

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

July, 2022

SeConS
development initiative group

The logo for ASTRA (anti trafficking action) is located in the bottom right corner. It features a stylized red figure with arms raised, resembling a person or a flame, positioned above the word "ASTRA" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. Below "ASTRA", the words "anti trafficking action" are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed within a light red oval background.

ASTRA anti
trafficking
action

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SERBIA – OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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FOREWORD

ASTRA has been working to combat human trafficking in Serbia, in the region and beyond, for more than 20 years. We carry out our activities in the field of prevention and education, direct support for victims and on policy level, continuously advocate for the improvement of the position of victims and absolute respect for their rights.

Thanks to the work at the local level, the ASTRA SOS hotline for victims of human trafficking and our daily contact with those who need support, we were able to spot trends, open up new topics and point out areas that need to be improved long before it becomes obvious to the other actors. We have written about this in numerous analyses, advocacy documents, announcements, memos, petitions and shadow reports. However, we haven't had much time for in-depth research that would deal with all aspects and forms of human trafficking, especially spheres in which human trafficking is difficult to detect or border cases on related phenomena. In the past two decades, human trafficking in Serbia was the subject of the only such research, back in 2004, so the importance of this is even greater.

We are grateful to all those who directly or indirectly participated and helped us to achieve the presented findings, especially the SECONS researchers who listened and had patience for all our suggestions when creating the methodological framework of the research. As a special value of this research, we emphasize the active participation of our clients, who were gathered in the advisory board, participated both in the creation of the project and in the implementation of all activities together with the employees of ASTRA. We are grateful for their insights, comments and suggestions which are an integral part of research and which contributed to its quality.

Marija Andjelković
Director of ASTRA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Summary	7
Introduction	12
Research objectives	13
Research methodology	15
Quantitative research	15
Qualitative research	16
What is trafficking in human beings?	17
Definition of trafficking in human beings	17
Forms of trafficking in human beings	20
Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation	22
Trafficking in human beings and other terms	25
How much population in Serbia knows about human trafficking - previous research findings	27
Framework for human trafficking analysis	28
Legislative and institutional framework for combating trafficking in human beings in Serbia	28
Trafficking in human beings in Serbia and worldwide	30
Socio-economic context	33
Migrations and work abroad – risk of trafficking in human beings	34
Increased risks of trafficking in human beings among vulnerable groups	36
Trafficking in human beings and COVID-19 pandemic	37
RESEARCH RESULTS	38
Knowledge and information about trafficking in human beings	39
Identification of risks and different forms of trafficking in human beings	39
Information channels about trafficking in human beings	47
Who would the respondents turn to in case they are victims of human trafficking?	48
Exposure to risks from labour exploitation and human trafficking	50
Work abroad	50
Deception during labour recruitment – Serbia and abroad	52
Forced labour – Serbia and abroad	55
Exposure to risks from labour exploitation – Serbia and abroad	57
Domestic servitude – exposure to risks from labour exploitation and human trafficking	60

Intention to leave the country for employment	61
PERSONAL STORIES.	63
Risk from trafficking in human beings – Petar's story	64
Labour exploitation abroad – Ivana's story	68
Labour exploitation and human trafficking of foreign citizens in Serbia – Slaven and Milutin's story	70
Sexual exploitation abroad – Maria's story	73
Coercion to commit felonies in Serbia – Alexander's story.	79
Conclusion	81
Recommendations	85
Literature	89
Laws, conventions and strategies	92
Annex: Description of samples.	94

SUMMARY

About the research

Research on trafficking in human beings in Serbia was realised within the project “Extending the Framework of the Anti-trafficking Response in Serbia”. The research was conducted by SeConS Development Initiative Group in cooperation and for the purpose of the organization ASTRA – Anti-trafficking action. The primary goal of the research is to contribute to improvement and strengthening of protection system (including public and civil sector) of one of the most vulnerable social groups – victims and persons at risk of trafficking in human beings, through creation of a unique factual basis (database) on complex forms of trafficking in human beings, which change with the changes in social context, along with identification and perception of human trafficking risks in general population in Serbia and particularly among more vulnerable groups that are most exposed to risks.

Research methodology

The research was conducted in the period from September 2021 to March 2022, based on combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The key research components are:

- Desk research including the review of relevant documents (laws, conventions, publications, etc.),
- Survey research on the representative sample of 800 respondents from general population in total in Serbia, and additional sample of 50 respondents from Roma population,
- Interviews with persons who are at risk of trafficking in human beings, and with victims of various forms of trafficking in human beings, in Serbia and abroad.

Framework for human trafficking analysis

Definition of trafficking in human beings used in the research is the definition taken from *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes*¹, according to which *"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."*

Specific forms of trafficking in human beings included in the research are as follows:

- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation,
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation,
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of domestic servitude,
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of begging,
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of coercion to commit criminal activities,
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of giving birth/adopting a child,
- child trafficking.

Although anyone can become a victim of trafficking in human beings, vulnerable social groups are at particular risk of being in a situation of human trafficking. Factors that contribute to vulnerability of a certain person can be divided into two groups:

- **"Push" factors** or factors of pressure include inability to find work, poverty, social exclusion, discrimination based on sex or ethnicity, exposure to violence, low level of education, etc.²
- **"Pull" factors** or factors of attraction include attractive job offers and greater employment opportunities; better material living conditions expected in other environments, mainly in another country; more dignified life, primarily without

¹ Definition of trafficking in human beings can be found in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia. Law on Ratification of The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Additional Protocols, *Official Gazette of the FR Y – International Agreements*, no. 6/2001. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/proposisi/zakon_o_potvrđivanju_konvencije_ujedinjenih_nacija_protiv_transnacionalnog_organizovanog.html

² Shelley, L. (2010). *Human trafficking: Global perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 37.

discrimination and violence expected in the new living environment; belief in tempting, but false promises.³

In 2001 Serbia adopted the *Ratification Law on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (and the Protocols)*, by which it is legally obliged to comply with the *Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in human beings, especially women and children*. Two years later, the criminal offense of human trafficking was introduced in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia.

With the first *Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking* from 2006, the National Referral Mechanism for identification, assistance and protection of victims of human trafficking was specified (the National Referral Mechanism). One of the components of the National Referral Mechanism is the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, which as a social welfare institution formally assigns the status of human trafficking victim. The second *Strategy (Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims protection)* was adopted in 2017 and is still in force. However, there is still no officially adopted action plan that would operationalize implementation of the *Strategy* for the last two years (2021-2022).

According to the Annual statistical report for 2021 of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, there were in total 127 reported cases of trafficking in human beings, of which 46 persons were formally identified as victims of human trafficking – 37 women and 9 men. Out of the total number of identified victims, even 17 persons were minors at the moment of identification. Although the Centre's report provides data on the number of formally identified victims, there is still no common and comprehensive system of collecting and analysing data on trafficking in human beings in Serbia. On the other hand, the official data refer only to registered victims, although the large number of victims of trafficking in human beings never reaches the state bodies or nongovernment organizations, and therefore remains unregistered ("dark figure").

General research findings

Research results on the representative sample indicated to insufficient information of the respondents about risks of someone becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings.

- Average grade which respondents from the general population awarded to their own knowledge about risks of trafficking in human beings is 5.2 (of maximum 10).

³ Žarković, M., i dr. (2019). *Pravda za žrtve trgovine ljudima – Praktikum za sudije i javne tužioce*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 15.

- Men from the sample assessed their knowledge about human trafficking risk with slightly lower grades in comparison to women.
- Every fourth respondent aged 18 to 25 thinks he/she is not aware of the risks of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking at all, whereas every third respondent, who is without education or completed only primary school, thinks that he/she is not aware of this type of risk at all.
- Members of Roma population significantly more often responded that they had not been aware of the risks of someone becoming a human trafficking victim at all in comparison to respondents from general population – every fifth respondent among Roma population thinks he/she is not aware of these risks at all.

Ca For the largest number of respondents (79.3%) **poverty** presents the factor that, to the greatest extent, increases the risk of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking. On the other hand, **illegal migrant status** was identified as a risk factor of human trafficking to the least extent (36.9% of respondents).

Respondents are mostly informed about the problem of human trafficking through electronic and print media, and then through social networks. Almost fifth of respondents are not being informed about this topic at all (18.5%).

Should the respondents find themselves in a situation to be victims of human trafficking, the largest number of them would turn to police for help (80%), even 41% of respondents would try to get out of the situation through informal channels and personal contacts, while every fourth respondent would seek help through SOS Hotline for human trafficking victims.

Cases of trafficking in human beings who proved to be the most identified among general population are organ trafficking, sexual exploitation and illegal child adoption. On the other hand, examples including different forms of exploitation, such as forced begging, coercion to commit crime, forced marriage, as well as forced surrogate motherhood were identified as examples of human trafficking with considerably smaller share of respondents – between 70% and 80% of respondents from general population. Situations where human trafficking was identified in less than three quarters of respondents were examples of labour exploitation, both children and adults. Only a little more than half of respondents identified human trafficking in the situation where *a worker is engaged to perform certain job without necessary protection, with denied salary and restriction to free movement.*

The significant share of respondents from general population was deceived in connection to some aspects of work for which they had applied for or it had been offered to them.

- Every fifth respondent from general population was deceived in connection to work conditions (20.1% in Serbia and 18.4% abroad), the amount of earnings and/or payment dynamism at a certain job (20.5% in Serbia and 19.4% abroad), while almost 14% of respondents were exposed to deceptions referring to their legal status at work, i.e. related to formal conclusion of work contract.
- On the sample of Roma population, exposure to different deceptions on the jobs they performed in Serbia, is even more represented. Namely, every fourth respondent was deceived in connection to the type of work, location of workplace or in relation to employer, by a person who offered them a job (25.5%), as well as in relation to legal regulation of their labour status (23.5%). Almost every third respondent was deceived in relation to work conditions (31.4%), as well as the amount of earnings and/or payment dynamism at a certain job (31.4%).

Data have shown that labour exploitation risks present something that a significant share of respondents face or has faced in some of their previous jobs. Respondents from general population while working in Serbia most often faced the problems of not being paid, of delayed payment and extremely low earnings (30.3%), then very long working hours (28.8%), as well as non-observance of contract provisions or the Labour Law (24.9%). In case of work abroad, the problem that the largest number of respondents faced was lack of social security and healthcare – more than a fifth of respondents who experienced work abroad.

Experience of forced labour in Serbia and/or abroad was identified in 26 respondents (16 men and 10 women), which indicates to 3.3% of the general population sample, who in the largest number of cases were forced to perform jobs they didn't want and which they didn't apply for in the first place. The share of respondents who worked in Serbia and/or abroad under coercion is many times higher in Roma population – every tenth respondent from this sub-sample of Roma population experienced work under coercion.

Persons who work or have worked as domestic servitude in Serbia and abroad make up for 4.6% of the sample in total, that is 37 respondents – of whom 26 women and 11 men. The largest number of these persons had a problem with too long working hours.

INTRODUCTION

Research on trafficking in human beings in Serbia was conducted by SeConS Development Initiative Group within the project *Extending the Framework of the Anti-trafficking Response in Serbia*, for the purpose of ASTRA – Anti-trafficking action, and in cooperation with them. According to ASTRA estimates, in the period between 2011 and 2017 there was a stagnation in development of the system of prevention and protection of human trafficking victims, the adequate institutional framework was not established nor coordination of relevant stakeholders and actions. In August 2017, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the *Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims protection 2017-2022*, after a six-year gap from the previous strategy. Action Plan for 2017 and 2018 was adopted, and later on the Action Plan for 2019-2020, which also expired. There is still no officially adopted action plan that would operationalize implementation of the Strategy for the last two years (2021-2022).

In the meantime, Serbia has resumed to be a country of origin, transit and destination for women, children and men victims of trafficking in human beings, exposed to different forms of exploitation, such as sexual, labour exploitation, forced begging and coercion to commit felonies. Risks of trafficking in human beings are particularly high in certain groups of population faced with various forms of exclusion, discrimination and poverty, lack of education and information. Crisis periods further affect the members of different groups so as to find themselves in even more unfavourable situation in view of possibility to become victims of human trafficking. This is supported by the data that, **since pandemic declaration, ASTRA has received 71% more calls on its SOS Hotline, and has increased their interventions in the field for 44%**. Statistics for 2020 shows that the number of beneficiaries who have turned to ASTRA has been doubled in comparison to previous years.

Having in mind the unfavourable socio-economic context and systemic response, the purpose of this project is to contribute to quality and deep insights into complex phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, providing reliable and quality data on the basis of which actions aimed at prevention and combating trafficking in human beings can be planned, whether or not the actions are carried out by the state or civil sector.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Overall objective of the research is to contribute to improvement and strengthening of protection system (including public and civil sector) of one of the most vulnerable social groups – victims and persons at risk of trafficking in human beings, through creation of a unique factual basis (database) on complex forms of trafficking in human beings, which change with the changes in social context, along with identification and perception of human trafficking risks in general population in Serbia and particularly among more vulnerable groups that are most exposed to risks.

Specific objective of the research are as follows:

- 1. Establish common understanding and knowledge** about the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings in Serbia – its causes, forms and challenges, based on reliable and accurate data, in order to better understand processes of human trafficking change from traditional towards some new forms in a changed social context.
- 2. Improved basis for policy making:** new facts on trafficking in human beings should enable ASTRA and other stakeholders engaged in the field of combating trafficking in human beings to develop new or improve the existing activities, projects and programmes on the basis of new research insights and facts, and thus be able to provide better contribution to improving systemic response to trafficking in human beings.
- 3. Effective, viable response to trafficking in human beings:** based on new knowledge obtained by research, ASTRA and other stakeholders will be able to improve their work in the field of prevention and combating trafficking in human beings and protection of victims. They will especially be able to establish better identification systems of new forms of human trafficking and more adequate prevention and protection in the context of such new forms.
- 4. Empower the constructive supervisory roles of ASTRA** in the system of the National Referral Mechanism for victims of human trafficking (NRM): Based on new insights, ASTRA will be in position to empower its role in the field of advocacy and public policy promotion, when working with the competent institutions and organizations.

Scope of research

The research has, at the same time, encompassed **general population in Serbia, specific groups** that are under greater risks of trafficking in human beings, as well as the victims of different forms of trafficking in human beings. Territorial reach, in case of research in general population, means the entire territory of Serbia, while certain components of research are geographically located on narrower territorial units.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conducted research is very comprehensive and based on combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The key research components are:

1. **Desk research**, the aim of which was to investigate the manner in which trafficking in human beings and its specific forms were defined in relevant documents (laws, conventions, publications, etc.), as well as to perceive social context and changes of such context, in order to better understand changes in forms, patterns and risks of trafficking in human beings.
2. **Quantitative research** included public opinion survey on the representative sample of general population, with additional sample from Roma population.
3. **Qualitative research** with especially vulnerable groups – victims of human trafficking and persons who are at risk of trafficking in human beings.

For quantitative and qualitative components of the research different instruments were developed (questionnaires, interview guides, statements of informed consent to participate in the research), which may be submitted on request.

Quantitative research

The research was conducted on the representative sample of **800 respondents from general population** in total, which means that the sample reflects the representation of groups in population according to their basic socio-demographic characteristics. Structure of respondents according to gender, age, region and place of residence, as well as acquired education level is presented in the Annex to this study. In addition to basic sample, public opinion survey was conducted on the **additional sample of 50 respondents from Roma population**, as especially vulnerable category of population. Participation in the survey was based on voluntary basis. In addition, anonymity of respondents was preserved by presenting data in aggregate form, without stating names, surnames or other personal data of the respondents.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research included conducting interviews with **persons who were at risk of trafficking in human beings**, as well as **victims of different forms of trafficking in human beings**, in Serbia and abroad. Victims of human trafficking, who were encompassed with the research, are beneficiaries of ASTRA, and these interviews were conducted by professionals employed in ASTRA, who have many years of experience in working with victims of human trafficking and are completely sensitized to this topic. Accordingly, the possibility of secondary victimization was reduced to a minimum. In a part of the research where personal stories of some of the interviewed victims of human trafficking are presented, real names of the victims and other mentioned persons were not used, to keep their identity protected. As in the case of quantitative research component, participation in this research component was completely on voluntary basis, and each respondent gave a written consent to participate in the research before the interview started.⁴

QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT	Public opinion survey on the representative sample of 800 respondents from general population
	Additional sample of 50 respondents, members of Roma population
QUALITATIVE COMPONENT	Interviews with persons at risk of human trafficking (2 interviews)
	Interviews with victims of human trafficking (11 interviews): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • victims of labour exploitation in Serbia, • victims of labour exploitation abroad - domestic servitude, • victims of sexual exploitation in Serbia, • victims of sexual exploitation abroad, • victims who commit crimes under coercion.

⁴ It was planned to conduct more interviews with persons at risk of human trafficking, but the response to participate in the research was weaker than expected.

WHAT IS TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS?

Definition of trafficking in human beings

The basic definition which will present a baseline in operationalization of trafficking in human beings in the research is the definition from *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes*⁵, according to which: ***“Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”***

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to as Convention) provides somewhat more precise definition of exploitation, according to which exploitation *“shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation by way of recruiting others for prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”*. Also, this Convention emphasizes that *“trafficking in persons constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and the integrity of the human being”*.

The goal of trafficking in human beings is **to make profit through exploitation**, whether it is sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging, coercion to commit criminal activities, illegal adoption, forced marriage, organ trafficking or in any other form. One of the common stereotypes is that traffickers expose their victims exclusively to sexual exploitation, and that only women and girls are at risk. On the other hand, other forms of exploitation are left out of sight, such as labour exploitation, whose victims are more often men, as well as combination of different forms of exploitation – such as combination of sexual and labour exploitation.

⁵ Definition of trafficking in human being can be found in the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, as well as in the *Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia*.

Elements of the stated definition may be grouped in three categories. The category of **action** includes recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons; the category of **means or manner** refers to the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person; and **goal or intent to exploit**, as the third category, includes prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, use for pornographic purposes, slavery or practices similar to slavery, aiming at removal of organs or body parts, or for service in armed conflicts. International legal acts and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia determine that at least one of the elements from all three categories is necessary to be committed in order to determine committing acts of trafficking in human beings.⁶

As it is stated in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia that the criminal offense of trafficking in human beings is undertaking some of the stated actions with a specific means of execution, for the purpose of different forms of exploitation, it is sufficient to prove there was an intention to achieve exploitation. Therefore, if a victim has not been exploited, but the existence of other elements is established, as well as the intention to achieve some of the forms of exploitation, then it is trafficking in human beings.⁷ Also, it is determined by the Criminal Code that the consent of a person to exploitation or establishment of slavery or similar relationship does not affect the existence of a criminal offense.⁸ Thus, even if a person consented to any form of exploitation, it should not be taken into account when identifying a person as a victim of trafficking in human beings.

International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed a **list of indicators of trafficking in human beings** for the purpose of operationalization of the term of trafficking in human beings and closer definition of the terms encompassed by the definition from the UN Convention.⁹ The list includes 67 indicators in total, which are divided into the following categories, as per the definition:

1. deceptive recruitment,
2. coercive recruitment,

⁶ Žarković, M., idr. (2019). *Pravda za žrtve trgovine ljudima - Praktikum za sudije i javne tužioce*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁸ Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia, (*Official Gazette of the RS*, no. 85/2005, 88/2005 - correction, 107/2005 - correction, 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014, 94/2016 and 35/2019).

⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has also developed a list of indicators of trafficking in human beings, which to a certain extent differs from the list of indicators by the International Organization of Labour. The indicators are available at the following link: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewj4y4LzzYt3AhXQiv0HHZVPAI4QfnoECAMQAO&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unodc.org%2Fpdf%2FHT_indicators_E_LOWRES.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3kSLFBhau7I1ZWGZChrWyt. However, the authors of this report have opted to rely on the indicators by the International Organization of Labour in operationalization of the term "trafficking in human beings" and development of research instruments in specific segments.

3. recruitment by abuse of vulnerability,
4. exploitative conditions of work;
5. coercion at destination,
6. abuse of vulnerability at destination.¹⁰

Cases of trafficking in human beings can be rather different, and therefore difficult to identify. If we stick to the definition of trafficking in human beings and take into account all **three elements (action, means and goal)**, it is clear that there is no uniform pattern upon which trafficking in human beings occurs. The first element, **action by which trafficker approaches victim**, includes a wide range of activities. A person can be coercively recruited, but he/she can also be recruited in a rather subtle manner. In some studies, globalization and development of communication networks are highlighted as significant "mitigating circumstances" for trafficking in human beings and **new sources of risk**, pointing out the fact that these processes have enabled very fast and cheap communication among people worldwide, while maintaining anonymity, which is one of the ways how a victim comes into a contact with a trafficker.¹¹ Development of technologies has had the greatest impact in the recruitment stage of potential victims, in the context of trafficking in human beings. Although the contact with a victim is most often made personally, since traffickers or their intermediaries are in a large number of cases persons close to the victim,¹² internet advertisements and employment agencies, in the country and abroad, which advertise through various social networks, present increasingly important recruitment channels, primarily for labour and/or sexual exploitation.¹³ Methods used for recruitment include promise of a good job, of a marriage, as well as an offer to escape from difficult or crisis situation in the victim's family.¹⁴ These types of promises present "pull" factors which increase probability that a certain person, especially from vulnerable social groups, will believe in different promises and agree to risky offers.

Manners or means of maintaining an exploitative relationship between trafficker and victim can include different control mechanisms, such as isolation and captivity, use of violence and/or threats of violence to both the victim and his/her family or other important persons. Control mechanisms can also be manifested in the form of psychological manipulation, through various promises or abuse of victim's difficult position, as well as through various types of blackmail, such as blackmail that compromising photos of the victim will be posted online or sent to his/her family, if the victim tries to get out of the human trafficking situation.

¹⁰ ILO, Details of indicators for labour exploitation. Available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ed=2ahUKewjwrZP335X3AhWFGuWKHQFuDFoQFnoECAMQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ilo.org%2Fwcmcs5%2Fgroups%2Fpublic%2F--ed_norm%2F--declaration%2Fdocuments%2Fpublication%2Fwcmcs_105035.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3XhJra7ToWVvNHQcoqOVWVu

¹¹ Shelly, L. (2010). *Human trafficking: Global perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 41.

¹² UNODC. (2020). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 71.

¹³ SELEC. (2019). *Report on Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeast Europe*. Bucharest: SELEC, p. 10.

¹⁴ IOM. (2014). *Procena potreba: Trgovina ljudskim bićima na Zapadnom Balkanu*. Ženeva: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije, Geneva: International Organization for Migration, p. 38.

Goal of trafficking in human beings refers to some of the forms of exploitation to which a victim is exposed, and due to which a trafficker gains profit. Depending on the form of exploitation, it is possible to distinguish several forms of trafficking in human beings, such as: trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings in the form of domestic servitude, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of begging, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of coercion to commit felonies, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of giving birth or forced child adoption, child trafficking and organ trafficking. Each of the stated forms of trafficking in human beings will be described in the next chapter.

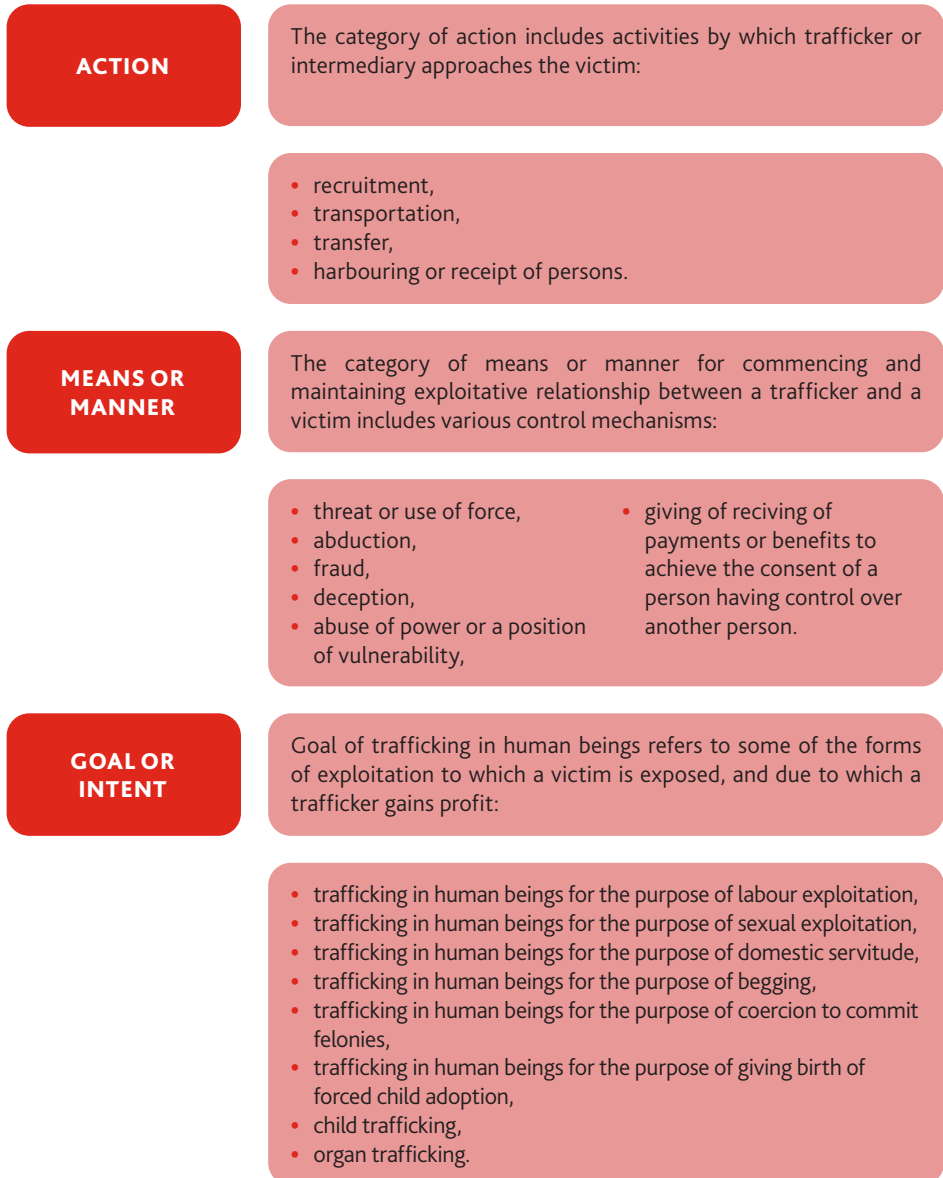
Variations that occur in cases of all three described categories, or stages in the process of trafficking in human beings, indicate to **complexity** of the phenomenon itself, which also makes it difficult to identify the victim. Even if it is the case with trafficking in human beings with the same goal, i.e. intention, situations in which victims find themselves can be very different. If we take as an example trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, based only on the manner of recruiting the victim, the entire situation may appear as follows: (1) the complete force was used in case of abduction, (2) deception was used when persons had been promised a job in formal economy, but ending in sexual slavery, (3) persons were told a half truth, that is to say, they would work in entertainment industry or as dancers or showgirls, but ending as victims of sexual exploitation, and (4) when women are fully aware, before departure, that they would work as prostitutes, but they are not aware of potential degree of intimidation, indebtedness, control and exploitation.¹⁵

Forms of trafficking in human beings

As already described in the previous chapter, trafficking in human beings can occur in different forms, primarily depending on the type of exploitation to which a victim is exposed. With the aim to better understand each of the forms mentioned, the forms in which trafficking in human beings occur most often are described below. It is important to notice that **some cases of trafficking in human beings refer to multiple exploitations**, such as labour and sexual exploitation, and that in some cases it is possible to identify more forms of trafficking in human beings which intertwine or derive from each other. For instance, child trafficking can turn into trafficking in human beings for the purpose of begging and/or for the purpose of committing felonies.

¹⁵ Kelly, L., & Regan, L. (2000). *Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking in Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK*. London: Policing and Reducing Crime Unit: Police Research Series, p. 24.

Figure 1: Elements and forms of trafficking in human beings



Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation

Labour exploitation is in literature equalled to forced or compulsory labour as one of the goals of trafficking in human beings. *Forced Labour Convention no. 29* of the International Organization of Labour defines *forced or compulsory labour* as any labour or service which is required of a person under the threat of punishment, and to which the person has not voluntarily consented.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the existing definitions, available in international documents, do not provide precise definition of what labour exploitation is. As it has already been highlighted, clear defining of each term related to trafficking in human beings is necessary in order to understand those already complex phenomena. Therefore, it is not enough to defined labour exploitation only as "forced or compulsory labour", for a person to be labour exploited does not necessarily have to be exposed to any kind of coercion. Definition providing more precise determination, and by which we will be guided in this research, states that labour exploitation refers to "existence of circumstances indicating that certain labour is done under conditions which are contrary to the principle of respect for human dignity, physical and mental integrity and health of those in great disproportion to the conditions of other persons performing the same or similar work (including denied payment of salaries, denied right to annual leave, overtime work, etc.)."¹⁷

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation most often presents exploitation through forced prostitution, the one in which victim is unable to resist due to infirmity, the one in which voluntariness is obtained by deception or fraud, or presents a result of forced reconciliation with the situation, but also exploitation through recording pornographic scenes and organizing sexual oriented performances.¹⁸

Trafficking in human beings in the form of domestic servitude

Trafficking in the form of domestic servitude¹⁹ presents a specific form of trafficking in human beings that can belong to the form of labour exploitation and/or sexual exploitation, if it combines forced labour with forced marriage (whether formal or informal).

¹⁶ Forced Labour Convention of the International Organization of Labour no. 29, *Official Gazette of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia*, number 297/1932.

¹⁷ Žarković, M., i dr. (2019). *Pravda za žrtve trgovine ljudima – Praktikum za sudije i javne tužioce*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 36.

¹⁹ Council of Europe, Recommendation 1663 (2004) Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and mail-order brides, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17229&lang=en>

According to the International Organization of Labour, this form of trafficking in human beings is one of the forms of forced labour and presents almost every fourth case in the total number of identified cases of forced labour in the world.²⁰ In addition, in comparison to other forms of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and forced labour, **trafficking in human beings in the form of domestic servitude is the most widespread phenomenon**, having in mind that, according to the *United Nations Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* from 2020, this form of forced labour was identified in all regions of the world.

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of begging

Trafficking for the purpose of begging refers to begging under coercion, as a form of exploitation.

With the aim to closer define the term, a division that distinguishes three forms of begging has been taken into account: (1) **voluntary begging**, (2) **exploitation of voluntary begging**, (3) **trafficking in human beings for the purpose of exploitation through begging under coercion**.²¹ According to this division, the second form means that one person makes profit by exploiting another person who performs begging, while the third form includes coercion as a necessary element and in this case the person begging is the victim of trafficking in human beings.

Victims of this form of human trafficking are persons who in large number of cases belong to vulnerable groups, that is to say, these are persons who are unable to meet basic needs (food, shelter, etc.) independently from the person they are begging for. This refers to disabled persons, elderly persons, children and young people.²² In case when children are victims of this form of human trafficking, it is child trafficking for the purpose of begging. In legal framework, begging performed by children is identified in the *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention no. 182 of the International Organization of Labour*. One of the items defines the **worst forms of child labour**, as follows: "...work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children."²³

²⁰ According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery for 2017 by the International Organization of Labour, total of 24.9 million people were identified as victims of forced labour.

²¹ Tamas, A. Moise, A. Predut, C. Medvichi, N. (2013). *Trafficking in persons for begging - Romania study*. Bucharest: National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, p. 12.

²² *Ibid*, p.16.

²³ Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention no. 182, 1999, ILO.

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of coercion to commit felonies

Trafficking in human beings occurs also in the form of exploitation of a person for the purpose of committing a felony.

Victims of such type of exploitation are both adults and children who are forced to perform various felonies by a person or a criminal group, i.e. traffickers. Especially vulnerable age category, when it comes to this form of trafficking in human beings, presents children under 14 years of age, who are criminally irresponsible, i.e. they cannot be punished for an illegal act committed.²⁴

The specificity of this form of human trafficking is identified in an array of shortcomings in detecting coercion to commit felonies, as a type of exploitation which makes difficult to identify a victim. A number of factors are cited as the reason for this, such as lack of awareness of this form of exploitation, understanding, insufficient knowledge about such cases, but also lack of activity in the field with vulnerable groups.²⁵ Also, it is assumed that in some situations it is necessary to reveal the entire chain of trafficking in human beings so that the person who was forced to perform criminal activities could be identified as a victim, and not the person who voluntarily committed felonies.²⁶

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of giving birth/adopting a child

Adoptions deriving from felonies, such as abduction and sale of children and trafficking in children, fraud in adoption declaration, forgery of official documents and coercion, as well as any illegal activity or practice such as lack of appropriate consent of biological parents, inappropriate financial gain of intermediaries and related corruption, present illegal adoptions and must be prohibited, criminalized and penalized as such.²⁷

At the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council, there was concern expressed about the human rights of surrogate mothers and children born this way. Imbalance of power between parents who wish to have a child this way and surrogate mothers, resulting from their different economic positions, opens up a possibility to numerous forms of exploitation of mothers and children.²⁸

²⁴ Živković, N. (2020). Krivična neodgovornost dece – zločin bez kazne i moguća rešenja, u: *Strani pravni život*, 64(3), p. 151.

²⁵ Sorentino, L. (2019). *Ocena nacionalnog mehanizma za upućivanje žrtava trgovine ljudima*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 36.

²⁶ In the legislative framework of the Republic of Serbia "there is no specific criminal provision regulating responsibility of human trafficking victims for status offenses, but general provision of Article 21 of the Criminal Code excludes responsibility for acts committed under coercion" (Sorentino, 2019: 23).

²⁷ Definition taken from the UNHCR website, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Children/Pages/Illegaladoptions.aspx>

²⁸ For more details see: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Children/Pages/SurrogacySummary.aspx>

Child trafficking

Child trafficking is often identified as a separate form of trafficking in human beings that actually includes rather different forms of exploitation of juvenile population. It is cited in literature that this type of trafficking in human beings aims at exploitation of children for the purpose of committing felonies and other antisocial behaviours (e.g. begging, use in pornography), for organ trafficking, for adoption, service in armed conflicts and the like.²⁹

Trafficking in human beings and other terms

While normative framework, both national and international, exclusively uses the term “trafficking in human beings”, in recent years the term modern slavery has been introduced in reports of international organization. **Modern slavery**, as a much broader term, includes a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, forced marriage, debt bondage, slavery and practices similar to slavery, and trafficking in human beings, according to the definition by the International Organization of Labour.³⁰ As a closer definition, the term implies to a situation in which a person is being exploited, since he/she is in a position where he/she cannot refuse what is asked from him/her, mainly due to a threat, blackmail, violence, coercion, deception and/or use of power. Based on this definition, it is noticed that modern slavery term also implies to phenomena of rather different nature, i.e. of different levels. Namely, trafficking in human beings, as a phenomenon included in the term of modern slavery, presents a very complex phenomenon and a set of large number of different types of exploitation, but also other elements that have already been discussed. On the other hand, some phenomena included in the definition of modern slavery are less complex, such as forced labour, referring to concrete manner of exploitation, or the phenomenon of debt bondage, which can be understood as one of means of coercion.

Debt bondage presents a situation in which “the debtor undertakes to guarantee the payment of the debt by his services or the services of the persons he cares for, if this obligation is disproportionate to the amount of the debt or is not limited by time”.³¹ Debt as a means of coercion is rather widespread – out of 16 million victims of forced labour in total, which is the estimate of the International Organization of Labour from 2016, as

²⁹ Centar za prava deteta. (2006). *Trgovina decom u Srbiji – pretnja i realnost*. Beograd: Centar za prava deteta, Belgrade: The Child Rights Centre, p. 9.

³⁰ ILO. (2017). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*. Geneva: International Labour Office, p. 16.

³¹ Dimitrijević, V., Paunović, M., & Đerić, V. (1997). *Ljudska prava: užbenik*. Beograd: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, p. 249.

many as half were recruited and held under coercion based on the debt which the victims had towards their exploiter.³²

Also, taking into account the indicators of trafficking in human beings of the International Organization of Labour, it is possible to notice that modern slavery and trafficking in human beings, in the manner they are defined, overlap in many points. Namely, forced labour, forced marriage, even the position similar to slavery, present the forms in which trafficking in human beings occur. In addition, slavery is considered as “the worst form of exploitation in human history”³³, and there is danger that due to broader use of the term *modern slavery* some forms of trafficking in human beings, which by their nature are beyond the term of modern slavery, have become less noticeable. So, when it comes to identifying trafficking in human beings and all forms in which it can occur, it is important to define terms individually, to make it clear at all times what each of them means.

While on one hand it is important to bring together different terms which in some cases can describe almost the same situations, it is necessary, on the other hand, to indicate to different phenomena, such as trafficking in human beings and **smuggling**, which are often related and identified. Trafficking in human beings and smuggling may, to some extent, have similarities, and person being smuggled is subjected to greater risks of becoming a victim of human trafficking due to debt he/she may have towards the smuggler, illegal migrant status in the country where he/she is smuggled, or due to other situations that may bring him/her to a very risky position.³⁴ Yet, the key difference underlying these two phenomena is that the person being smuggled not only does he/she agree to it, but he/she pays to the smuggler for this service. Also, while smuggling is completed when the person being smuggled, i.e. migrant, arrives to the final destination, trafficking in human beings means constant exploitation of the victim, in order for the trafficker to gain profit.³⁵ Another important difference between the two phenomena is that smuggling always means crossing state borders, while trafficking in human beings may be internal (within borders of one country) and international, i.e. cross-border.

Smuggling migrants in the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by land, Sea and Air*³⁶ is defined as **the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a**

³² ILO. (2017). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*. Geneva: International Labour Office, p. 10.

³³ Lee, M. (2007). Introduction: Understanding human trafficking, in: M. Lee (ed.) *Human trafficking*, Devon: Willan Publishing, p. 3.

³⁴ Weitzer, R. (2014). New directions in Research on Human Trafficking, in: *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 653(1), p. 8.

³⁵ KIRS. (2012). *Osnovi upravljanja migracijama u Republici Srbiji*. Beograd: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije – Misija u Srbiji, International Organization for Migration – Mission in Serbia, p. 55.

³⁶ Ratification Law on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (and the Protocols), *Official Gazette of the FRY – International agreements*, no. 6/2001. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi_download/zakon_o_potvrdivanju_konvencije_ujedinjenih_nacija_protiv_transnacionalnog_organizovanog.pdf

financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.

Having in mind that trafficking in human beings may or may not involve any migration, identifying smuggling and trafficking in human beings may divert attention from "internal" trafficking in human beings, i.e. a situation when the entire process of recruitment and exploitation occurs within the borders of one country. Also, while smuggling is characterized as cross-border criminal, trafficking in human beings presents one of the most serious forms of human rights violations, besides constituting a felony.

How much population in Serbia knows about human trafficking - previous research findings

Public opinion surveys in Serbia about the issue of trafficking in human beings almost do not exist. The exception is research conducted in 2008 for the needs of NGO ASTRA, on the representative sample that included 1139 respondents.³⁷ The research goal was to investigate perceptions and understanding of the problem of trafficking in human beings among population in Serbia. In this research, almost fifth of the respondents considered trafficking in human beings as "abducting and selling people as goods" (19%), only 18% of respondents stated that trafficking in human beings was "crime", whereas 13% of respondents considered trafficking in human beings to be "violence/exploitation". When it comes to causes, the largest number of respondents identified the cause of trafficking in human beings in poverty (72%), wish for better life (42%), unemployment (37%) and corruption (31%). About three fifths of respondents thought that victims of trafficking in human being could be anyone (58%), the equal share of respondents thought that victims could be women and children (35% respectively), 28% of respondents stated that victims could be girls, and only 7% of them thought that victims of trafficking in human beings could be young men, i.e. 4% thought that victims could be men. Almost all citizens from the sample said they heard for sexual exploitation (92%), as one of the forms of exploitation to which a victim could be exposed, 63% of respondents heard for labour exploitation, 62% for forced begging, and 35% of respondents heard for coercion to commit felonies.

Taking into account that almost 14 years have passed since the mentioned research, and that the risk factors may change through time, as well as the dominant forms in which trafficking in human beings occur, we believe that the research results below will provide a significant insight into knowledge and perception about this phenomenon in general population in Serbia.

³⁷ Radović, I., & dr. (2009). *Trgovina ljudima – Priručnik za novinare*. Beograd: ASTRA.

FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING ANALYSIS

Legislative and institutional framework for combating trafficking in human beings in Serbia

When it comes to legislative framework, in 2001 Serbia adopted the *Ratification Law on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (and the Protocols)*³⁸, by which it is legally obliged to comply with the Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, the so-called Palermo Protocol, the most significant international legal and political document in the field of combating trafficking of human beings. Eight years later, the *Ratification Law on the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*³⁹ was adopted as yet another document in this field. Also, Serbia is signatory to the *Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants*, as well as the *International Organization of Labour (ILO) Forced Labour Convention* about abolition of forced labour and the *Convention of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*.⁴⁰

Amendments to the *Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia* from 2003 (which came into force on 1 January 2006), for the first time trafficking in human beings was criminalized in Serbian criminal law by Article 388.⁴¹ Also, trafficking in human beings is prohibited by the highest legal act of our country. In Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, it reads: "No person may be kept in slavery or servitude. All forms of human trafficking are prohibited. Forced labour is prohibited. Sexual or financial exploitation of person in unfavourable position shall be deemed forced labour."⁴²

In the following years, the National mechanism for identification, assistance and protection of victims of human trafficking, better known as the **National Referral Mechanism** was formed in Serbia. The goal of this mechanism is to identify all stakeholders that can come into contact with victims, potential victims of trafficking in human beings, and the system

³⁸ Ratification Law on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (and the Protocols). Official Gazette of the FRY – *International agreements*, no. 6/2001. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_potvrđivanju_konvencije_ujedinjenih_nacija_protiv_transnacionalnog_organizovanog.html

³⁹ Ratification Law on the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Official Gazette of the RS – *International agreements*, no. 19/2009. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_potvrđivanju_konvencije_saveta_evrope_o_borbi_protiv_trgovine_ljudima.html

⁴⁰ Documents available at: http://www.iio.org.rs/files/Mor_texts/MOR%2029%20Konvencija%20o%20prinudnom%20radu.%201930.pdf
http://www.iio.org.rs/files/Mor_texts/MOR%20182%20Konvencija%20o%20najgorim%20oblicima%20decijeg%20rada.%201999.pdf

⁴¹ Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia, *Official Gazette of the RS*, no. 85/2005, 88/2005 – corr., 107/2005 – corr., 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014, 94/2016 and 35/2019. Available at: <https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/krivicni-zakonik-2019.html>

⁴² Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, *Official Gazette of the RS*, no. 98/2006. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/ustav_republike_srbije.html

of necessary assistance.⁴³ National referral mechanism is organized as the centralized system and its main components are: (1) Office of the national coordinator for combating trafficking in human beings; (2) Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking (hereinafter referred to as Centre); (3) standard operating procedures for dealing with human trafficking victims; (4) specific bodies in criminal justice system; and (5) specialized nongovernment organizations for human trafficking issue.⁴⁴ Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking is a social welfare institution which formally assigns the status of human trafficking victim, separately from the legal action.⁴⁵ In annual statistical report of the Centre they present data about the number of reported human trafficking and the number of formally identified victims.⁴⁶ However, a common and comprehensive system of collecting and analysing data on human trafficking has still not been formed in Serbia.⁴⁷

The National Referral Mechanism was specified by the *Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking* (hereinafter referred to as the *Strategy*) from 2006, which presents the first out of two Strategies in total that have been adopted in the field of combating trafficking in human beings in Serbia so far. The second Strategy (*Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims protection*) was adopted in 2017 and is still in force. However, the national action plans for combating human trafficking, which would follow the strategies, were not adopted in timely manner. According to ASTRA estimates, in the period between 2011 and 2017 there was a stagnation in development of the system of prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking, the adequate institutional framework was not established nor coordination of relevant stakeholders and actions. In August 2017, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the *Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims protection 2017-2022*, after a six-year gap from the previous strategy. Action Plan for 2017 and 2018 was adopted, and later on the Action Plan for 2019-2020, which also expired. There is still no officially adopted action plan that would operationalize implementation of the Strategy for the last two years (2021-2022).

As stated in the Strategy itself, the areas still undeveloped and in which a continuing work is necessary to improve the combat against trafficking in human beings are, inter alia, as follows: lack of common and comprehensive system for collecting and analysing data on trafficking in human beings; non-uniform training and sensitization of professionals

⁴³ Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Serbia, *Official Gazette of the RS*, no. 111/2006. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/strategija_borbe_protiv_trgovine_ljudima_u_republici_srbiji.html

⁴⁴ Sorentino, L. (2019). *Ocena nacionalnog mehanizma za upućivanje žrtava trgovine ljudima*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁴⁶ It is possible to access the annual statistical report of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking on the following link: <http://centarzztlj.rs/statisticki-podaci/>

⁴⁷ Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims' protection 2017-2022. Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/strategija_prevenicije_i_suzbijanja_trgovine_ljudima_osebno_zenama_i_decom_i_zastite_zrtava_2017-2022.html

who work on prevention, victims' protection and combating human trafficking; insufficient development of the system for identification of victims, especially when it comes to children and vulnerable category of migrants, there are no developed support programmes for groups at risk and vulnerable categories, nor does the system have the necessary human resources.⁴⁸ Particularly unfavourable situation is lack of intersectoral collaboration, and that is a long-term problem.⁴⁹

Trafficking in human beings in Serbia and worldwide

In the period of establishing the institutional framework, Serbia was dominantly a transit country for victims of trafficking in human beings, primarily women, while somewhat less often a country for temporary stay of victims or country of destination.⁵⁰ According to the First Annual Report on Victims of Trafficking in South Eastern Europe,⁵¹ in the period between 2001 and 2003, the number of identified victims in Serbia was 138 women and girls. **The report presented that out of the total number of victims, at a minimum, 124 victims were foreign citizens, while 14 of them came from Serbia.** On the other hand, there is an estimate that for 1.311 victims Serbia was a transit country.

In the following decade, Serbia continued to have been a country of transit and destination, but more often the country of origin as well, for women, children and men victims of trafficking in human beings. In this period, differentiation of forms of exploitation was noticeable as the goals of human trafficking. So today, in addition to sexual exploitation as the most often form of exploitation, labour exploitation, exploitation of the form of domestic servitude, coercion to commit felonies, forced begging, forced marriage, etc., more often occur among the goals of trafficking in human beings. According to the estimation conducted in 2014 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), whose general goal is to identify opinions of the key stakeholders about the shortcomings in the field of combating trafficking in human beings in the Western Balkans, several new movements emerged in the field of trafficking in human beings. As the most significant changes, the following have been listed: **an increase in the number of cases of human trafficking for the purpose of various forms of labour exploitation, emergence of new**

⁴⁸ Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children, and victims' protection 2017–2022. More detailed in: Krunić, J., Mitić, M., & Malbaša, D. (2021). *Analiza usluga zaštite i podrške žrtvama trgovine ljudima u Srbiji*. Beograd: ASTRA.

⁴⁹ Pejić Nikić, J. (ur.) (2021). *Preugovor alarm: izveštaj o napretku Srbije u poglavljima 23 i 24*. Beograd: Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, p. 95.

⁵⁰ Hanzinger, L., & Coffey, P. S. (2003). *First Annual Report on Victims of Trafficking in South Eastern Europe*, Counter-Trafficking Regional Clearing Point, p. 189.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 189.

⁵² When presenting data about the number of human trafficking victims, it is important to have in mind that a large number of victims remains unidentified and that, therefore, data about the number of victims do not completely reflect the situation in reality. According to the mentioned report, at least 9 out of 10 victims to whom Serbia is the country of origin, destination or transit, remain unregistered.

forms of child exploitation, an increase in the number of internet human trafficking cases, increasing illegal migration within the region of the Western Balkans.⁵³

The causes of such changes can be identified in global trends, such as emergence of new sources of risk from trafficking in human beings and an increasing number of victims of various forms of exploitation worldwide. On the other hand, phenomena that may appear new to us, sometimes are just resulting from the change of perspective. Thus, in recent years, more attention has been paid to "internal" human trafficking. This form of human trafficking refers to the situation in which recruitment and exploitation of victims are conducted in the same country.⁵⁴ In addition, some forms of exploitation have only later begun to be considered a form of human trafficking. Hence, it is not easy to determine whether in some cases new patterns of human trafficking have actually emerged or it is just better identification of the existing ones.⁵⁵

Trafficking in human beings is the only field of transnational organized crime whose victims are significantly more women,⁵⁶ which is one of the reasons why it has long been considered a gender issue, and the term "trafficking in human beings" has very often been equalled to the term "women trafficking". According to data by ASTRA and the Agency for Coordination of Assistance to Trafficking Victims for 2009, majority of victims were actually women and girls exposed to sexual exploitation – 88.6% of the total number of victims.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it is necessary to have in mind that lack of aggregated data on the number of victims and unclear procedure for identification,⁵⁸ can make the number of identified male victims of human trafficking many times smaller than the actual scale of this phenomenon. It is important to take into account that men less often than women ask for help, even when they have an opportunity, which presents one of the consequences of the internalized patriarchal pattern, upon which a man should not consider himself a victim. Manner of exploitation can also have a significant impact in insufficient identification of this form of trafficking in human beings, having in mind that labour exploitation is very often represented in the construction and manufacturing industries, in which difficult work conditions are almost a rule. These are some of the reasons why a large number of cases of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation remains undiscovered.⁵⁹

⁵³ IOM. (2014). *Procena potreba: Trgovina ljudskim bićima na Zapadnom Balkanu*. Ženeva: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije, International Organization for Migration, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Anđelković, M., & dr. (2011). *Trgovina ljudima u Republici Srbiji: Izveštaj za period 2000-2010*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 398.

⁵⁵ IOM. (2014). *Procena potreba: Trgovina ljudskim bićima na Zapadnom Balkanu*. Ženeva: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije, International Organization for Migration, p. 36.

⁵⁶ Shelly, L. (2010). *Human trafficking: Global perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 16.

⁵⁷ Anđelković, M., & dr. (2011). *Trgovina ljudima u Republici Srbiji: Izveštaj za period 2000-2010*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 53.

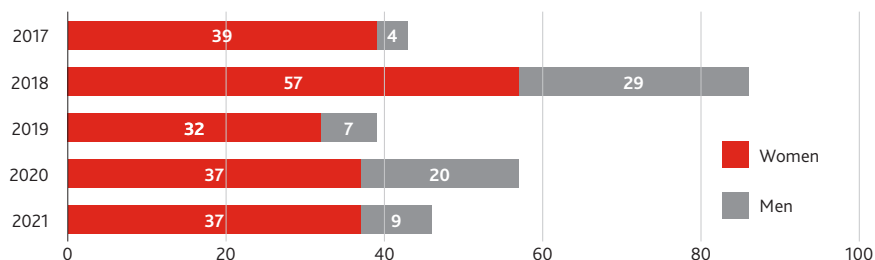
⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 228.

⁵⁹ IOM. (2014). *Procena potreba: Trgovina ljudskim bićima na Zapadnom Balkanu*. Ženeva: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije, International Organization for Migration, p. 43.

According to data from the UN Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, out of the total number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings in the world in 2018, almost half were women (46%), about 30% of victims were children⁶⁰ (slightly more girls in comparison to boys), and about 20% of men.⁶¹ Such data are the result of a gradual increase in share of men and children in the total number of victims – in 2004, in the total number of victims there were 74% of women, 13% of men and 13% of children. Rise in number of men among victims of trafficking in human beings significantly increased the frequency of forced labour as the form of exploitation to which victim were exposed. The share of persons exposed to forced labour increased from 18% in 2006 to 38% in 2018.

According to the Annual statistical report for 2021 of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, there were in total 127 reported cases of trafficking in human beings, of which 46 persons were formally identified as victims of human trafficking – 37 women and 9 men. Out of the total number of identified victims, even 17 persons were minors at the moment of identification. When it comes to forms of exploitation, in most cases victims were exposed to sexual exploitation – 23 persons, eight persons were exposed to multiple exploitation⁶², five persons were victims of forced begging, four persons were victims of labour exploitation, three persons were victims of forced marriage, and two persons were victims of coercion to commit felonies.

Chart 1: Number of formally identified women and men victims of trafficking in human beings (2017-2021)



Source: Annual statistical report of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking for the period from 2017 to 2021, available at: <http://centarzztlj.rs/statisticki-podaci/>

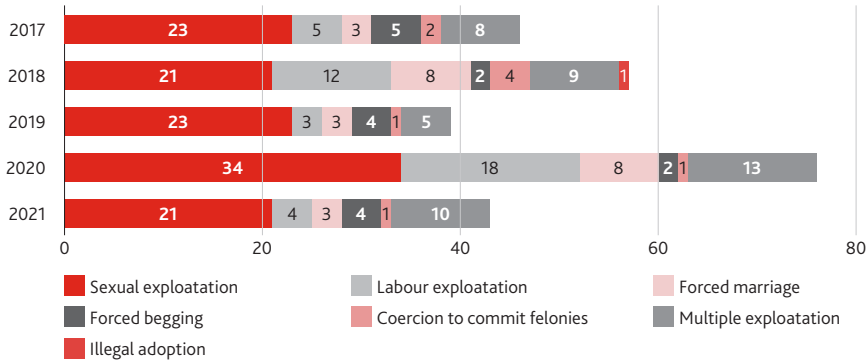
The Chart 1 shows the number of women and men who were formally identified as victims of trafficking in human beings in the last five years, i.e. in the period from 2017 to 2021. Chart 2 shows the number of victims according to the form of exploitation to which they were exposed.

⁶⁰ Children under the age of 18 are considered to be children.

⁶¹ UNODC. (2020). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 31.

⁶² In the report by the Centre, the term "multiple exploitation" was not specified.

Chart 2: Number of formally identified victims according to form of exploitation (2017-2021)



Source: Annual statistical report of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking for the period from 2017 to 2021, available at: <http://centarzztlj.rs/statisticki-podaci/>

It is important to note that the number of victims of trafficking in human beings, both in Serbia and the world, should be taken with caution. **The official data refer only to registered victims**; however, it is the fact that a large number of victims of trafficking in human beings never reaches the state bodies or nongovernment organizations, and therefore remains unregistered. This presents the so-called “dark figures”, i.e. undiscovered cases of trafficking in human beings, which according to some estimates can be up to several times higher than the number of registered victims.⁶³

Socio-economic context

It is possible to identify a large number of factors that contribute to trafficking in human beings, i.e. the circumstances that “encourage” the certain person to change his/her life environment and thus become exposed to increased risk of trafficking in human beings. These factors coincide to a great extent to factors that lead to migration and can be divided into “push” and “pull” factors.

“Push” factors or factors of pressure include inability to find work, poverty, social exclusion, discrimination based on sex or ethnicity, exposure to violence, etc.⁶⁴ Another significant factor is the low level of education, which is very often a consequence of poor economic situation in the household, but also the traditional opinions due to which girls

⁶³ UNODC. (2016). *Research Brief: Multiple Systems Estimation for estimating the number of victims of human trafficking across the world*. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tip/TiPMSE.pdf>

⁶⁴ Shelley, L. (2010). *Human trafficking: Global perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 37.

and young women do not obtain necessary support to continue education.⁶⁵

"Pull" factors or factors of attraction are considered to be attractive job offers and greater employment opportunities; better material living conditions expected in other environments, mainly in another country; more dignified life, primarily without discrimination and violence expected in the new living environment; belief in tempting, but false promises.⁶⁶ Therefore, it can be stated that there is "the synthesis of factors that 'push' persons in the hands of traffickers and those factors which act with their attractive power, creating an illusion of better life".⁶⁷

In addition to "push" and "pull" factors that contribute to vulnerability of a certain person and increase the risk of becoming a victim, significant factors are the ones that derive from a broader social context. Corruption and insufficient customs control are factors which create fertile ground for functioning of the entire chain of trafficking in human beings.⁶⁸ Also, political and social crisis, war situation in certain country, as well as the uneven economic development among the regions in the world, encourage migratory movements that affect the development of trafficking in human beings.⁶⁹

Migrations and work abroad – risk of trafficking in human beings

Migrations, particularly if they are illegal, represent a very fertile ground for trafficking in human beings. As some authors note, with greater migration flows, this social problem is intensifying.⁷⁰ Even in cases of economic migration, when persons voluntarily go abroad in search of work, they are exposed to increased risks of labour exploitation and human trafficking. Researches on migratory movements show that the nationalities of victims registered in a particular country largely coincide with the citizens who came into the country as regular migrants during that period.⁷¹

Due to mentioned factors of "pressure", migration and human trafficking routes very often coincide – persons leave less economically developed regions for economically more developed regions with higher economic activity and greater possibility to find a

⁶⁵ Klopčič, A. (2004). Trafficking in Human Beings in Transition and Post-Conflict Countries, in: *Human Security Perspectives*, 1 (1), p. 8.

⁶⁶ Žarković, M., i dr. (2019). *Pravda za žrtve trgovine ljudima - Praktikum za sudije i javne tužioce*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Stevanović, Z. (2014). Trgovina ljudima radi seksualnog iskorišćavanja, u: *Zbornik Instituta za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja*, 33(1), Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, p. 131.

⁶⁸ Shelley, L. (2010). *Human trafficking: Global perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Pajić, N. (2017). Trgovina ljudima: Socioekonomski i kulturni činioci, u: *Godišnjak Fakulteta bezbednosti*, Faculty of Security Studies p. 242.

⁷⁰ Jelić, M. S., & Vasić, D. M. (2018). Žene i deca migrant – žrtve trgovine ljudima, u: *Savremene migracije i društveni razvoj: interdisciplinarna perspektiva*. Beograd: Srpsko sociološko društvo, Institut društvenih nauka, Filozofski fakultet, Serbian Sociological Society, Institute of Social Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy, p. 87.

⁷¹ UNODC. (2016). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 9.

job, as well as leaving rural for urban areas. Due to intersection of human trafficking and (il)legal migration routes, trafficking in human beings, as a social phenomenon, is frequently investigated in the context of broader social movements.⁷² According to data from 2016, the largest number of victims of trafficking in human beings were foreign citizens in the country where they were identified, about 60% of identified victims in the world in total.⁷³ Although detailed data are not available, it is assumed that at least a part of victims are economic migrants, who independently, or through recruitment by another person, went abroad to work.

Insufficient adaptation to the new environment, but also socio-economic position of migrants, increase their vulnerability. **Unfavourable economic position, low level of education, lack of knowledge of the language used in the country of destination, as well as inability to find work through legal channels or outside informal economy, contribute to the risk of someone becoming a victim of various forms of exploitation, but also a victim of trafficking in human beings.** If it is illegal migration and/or work without work permit, the stated risks increase additionally. Traffickers use exactly this vulnerable position of an individual, whom they draw into the chain of trafficking in human beings through various deceptions and false promises.

Serbia is considered to be a country of emigration and, according to different studies, number of persons who leave Serbia every year is between 30.000 and 60.000, and in the largest number of cases, these are economic migrations.⁷⁴ Economically attractive destinations for persons who emigrate from Serbia are most often countries of the European Union (EU). According to data from 2018, 49.631 in total of Serbian citizens were registered as newly arrived immigrants in some of the EU countries.⁷⁵ Almost one third of them immigrated to Germany (32.6%), while every tenth person opted for Slovenia (10.4%).⁷⁶

As previous data already show, persons who migrate find themselves in increased risk of trafficking in human beings. Also, in addition to migrant status, the sector of activity in which they work further increase their vulnerability. According to the report by the International Organization of Labour, migrant workers are most often employed in the sector of construction, season agriculture, home care, catering industry, or they provide cleaning services.⁷⁷ These jobs can be mainly found in the sector of non-standard

⁷² Pajić, N. (2017). Trgovina ljudima: Socioekonomski i kulturni činioci, u: *Godišnjak Fakulteta bezbednosti*, Faculty of Security Studies p. 242.

⁷³ UNODC. (2016). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. New York: United Nations, p. 57.

⁷⁴ The Economic Migration Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2027, *Official Gazette of the RS*, no. 21/2020.

⁷⁵ Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia for 2019, p. 18.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18

⁷⁷ ILO. (2017). *Nestandardno zapošljavanje širom svijeta: Razumijevanje izazova, oblikovanje mogućnosti*. Geneva: International Labour Office, p. 8.

employment⁷⁸, which is characterized by higher insecurity for workers in comparison to standard employment. Recruitment of workers for this type of jobs is frequently done by various employment agencies abroad, which, in some cases, may be an initial link in human trafficking chain, for the purpose of labour and/or sexual exploitation.⁷⁹ Agencies or some other kind of intermediary, deceive prospective workers in relation to the mode of transport to the workplace, work conditions and accommodation, necessary documents for residence and work in particular country, the amount of earnings, as well as the job description itself. During the recruitment process, as the first stage of human trafficking, future victims are very often exposed to some of these deceptions, which make it difficult to identify risky job offers. According to data of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking for the period from 2016 to 2021, among Serbian citizens registered as victims of human trafficking abroad, the largest number of them was registered in Germany, France, Russia, Switzerland, but also in countries in the region.⁸⁰

On the other hand, although going to work abroad is a significant source of risk from trafficking in human beings, especially in Serbia as a country of emigration, there is a large share of persons exploited in Serbia among those who have been identified as victims of trafficking in human beings by the Centre.

According to official data of the Centre for 2021, out of 46 registered human trafficking victims in total, 39 are Serbian citizens. This data indicates that victims of internal human trafficking are mostly identified in Serbia, more precisely, our citizens are victims of trafficking in human beings on the territory of Serbia.

Increased risks of trafficking in human beings among vulnerable groups

On the basis of presented data, it is clear that anybody can be a victim of human trafficking, i.e. everybody is exposed to certain risk from trafficking in human beings, primarily when we speak of demographic characteristics, such as gender and age. Still, **risks from trafficking in human beings can be greater in certain groups of population faced with different forms of exclusion, discrimination and poverty, lack of education or information.** Members of Roma population, children who work and live on the street, unemployed young people or persons working in unfavourable conditions can be considered as socially marginalized and therefore as especially vulnerable group. Poor living conditions and

⁷⁸ Non-standard forms of employment present a group of different work engagements that deviate from the standard work engagements. They include temporary employment; part-time work; work through agencies for temporary employment and other multilateral work relations; as well as concealed employment and dependent self-employment (ILO, 2017: 1).

⁷⁹ UNODC. (2020). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Annual statistical reports available at: <http://centarzztlj.rs/statisticki-podaci/>

limited access to legitimate employment can lead to a position to accept risky job offers.⁸¹ It is possible for persons to find themselves in different risks that lead to labour exploitation even during the employment process itself,⁸² but due to insufficient knowledge about risks, they are unable to recognize them in time. Members of the most vulnerable groups, in addition to not being aware enough to recognize risks of trafficking in human beings, are not empowered to resist such risks due to unfavourable socio-economic living conditions, they have insufficient resources at their disposal for making choices, as well as inadequate social network support or institutional forms of protection. Also, maladjustment to social movements or new environment contributes to a person's vulnerable position. Therefore, as explained in the previous chapter, persons who migrate find themselves in an increased risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings.

Trafficking in human beings and COVID-19 pandemic

During 2020 there was a significant increase in the number of calls made to ASTRA SOS Hotline. Namely, since pandemic declaration, ASTRA received 71% more calls to their SOS Hotline, and it increased its interventions in the field for 44%. Statistics for 2020 show that the number of persons who turned to ASTRA doubled in comparison to previous years.⁸³ Poorly functioning state support system for victims, which was mostly inactive during the pandemic, partly contributed to this situation. In addition, systemic weaknesses are reflected in absence of financing nongovernment organizations which provide significant social support to potential or current victims of trafficking in human beings, lack of public support services, including shelter for male victims of trafficking in human beings in the form of labour exploitation, reduced number of convictions for trafficking in human beings and inadequate case recording system.

Based on the presented data, it is clear that changed circumstances have additionally weakened the position of persons who had already been in precarious position, while members of particularly vulnerable groups found themselves in greater risk from trafficking in human beings and from different forms of exploitation. The pandemic impacted unfavourably the position of vulnerable groups of population due to health risks, loss of mostly insecure jobs, unemployment, and loss of income, movement restrictions and possibility that deterioration of economic situation can be overcome by alternative and successful economic strategies.

⁸¹ Berman, Ž., Bradić, D., & Maršal, F. (2014). *Trgovina ljudskim bićima na Zapadnom Balkanu*. Ženeva: Međunarodna organizacija za migracije, International Organization for Migration, p. 20.

⁸² Reljanović, M., & Kovačević, Lj. (2018). *Pravni i institucionalni okvir borbe protiv radne eksploatacije: Zbornik studentskih radova*. Beograd: ASTRA, p. 11.

⁸³ ASTRA internal data.

RESEARCH RESULTS

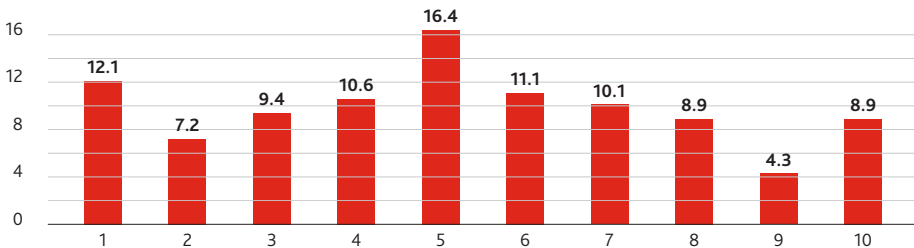
KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ABOUT TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Identification of risks and different forms of trafficking in human beings

One of the main goals of this research is to investigate to what extent the general population in Serbia identify risks of trafficking in human beings and different forms in which human trafficking can occur.

When it comes to human trafficking, respondents were asked to assess how much they were aware of the risks of someone becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings, on the scale from 1 to 10, where grade 1 means that they were not aware of the risks at all, and 10 that they were fully aware of them. As shown in the Chart 3, the largest share of respondents (16.4%) assessed their knowledge with grade 5, while average grade at the level of the entire sample is 5.2.

Chart 3: Self-assessment of risk awareness that someone can become a victim of human trafficking (%)

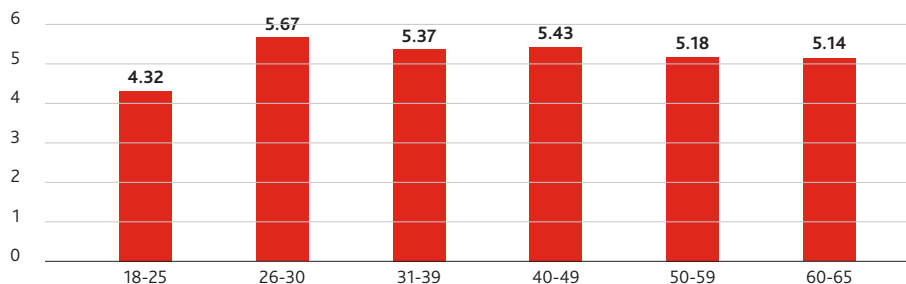


Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Women in the sample assessed their risk awareness of trafficking in human beings with slightly higher grades in comparison to men. The average grade in case of female respondents is 5.54, and in case of male respondents it is 4.85. If age of respondents is taken into account, the lowest average grade appears in the youngest age category, in young people aged 18 to 25, and it is 4.32. In all other age categories, the average grades are between 5.1 and 5.7 (Chart 4). When the average grades are perceived at the level of a place of residence, the highest grade is noted in respondents from Belgrade and it is 5.55, then in respondents from villages and smaller towns (5.22), in respondents from smaller

towns (5.21), and the lowest grade is perceived in respondents from other larger towns after Belgrade, with at least 50.000 inhabitants, and it is 4.84.

Chart 4: Respondents' average grades for their own risk awareness of trafficking in human beings, per age



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

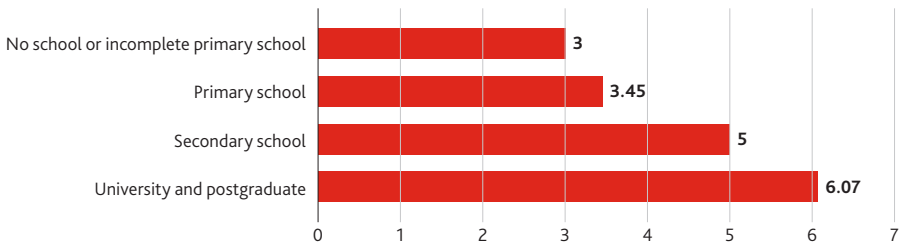
If specific grades are taken into account, it is noticeable that certain categories of respondents significantly more often assessed their knowledge with the lowest, i.e. the highest grade. In awarding the lowest grade to their own knowledge of risk from trafficking in human beings, age and level of respondents' education proved to be the most significant indicators. The youngest respondents in the sample, aged 18 to 25, assessed their awareness of risks most often with grade 1, in comparison to older respondents. More precisely, even every fourth respondent from this age category (25.5%) thinks that he/she is not aware at all of risks that someone can become a victim of trafficking in human beings. Such data causes concern, having in mind that a large number of young people of this age is just entering the labour market, and insufficient knowledge about risks makes them especially vulnerable group, subject to various forms of exploitation. Level of education is also very important in this case, so among respondents who are without education or have completed only primary school, almost every third respondent (31.1%) said they were not aware of this type of risk at all.

Among respondents who think they are **fully aware** of risks from trafficking in human beings, there are significantly more women, respondents who live in **Belgrade**, as well as those with the best financial situation.⁸⁴ Respondents from the stated groups opted significantly more often for grade 10 in comparison to the entire sample. As it can be seen in Chart 5, the average grade for risk awareness of trafficking in

⁸⁴ Respondents assessed their own financial situation in the household, i.e. they chose one of the following options: (1) We have difficulty in covering the basic costs of living and often have no money, and we can barely make ends meet. (2) We have enough money only for the most basic expenses and necessities and we live modestly. (3) We can cover all basic costs of living and there is money left for something more than that, such as travel, renewal of home appliances. (4) We can afford whatever we want. Distribution of respondents according to this indicator is shown in Annex.

human beings rises with the level of education. The same trend is recognized in the case of financial situation in the household – with the favourable grade of their own financial status, there rises the average grade for risk awareness. If work status of respondents is taken into account, it is important to note that respondents who were unemployed at the time of research, and actively looking for job, awarded their knowledge on risks with lower grade (4.84) in comparison to respondents who were employed⁸⁵ (5.56). Poorer knowledge about risks from trafficking in human beings, both in comparison to employed persons and the entire sample, shows that unemployed persons could find themselves in particularly vulnerable position during their search for work.

Chart 5: Respondents' average grades for their own risk awareness of trafficking in human beings, per level of education



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Statistically significant **differences between general and Roma population** occur exactly in awarding the lowest grades to their own knowledge about risks. Members of Roma population significantly more often responded that they were not aware of risks that someone could become a victim of trafficking in human beings – every fifth respondent among Roma population (21.6%). Therefore, an average grade is lower and it is 4.65.

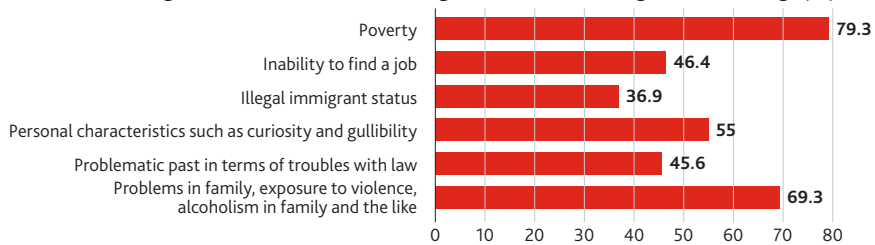
In addition to self-assessment of one's awareness of/being informed about risks from trafficking in human beings, respondents singled out, among six given factors, those **factors** which they considered to increase the risk of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking. Respondents were able to give more answers, i.e. they were asked to state all factors, within the given ones, which they considered to increase risks from trafficking in human beings.

In Chart 6 presented data show what percentage of respondents believe that the stated factors increase the risk of someone becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings. As

⁸⁵ The term "employed" included respondents who were employed by the employer or self-employed at the time of the research.

the most significant factor **poverty** is singled out, which almost four fifths of respondents deem as a risk factor (79.3%). On the other hand, **inability to find a job**, which along with poverty presents the most significant incentive for a person to find himself/herself in the chain of human trafficking, as a risk factor it is perceived by less than half of respondents (46.4%). Also, a person with **illegal immigrant status** is exposed to significantly greater risks of becoming a victim; still, slightly more than a third of respondents identified this as a risk factor (36.9%). Respondents who were employed by the employer or were self-employed opted significantly more for these two risk factors, in comparison to the category of inactive persons, while the inability to find a job was significantly greater risk from the perspective of highly educated persons in comparison to the rest of the sample.

Chart 6: Factors increasing the risk of someone becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

"My life was hell in Serbia... not only that I was from one poor family, but because there was violence at home almost every day, so that, well, I couldn't wait to consciously, or unconsciously... when I finish my high school, to simply disappear, to be gone. Because, I could no longer stand it, because it was long-term, well, domestic violence, where my father would constantly beat my mother, since I was a small child, so that, well, it was really scary. I have great traumas from that period of my life."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 48

"At that time, I worked in a cafe... the daily allowance was 700 dinars... And then, it's not that much money, and my daughter was also sick at that time, the older one, and I needed about 50 euros for medicines, which was really a lot. And he came, that man, and started talking about how he has a job for me abroad, so that we (her and her colleague) could earn about 1000 euros a month. ... it's still a lot of money and that's why we decided to go abroad."

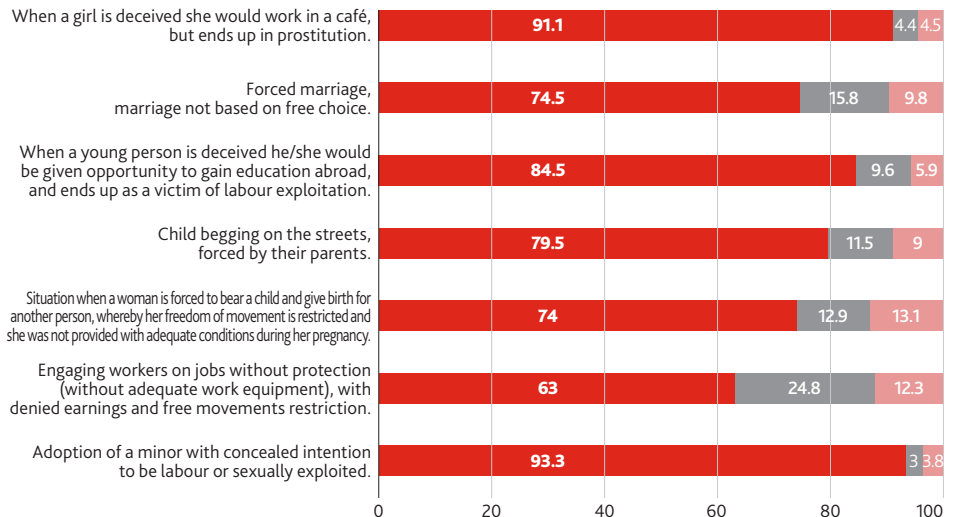
Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 29

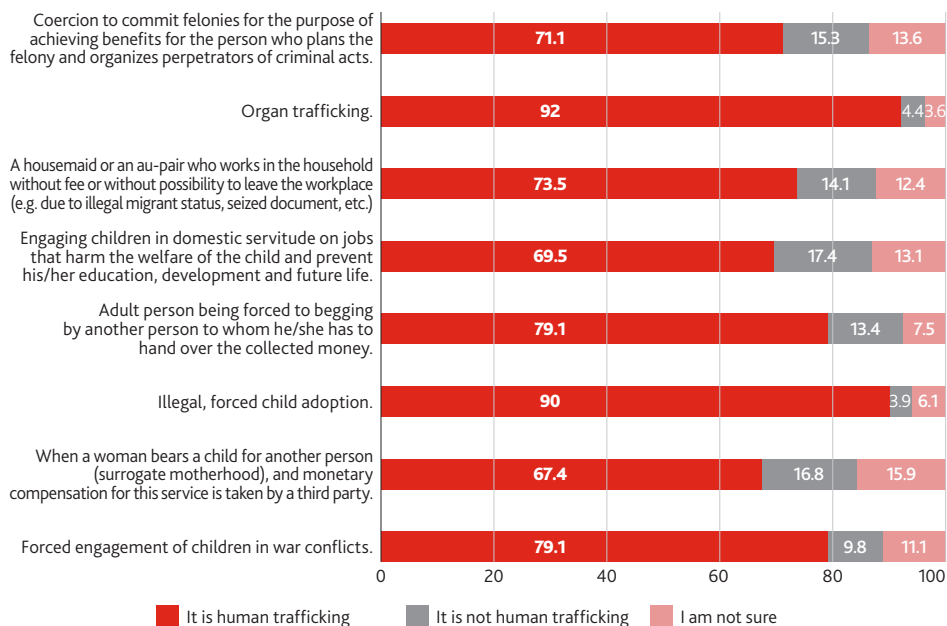
"... in Belgrade I've seen various people who don't even know the language at all, whether they are from India, but you can easily see they are not from here, they are not Serbs and so on. They were dark-skinned, worked on construction site, the same bus or a car would always drive them there and then drove them off. They went from the construction site to their accommodation, but I'm not sure if they were some kind of human trafficking. I mean, that labour exploitation."

Male, a person at risk from human trafficking, aged 40

Complexity of human trafficking phenomenon, as well as the multitude of forms in which it can occur, makes it difficult to a great extent to identify cases of human trafficking. This primarily refers to newer forms of human trafficking, or they have been identified as such later on, along with borderline situations, which in comparison to presence or absence of certain elements, present human trafficking or not. Respondents answered on basis of various statements whether the described situation was about human trafficking or not. The statements were formulated in a way to be short, but at the same time to provide enough information based on which it was possible to conclude whether the described situation contained enough elements to have been trafficking in human beings. Out of 19 statements in total, only those that refer to the **situations which present trafficking in human beings** are shown in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Ability to identify different forms of trafficking in human beings (%)





Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

As expected, **the greatest share of correct answers occur in situations that include organ trafficking, sexual exploitation and illegal child adoption.** Percentage of respondents who identified human trafficking based on statements where the stated terms appeared is 90% and more. The situation for which it can be said it was “the most obvious” example of human trafficking was *adoption of a minor with concealed intention to be labour or sexually exploited.*

On the other hand, almost every fourth respondent (25.5%) answered to the question related to human trafficking case of *forced marriage, marriage not based on free choice* as not being trafficking in human beings or was not sure about it. For the same answers they opted more often in case of the statement *situation when a woman is forced to bear a child and give birth for another person, whereby her freedom of movement is restricted and she was not provided with adequate conditions during her pregnancy* (26%), more precisely, more than every fourth person in the sample did not identify trafficking in human beings in the described situation⁸⁶. If we look at the statements describing different forms of child exploitation, every fifth respondent opted for the option *It is not human trafficking*

⁸⁶ Persons who answered that the described situation was not human trafficking or they were not sure about it.

or *I am not sure* when it comes to the statement whether *child begging on the streets, forced by their parents* presents trafficking in human beings, as well as for the statement *forced engagement of children in was conflicts*. Also, forced begging is less identified as a form of trafficking in human beings and in the situation when the victims are adults. Almost the same share of respondents (20.9%) did not identify human trafficking in the case *adult person being forced to begging by another person to whom he/she has to hand over the collected money*. It seems that respondents found it more difficult to identify human trafficking when it came to coercion to commit felonies, so for the statement *coercion to commit felonies for the purpose of achieving benefits for the person who plans the felony and organizes perpetrators of criminal acts* almost every third respondents said that the described situation was not human trafficking or was not sure about it.

Three statements stand out based on which respondents found it most difficult to identify whether it was human trafficking or not. Slightly less than 70% of respondents identified the case of human trafficking in situations *engaging children in domestic servitude on jobs that harm the welfare of the child and prevent his/her education, development and future life* and *when a woman bears a child for another person (surrogate motherhood), and monetary compensation for this service is taken by a third party*. The case of human trafficking which was identified by the least percentage of respondents (63%) is *engaging workers on jobs without protection (without adequate work equipment), with denied earnings and free movements restriction*. For this statement, even 24.8% of respondents said it was not human trafficking, while 12.3% of them said they were not sure.

When we include the respondents' characteristics in the analysis, it can be observed that **gender** and **level of education** have significant impact on the ability to identify cases of human trafficking. Although 91.1% of respondents identified human trafficking in the situation *when a girl is deceived she would work in a café, but ends up in prostitution*, the important finding is that among those who think this was not human trafficking there are significantly more men. It is interesting that gender proved to be significant in both statements referring to forced begging – significantly more women than men linked forced begging to human trafficking.

Level of education showed statistical significance in more than half of statements.

Respondents with the lowest level of education, i.e. those without education or with primary education were the least successful in identifying situations where human trafficking was present in comparison to all other education categories. This data can be partly explained by misunderstanding of the terms labour and/or sexual exploitation; still, respondents from this category significantly less often than others observed human trafficking in situations such as *organ trafficking* and *illegal, forced child adoption*. Within this education

category, slightly less than half of respondents think that statements concerning surrogate motherhood, i.e. bearing a child for another person in exploitative conditions, actually describe human trafficking. Also, there are significantly fewer respondents from this group in comparison to all other education categories, who identified the following statement as human trafficking case: *a housemaid or an au-pair who works in the household without fee or without possibility to leave the workplace (e.g. due to illegal migrant status, seized document, etc.)*. Another important, but also alarming data, is that significantly more women do not identify the stated situation as human trafficking. Such finding indicates that **women are not sufficiently aware of the abuse of domestic work, and therefore are in greater risk to be exploited in this way** or not to react to such situations, should they witness it.

It is necessary to bear in mind that respondents with the lowest level of education had the least opportunities to “guess” the correct answer, because they were more prone to choose the option *I am not sure*. They significantly more often answered in this way, in even 11 out of 19 statements in total.

In comparison to the basic sample, with members of Roma population the ability to identify cases of human trafficking among given statements proved to be statistically more significant in several examples. Namely, almost every third respondent (31.4%) among members of Roma population thinks that *forced marriage, marriage not based on free choice* presents human trafficking. However, an interesting finding is that 37.3% of respondents said that *marrying a foreign citizen in order to obtain citizenship*⁸⁷ was human trafficking. Also, for situations *engaging children in domestic servitude on jobs that harm the welfare of the child (...), illegal, forced child adoption* and *a housemaid or an au-pair who works in the household without fee or without possibility to leave the workplace (...)* more respondents, above the average percentage in comparison to general population, think that these are not cases of human trafficking (29.4%, 11.8%, 25.5% respectively).

"Human trafficking is when I, for example, this is how I see it, human trafficking is when I give money for you and I buy you out. Simply, this is how I think."

Male, a person at risk of human trafficking, aged 30

"Human trafficking is exploiting another living being, another man, for material benefits. You can sell him as labour force, you can sell him as sexual object, you can sell him as dead and killed person for organs and so on. That is human trafficking."

Male, a person at risk of human trafficking, aged 40

⁸⁷ This is one of the statements describing situation which is **not the case of human trafficking**.

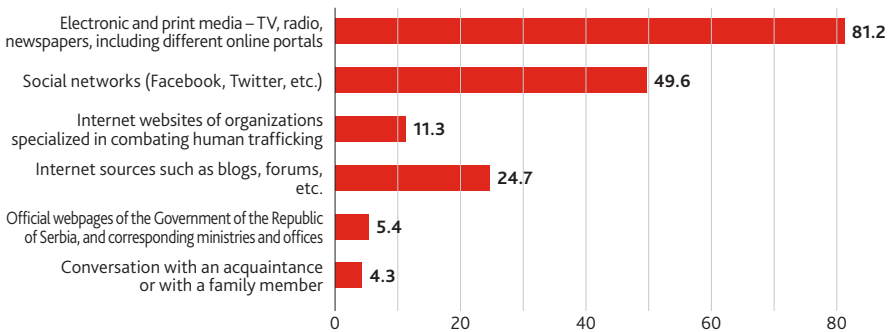
"... everyone in Serbia knows about the term "white slavery", but even I didn't know what human trafficking was. I mean... perhaps it is now known in Serbia, in the last... ten, 15 years, the awareness about it is spreading more and more..."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 29

Information channels about trafficking in human beings

Knowledge about trafficking in human beings and perception of certain situation as less or more risky, to the greatest extent are results of (non)information about this topic. Information can be obtained through various media reports about discovered chains of human trafficking and their victims, different internet sources or publications and announcements of official institutions and/or nongovernment organizations. Almost one fifth of respondents (18.5%) stated they were not informed about this topic at all, and answers of other respondents are shown in Chart 8. Respondents did not choose only one option, but they stated, among given options, all information channels which they use.

Chart 8: Sources from which respondents are informed about human trafficking (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Electronic and print media, which include TV, radio, newspapers and different newspaper internet portals, were singled out as the most represented information channels about the topic of human trafficking. **Social networks**, as the second most represented source (49.6%) of information about this issue are used, above average, more by younger categories aged 18 to 49 in comparison to two older categories in the sample. This data is certainly not surprising, but it is significant because it indicates to information channels

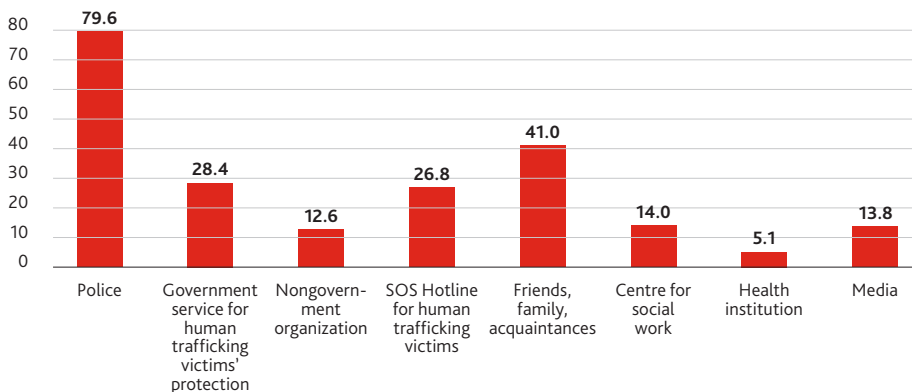
which would be the most effective for promotion of different activities in combating and prevention of human trafficking among population of this age. **Internet websites of organizations specialized in combating human trafficking** (local and foreign) as information channels are more often used by women and respondents with higher education, in comparison to other respondents in the sample.

Information that should be taken into account as rather important is that almost every fifth respondent (18.5%) is **not informed about this topic** at all, among them there is a significant share of the youngest respondents. Out of the total number of respondents from the age category of 18 to 25, even 30% of them stated they were never informed about human trafficking problem. Within Roma population, this answer was far more prevalent – 41.2% of them are not informed about this topic.

Who would the respondents turn to in case they are victims of human trafficking?

In addition to information about different risks and forms in which human trafficking can occur, it was examined what the most frequent channels of help existed, to which the respondents would turn in case they found themselves in the situation of human trafficking. Here it was also possible to choose more options.

Chart 9: Who would you turn to in case you find yourself in the situation to be a victim of human trafficking? (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

As presented in Chart 9, almost 80% of respondents would turn to **police** as the source of help. The next are **friends, family and acquaintances** (41%) of whom men would seek help significantly more often than women. Of all male respondents, even 45.4% chose this option, which indicates that men are more prone to seek help from informal channels and personal contacts. Every fourth respondent would seek help via **SOS Hotline for human trafficking victims**, but more often highly educated persons and those who have experience in working abroad.

"Well, I would turn to police, but probably police would turn to me. In any situation that I feel threatened, in the situation that I can't withdraw or leave such a place, where I feel threatened, I would be aggressive. And then police would come after me, not me turning to them. Well, really, this is the only recipe to survive..."

Male, a person at risk from human trafficking, aged 40

"I didn't know my consent had no significance and at the cost of ending up in prison, I finally reported him (the human trafficker), I thought I was committing a felony, despite the fact I didn't want to do it. (She was exposed by the trafficker) to constant intimidation of being reported to the police, (...). According to him (the trafficker), I was the one who was committing a felony."

Female, a victim of human trafficking

"I had to do something, I didn't have the clearest idea what and how, because of the general hell in which I lived, but through a friend I got in touch with an inspector, who connected me further with a man who works on blood and sexual crimes... And then it all started. And after that, my family only found out about all that when I reported it to the police and later. And then at one point my sister called ASTRA..."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 29

EXPOSURE TO RISKS FROM LABOUR EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Work abroad

As already presented in the previous chapter, **going abroad to work contributes to vulnerability of workers and increases chances of becoming victims of different forms of exploitation, or even victims of human trafficking.** The share of respondents who experienced work abroad, in the sample of general and Roma population, is shown in the Charts 10 and 11.

Chart 10: Respondents who worked abroad, regardless of how long and what type of work they did – general population (%)

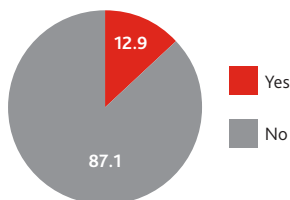
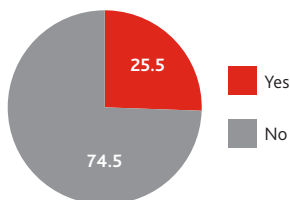


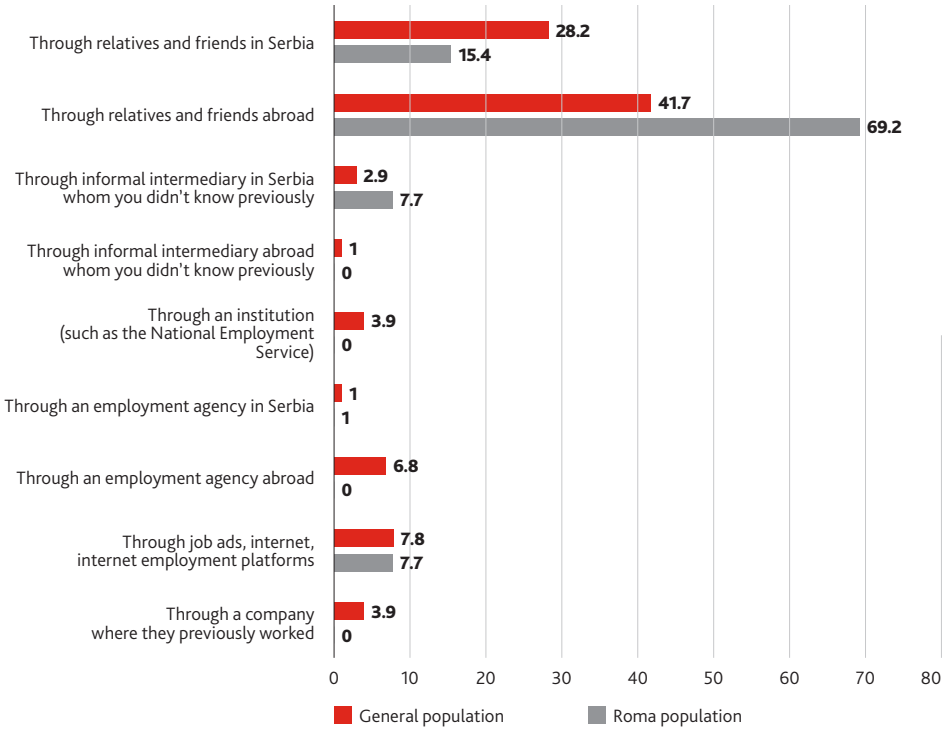
Chart 11: Respondents who worked abroad, regardless of how long and what type of work they did – Roma population (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Members of Roma population significantly more often stated they had had experience of working abroad (25.5%) in comparison to members of general population (12.9%), where experience of working abroad was mostly reported by men. Of the total number of respondents who worked abroad at some point, 70.9% of them were men, and 29.1% women. The greatest share of respondents found jobs abroad through close contacts – relatives or friends from Serbia or abroad (Chart 12). Other channels through which respondents found work abroad are informal intermediaries whom they didn't know, job ads and internet employment platforms, while very small number of respondents from general population registered with formal institutions (such as the National Employment Service) and employment agencies abroad as channels for finding a job abroad.

Chart 12: How did respondents find work abroad – general and Roma population (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

"He was my husband's friend. Or a relative, frankly, now I'm not so sure... He simply came there (to the café where she worked), he heard I was working there, he came to see how I was, what I was doing, and those things like that. And then he offered us a job in Austria. A job in some casino was... (He said that) we'd have an accommodation and a thousand euros, like, monthly. ... I got my passport within a day, and my friend got her passport within two days. So, he financed all that... He was only included in the part with documents and all, and after he called those guys and told them, that our documents were ready, and that we could go."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 30

"Here in the village, where I live, when I was cleaning houses, I met a woman... She introduced herself to me as a friend who wants to help me. We were very close for a couple of months and then she offered to arrange a job for me, to clean houses in Vienna, so that I wouldn't have to worry about anything. I was thinking, I was a little afraid, but I trusted her because she had already found me previous jobs in Serbia. She kept saying that I would be satisfied, that there was nothing to be afraid of, that she would help me with everything... She told me that she had taken so many women away and helped them, it seemed to me that she was being honest with me, once she said we are best friends."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 35

Deception during labour recruitment – Serbia and abroad

Deception during recruitment, according to the International Organization of Labour, presents one of the key indicators of human trafficking. Persons are primarily being deceived related to different aspects of work they are applying for or offered to them by an employer or another person. Regarding threats and use of force, deceptions are a subtle way of "pulling" a victim into human trafficking chain, and therefore, these situations are more difficult to identify as potentially dangerous.

"There at the bus station, there I met the one who... all started with her. That woman... she sold me... All started in Kraljevo. It happened, so I ended up in Belgrade, like I'd supposedly work in a restaurant... There I'd earn money, I'd live properly. Yet, what happened it happened. I saw in the end what they did, because that woman from Kraljevo sold me, I ended up in prostitution."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 37

"And yeah, it happened that I fell in love and I thought, this is it. Like, I've been just waiting for that, I've been waiting only for you. That's why I didn't ask where we'd been going, what we'd do there. He must have said something. I know, I vaguely remember, but I wasn't interested in listening to where I was going and what I'd do there. I wasn't interested in anything... I just wanted to leave my home and that environment. So, like, I definitely didn't ask anything, but I just thought: 'Where have you been all my life, why haven't you come into my life earlier'... Time didn't exist for me, to put it simply. I only remember that what I wanted, he also wanted it, but not in the same

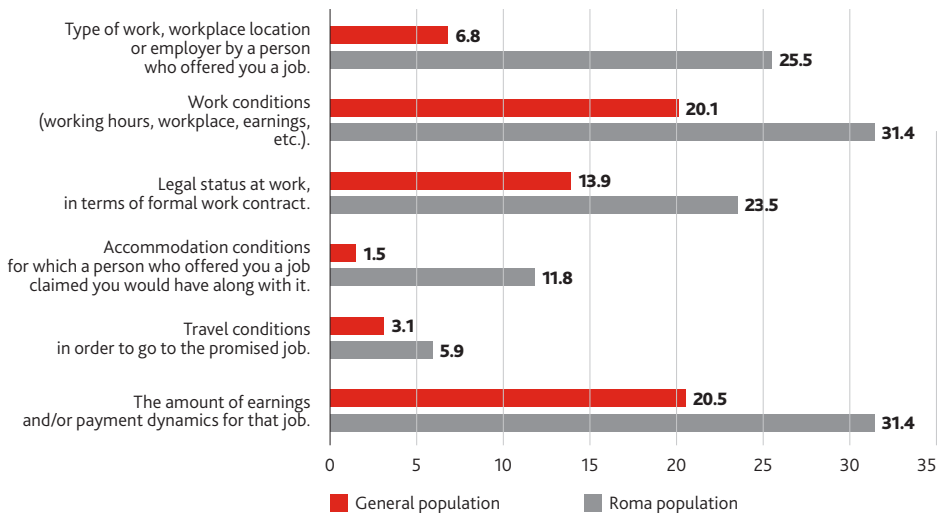
way. So, he wanted to meet exactly the person like me, the one who doesn't have any support, who comes from a family full of violence, where there is no one to look for such a person like me. Like, he's been looking for me, and I've been looking for him. And that is how we found each other. I was a perfect victim for him... he couldn't have better victim than me, 'cos he found out all about my family, about me, like he wanted to show me he was gentle, caring, sensitive, interested in me. So that was simply a perfect combination."

Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 48

Deceived persons do not have to become victims of human trafficking; however, it is certain that these people's labour rights have been violated. The research has shown there is a significant share of those who, in Serbia and abroad, were exposed to deception in connection to different aspects of labour.

Chart 13: Share of respondents who were exposed to deceptions in Serbia in comparison to the entire sample – general and Roma population (%)

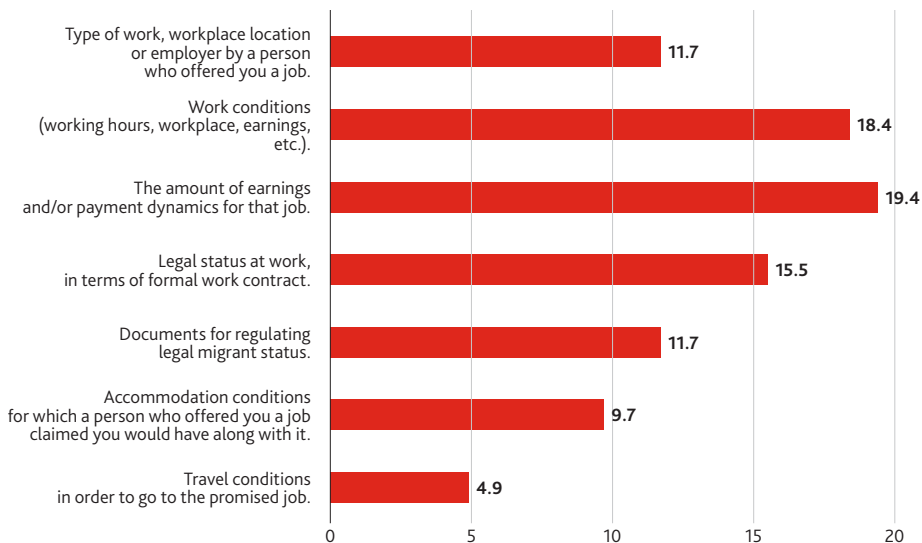
Exposed to deceptions regarding...



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Chart 14: Share of respondents who were exposed to deceptions abroad in comparison to respondents who experienced work abroad – general population (%)⁸⁸

Exposed to deceptions regarding...



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Deceptions to which respondents were mostly exposed were the ones related to work conditions, in terms of working hours, safety at work, workplace and the like (20.1% in Serbia and 18.4% abroad), as well as the amount of earnings and/or payment dynamics for the job (20.5% in Serbia and 19.4% abroad). The next most frequent deception is the one referring to legal status of the employee, i.e. deception that they would conclude a work contract with the employer (13.9% in Serbia and 15.5% abroad). When we take into account the respondents' characteristics, young people aged 26-30 experienced significantly more deceptions regarding work conditions in Serbia – almost every third respondent from this age category. There is no significant statistical difference in any of the stated deceptions according to gender, which means that among those who were exposed to deceptions, men and women were almost equally represented.

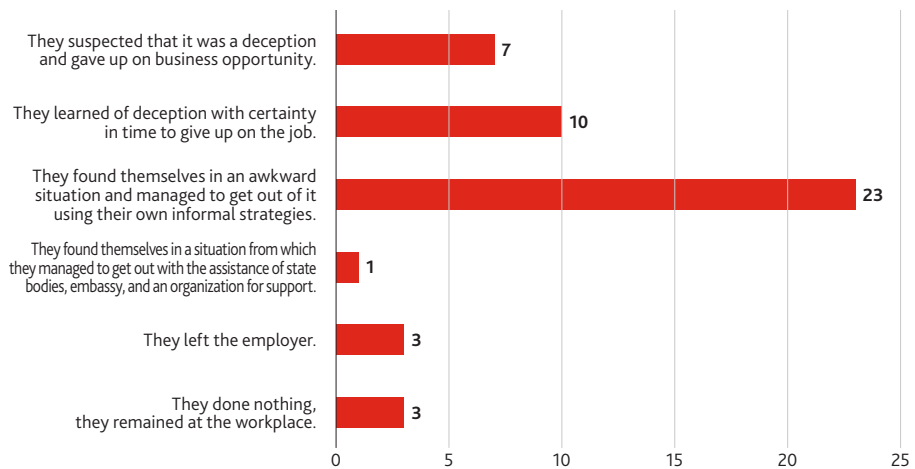
Members of Roma population showed larger share among those who were exposed to deceptions in Serbia in comparison to general population. They more often reported each of the stated deceptions in case of work abroad, but in two cases

⁸⁸ Total number of respondents from Roma population who experienced work abroad is not large enough to be presented in percentages.

significantly larger share of them was deceived in Serbia, as well – regarding the type of work and accommodation conditions that were promised to them along with the job.

Also, when we take into account only those respondents who were deceived, there is a significant data that **respondents who worked abroad found themselves more often in awkward situations due to deceptions to which they were exposed**. Of 103 persons in total from general population who experienced work abroad, even 23 persons found themselves in a situation from which they managed to get out using their own informal strategies.

Chart 15: Activities undertaken by respondents who worked abroad, regarding a deception or deceptions they were exposed to – general population (absolute numbers)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

Forced labour – Serbia and abroad

In the sample of general population, 3.3% of respondents stated that in Serbia and/or abroad they performed certain work under coercion. In total of 26 respondents stated they had had such experience, of which 16 men and 10 women.⁸⁹ Even 17 respondents were forced to perform work they didn't want and for which they didn't apply in the first place. The next most often means of forced labour is through denial of livelihood, to which 9 respondents were exposed. Seven respondents were forced to work due to debt they had

⁸⁹ Number of respondents who experienced forced labour, both in general and Roma population, is not large enough to report statistically significant differences based on gender, age, level of education or any other characteristics.

towards the employer. Somewhat less often are the answers that appeared with two, i.e. three respondents, referring to coercion through violence or threat of violence; isolation, restriction of movements and surveillance. Also, several respondents were exposed to threats they would be reported to the authorities, while some respondents suffered threats against their family. It is important to take into account the part of respondents exposed not only to one, but different types of coercion, since every respondents stated all means in which he/she was forced to perform certain work.

The share of respondents who worked in Serbia and/or abroad under coercions is many times larger in Roma population – every tenth respondents from sub-sample of Roma population (5 of 51 respondents in total) experienced work under coercion. In comparison to general population, violence or threats of violence are the most frequent types of coercion to which the respondents from Roma population were exposed, which is the case with four respondents, while three of them were forced to perform work they didn't want or they didn't apply for.⁹⁰

Chart 16: Respondents who performed work under coercion in Serbia and/or abroad (%) – general population (%)

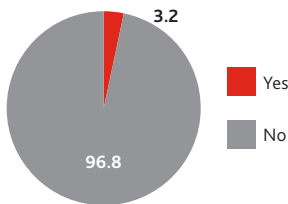
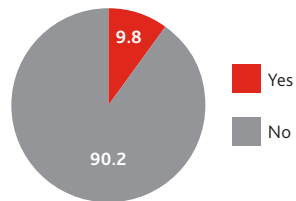


Chart 17: Respondents who performed work under coercion in Serbia and/or abroad (%) – Roma population



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

"I was in charge of cleaning the stables and feeding the cattle, we worked from morning to night... I was not paid anything, not even a dinar. Once when I ran away and went back to my old boss, he (the man he worked for) found me and said we were going to dinner to pay me back for everything I had worked on until then, but he lied to me and it wasn't until we got to his house I realized that he sent me back to work without money... After a while, I didn't even think I could leave because he would find me and bring me back and then I have nowhere to go."

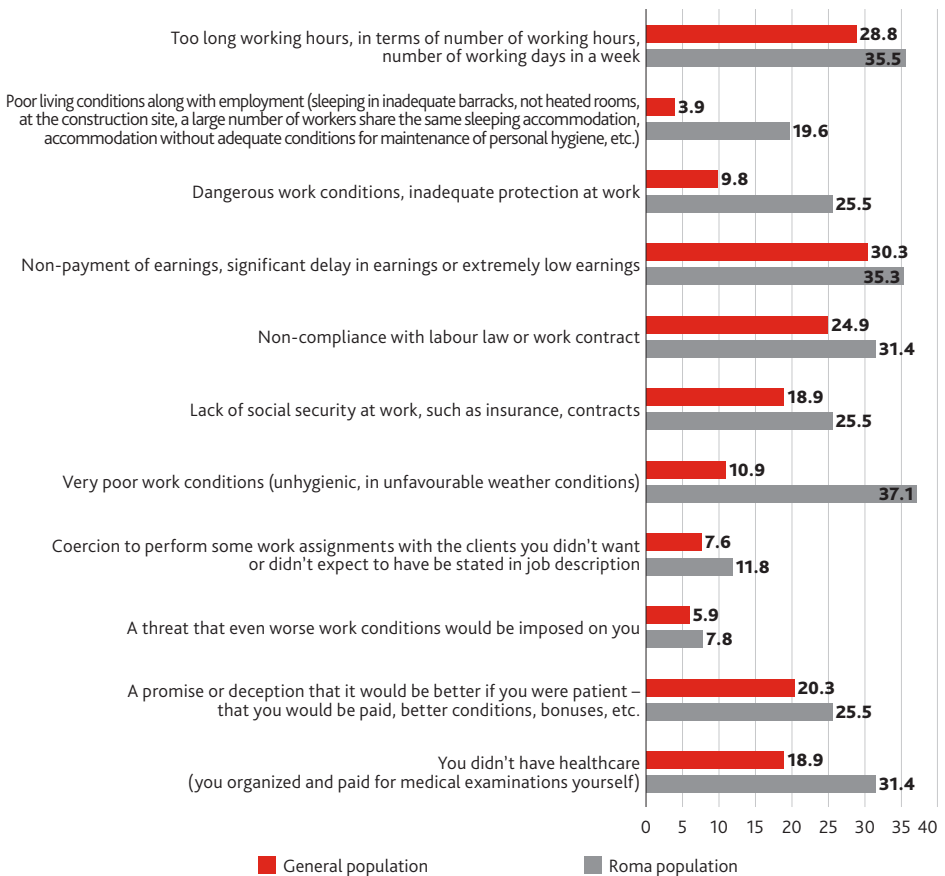
Male, a victim of human trafficking, aged 69

⁹⁰ A part of mentioned respondents was exposed to both types of coercion.

Exposure to risks from labour exploitation – Serbia and abroad

Research data show that a significant share of respondents was exposed to risks from labour exploitation in Serbia, whether we perceive general population or sub-sample referring to Roma population. Still, there are considerable difference between the two mentioned groups of respondents, in terms of specific forms of violating labour rights that are in direct connection to labour exploitation (Chart 18).

Chart 18: Problems the respondents faced at work in Serbia – share of respondents of general and Roma population (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

While working in Serbia, respondents who belong to general population faced, to the greatest extent, problems of non-payment, delay in payment or extremely low earnings (30.3%), and then very long working hours (28.8%), as well as non-compliance with provision of work contract or the Labour Law (24.9%). In addition and to the great extent, respondents from Roma population face the additional problems and cases of violations of their labour rights. Even 37.1% respondents of Roma population stated they had had very poor work conditions, which meant work in unhygienic conditions, as well as work in unfavourable weather conditions. The share of respondents from general population who face such work conditions is by no means negligible, but it is almost four times lower that in comparison to Roma population. Rather significant differences are noted when it comes to lack of healthcare, poor living conditions provided to workers by employer, as well as dangerous work conditions and work without adequate work equipment – Roma population is significantly more exposed to each of these forms of violations of labour rights, in comparison to general population (Chart 18).

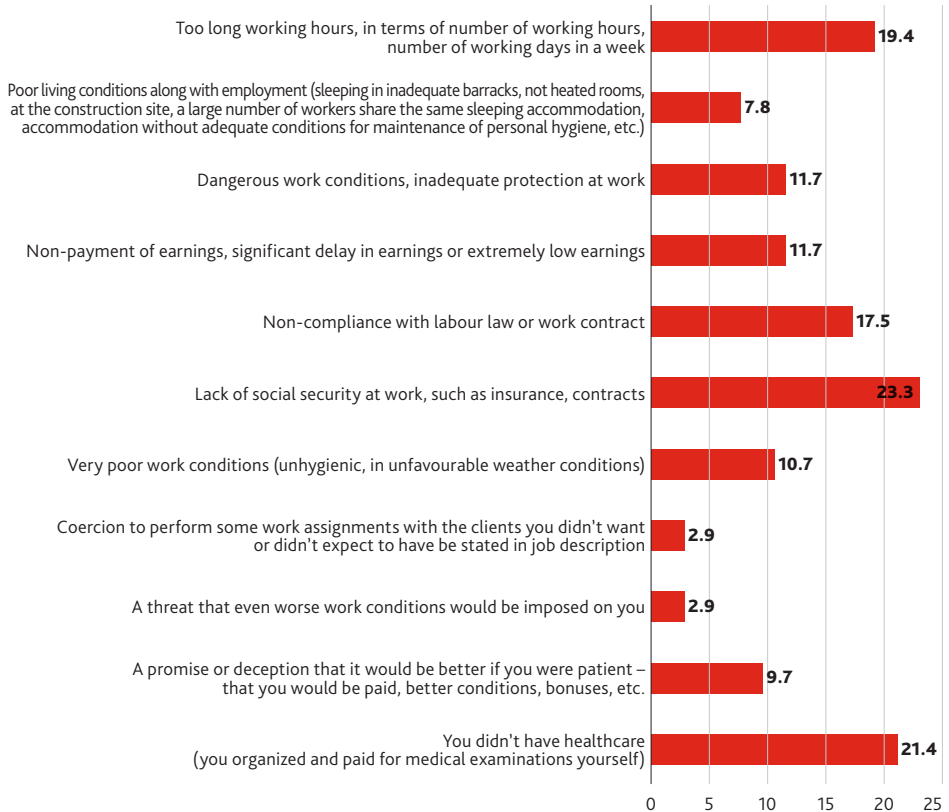
"Only in one company where I worked, did I have adequate work equipment, that is, PPE equipment, provided by the company. And that's actually the only company where I was registered."

Male, a person at risk from human trafficking, aged 40

"(The owner of the beauty salon where the she worked) said I was registered from the day one, and that work contract had been signed, but there was no registration or anything else for the whole two months. I saw a message she'd written to a bookkeeper not to register me until further notice. (She applied for) ... a job ad for a manicurist, but actually they were looking for an assistant in the salon... The job of an assistant for 30.000 dinars, and for every manicure additional 30%. I had a lot of work as a manicurist and instead of earning 80.000 dinars that month, I got 30.550 dinars."

Female, a victim of human trafficking

Chart 19: Problems the respondents faced at work abroad – the share of respondents from general population who experienced work abroad (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

When it comes to experience of work abroad, it is noticeable that problems the respondents from general population most often encountered are somewhat different in comparison to those that were singled out when we observed experience of work in Serbia. Lack of adequate social security is the problem that respondents faced most often – **almost a quarter of them who worked abroad was not socially secured. In addition, more than one fifth of respondents with work experience abroad did not have healthcare**, but they had to provide it independently, if they needed it. Since such rights are guaranteed by work contract, it can be assumed that in case of these respondents, a formal contract was non-existent. Even when there is such a contract, there is no guarantee that it will be

honoured. This is supported by the data that 17.5% of respondents who worked abroad stated they had faced breaching of contract and/or labour law by the employer in the country where they resided. Too long working hours is the problem that is, as in the case of work in Serbia, singled out by respondents who worked abroad – slightly less than a fifth of them worked more working hours or more days in a week than it was agreed (Chart 19). In case of Roma population, data referring to work abroad is not possible to show in more details, due to small number of respondents belonging to this category.

Domestic servitude – exposure to risks from labour exploitation and human trafficking

One of the categories which is considered to be especially vulnerable in view of exposure to risks from labour exploitation, but also to risks from human trafficking, is the category of those who work as domestic servants (domestic servitude). **According to research data on the sample of general population, approximately every twentieth person is currently working or has worked in domestic servitude at some point in Serbia and/or abroad** (Chart 20). It is not surprising that most of this category consists of women (70.3%), while men are represented to a significantly lesser extent (29.7%) (Chart 21). The most often problem, which the persons who worked as domestic servants faced, is too long working hours (in terms of number of hours worked, as well as number of working days in a week).

Chart 20: Respondents who worked as domestic servants in Serbia and/or abroad (%)

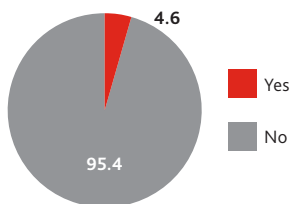
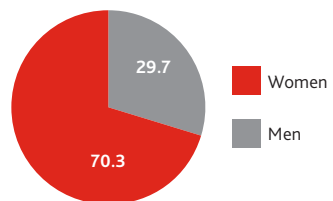


Chart 21: Respondents who worked as domestic servants in Serbia and/or abroad (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

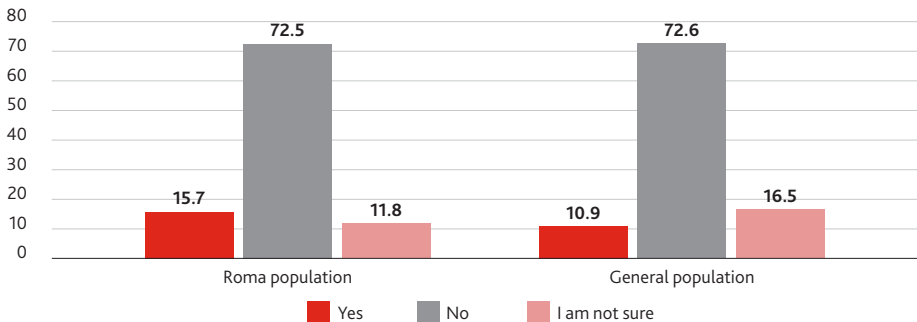
"It was really a disaster for me the first time with that lady where I worked 17 hours a day, where I was literally like a slave... I really tried to explain to that lady that working 17 hours is too much, that I really can't endure it physically... At the same time, she

didn't give us classic chemicals (cleaning products), (we cleaned) literally with bare hands... Right hand or left, I can't even remember anymore, it was literally in wounds."
 Female, a victim of human trafficking, aged 43

Intention to leave the country for employment

Due to inability to find decent employment in Serbia, a significant share of respondents, both from general and Roma population, states they intend to leave the country in search for work (Chart 22). Every tenth person from general population stated they planned to go abroad, and it is particularly worrying that young people are significantly more likely to take this step (aged up to 30), in comparison to older categories of respondents. So, even 30% of young people from 18 to 25 and another 20.5% of those who are between 26 and 30 state they intend to look for job outside the country. For the country which, in comparison to the average age of population, belongs to those countries with the oldest population in Europe⁹¹, such data should be quite alarming.

Chart 22: Share of respondents from general and Roma population in relation to whether they plan to go abroad in search for work (%)



Source: SeConS, Research on Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia, 2021

The respondents were also asked whether they would accept a highly paid business offer abroad, **without performing any background check** of the employer, work conditions, and experience of other persons who worked in similar or the same positions. Although the numbers are not seemingly high, they should not be disregarded, since non-

⁹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement_countries_-_population_statistics

information about business offer, especially if it is outside the borders of the country of residence, is in direct connection to exposure to risks from labour exploitation, and also human trafficking. Namely, **2.6% of respondents from general population answered affirmatively, and the number is almost three times higher when we observe Roma population included in the sub-sample of the research** (7.8% answered “yes”).

RESPONDENT: I'd really love to work on these oil rigs, they pay 200 dollar per hour. So, I could accept any kind of life-threatening risk, even for example, I'd love to work on the ship, the fishing one, although I was born in the mainland, and I'd love to work on the shrimp ship and so on.

INTERVIEWER: But, how would you check out information that it is exactly as it is said?

RESPONDENT: There is no way I could check it, unless you try, you can't check it out.

INTERVIEWER: So, you'd take a risk?

RESPONDENT: I'd take a risk. I've always taken a risk.

Male, a person at risk from human trafficking, aged 40

PERSONAL STORIES

RISK FROM TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS – PETAR'S STORY

Petar, aged 30

Petar has completed vocational high school and lives in a smaller town in Serbia with his parents and a sister. He is currently employed in a meat industry and his salary is the only source of income in the household. Due to such situation, it happens very often that they need to borrow money to cover all monthly expenses.

Since he completed his high school until today, Petar has performed different jobs, which include work in meat processing plant, work in agriculture, selling goods on local fairs, work in catering industry, but also different manual work. The largest number of jobs he performed was in Serbia, but he also has experience in working abroad – in Germany and France. In almost all cases, it has been an informal employment, fixed-term contract, or seasonal jobs. There were periods when he was unemployed, but after some time he would manage to find a new job through informal channels. He was registered in the National Employment Service, but, as he puts it, they have never called him to offer any kind of job.

Work in Serbia

As for jobs that he performed in Serbia, Petar singled out picking apples as the easiest job, although, as he puts it, work conditions and accommodation for seasonal agricultural jobs were the worst ones. What he singles out as especially bad is the behaviour of superiors towards workers, as well as accommodation conditions and food, which were offered along with those agricultural jobs. Also, there were situations when he had been paid less than he should have, since employers did not determine how much apples he had picked on basis of measuring the weight, but based on their own estimation.

"They just needed whips to start beating us there, in order to pick the apples. You mustn't stop for a second, not even to light a cigarette... They immediately start threatening: We'll throw you out, we'll sack you, send you home ... I've been going for 5, 6 years to do this job, but there have never been good conditions. Like, I need to take a shower, and I need to walk for a kilometre to get to the bathroom. And while I'm going three, and there is mostly bad weather there, it starts raining, it's disaster. Rats, cats, real catastrophe.

So, food is sometimes good, sometimes not. It happened several times they'd brought us food which was rotten... Twenty of us sleep in one room, where there are bunk beds ...Women are on the second floor, we are down there in the basement."

When it comes to work on the construction site, Petar highlights that accommodation conditions and food were adequate, but he also had negative experiences working there, which primarily refer to verbal and physical violence. As he puts it, the foremen would often come to the construction site in an alcoholic state and insult other workers. Once he witnessed physical abuse of a worker by a foreman, after which Petar resigned.

"...a boy wears a helmet, and this (foreman) comes with a hammer to hit him in the head... and he hits him, pinches him, like, you can't imagine what he does to him... That's why I quit work in that company, where I worked."

Work abroad

One of the first jobs that Petar performed is selling goods at local fairs. He performed this job for a married couple who offered him, after several years of cooperation, to go with them to Germany and work there on collecting old things they would later on sell in Serbia. Petar was promised to live in a house of this married couple and earn 300 euros monthly, which at that moment seemed as a good offer. Petar agreed to go with them to Germany and as he puts it, the first two weeks he performed the job he had been promised. After that period, when a woman he worked for realized he hadn't been physically capable of collecting heavier things for resale, Petar's job turned into taking care of their four children.

After the first month had passed, Petar asked for his earned money, which they didn't want to give him. From that moment, Petar's life in Germany became unbearable. The woman for whom he worked took his passport and mobile telephone, so Petar didn't have any documents or money to go back to Serbia, he couldn't get into contact with anyone to seek help. He was, therefore, forced to continue with performing jobs without any salary, and in some moments, he was forced to steal secondary raw materials –iron and copper.

"Well, she took my passport after... when I started asking for money, and you know, I told them: Guys, the date is approaching, I need to leave Germany in order to go home, to be there for a while and then come back again. But, it's not gonna happen. She took the passport, and after that I started having great problems."

In addition, coercion was also done in other ways. Namely, Petar was exposed to threats and verbal blackmail, and in one situation to physical violence. Also, this married couple, during Petar's stay in Germany, came to Serbia several times and on that occasion they threatened him if he hadn't continued working for them, they would have set his parent's house on fire. In one situation he was exposed to physical violence and threatened with death.

"When they got drunk, they would harass me a lot. I got drunk one night, and they, man, they put me in a basement. I'm honest, man. In a basement. So, I was in that basement where, I remember, she slapped me three, four times and said: I'll kill you, I'll put you in a plastic bag. She really said that to me. I'll put you in a plastic bag, she says, I'll send you in a black plastic bag... to Serbia. It's hell."

Petar asked police for help several times, and he went to Serbian embassy in Germany. However, as he didn't speak German, he couldn't explain the situation he'd been in when he went to police, while in embassy they told him that he had to commit a felony in order to be deported to Serbia. Still, it was not acceptable for Petar to commit a felony voluntarily.

"I went four times (to the embassy), where they once told me I had to make some damage, so that police could deport me to Serbia, break some shop window... And I said: I don't need that."

After ten months from his arrival to Germany, Petar managed to return home. While he was in Germany, his mother went to police several times to report his missing. However, police didn't take any measure for a long time and claimed it wasn't in their jurisdiction, since Petar went abroad as an adult person. After several months of insisting on the part of his mother, police went to collect Petar and soon he was back in Serbia. Petar wasn't identified as a victim of human trafficking and he doesn't know whether any legal proceedings have been instituted against the married couple who exploited him.

Petar was once again abroad after he had come back from Germany and he worked at apple plantation in France, recalling it as a very positive experience. He points out the working day was very long, sometimes up to 18 hours, but earnings were higher, and work conditions and accommodation were better than on seasonal agricultural work in Serbia. Still, Petar highlights that he went to France because he has relatives there and that he would never again go abroad to work without prior checking.

Current employment

Petar started working in a meat processing plant, where he is currently employed on basis of fixed-term contract and where he has been working for the past couple of months, and he came there through his acquaintance, who also works in that company. Since the factory is far away from the place where Petar lives, they provided him with certain accommodation and food, which he is satisfied with. Yet, he also encountered several problems in this job. He worked overtime on more than one occasion, sometimes he stayed to do another shift, and once it happened that for the entire week he worked all shifts a day. However, Petar wasn't paid for this overtime work. As they explained it to him, he didn't have a right to be paid for overtime work, since he had been working in the company less than six months. Within those couple of months that he has been working in this factory, Petar has had a very unpleasant experience. Namely, one of the employees, as he assumes it, locked him up in a cold-storage from which he managed to escape only after half an hour. Petar didn't find out how it happened he had stayed locked inside a cold-storage, nor was he allowed to talk about it in the company.

"...when I got out, my boss got scared, some people started laughing... and what is more interesting is that there aren't any cameras there, you can't see who did it. So you can't say, this guy locked me up, that guy locked me up... and they told me: Don't spread such misinformation. Like, what is going on in the company, you mustn't talk about it."

After this affair, Petar got pneumonia and was not working at the time of the interview, since doctor advised him to remain at home and be treated. Nevertheless, he wasn't able to open his sick leave, because, as he was told in the company, they couldn't pay for sick leave to a person who was employed there less than six months. In addition to having sustained an occupational injury and was not able to open his sick leave, Petar may lose his job, since he is not able to work due to his health conditions, for which his boss shows no understanding.

"...they keep on calling me, really, he phoned me this morning ..., my boss, and says something like: Do you plan? Hey, I can't, when my doctor says I'm fit to work, I'll come to work. Like, somebody might take my bed, since we pay accommodation for you, and food, what can I say..."

LABOUR EXPLOITATION ABROAD – IVANA'S STORY

Ivana, aged 43

Ivana completed vocational high school, after which she got married and had a child. Both her husband and she have been employed since the beginning of their life together. Ivana has worked for 20 years in the trade industry in Serbia. Although they had enough money for decent life, an opportunity to work abroad presented a chance to secure greater financial stability for her family and herself. Through her female friend she got a contact of Svetlana, who lived in Switzerland and who offered her to come there and perform domestic work, promising her good work conditions and relatively good earnings. So, at the end of 2017, Ivana went to work abroad for the first time. She organized and financed her travel to Switzerland herself. When she arrived there, Svetlana and her husband welcomed her, and she lived and worked for the first 17 days in their house. In that period Ivana worked from 7 to 9 hours a day, primarily performing cleaning jobs, although she often had to perform additional jobs, such as preparation of food and housekeeping. Although she realized from the very beginning that all things would not be as it had been agreed, Ivana decided to endure and stay there as much as she could, in order to fulfil her goal and earn money for her family.

After these initial 17 days, Ivana was sent to work in the house of an elderly woman, where she spent the following 64 days, experiencing what she could not even imagine. In this job, a working day started in the morning at 7 o'clock, and it ended at midnight. In addition to not having a single break during the day, Ivana very often remained hungry, since she was deprived of certain meals. Physical tiredness had become increasingly greater in time and Ivana tried to explain to the lady she had been working for that it was unbearable to work so many hours non-stop, but to no avail. Sometimes she had to stay outside in very low temperatures for hours, cleaning the terrace which, due to the condition it was in, was never able to be thoroughly cleaned. They insisted on using very strong chemical cleaning solutions, due to which Ivana sustained wounds on her hands. Her movements were completely restricted, at night she had to leave the door of the room where she slept open, she couldn't stay in the toilet for long, and if the woman for whom she worked had gone out, she would call Ivana non-stop to check what she was doing.

"Frankly speaking, I was at her place 64 days, and I couldn't go out anywhere. It means she didn't let us go out anywhere. I am a smoker, she didn't let me smoke, I didn't have the right to literally light a cigarette, she wouldn't let me. She didn't let me dye my hair, or put on some perfume, she didn't let me do anything at all. I was her slave there, lika a slave. But literally."

What Ivana was not denied was communication with her family, especially her child. Money that was agreed, Ivana would get in cash from a woman she had been working for. However, the agreed amount was not proportional to working hours and conditions in which Ivana worked. After 64 days, at her own expenses, Ivana came back to Serbia, since three months of staying abroad were approaching, which is allowed by law. After this experience, Ivana needed a lot of time to primarily recover mentally and then overcome trauma she had experienced. Despite such negative experience, after almost half a year, Ivana went to work in Switzerland, again through the assistance of Svetlana and her husband. This time the conditions were different and Ivana states that she was satisfied. She worked on maintenance of a household and childcare in a family. Money was not paid to her directly, but she would receive money from Svetlana, upon the expiry of three months. In such arrangement, Ivana went to work in Switzerland several times during the period from 2018 to 2020.

At the beginning of 2020, she found out through acquaintances who also worked abroad that Svetlana and her husband were arrested in Switzerland and accused of human trafficking. According to Ivana's knowledge, more than 200 girls and women were recruited through them and brought to work in Switzerland, without regulated work status and, it can be assumed, without provision of adequate living and work conditions. Ivana was contacted by Swiss institutions, she was identified as a victim of human trafficking and she agreed to cooperate in proceedings against Svetlana and her husband.

Even today, going abroad presents for Ivana the most favourable option to gain additional earnings for her household; however, with regulated work status. During the summer of 2021, Ivana was on Alaska and perfumed some seasonal jobs, and her wish is to get the same opportunity this year.

LABOUR EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF FOREIGN CITIZENS IN SERBIA – SLAVEN AND MILUTIN'S STORY

Slaven, aged 48

Before coming to Serbia, Slaven lived with his grandparents in Croatia. They lived modestly, but Slaven was employed and didn't live in poverty when it comes to basic subsistence. He came to Serbia to visit his mother, and then the war started and he couldn't go back to Croatia, and was forced to stay here. Soon he met Stefan and Darko, for whom he worked for two decades. He performed heavy physical labour, especially for Stefan, where work and living conditions were particularly poor. He had an agreement with Stefan that food and accommodation as well as monthly salary in the amount of 100 euros was to be provided for livestock keeping and farm work. Documents which Slaven had, expired over time, so there was no possibility to obtain any type of work contract. His movements were restricted, he was not allowed to leave the farm unless he was accompanied by someone and he lived under constant threat that he would be reported to police.

"We were accommodated in small rooms, two or three of us. Furniture in the room was shabby, partly broken and dirty, walls were black. Policemen said that such catastrophic conditions they hadn't seen for ages. We didn't have a bathroom. We washed ourselves in the trough or at the milking parlour, we would heat water if we wanted to and then pour it on us from 5 litre containers. There was no soup, shampoo or anything else. The place where we washed ourselves was quite far from the room where we slept, so we were freezing on the way to the room. We relieved ourselves outside. There was no toilet paper, we managed as we could. We were not allowed to go out during a break, not to leave the farm, without the boss or his son. They threatened us with police. We had one kettle for making coffee, sometimes he would buy us some beer and give it along with food. Often it was very cold, we had a blanket per person... We would get up between 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, then we'd perform work at the stable – we cleaned it and feed cows until 11 or 12 o'clock, then we got our breakfast and continued working from 3 to 8 pm. After all that we had dinner. Two meals a day, we worked every day, seven days in a week. There was enough food, but sometimes we were so tired we couldn't eat in the evening."

Slaven tried to escape from such hard conditions and life under constant coercion and threat, however, Stefan found him and turned him back to the farm. In order to try to escape once again he needed money, and for all those years of work Slaven was never paid by Stefan, only once did they buy him some clothes and shoes. In addition, Slaven, as well as other workers on the farm, they lived in the same conditions, they suffered continuing mental and physical violence.

"There on the farm, bad things were happening, a pipe breaks or an animal is untied, something like that. Then we also worked over night, and those were situations when boss was particularly aggressive... He would kick us, beat with a stick, and throw groats in our eyes. It was better when he was not at home, then he beats us and invents new jobs. Once Stefan threatened me he would chop off my head."

Life in servitude ceased when, as Slaven assumes, one of the neighbours reported to police what had been going on for years on Stefan's farm. In March 2020, police came to the farm and took away all forced labourers, Stefan was detained, and later on released to defend himself while the proceedings are pending. As a victim of human trafficking, Slaven received a support by ASTRA and the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, through which he was provided with accommodation. Currently he is performing various agriculture work on a homestead in Serbia.

Milutin, aged 69

Milutin was, before coming to Serbia, a citizen of Germany. As Slaven, Milutin was also exploited by Stefan and identified as a victim of human trafficking. Before his encounter with Stefan, Milutin also performed jobs related to keeping cattle on a farm. Stefan offered him to start working for him for a salary of 30.000 dinars a month, with provided accommodation and food. As winter was approaching, Milutin realized that there would not be any more work with the boss for whom he had worked up to that moment, and he accepted Stefan's offer. Contrary to what was promised, the following three years he worked without any monetary compensation and without a single day off, in extremely difficult work and living conditions.

"Stefan had 100 heads of livestock, I was in charge of cleaning the stable and feeding the cattle, we worked from morning to night. Stefan would sometimes slaughter an animal that was sick and sell that meat, he sold milk to some company. He would always say he didn't have any money, since people from that plant hadn't been paying

him, but after some time I realized it wasn't true, but that he didn't want to pay us... I didn't have a day off while I was working for him. I was never paid a salary or daily wages, once he bought me some clothes, a tracksuit and some T-shirts."

As well as Slaven, Milutin testifies to the violence they suffered. Once he tried to leave, but he was also brought back. After some time, he became completely discouraged and didn't think of a chance to escape from the farm again, since he knew they would bring him back again if he tried to escape, as it happened to other workers.

"He'd hit us with a bar stick on our genitals. Once I wanted to stab him with forks I was holding in my hands, but I didn't. Once I left the farm, I went to the other village on foot, but Stefan picked me up and pushed me in his car. I went out again, and he shoved me in again. Then he was saying everything would be as we had agreed and that he would pay me. After some time I didn't think I could leave that place, because he would find me and bring me back and then I didn't have anywhere to go. We couldn't go out a lot, he didn't lock us up, we could go to the street and back and forth, but I didn't have where to go... We had a lot of work, we didn't rest, only a bit in the evening, before going to sleep."

Milutin was also taken away from that farm during the organized action by police, and he received support from the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking and ASTRA. He was provided with accommodation and food on one homestead, where he currently lives. He occasionally performs some physical labour, but it doesn't present his permanent source of income. As he was told, he didn't acquire the right on pension in Germany, but his cousin sends him money which is paid to him on the basis of taxes and contribution earned during his years of service in Germany. When he encountered Stefan and his son at the trial, he was scared, and he was especially afraid when Stefan was released to defend himself pending trial.

"I got scared when I went to the trial, I saw Stefan, he went past me in the hall, and then he sat in a café, that is, his son. It wasn't easy because I know what he was able to do. Now they have informed me that he is free, like he is not allowed to approach us, I think he doesn't even know where we are now. At first I was afraid, I didn't even know what hit me, but I'm okay now."

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ABROAD – MARIA'S STORY

Marija, age 30

Marija completed a three-year vocational high school. At 19, she had her first child and soon became a single mother. As father of the child didn't want to participate in the child's upbringing, the child was raised with the help of her mother. Before going abroad and the experience of human trafficking, she worked in a local café. A part of a week she would spend in her family house, and the other she lived in a house where the café was located. Relationships in her primary family were very bad. Her father was prone to alcoholism and he was violent towards her mother, but also to Marija who wanted to protect her mother. Beside father, mother and her child, Marija's uncle and a brother and a sister also lived in the household. Marija's modest earnings, as well as child allowance she was receiving, presented a basic source of income of the household. Although her father had "a main say" in the house, he, but also all other male members of the household, generated income only through seasonal work, and mother was without any employment. Financial situation in the household was very bad, they especially lacked means of child support. That was the key motif for Marija, who was 21 at that time, to accept an offer to work abroad, by people who once frequented a café where she worked.

Marija and her friend Jelena, with whom she was working, were offered to go to Vienna to work in a café. Marija and Jelena didn't check out the name of this café or any other information. They were not sure whether to accept the offer or not, but both had children whom they had to support and it seemed to them as an opportunity for good earnings. The owners of the café where she worked begged her not to go, because they assumed something bad could happen.

"The owners of the restaurant where we worked told us not to go, because we wouldn't be back. They advised us not to go, because those were some shady things and they would tell us not to go, to stay with them, who knew what would happen, who knew whether we would come back at all, whether we would stay alive, I don't know, those sorts of things. But, we didn't pay attention at all. I mean, how could that happen to us, anyway? And then, we said goodbye to them there, we even cried, that is, the lady owner, since we were, me and my friend, we were really good with them."

Marija previously didn't leave the country, but the man who recruited her used his connections to obtain a passport under fast-track procedure. They were told they could go back to Serbia whenever they wanted to, but it would be best if they did at least a month work and earn for that period 1000 euros, with accommodation and food provided. Marija, apart from Serbian, didn't speak any other language, so she went to work in a foreign country without any knowledge of a language that was spoken there. The man who offered them to go, took them to meet a married couple and another woman for whom they were to work and who would take them to Vienna. In front of Marija and Jelena they all spoke Serbian, but occasionally they would stand aside and make agreements in German or Roma language. After some time, they set off by car to Austria. Only at the first break, they took the passports and IDs from Marija and Jelena, which at that moment didn't seem suspicious, since they knew they had to cross the border. The next day they arrived at the destination and immediately went shopping with the woman, in whose house they were to reside. The woman was choosing clothes for them and Marija found it rather strange when she saw what kind of clothes and shoes she had been buying, and thought that in the restaurant where they should work, it was probably important to be specifically dressed up. Soon after shopping, Marija and Jelena realized they were not brought to Austria to work in a luxurious cafe.

"...Well, nothing, then she said: Now I'll take you to see your workplace. And we went. Now, the door to the entrance was closed, you can't see what kind of a place it is, from outside, like, there is a garden or a terrace or something like that... There is a club table on both sides and a room on the left side. Only when we entered the room, we could see a bed and there was a girl. And then she told us: You will work here. And like, now, I was shocked, I mean, I'm silent, what can I say, I don't know, I'm like... And later she said to us what we would actually do. That first day, I mean when she told us that, I was silent, I didn't want to say anything, because, I was shocked, and afraid, and in the country where I know no one, I don't have anyone, I don't speak the language, I don't know whom to turn to. I was silent that day, and the next day I started crying, that is, even in the evening I started crying and she threatened me and I don't know, to stop crying, she'd put knife under my throat. That man who was married to the other woman, he had a gun on him.... There they took pictures of us for advertisements."

Beside Marija and Jelena, there were more girls who worked at the same place. Some were from Serbia, but there were girls from other countries, as well. They worked from 11 am until 4 am the next day, they had 20 euros per day available for food and other items. Still, they were always under supervision, they could never go alone in the shop, but always accompanied by some persons. The building where they worked had video

surveillance. The only moment when Marija felt a bit freer was when they stop for a cup of coffee at the nearby petrol station, on the way to the place where they slept, after they finished their workday.

"Now I don't know, when we finished around 4 o'clock, when we were going home, we would always stop for a coffee at the petrol station. I felt a bit more relaxed when we were at the petrol station, so to speak. Somehow, because this was too traumatic and sad..."

Although their phones were taken from them and they could not communicate with anyone from Serbia, so as no one could suspect anything, several days after arriving in Austria, Marija and Jelena were given 100 euros each, to send to their families. In this way, none of their close families would think they were actually victims of human trafficking, forced to sexual exploitation and completely inhuman living conditions. They were often told they were bought and they had to work for them in order to pay off money that had been paid for them, but even more than that. When they "pay that off", they were told they were planning to send them somewhere else.

"Then I was crying, when she put knife under my throat, she told us we had to, that is, that they bought us from the man who had made our passports, for three thousand euros. Me and my friend. And we had to work for those three thousand euros, so they could get back the money they had given and plus to pay off their loans for apartments, something like that. For apartments or for a flat, now I can't remember exactly. It doesn't matter. Then we learned we were bought... Half an hour was 50 euros, an hour 80 euros. And there were.... I can't remember now, about 7-8 girls. So, there was someone there non-stop, and as clients would come, they were choosing a girl. We had to smile, to compete who would earn more... In one moment, she told us: When you finish with what you have to pay us off, we'll send you further, I can't remember now where."

One of the girls, who was exploited along with Marija and Jelena, tried to escape. However, they found her and beat her up, to serve as an example to other girls who thought of doing something similar. One man who was coming there as a client wanted to help Marija, since he realized that she wasn't working there voluntarily, but she refused, being afraid of the consequences.

"I had one client, the man was OK, he didn't want anything 'cos he saw I was there involuntarily, he said he would bring me phone and a card to be able to contact someone, to somehow get out of there. But, I told him not to do it, because I could be treated, God knows how, because of that... there were also cameras there. I couldn't

risk it and where to keep the phone, when they would notice anyway. However, he brought it the next time, I don't know, I guess after two days. But, I didn't want to take it."

In the environment where Marija was forced to be, different narcotics were being used, but she and other girls who were exploited, they were not forced to take drugs. What they were forced to do, and which particularly left a great trauma on Marija, was the so-called house visit.

"We had, yes, house visits, that woman in which house we slept would drive us there... well, the same price, but this was good for them, because when it comes to house visits, they didn't have to use protection, if they didn't want to. And we had to respect that, to agree to it."

From a seemingly hopeless situation, Marija and Jelena managed somehow to escape and get back to Serbia. A girl with origins from Serbia helped them, since she was also a victim of sexual exploitation like them. They got in touch with one of her friends, who planned the way to rescue all three of them and bring them back to Serbia. Nevertheless, that girl gave up on escape and decided to stay there anyway, most probably because of fear that something could go wrong. One day Marija and Jelena took the opportunity when they were left alone and crept to the back door of the building where they worked. They ran towards a deserted nearby house, where they waited for a young man who helped them escape. He drove them to a pizzeria, from where he phoned his friend who was driving a bus to Serbia that day. However, the girls didn't have their passports on them, since they were taken from them at the very beginning, and the only document they had was a residence registration document. It was important to solve this so that Marija and Jelena could cross the border at all.

"They proposed that, like, to call them, that is, that woman... to make an agreement to return those signed residence applications to them in turn for our passports. In order to cross the border, and then they would not pay any fine, because we were not at that address, and in wasn't signed and returned... And we had an agreement to meet at the bus station in Vienna, the main station... And nothing, we went to the man who was driving a bus to tell him to get ready, and then off to the bus station. We were without any money there. We sat in the bus and now, that boy who helped us, who drove us, he was outside, and the driver was at the wheel and then that woman came...we signed those papers when we were close to the driver, when he was getting ready and I gave my friend those documents to hand them over and take our passports. She took them

and said that the woman had called her to get outside. I didn't want to, because, I mean, I didn't want to see her at all, or anything else. And in the end, since she called me several times to get out to tell me something, and nothing, well, I got out and she said to me: You have 5 or 10 minutes until the bus leaves to change your mind or I'll come to Serbia and I'll kill your child before you. I only said that I didn't want to and got back on the bus... And nothing, I went back inside, she paid the tickets for Serbia, for me and my friend, and the driver gave us 50 euros to buy some food and some drinks for the trip."

When they got to Serbia, Marija and Jelena first phoned those owners of the café where they had worked and told them what had happened. They were happy the girls managed to survive and got back and immediately offered them to stay with them and work in the same arrangement they had before leaving for Austria, which both of them accepted. Jelena, however, got married soon and stopped working there, but Marija stayed. The woman where they resided in Austria and who exploited them, came to Serbia with two men and went to see the owner of the café, asking for Jelena and Marija to return to Austria. Marija was, at the moment when this happened, by some lucky chance in her room sleeping, and they didn't manage to find her and try to forcibly bring her back to Austria.

Upon her return to Serbia, Marija realized she got pregnant while she was sexually exploited in Austria. Nevertheless, she decided to give birth to the child. She said to her family what had happened and her father immediately wanted to report the case to police. Because of the fear that something might happen to her family members, Marija didn't allow him to do so. Two years after Marija's return to Serbia, her father called police, anyhow. Although at the beginning Marija denied what had happened, soon she was referred to the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, through which she came into contact with ASTRA. The proceedings against the people who exploited Marija, Jelena and many other girls is still not over. The proceedings are very slow, and Marija believes the reason for that is the bribery of individuals who work on the case. What is very interesting is that in parallel with the proceedings in Serbia, the woman where Marija and Jelena stayed with while they were sexually exploited, initiated proceedings against them in Austria, accusing them of prostitution, on the occasion of which they both had to give statements in Austria. The consequences of everything that Marija went through nine years ago are immense. She underwent a period of depression during which the support from ASTRA was particularly important, in terms of psychological support and also in terms of general safety and opportunity to provide for her children and herself something that was important for them (such as medical examinations). In addition,

she encountered misunderstandings and was stigmatized by some individuals from that small town, including the closest members of her family.

"...I was really feeling bad back then, and in depression and I was really, it was... I can't remember when exactly, some four years ago, four and a half... I was crying non-stop and I didn't want to go out anywhere I didn't want to socialize with anyone. Like, I was literally crying non-stop. I had support from several sides (by ASTRA), because, I was talking to you on the phone, and personally when you were coming, support in any sense of the word... If something had to be bought for children, to be paid... then the conversations with psychotherapist..."

Today, Marija lives with her partner and children. She is employed in a bakery, and besides that, she privately works as a hygienist. She is generally satisfied with her income, but still she would love to change her job in future and work as a beautician. Due to her previous experience, Marija would no longer go to work outside Serbia, no matter how secure the job is, and she advises other young women to think carefully about such decision.

"Just don't make a decision in haste, there, I have advice for little girls, for girls. Don't hurry, don't be naive, don't fall prey to good job offers, especially abroad, watch out what kind of people you hang out with and if you need any help, turn to (ASTRA) or any other institution, for starters."

COERCION TO COMMIT FELONIES IN SERBIA – ALEXANDER'S STORY

Aleksandar, aged 32

Aleksandar grew up in a small place where he completed high school, after which he went to Belgrade. In Belgrade he worked as a waiter, however, it was a seasonal type of work and thus insecure. In the period when there was less work or he didn't have any job, Aleksandar faced the financial problems. Due to bad relationships in his family, and especially the disagreements with his father, he didn't have anyone to turn to for help. Exactly at that moment, when he was out of job, Aleksandar met a group of men who, as he puts it, offered to provide him with "something better in life, something more powerful". In return, he was asked to perform certain criminal activities. Aleksandar had never committed a crime before.

"I was working as a waiter, and it was winter then, it wasn't busy, there was nothing to do, I had to pay the rent, I had to pay everything. I was, like, young, I was, how old... I was 19, I was thinking about something else, to create a better life for myself overnight and so on. I can't lie to you, the plans failed, nor was there anything as we planned, it was totally the opposite."

Having accepted their offer, Aleksandar moved into a flat of one of them, along with several other people. Aleksandar was not allowed to independently leave the flat, his was denied some meals, so he would usually get only one meal a day. For months he suffered psychological violence, once even physical violence, as well. In the first period he would go with the rest of the "gang" to rob petrol stations, banks, posts, in order to learn how to commit a theft. After some time, they started to put pressure on him to independently commit a theft, which he resisted. Nevertheless, there came a moment when he was forced to commit his first felony – to rob a betting house. Aleksandar thought that he would be an accomplice in the robbery, but there on the spot he was blackmailed to rob the betting house alone.

"He (the person he worked for) wasn't there, he just left me in front of the betting house and said: Look, rob it in any way you know, I... am not working, we'll kill your family. When we went past my house, he showed me where each person was, my father, mother.... He knew everything, where I live, what I do, what's my profession. At that time I depended on him, since I went to live in his apartment..."

Several months later, Aleksandar and the person in whose apartment he was living, and who was exploiting him, got arrested. After telling his story to the police and public prosecutor, Aleksandar was identified as a victim of human trafficking. Despite this, the court's verdict for the crime of robbery was passed, by which he was sentenced to a prison sentence of one year, which is contrary to the provisions and recommendations of international documents. Namely, based on the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the court is obliged to directly apply all ratified international documents, however, in Aleksandar's case, the court did not apply the provisions of *The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, nor did it comply with the *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking* of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who recommend that a victim of human trafficking should not be arrested, charged, or tried for her involvement in illegal activities, if that involvement is a direct consequence of her status as a victim of human trafficking.

Aleksandar contacted ASTRA after the verdict. ASTRA hired a lawyer who filed an appeal against the verdict and referred the case to the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, where proceedings are being held for the criminal offense of human trafficking under Article 388 of the Criminal Code, in which Aleksandar was the victim. At the request of ASTRA's lawyer, Aleksandar served his sentence of house arrest instead of prison for the crime of robbery, while the criminal proceedings before the High Court for the crime of human trafficking have not yet ended. In this court proceeding, Alexander was granted the status of a particularly sensitive witness.

The experience of human trafficking left multiple consequences on him, as he puts it, he was "mentally, nervously and physically disturbed". It was hard for him to accept he was a victim and that he was not guilty for a crime committed under coercion.

"ASTRA helped me to empower myself mentally, physically, to overcome something, since I blamed myself. Even today I blame myself for many things, but then I was blaming myself the most for all things that had happened to me. No matter how good or bad it was with me. I would realize I was guilty. However, now that I've started talking about it, I would say that a psychotherapist convinced me I wasn't guilty."

Today Aleksandar has a family and he is employed. Although more than 10 years have passed since he was identified as a victim and became a client of ASTRA, he is still in contact with ASTRA, and with their help he is currently attending German classes and is consulted in connection to looking for a job abroad.

CONCLUSION

Research on trafficking in human beings in Serbia provided significant insight into perceptions, information and knowledge about trafficking in human beings, as well as its specific forms and different risk factors.

The average grade which respondents from the general population awarded to their own **knowledge about human trafficking** is 5.2, which is not surprising, having in mind that the largest number of respondents awarded the grade 5 (of maximum 10). Yet, inclusion of certain characteristics of respondents in the analysis provided more specific knowledge about self-assessment of human trafficking risk among different categories of respondents:

- Men from the sample assessed their knowledge about human trafficking risk with slightly lower grades in comparison to women.
- The youngest respondents in the sample showed the least knowledge about human trafficking risks. To be precise, every fourth respondent aged 18 to 25 thinks he/she is not aware of the risks of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking at all. This data is alarming, bearing in mind that a large number of young people of that age is just entering labour market, and insufficient knowledge about risks makes them especially vulnerable group, susceptible to different forms of exploitation.
- Every third respondent, who is without education or completed only primary school, thinks that he/she is not aware of this type of risk at all.
- Respondents who were unemployed at the time of research, but were actively looking for a job, awarded their knowledge about the risks with a lower grade in comparison to the employed respondents.

Members of Roma population significantly more often responded that they had not been aware of the risks of someone becoming a human trafficking victim at all in comparison to respondents from general population – every fifth respondent among Roma population thinks he/she is not aware of these risks at all.

When it comes to “push” factors, poverty was singled out as the factor which, according to the respondents’ opinions, to the greatest extent increases the risk of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking (79.3% of respondents). On the other hand, illegal migrant status was identified as a risk factor of human trafficking to the least extent (36.9% of respondents).

When it comes to channels through which respondents from general population become informed about human trafficking, almost a fifth of respondents stated they were not informed about this topic at all (18.5%), and among whom there is a considerable share of the youngest category of respondents – aged 18 to 25. On the sample of Roma population, this answer was by far more represented – 41.2% of them were not informed about this topic. Among those who are informed about this topic, the most represented sources are electronic and print media (81.2%), then social networks (49.6%), internet sources such as blogs and forums (24.7%), while slightly more often than every tenth respondent used internet websites of the organizations specialized in combating human trafficking as a source of information about this problem (11.3%).

Should the respondents find themselves in a situation to be victims of human trafficking, the largest number of them would turn to police for help (80%), even 41% of respondents would try to get out of the situation through informal channels and personal contacts, while every fourth respondent would seek help through SOS Hotline for human trafficking victims. On basis of this, along with the previous finding, it can be concluded that respondents rely dominantly on traditional sources of help, while organizations and specialized services for combating trafficking in human beings are insufficiently identified as stakeholders for providing help, but also as the channels for information about this topic.

Cases of trafficking in human beings who proved to be the most identified among general population are organ trafficking, sexual exploitation and illegal child adoption. On the other hand, examples including different forms of exploitation, such as forced begging, coercion to commit felonies, forced marriage, as well as forced surrogate motherhood were identified as examples of human trafficking with considerably smaller share of respondents – between 70% and 80% of respondents from general population. Situations where human trafficking was identified in less than three quarters of respondents were examples of labour exploitation, both children and adults.

Level of education was singled out as significant factor in identifying human trafficking – respondents with the lowest level of education showed the least ability to notice human trafficking in situations that had been described to them. Gender also had an impact on identification of human trafficking in certain examples. It is important to single out the finding that slightly fewer women, in comparison to men, identified human trafficking in the situations where a housemaid or an au-pair worked in a household without any compensation or without any possibility to leave the job.

Data that only a little more than half of respondents identified human trafficking in the situation where *a worker is engaged to perform certain job without necessary protection, with denied salary and free movements restriction*, indicates that among general population there is not sufficient level of information about labour exploitation and its extreme forms that can turn into human trafficking. Also, this finding can suggest that among general population in Serbia there is a certain degree of tolerance for violations of both labour and human rights.

The significant share of respondents from general population was **deceived in connection to some aspects of work** for which they had applied for or it had been offered to them.

- Every fifth respondent from general population was deceived in connection to work conditions (20.1% in Serbia and 18.4% abroad), the amount of earnings and/or payment dynamism at a certain job (20.5% in Serbia and 19.4% abroad), while almost 14% of respondents were exposed to deceptions referring to their legal status at work, i.e. related to formal conclusion of work contract. Having in mind that research was conducted on the representative sample, these data may indicate to deceptions that workers encounter in Serbia in relation to different aspects of work, as well as that violations of labour rights present an integral part of work experience of a large number of employed persons in Serbia.
- On the sample of Roma population, exposure to different deceptions on the jobs they performed in Serbia, is even more represented. Namely, every fourth respondent was deceived in connection to the type of work, location of workplace or in relation to employer, by a person who offered them a job (25.5%), as well as in relation to legal regulation of their labour status (23.5%). Almost every third respondent was deceived in relation to work conditions (31.4%), as well as the amount of earnings and/or payment dynamism at a certain job (31.4%).
- The largest number of respondents who worked abroad, and who were deceived in relation to some of the work aspects, ended up in an awkward situation from which they managed to get out of through informal strategies.

Among respondents who experienced work abroad, the largest number of them obtained jobs through informal channels – through relatives or friends from Serbia and abroad. When it comes to plans for future, significant share of respondents intends to seek work abroad, most often young respondents.

Labour exploitation risks present something that a considerable share of respondents face or has faced in some of their previous jobs. Respondents from general population

while **working in Serbia** most often faced the problems of not being paid, of delayed payment and extremely low earnings (30.3%), then very long working hours (28.8%), as well as non-observance of contract provisions or the Labour Law (24.9%). In case of **work abroad**, the problem that the largest number of respondents faced was lack of social security and healthcare – more than a fifth of respondents who experienced work abroad.

Experience of **forced labour** in Serbia and/or abroad was identified in 26 respondents (16 men and 10 women), which indicates to 3.3% of the general population sample, who in the largest number of cases were forced to perform jobs they didn't want and which they didn't apply for in the first place. The share of respondents who worked in Serbia and/or abroad under coercion is many times higher in Roma population – every tenth respondent from this sub-sample of Roma population experienced work under coercion. In comparison to general population, violence or threats with violence present the most frequent type of coercion to which the respondents from this sub-sample were exposed.

Persons who work or have worked as **domestic servitude** in Serbia and abroad make up for 4.6% of the sample in total, which presents an insignificant share of respondents on the national representative sample. The largest share of these persons had problems with too long working hours. Although this type of work is mostly linked to women who, both in Serbia and abroad, work on maintenance of other households, of 37 persons from the sample in total who experienced such work, even 11 were men. This data is very important since it indicates that women and men can find themselves in the category of workers who are especially vulnerable and exposed to multiple risks from labour exploitation, but also human trafficking risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary to **improve the system of identification and keeping records about human trafficking victims** in Serbia, particularly having in mind that “dark figure” are considerably higher than the number of registered cases.

It is very important to **raise awareness about human trafficking risks**, especially among younger population, taking into account that the research has shown that even every fourth person aged 18 to 25 is not aware of those risks at all.

Also, it is necessary to **raise awareness about those problems with unemployed persons and persons with lower level of education**, since these two categories proved to be the least informed after young people category.

It is required to **find innovative ways to raise awareness about risks** from becoming a victim of human trafficking among Roma population, as especially vulnerable group, since the research has shown that even the fifth of respondents from this category is not aware of such risks at all.

In addition to devising concrete measures to reduce risks of becoming victims of human trafficking for individuals, particularly those who belong to especially vulnerable groups (young people, Roma people, unemployed persons, persons with low level of education, etc.), it is very important to **take into account the structural factors that influence a person to be at such risk**. As poverty presents the most prominent factor that “pushes” people to find alternative ways to ensure survival of their families and themselves, it is necessary for the state to create measures and programmes through which the position of people who belong to the category of the poor or who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion is improved.

As education presents one of the protective factors, both in terms of exposure to poverty and in terms of exposure to human trafficking risks, it is very important to **enable everyone** to exercise one of their basic rights, such as **the right to education**. This particularly refers to children from Roma population, who need additional support not only to start the education process, but also to stay in it as long as it is possible.

Since the research has shown that women less often than men identify human trafficking in the situation of labour engagement as domestic servitude without wages or the possibility of leaving the job, it is important to **think of innovative ways of providing information to women** and raising awareness of such specific form of trafficking in human beings, because they are actually the ones who are at the greatest risk of becoming the victims of this form of human trafficking.

Special attention should be directed to the risk from exposure to labour exploitation, both in the country and abroad, and connection of these risks with human trafficking risks.

- When it comes to companies doing business on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, it is very important that **the institutions in charge of protecting workers' rights (such as labour inspection) conduct regular inspections**, to gain insight into the conditions in which employees work, whether they are threatened or exposed to any form of labour exploitation. Accordingly, it is important to adequately penalize those who jeopardize labour rights of the employees.
- It is necessary to **implement activities** (such as trainings or advertising campaigns) to inform the citizens about their labour rights, as well as possibilities to protect themselves in the situation when their rights are jeopardized
- It is very important to **raise awareness about the significance of information about business offers**, especially if there is an opportunity to work abroad. It is necessary to inform the citizens through various activities, especially young people and the unemployed, about the way in which it is possible to check out business offers and the employer, but also which institutions and organizations they can turn to for help if they find themselves in the situation of human trafficking.

It is necessary to **increase sensitization of employees in relevant institutions**, to be able to identify different forms of labour exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking. Also, it is important to determine competence of each institution and harmonize procedures for dealing with such situations.

It is necessary to **strengthen control mechanism on border crossings** and train border police to be able to identify potential victims of human trafficking.

Make efforts to **improve cooperation of state institutions and civil society organizations**, as well as to work on further development of mechanisms for identifying victims of human trafficking.

Qualitative component of the research has specifically indicated to the significance of support that ASTRA provides to victims of human trafficking. Accordingly, it is important to **identify significance of such organizations at the state level and provide them with various kinds of support** to improve their own capacities.

Work on informing citizens about the work of specialized civil society organizations that deal with problems of human trafficking, since these organizations are important stakeholders in providing help and support to victims of human trafficking, but also to those who are in risky situations.

Introduce education programmes for high school pupils within which they would have the opportunity to learn about risks of someone becoming a victim of human trafficking, which would be realized by representatives of specialized organizations for provision of support to victims of human trafficking.

One of important aspects of support to victims of human trafficking should be their economic empowerment. It is necessary for the state, in cooperation with civil society organizations, to **create measures for supporting employment of victims**, when they become ready for such a step.

Also, it would be of great importance to **include persons identified as victims of human trafficking in designing new and adapting existing support measures**, which would improve both their position and the position of persons in a similar situation.

Devise **activities in local communities** to raise awareness about the fact that anyone can become a victim of human trafficking and that a victim is not guilty for the situation he/she has found himself/herself. In this way the stigmatization of victims could be reduced, and they would more easily reintegrate in the society.

It is necessary to **determine the resources of state and international organizations in a planned way**, which would enable the regular implementation of research on the problem of human trafficking, as well as its specific forms. Research would provide insights that are significant for the process of creating support measures, but would also provide quality data that could be part of informative material intended for the general population.

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ANNEX: DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Chart 1: Sample structure per gender (%)

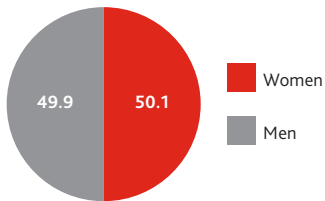


Chart 2: Sample structure per age (%)

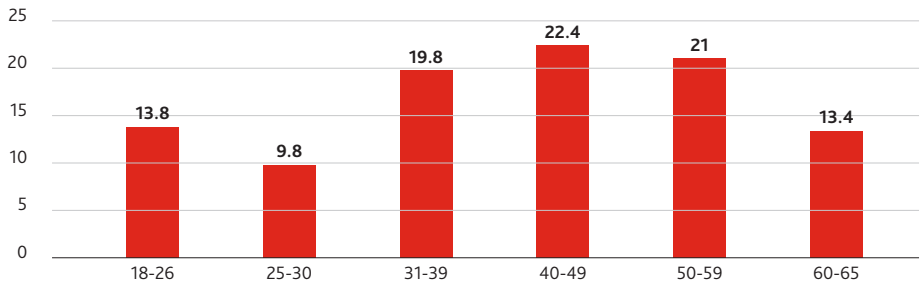


Chart 3: Sample structure per region (%)

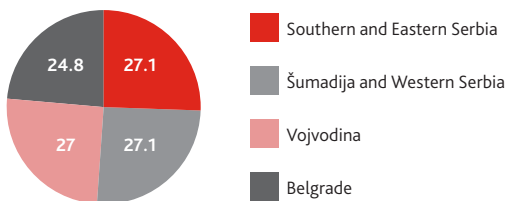


Chart 4: Sample structure per place of residence (%)

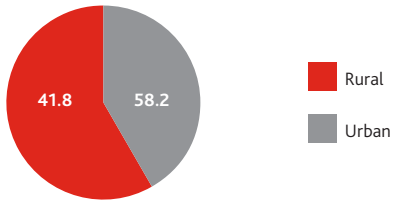
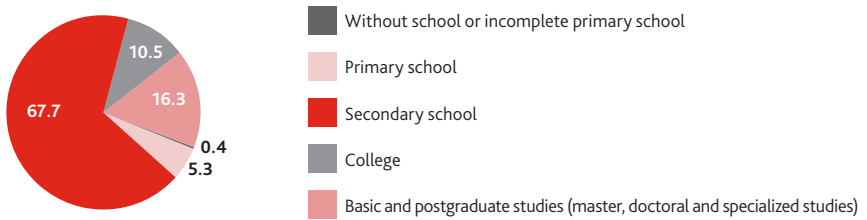


Chart 5: Sample structure per education level (%)



Socio-economic status of respondents

Chart 6: Socio-economic status of respondents(%)

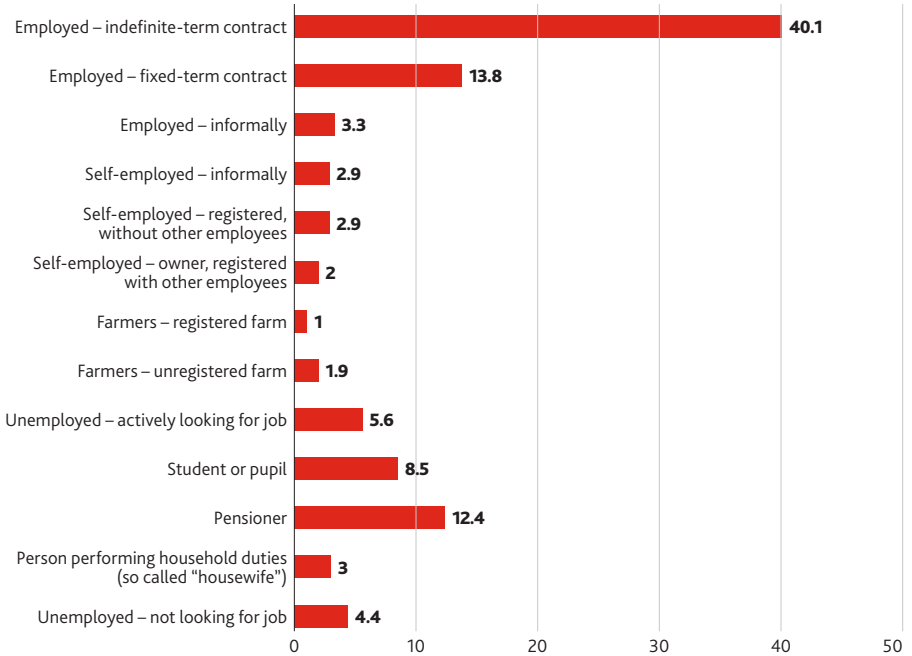


Chart 7: Self-assessment of financial situation in household (%)

