast to sell small objects on the beaches. Someone they work in Prato in Chinese enterprises, they let them work even if without a residence permit.

They do not believe begging is respectable and fair job; they beg in a very large group (50 people) working as unlicensed car-park attendant. When we asked whether there is a criminal organization that exploits them they said they are not exploited. They can practice begging in this place thanks to solidarity and friendship with fellow countrymen who say them that begging may be a chance of earn some money waiting for a real job. Who has a residence permit, has a CV often made at the Public Employment Centre, but generally they have no contact with other public or private health or social services; they only know Caritas.



4

Guideline

*By Vincenzo Castelli
and Riccardo Poli*

*Guidelines and Feasible Solutions for Actions
on Human Trafficking for Begging*

1. Approaches to the policies, strategies, and construction of high performance practices within the “Human Trafficking” world at European Union level must be completely revised

- There has been, and continues to be, a strong centrality around human trafficking for sexual exploitation;
There has been, and continues to be, a one-way, univocal, and fragmented approach to the phenomenon of human trafficking. The integration between different kinds of trafficking (sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, begging, illegal economies, forced and combined marriages, selling organs, etc.), the relationship between the phenomenon of trafficking and other variables such as international protection, underage, migration, humanitarian emergency, as well as the co-existence in the same person (trafficked) of poverty, mental illness, physical disability, alcoholism and drug addiction, homelessness, violence, etc., should be included in this approach.
- Despite the recent guidelines of the European Union (see Directive 36/1136 EU on prevention and combating human trafficking and protection of victims, which replaces the Framework Decision of the European Council 2002/629/GAI, the European Union Strategy 2012-2016 on trafficking in human beings), of the Council of Europe (see the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Warsaw 2005) and the OSCE (Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking, Vienna 2013) the political, institutional, strategic, regulatory, and economic investment around the phenomenon of human trafficking in its different forms is still residual;
- The transposition of legislation (in particular the European Union Directive 36/11) in the European Union Member Countries have not filled the existing problems: lack of correlation and integration between countries in terms of exchange, support, and accompanying of relevant practices, spot policies in the various EU countries, difficulties in building universal instruments on evident “critical issues” (identification of victims of trafficking, repatriation of victims, compensation for victims, training of actors in the field, multi-agency protocols, etc...);
- Specifically, concerning human trafficking for begging, the above matters become really embarrassing. Beyond some statements of principle at EU level, there are no policies, strategies, or high performance practices that can offer guidance, guidelines, or solutions to develop.

2. It takes years to understand the scenario of forced begging in Europe in terms of:

- Research-Action

There is no research of great depth at international level on trafficking for begging. This project (together with the project “STOP FOR-BEG”, of the Veneto Region, Italy) can help to open a season of important research in order to understand the complex phenomenon of forced begging in Europe. The methodology of research-action will provide important results to understand the world of “Begging” and its context variables;

- Contact/engagement work of target groups (road/flow areas/topical places)

It will be very important, to compete with the multi-problematic situations of forced begging, to launch structured observation, possibly through a participatory process; to study maps (and maybe even the design) of places where victims of trafficking come together; try to build contacts, more and more significant relationships; and enter the difficult circuit of trust (by the target). This will begin to pierce the veil of complexity that begging presents (in fact, the very little research carried out focus a lot on the great difficulty to interpret the phenomenon in its transversal and complication aspects);

- Work for the construction of indicators for identifying victims of trafficking within the world of begging

There are increasing recommendations to structure the indicators for the identification of victims of trafficking, a transnational system of Referral for trafficked persons in Europe (See the Project TRM-EU implemented in 2010 by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development- ICMPPD and the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Government). We can say that the basic aim to build policies and define strategies for action on trafficking in human beings is still “in the pipeline” and needs to be consolidated with regard to sexual exploitation and partly labour exploitation. The indicators for identifying victims of trafficking for begging still need to be totally formulated. Without any doubt, it is necessary to focus the indicators around the following actions: give information and guidance in the victim’s language about the systems of protection and support to the target group; start the initial response by law enforcement;

thirdly, structure a shared multi-agency collection of the life history of trafficked persons; open emergency reception and safety centres of the target; define a clinical evaluation of the physical and psychical conditions of the alleged victims of trafficking for an appropriate placement and their consequent legal and health protection; initiate discussions with legal professionals and obtain informed consent before establishing a working relationship with the authorities; finally, activate an evaluation in multidisciplinary team of the migratory project of the victim of trafficking to make a first individual care plan;

- Structuring of an integrated system of social protection for victims of trafficking for begging

The social protection model for victims of trafficking built in recent decades in Europe and strongly directed to victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (and very little for labour exploitation) has been in a situation of crisis for some time, despite the various European Union countries have been achieved important results (See the Italian model focused, thanks to art. 18 of the Italian Legislative Decree No. 286/98 - Immigration Consolidation Act, on granting of residence permits on humanitarian grounds for people identified as victims of trafficking). Ultimately, a system of social protection was built, which was too often “top-down”, sometimes crystallized around the control of the person, often in the image and likeness of therapeutic communities for people addicted to substances, with great difficulty to create spaces and time for independent living, to work in an cross-cultural way within a migration project.

This model is not feasible for the victims of trafficking for begging, due to the complexity of this phenomenon, the “liquidity” of its structure, the multi-situational action with which it is channelled locally, and, finally, to the vast target group (unaccompanied children, Roma women, disabled persons, homeless adults, etc.). Therefore, the whole system of social protection should be re-considered, focusing on the integration of actions;

- Identification of Public Bodies (in particular Local Authorities) and private social organisations (in particular associations, cooperatives, and foundations that deal with trafficking), which invest their skills and competencies on the peculiarities of forced begging.

Trafficking for begging complicates the inter-institutional structure existing so far on the emerging phenomena of human trafficking (sexual exploitation in particular). In particular, the capabilities and skills structured by the organizations involved in social protection programmes were very psychologically-oriented, had a nearly all-female beneficiaries (being the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation almost all women). They were within a quite clear “road map” (street and apartment prostitution, reception in residential facilities, support for personal independence). These actions (investments) also had (often) an ethical justification, as they were unequivocally victims of trafficking (for the majority of public opinion, although voices “outside the box” were not missing). In the case of begging, very often this target is seen in a very ambivalent way, with a consideration that this target is more a perturbation than exploited (and therefore without rights). In this sense, very often local authorities are struggling to invest human and financial resources on actions that have a “boomerang” effect politically. It is therefore necessary to work to build more conscious and more united community welfare.

3. We need to build (from scratch) a specific model of social intervention for the victims of trafficking for begging:

For the reasoning outlined above, we must rethink the whole model of intervention in favour of the victims of trafficking for begging. The “focal” actions with which to act are:

- New generation road work (street outreach, actions to reduce risk and harm, spatial welfare actions in the areas of flow such as railway stations, bus terminals, subways, squares, shopping malls, churches and places of worship, cultural and artistic actions, use of public art, structuring of events to involve the victims of trafficking for begging living on the streets, actions of conflict mediation, urban security among the actors who live in areas where there are victims of trafficking). Ultimately, street outreach work (i.e. the historical cornerstone of actions on human trafficking) needs to change. It should be no longer only a methodology focused on monitoring, contact, engagement, and preventive health action,

but a high impact action that can build events, use street space and time in a creative way, and make the inhabitants of the street (victims of trafficking through begging) protagonists of their own present. Ultimately, it should be an action between mediation and urban security, between the culture of marginality and inclusion of the community.

- **Dedicated Proximity Services (drop in/help centre) to offer diverse legal/health services, informal and customised spaces**
In structuring actions in favour of our target group, structuring of dedicated proximity services becomes crucial (reorganisation of our Help Centres/drop in centres) that can offer diversified solutions, such as legal consulting, support to obtain residence permits for humanitarian reasons, correlation between the issues of trafficking and international protection, healthcare consulting, information on the area and its services, on the places where it is possible to access to low threshold areas (canteen, dormitory, laundry, showers, etc.). Ultimately, this should be a dynamic space ensuring conviviality and confidentiality, and accessibility of the service (at spatial, linguistic, and structural level), which that focuses on informal and personalized offer of services. It would be desirable that these spaces are around the areas where the target group is, to be able to offer faster and contextualized support;
- **Lightweight host spaces (small independent apartments)**
Day, semi-residential, and residential care of victims of trafficking for begging should be designed very carefully. It is not possible to offer hospitality in the classic forms of acceptance that we have built in the “human trafficking” system to people who are strongly “autonomous” and unwilling to be controlled and embedded in regulated spaces. The coexistence of victims of trafficking for begging is not easy and often creates high complication situations. Therefore, it is important to redesign reception facilities for our target from the following variables: small apartments for up to 2-3 people, with high autonomy and with the strong involvement of the users in the management of daily life, great attention to conviviality and the enhancement of mode of life of our target (in terms of food, space of leisure, rest, and life time of received people).

- Vocational Training
We must deal very carefully with the involvement of the target group in the construction of proposals for personal commitment, involvement in ergo-therapeutic and training activities, inclusion in vocational training, training on the job, etc. It becomes important for their empowerment to direct our beneficiaries towards one of these forms of progressive professionalizing commitment, after building guidance, skills assessment, and curriculum vitae with them that provide target with learning opportunities suited to their abilities and skills.
- Street Enterprises
Street Enterprises can really be a kind of Copernican revolution for the benefit of victims of trafficking for begging. This means that the streets should be considered not only as a place of discomfort and deviance, or of structural insecurity, where “obscene” (i.e. out of the scene of normality) situations, people, and events settle, but as an interesting source of employment (the market, street food, sale of various objects on the street, local street musical and artistic attraction, activities in the world of leisure and street entertainment, etc.), i.e. an increasingly broad and extensive market niche that we could address and channel the people who live on the street (such as our target group). The task is not to structure low-profile welfare or endorse illegal activities considered as related to organized petty crime. Instead, it means building real businesses that arise from below, with “ad hoc” entrepreneurs who know the road and its opportunities well. This business activity should be supported by a street business incubator that ensures expertises in the labour market, in business, in the legal sector, and in the financial area. The instrument of micro-credit could allow the accompaniment of such insight.

4. Decentralized and International Cooperation

In addressing the issues relating to trafficking in human beings (as well as migration, international protection, etc.), the issue is rarely addressed from the side of decentralized and international cooperation. Projects for the victims of trafficking have been rare and very unusual within the framework of international cooperation (with regard to Funds of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the various European Union countries) and decentralized cooperation (with regard to the funds of the regional and local authorities). Yet it is crucial to act, in a diversified and integrated way, in the countries of origin of victims of human trafficking. In our case, we are referring specifically to Nigeria, or other African countries (North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa), where it would be necessary to organise guidance activities, vocational training, social and job inclusion, self-employment, social inclusion of vulnerable groups in those areas, i.e. women and children).

There is still the big “dilemma” of begging from EU countries (such as Romania and Bulgaria) with which there are no international cooperation actions, but with which it would be possible to implement projects on trafficking for begging by using the Structural Funds (in particular the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund), Territorial Cooperation Programmes (in particular, trans-national and interregional cooperation Programmes), Community Programmes (we refer to specific actions on human trafficking proposed by the European Commission in the trans-national field in EU countries).

5. Multi-Agency Networking

We believe that one of the most interesting outcome of actions, for our target group, is networking between those involved in the issue of trafficking at the regional level in a dimension that could be called multi-agency dimension. The objective of this action is to develop, in a shared way between many actors, multi-agency guidelines and procedures for emerging, identification, support and social inclusion of victims of trafficking and serious exploitation. The guidelines of the Public Prosecutor of Teramo (Italy), promoted by the Association On The Road, may be a useful reference for the general structure and specifically in relation to international, European, and national regulatory references, as well as the general principles for action and the various areas of exploitation related to human trafficking, the framework, and the identification of a contact person for each of the agencies involved, the contexts of operation and general guidelines to be followed, the establishment of a group for monitoring and evaluation guidelines and procedures that operate through regularly held meetings.

The tools to support the guidelines and procedures (e.g. report/referral forms of trafficking victims, lists of simplification indicators, interview models, etc.) shall also be set up. This multi-agency networking will be the space/area to enable training programmes between the various actors involved in the issue of trafficking for begging. We refer to the mayors and municipal councillors, law enforcement and municipal police, social and healthcare workers, and judges. About the specific issue of begging, proper training is really missing, which should be able to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon, the reference standards (ranging from the issue of beggary in general, Roma people, often involved in this field, though far from trafficking for begging, to forms of real forced begging), the actions to be put in place to lower the phenomena of trafficking and exploitation, the players involved or to be involved in this challenge.

5

Evaluation List

(Punctuation will be measured from 1-5, where 1 being the lowest result and 5 the highest)

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION AND COOPERATION		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	PUNCTUATION	COMMENTS
To what extent is the coordinator committed to the project?		
To what extent is the coordinator engaged to solve the problems together with partners?		
Are the partners' roles clear?		
Are you satisfied with the partners' contribution to the project's objectives?		
Is the communication within the partnership satisfactory?		

EVALUATION CRITERIA	PUNCTUATION	COMMENTS
Are minutes always taken and circulated?		
Are deadlines always met?		
How actively do you contribute in project activities?		
How actively do you contribute in project communication activities?		
How actively are you disseminating the project's results?		

If you want, you can add any other comments:

EVALUATION OF TRANSNATIONAL MEETING

EVALUATION CRITERIA	PUNCTUATION	COMMENTS
Information provided to the partners before the meeting		
Location of the project meeting		
Duration of the project meeting		
Agenda of the project meeting		
General organisation of the project meeting		
To what extent was the programme for the meeting realised?		
To what extent were the selected topics selected for the meeting in line with the project objectives?		
Was there enough time to discuss the issues planned for the meeting?		
Are you satisfied with the project meeting results?		

If you want, you can add any other comments:

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*"Co-funded by the Prevention of the Fight against
Crime Programme of the European Union"*