



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  **A CRIME THAT SHAMES US ALL**

# Trafficking in Persons; Analysis on Europe



**UN.GIFT**  
Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

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## Introduction

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children<sup>1</sup> (the “UN Trafficking Protocol”) was opened up for signatures in the year 2000 and came into effect in December 2003. This paper presents an overview of the situation in Europe<sup>2</sup> and its evolution during the last nine years.

This paper is based on information collected by UNODC in the framework of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), published in the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* in February 2009.

Data on the trafficking situation in Europe was gathered from national authorities by UNODC and the UN-affiliated European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI). The researchers contacted the relevant national governments to collect available data in three subject areas:

- Legislative and administrative frameworks.
- Criminal justice data, and the profile of the offenders.
- Numbers of victims identified and their profiles.

The information presented pertains to the 2003-2008 period.

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime) can be downloaded at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> To facilitate analysis of the data, five subregional groups were used in this study, namely:

- Central Europe, which includes the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.
- Northern Europe, which includes Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden.
- South-East Europe, which includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo (Serbia), and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Southern Europe, which includes Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.
- Western Europe, which includes Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

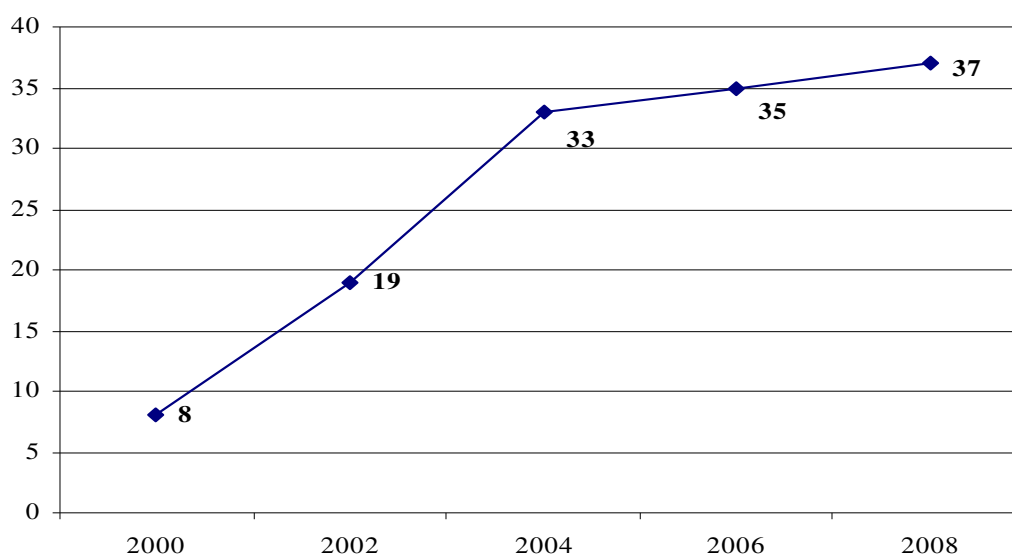
## National responses to human trafficking in Europe

### *A. A renovated legal framework after the Protocol*

Most of the 38 European countries and territories covered by this paper have specific provisions in their criminal codes to combat trafficking in persons or at least some of its aspects<sup>3</sup>.

Most of the legislation currently in place was introduced into the countries' legal systems after the year 2000, when the UN Trafficking Protocol was opened for signature. During the years 2002-2003, many countries established human trafficking as a specific offence. It can be concluded that in Europe, as in the rest of the world, the UN trafficking protocol resulted in an acceleration of the number of countries introducing a specific offence on human trafficking in their criminal codes.

**Figure 1: Number of European countries with a specific offence on human trafficking**



Source: UNODC-UN.GIFT

In addition, between 2005 and 2008, more than 10 countries amended their anti-trafficking legal frameworks, mainly modifying their criminal code to cover forms of trafficking not previously criminalized.

<sup>3</sup> In 2009, Estonia is the only country without a specific offence of trafficking in persons; The Polish Criminal Code considers specifically the offence of “trafficking in persons”. Even though it is not defined in the Criminal Code, the jurisprudence refers to the definition found in Article 3 of the UN Trafficking Protocol for applying this article of the criminal code.

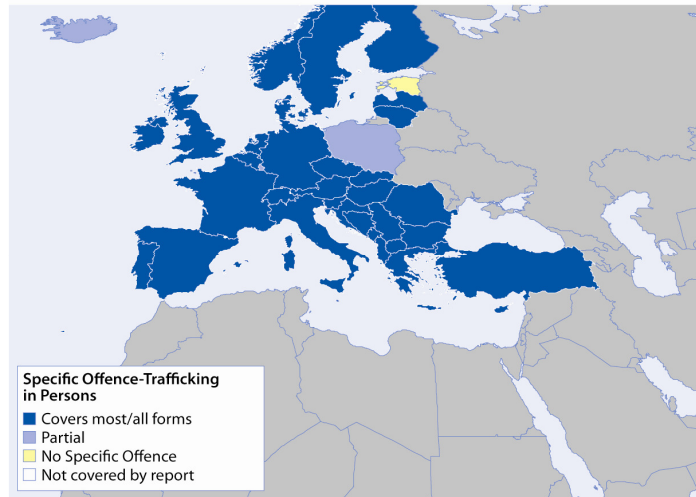
While Western European countries and some Central European countries have had a legislation dealing with trafficking for sexual exploitation in place since the late 1990s, most other European countries adopted their legislation in the early 2000s.

The majority of countries in Europe that have a specific offence of trafficking in persons criminalize all or most forms of exploitation indicated in article 3 of the UN Protocol.

However, in many European countries, related offences are still used to prosecute some trafficking cases. For instance, the offences of “sexual exploitation”, “soliciting prostitution” or “pandering” are often used to prosecute cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The offences of “slavery”, “trade of slaves” and laws on labour standards are used to prosecute cases of trafficking for forced labour.

**Figure 2: Specific offence for trafficking in persons - the status of the national legislation (November 2008)**



**Covers most/all forms:** Countries where the specific offence of trafficking in persons is in force, criminalizing at a minimum sexual exploitation and forced labour, with no restrictions concerning the profile of the victim.

**Partial:** Countries where the specific offence of trafficking in persons is in force, but legislation does not criminalize all or most forms listed in Article 3 of the UN Trafficking Protocol or does not define trafficking in persons.

**No specific offence:** Countries where forms of trafficking in persons are criminalized through other offences due to the absence of a specific trafficking in persons offence.

Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

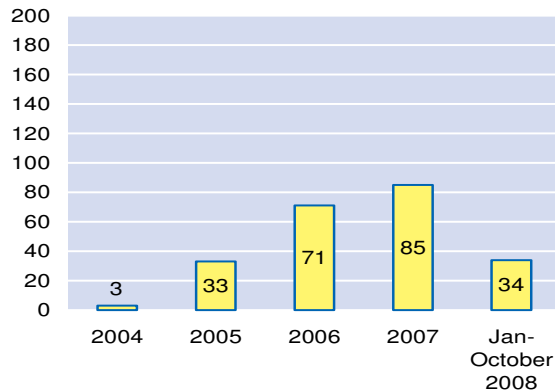
In this context, it must be stressed that the UN Trafficking Protocol requires Member States to criminalize trafficking in persons in all its forms, as defined in article 3. While using trafficking-related offences may enable to prosecute and convict criminals easily, applying legislation that is not specifically in line with the UN Trafficking Protocol is done at the expense of the victims. Victim protection measures are often not considered or not appropriate within the context of trafficking-related offences.

## ***B. The slow evolution of the criminal justice response***

As more countries have adopted specific legislation on human trafficking, more convictions for this crime are expected to be recorded. This is the case for the European region where an increasing trend in convictions (+30%) was recorded between 2003/04 and 2006/07. This is mostly due to increases in Romania and Bulgaria. While Bulgaria convicted three persons of human trafficking in 2004, in 2007, the number had risen to 85. Preliminary data for 2008 indicate a possible decrease. The number of convictions in Romania went from 49 in 2003 to 188 in 2007.

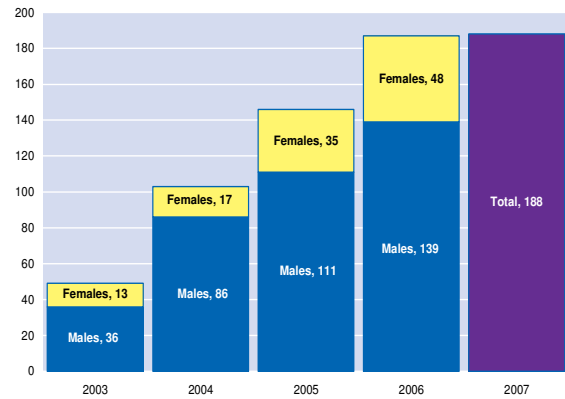
**Figure 3: Convictions recorded in Bulgaria and Romania**

**Persons sentenced for trafficking in persons in Bulgaria (2004-2006)**



Source: The Supreme Cassation Prosecutor Office in Bulgaria

**Persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Romania, by gender (2003-2007)**



Source: Resource Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons of the Inspectorate General of Romanian Police and Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism

When considering the numbers at the subregional level, differences in trends can be clearly identified.

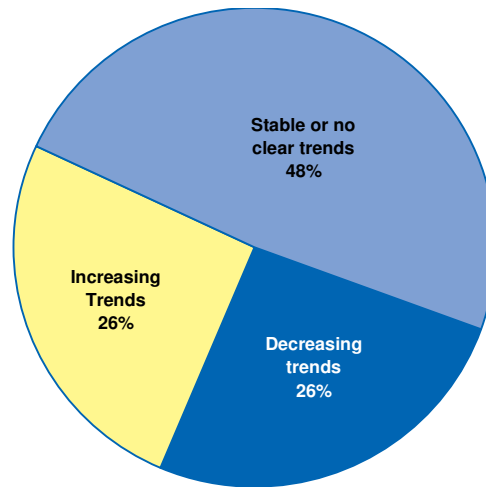
With the exception of Montenegro, all South-East European countries<sup>4</sup> recorded a rise in the number of persons investigated, prosecuted or convicted of human trafficking during the reporting period.

Conversely, almost all of the Central European countries showed a decreasing trend in the number of persons investigated or prosecuted for human trafficking from 2003 to 2007.

Trends were mixed in Western Europe. Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Greece and Italy recorded decreasing trends in the number of criminal proceedings over the last five years, whereas Denmark, France and the United Kingdom reported rising trends.

<sup>4</sup> The FYR Macedonia has recorded a decreasing trend in the number of prosecutions for trafficking in persons but an increasing trend in the number of persons prosecuted under the offence of “organization of a group and urging for committing trafficking in persons”.

**Figure 4: The trends in the number of recorded convictions <sup>5</sup> in Europe (2003-2007), percentage of countries**



Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

The response to human trafficking in terms of number of convictions recorded per year is still weak, especially compared to the number of victims that are estimated to be trafficked in Europe, which is estimated to be around 250,000 per year.<sup>6</sup> Most European countries record national conviction rates for human trafficking below one convict per 100,000 people.<sup>7</sup>

In order to contextualize the conviction rates for human trafficking, rates for other crimes may be considered. In Europe, there are more convictions for rare crimes such as kidnapping in Denmark (3 per 100,000 people), homicide in Finland (4 per 100,000 people) or robbery in Norway (5.8 per 100,000 people) than for human trafficking

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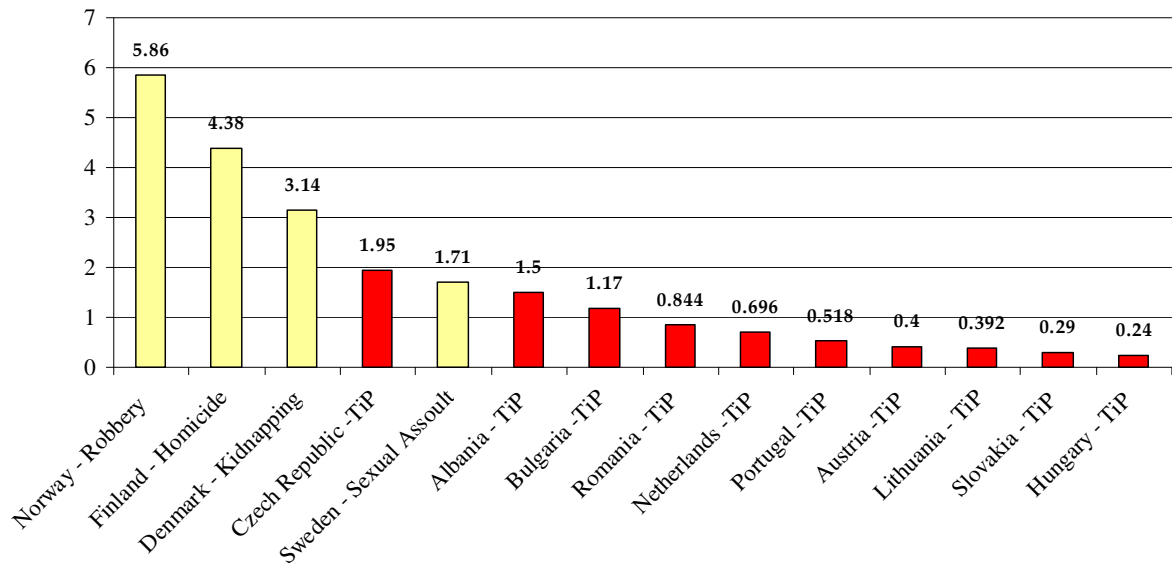
<sup>5</sup> When trends in convictions were not available, trends concerning prosecutions or investigations were considered.

<sup>6</sup> IOM has estimated that about 120,000 women and children are trafficked every year through the Balkans alone. ILO has estimated that, at minimum, 270,000 victims are under exploitation as a result of trafficking in the industrialized countries (Europe and North America), at any moment. Transcrime has estimated that, in Italy alone, about 40,000 victims are exploited for sexual exploitation.

<sup>7</sup> Exceptions were recorded in Czech Republic (1.9 per 100,000 people in 2005), Albania (1.5 for 100,000 people in 2006) and Bulgaria (1,17 per 100,000 people in 2007).



**Figure 5: Conviction rates per 100,000 people for human trafficking and selected crimes in selected European countries**



Source: Elaboration UNODC/UN.GIFT and UNODC-CTS data

This analysis opens for two possible explanations: either trafficking in persons is a crime much discussed but small in dimension (less than kidnappings in Denmark or homicides in Finland) or it is less frequently detected and punished than other crimes.

While it is true that estimates of the extent of trafficking in persons often lack a solid methodological base, the knowledge of the existence in Europe of exploitative practices such as child begging, work under irregular labour conditions, exploitation of the prostitution of others, domestic servitude etc. leads to the conclusion that the trafficking segments of these phenomena are large, compared to the few cases detected

## Human trafficking flows in Europe

Human trafficking flows show that Europe is affected in three ways: most of Europe is a destination for victims of trafficking, some countries are significant origins of human trafficking, and domestic trafficking is prevalent in many countries.

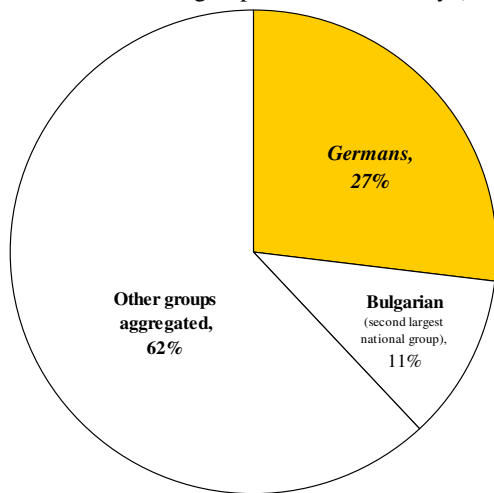
### ***A. Domestic trafficking: the unexpected victims***

Human trafficking has been portrayed for decades as a phenomenon affecting foreigners. As a matter of fact, data show that domestic trafficking is an important component of contemporary human trafficking. The consequence is that many of the countermeasures implemented (such as customs efficiency, ethno-linguistic integration, victim identification in irregular migration cases, training of Embassy and Consulate personnel, awareness campaigns on work abroad, and other) are not able to address this form of trafficking.

In Europe, domestic trafficking has been detected in at least 11 of the 38 countries considered in this study. In some countries, nationals are even the largest group of victims. This is the case for the Netherlands where Dutch victims were by far more numerous than other nationals. In 2007, the number of detected German victims in Germany was 184 of a total of 689 victims, making them the largest group of detected victims.

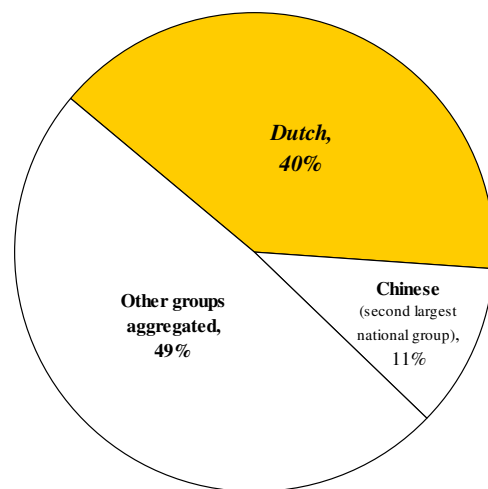
**Figure 6: Respective shares of foreigners and nationals in Germany and the Netherlands**

Respective share of foreigners and nationals among victims of trafficking in persons in Germany (2007)



Source: Bundeskriminalamt Trafficking in Human Beings

Respective shares of foreigners and nationals among victims registered in the Netherlands (2008)



Source: STV reports/The Bureau Nationaal Rapporteur Mensenhandel

In France, Italy and Romania nationals also accounted for a large part of the trafficking victim population.

Most of the Dutch victims considered in figure 6 relate to the so-called *loverboys* phenomenon. Dutch girls are exploited by their older ‘boyfriends’ who, abusing their psychological power and leverage, coerce these girls into prostitution. Similar methods cannot be excluded in other parts of Europe.

It has to be stressed that, because nationals are not “expected” to be victims of human trafficking, many criminal justice systems may tend to identify their own citizens not as victims of trafficking but as victims of other crimes, such as sexual exploitation, kidnapping or forced labour. The difference in how the data is categorized may thus be masking similarities between countries’ domestic trafficking situations.

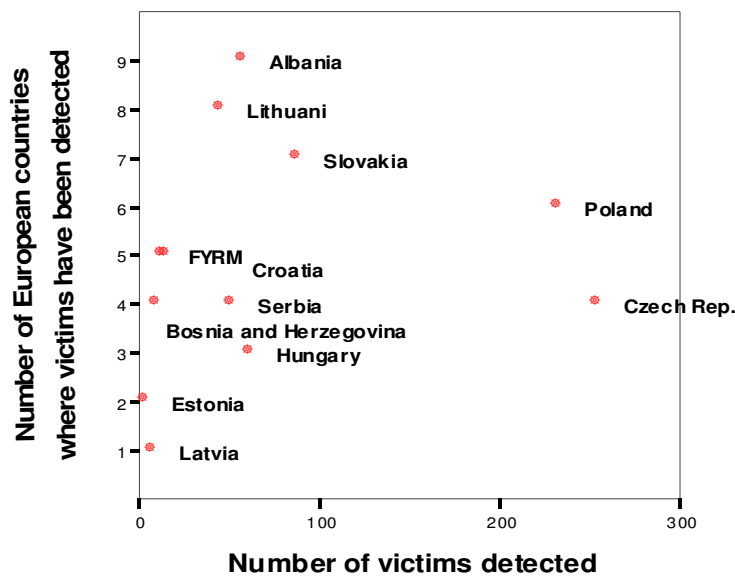
### ***B. Europe as origin: Central Europe and the Balkans***

Central and South-East European countries are origins for victims of human trafficking destined mainly for exploitation in the western and southern parts of the continent. European victims have rarely been detected in other regions of the world.

As far as Central Europe is concerned, a relatively small number of victims from Lithuania and Slovakia was detected in a wide range of European countries in the period 2005-2007. A large number of Polish and Czech victims was detected in fewer countries.

Other Central European and Baltic countries appear to be the origin of human trafficking victims destined for a limited number of countries.

**Figure 7 - European countries of origin of victims detected in Europe, according to number of victims detected and number of countries where victims were detected (2005-2007).**



Source: Elaboration UNODC/UN.GIFT data

Between 2005 and 2007, victims originating from the Western Balkans were found in four to five countries in Western and Southern Europe. During the same period, a limited number of Albanian victims were detected in nine European countries. In general, the number of victims from the Western Balkans detected in Europe does not appear particularly high.

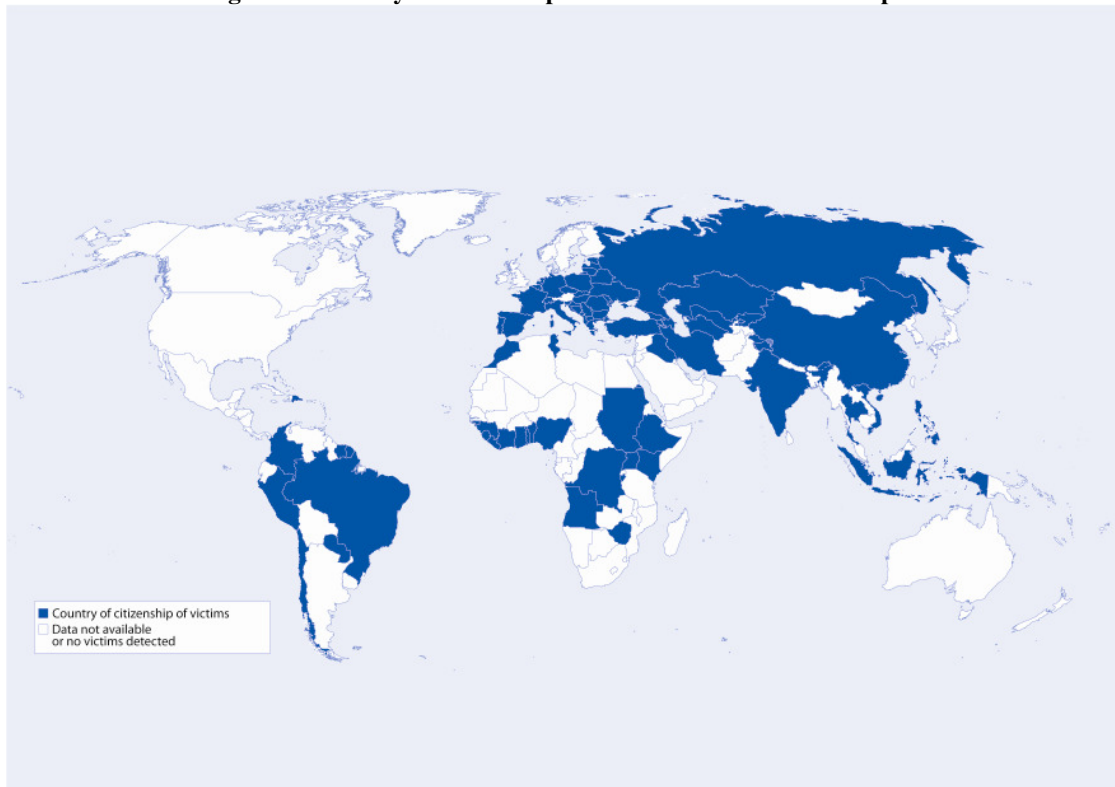
Bulgaria and Romania are hotspots in terms of the origins of human trafficking victims. The countries are not represented in the chart above as their figures are out of scale. Both in terms of the severity of the flow and the wide range of destinations of the trafficking, these two countries are more prominent than any other European origin countries. Between 2005 and 2007, more than 2,000 Romanian victims were recorded in 21 European countries. Over the same period, about 600 Bulgarian victims were detected in 17 European countries.

### ***C. Europe as destination; a whole world of victims***

As reported above, victims from Central Europe and the Balkans are trafficked to Western and Southern Europe. Europe as a whole is also a destination for victims trafficked from the Commonwealth of Independent States.

At the same time, European victims represent just a fraction of the total number of victims detected in Europe. Victims of trafficking in persons identified in Europe come from the most diverse range of origin countries than in any other region.

**Figure 8: Country of citizenship of victims trafficked to Europe<sup>8</sup>**



Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

During the 2005-2007 period, a substantial number of East Asian victims (in particular Chinese, but also Filipinos, Thais and Vietnamese) were detected in all European subregions. West African, South American and North African victims were also identified in some countries of Western and Southern Europe.

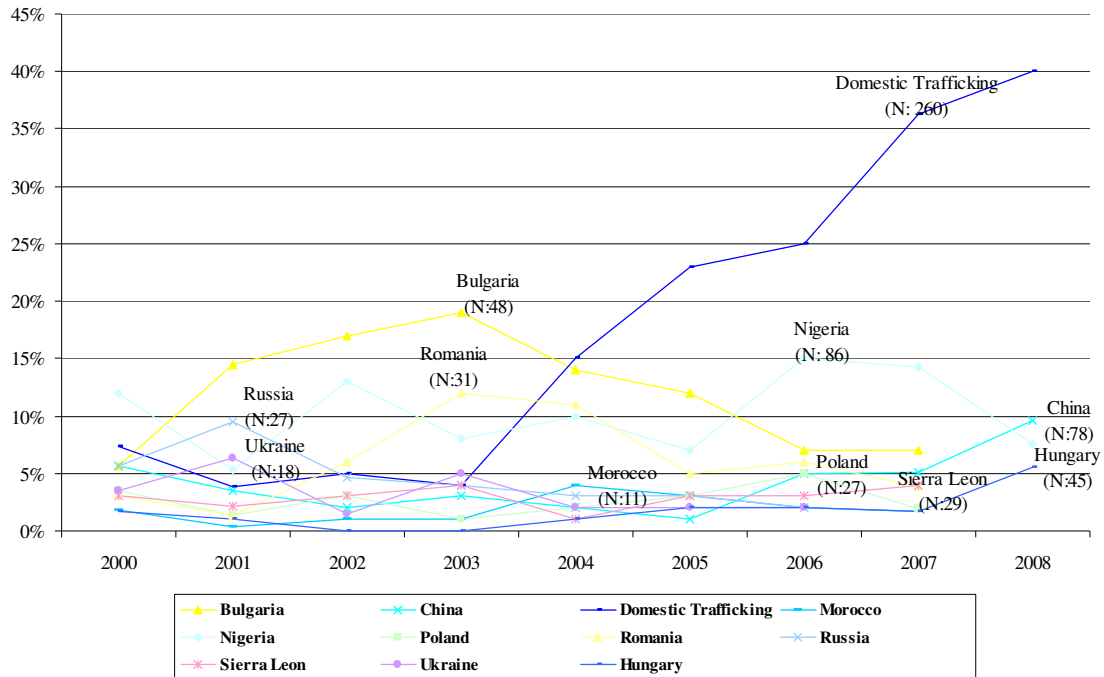
On the basis of available data, trends can be identified, including a possible increase or decrease of human trafficking from some areas.

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<sup>8</sup> The map is not exhaustive. In some countries, the nationality of the victims identified may not be reported, and often nationalities less frequently recorded may be aggregated into an 'other nationalities' category. As a consequence, this map should be considered in terms of the minimum scope of nationalities detected in Europe.

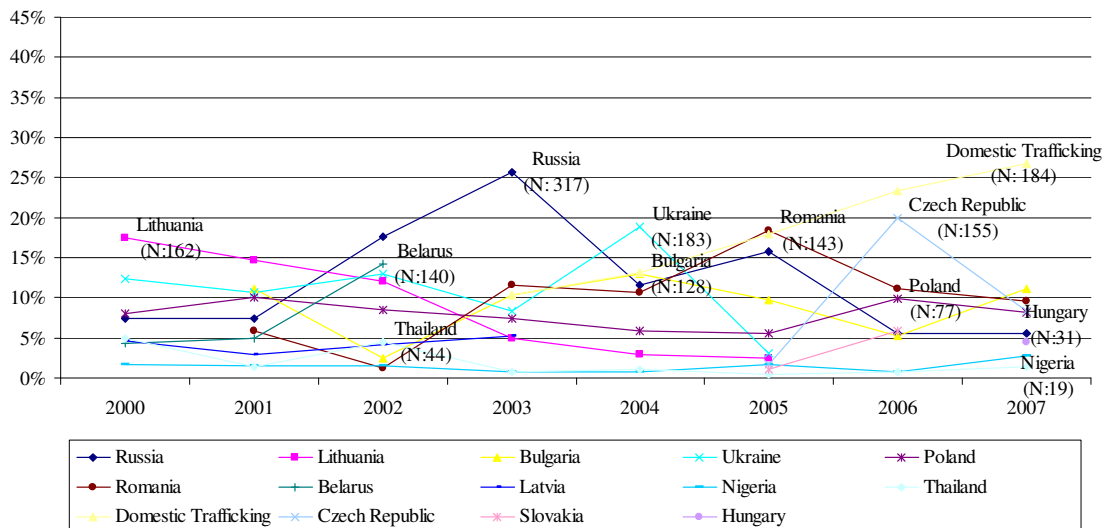
The following two charts represent a time series of the nationalities of the victims detected in the Netherlands and Germany.

**Figure 9: Trends in the main origin of victims of human trafficking detected in the Netherlands**



Source: Dutch National Rapporteur, different reports

**Figure 10 Trends in the main origin of victims of human trafficking detected in Germany**



Source: Bundeskriminalamt Trafficking in Human Beings, different reports

In Germany, victims from the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine comprised a large share of the victims of trafficking detected in 2003-2004. The presence of these victims

has drastically reduced in the last few years, as has the share of Lithuanian victims. In the Netherlands, the identification of Russian and Ukrainian victims registered a peak at the beginning of this decade, to decrease basically to zero in recent years.

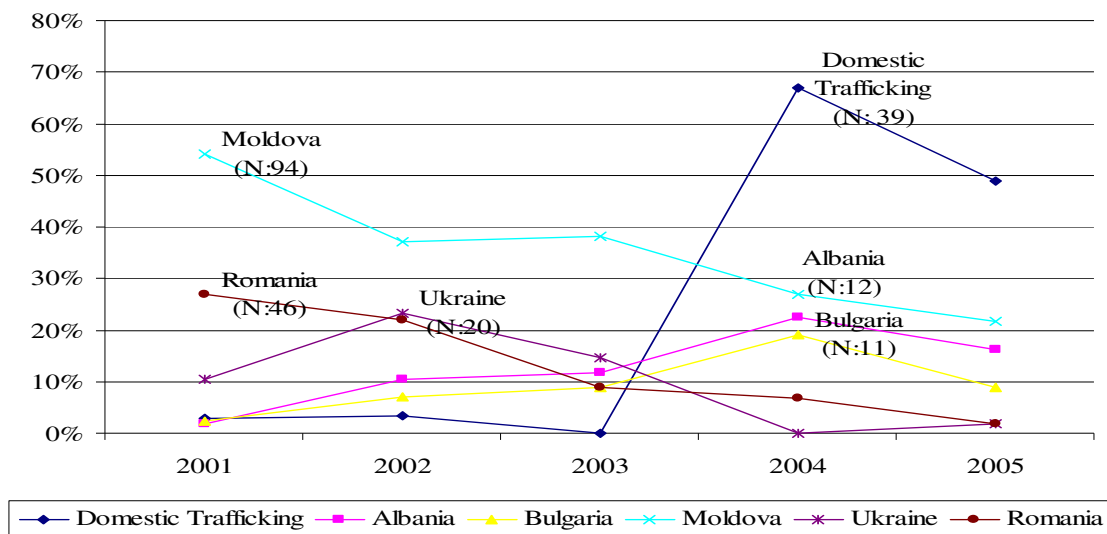
The share of Bulgarian and Romanian victims increased at the beginning of this decade to peak in the Netherlands in 2003, and in Germany in 2004-05. Although still significant, trafficking from these two countries has been slightly decreasing in recent years.

The share of Nigerian victims detected in both countries during the entire period considered remained constant. Trafficking of Chinese nationals increased in the Netherlands in the last few years. In 2008, Chinese victims were the largest group of foreign victims recorded in the Netherlands.

Germany and the Netherlands registered a peak in the identification of Hungarian victims in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Both countries also reported a constant increase in domestic trafficking during the entire period with peaks in 2007/08.

The number of Ukrainian victims also decreased in Kosovo, together with a sharp decrease in victims from Moldova and Romania. An increase in domestic trafficking has been registered in Kosovo in the last few years.

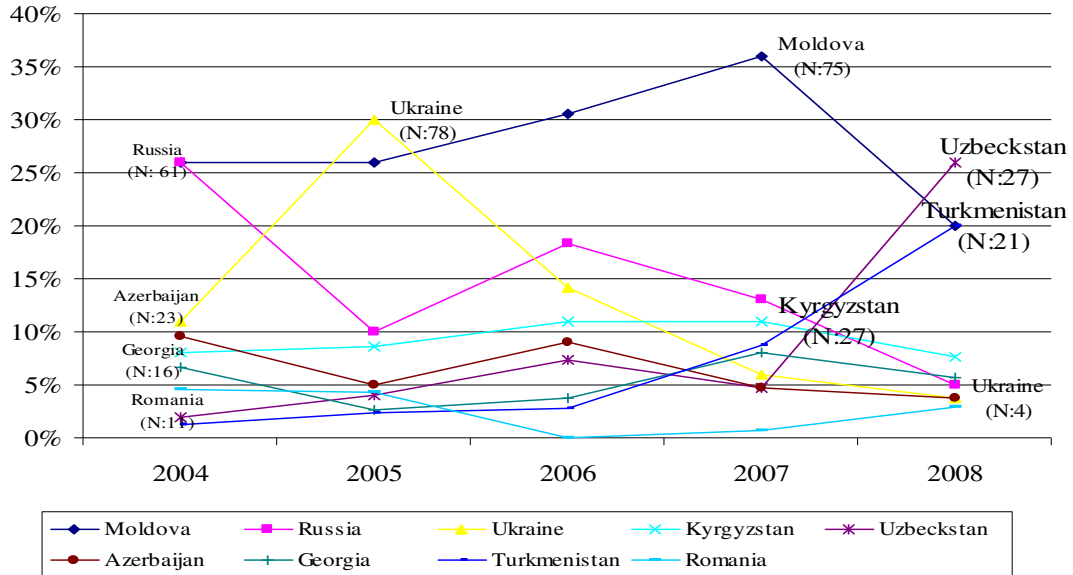
**Figure 11 Trends in the main origin of victims of human trafficking detected in Kosovo (Serbia)**



Source: Directorate of Crime for trafficking with Human Beings, Kosovo Police

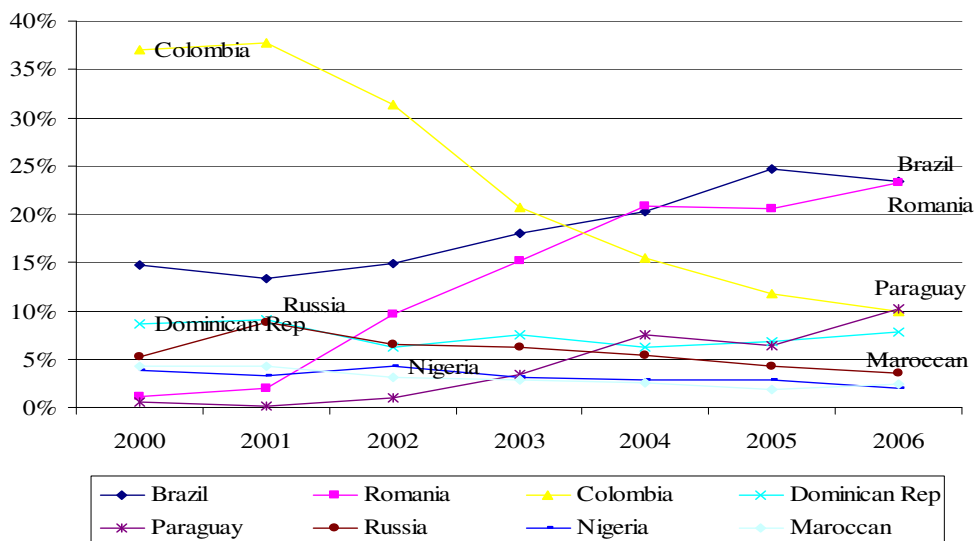
In Turkey, as in Germany, a peak in the number of Russian and Ukrainian victims of trafficking was registered in 2004-05. Recently the share of victims from these two countries have decreased to 4-5%. Similar trends have also been recorded in Greece and Italy.

**Figure 12 Trends in main origin of victims of human trafficking detected in Turkey**



Spain has different trafficking patterns than any other European countries. Normally dominated by victims from South America, Spain also saw the share of Russian victims detected peak in 2001 (9%) to decrease to 3.5% in 2006. While Colombian victims decreased consistently in the last few years, Brazilians and Paraguayans increased. Romanian victims were increasingly detected in Spain during this decade, while Nigerian victims registered a stable trend.

**Figure 13 Trends in main origin of victims of human trafficking detected in Spain**



To conclude, the available data indicate that Europe is facing a rapid diversification of the origins of its human trafficking victims.

New nationalities have entered the European scene in the last few years, such as Chinese, Paraguayan, Sierra Leonean and Uzbek victims. In addition, trafficking of nationals (internal trafficking) is rapidly and constantly increasing.

Traditional human trafficking flows to Europe, such as those originating from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Lithuania and Colombia have decreased sharply as of late.

Romanian and Bulgarian victims, although still detected in large quantities in many countries, registered a decreasing trend in some European countries in the last few years.

## **Trafficking patterns in Europe**

Information on the profile of the victims and offenders detected, as well as details on the cases of human trafficking recorded by the national authorities, allow for an analysis of the main trafficking patterns in Europe.

It is important to take into consideration that official statistics may over-represent incidents that are more easily detected by the criminal justice systems.

This is clearly the case when considering the forms of exploitation and/or the profile of the victims. Sexual exploitation is more likely to be detected than other forms of exploitation. This is because for many years a strong emphasis has been placed on sexual exploitation through awareness raising campaigns and the focus of legislation. Forced labour as a form of human trafficking is a recent inclusion in many national legislation.

As a consequence, criminal justice statistics are likely to contain a greater share of cases of sexual exploitation, compared to those actually occurring.

With this caveat in mind, some conclusions on the trafficking patterns in Europe can be drawn.

### ***A. Profile of the offenders: The next door trafficker***

As far as the profile of the offenders is concerned, the European data confirm a global pattern. In Europe, men comprise by far the largest share of traffickers convicted. At the same time, the rates of female offenders are higher for human trafficking than for other crimes.

A large body of literature has discussed the role of women in human trafficking. For instance, many qualitative studies have shown that Nigerian trafficking networks tend to



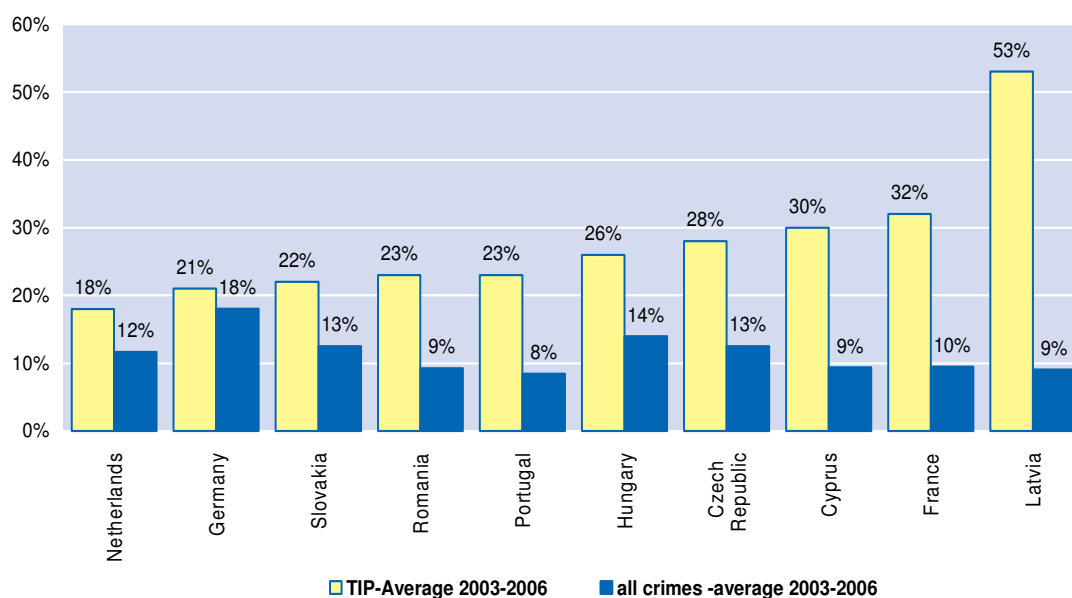
be dominated by women.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, studies on Eastern European and Central Asian trafficking also indicate that women have an important role in this crime<sup>10</sup>.

The criminological reasons behind this have yet to be comprehensively explained. In the case of Nigerian trafficking, however, many scholars report the passage from victim to exploiter as a possible pattern of this form of trafficking<sup>11</sup>

Some women are used by male-dominated organized crime networks to recruit other women. Thus, these female recruiters are in a way themselves ‘used’.

Whatever the reasons, statistics clearly show that the shares of women convicted for the offence of human trafficking are greater than for other crimes (see chart below).

**Figure 14: Ratio of females convicted compared to the ratio of convictions for both genders for trafficking in persons and for all offences in Europe**



Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

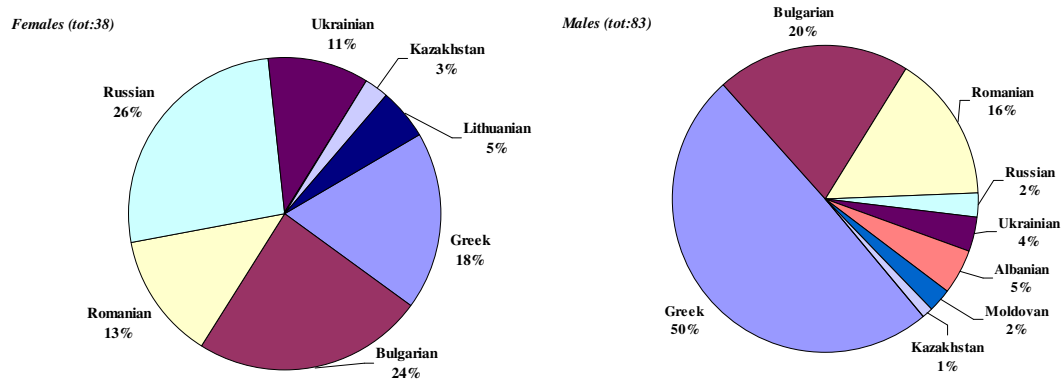
<sup>9</sup> Carling, J. *Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe*, IOM, 2005; Carchedi-Orfano *La tratta di persone in Italia*, Osservatorio tratta, 2007; UNICRI *Trafficking of Nigerian Girls to Italy*, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Deceived Migrants from Tajikistan: A Study of Trafficking in Women and Children <http://www.iom.int/documents/publication/en/tajikistan%5Fstudy%5Faugust2001.pdf>; Trafficking in Women and Children for Purposes of Sexual Exploitation” by Tatiana A. Denisova, Zaporizhie State University, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/international/programs/TraffickingWomen.PDF>; “An Assessment of Referral Practices to Assist and Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons in Moldova”, UNODC, Chisinau, Moldova, February 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Carling, J. *Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe*, IOM, 2005.

The female conviction in Eastern Europe and Central Asia tend to be higher than in other regions.<sup>12</sup> This trend is confirmed for these nationals also in destination countries. In 2007, 121 persons were arrested for human trafficking in Greece. Among them, 38 were women. More than 40% of these women were Eastern European (Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakh) whereas the same nationalities accounted for only 7% of the males arrested.

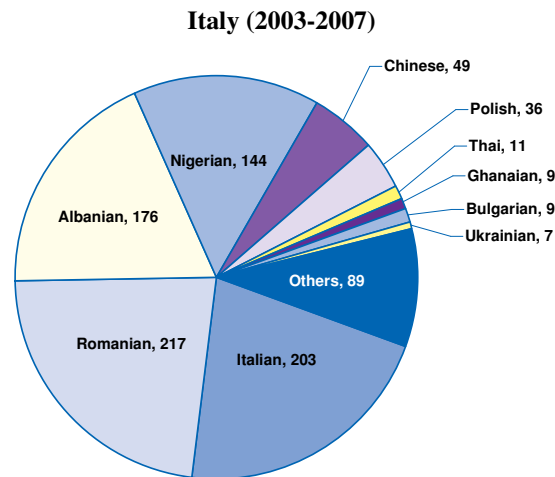
**Figure 15 Nationality of arrestees for human trafficking in Greece, by gender (2007)**



Source: Ministry of Public Order, Greece

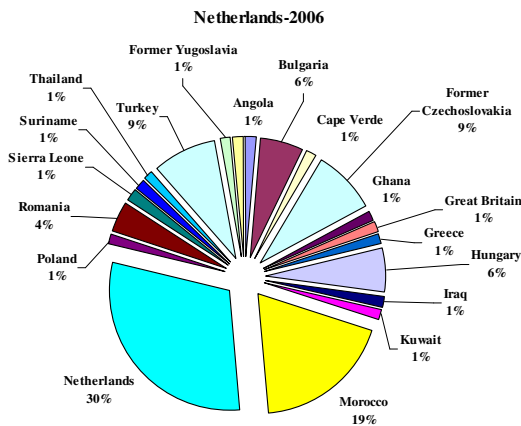
An analysis of the nationality of the offenders provide other insights into the trafficking patterns.

**Figure 16 Persons under prosecution for trafficking in persons offences in selected countries, by citizenship**

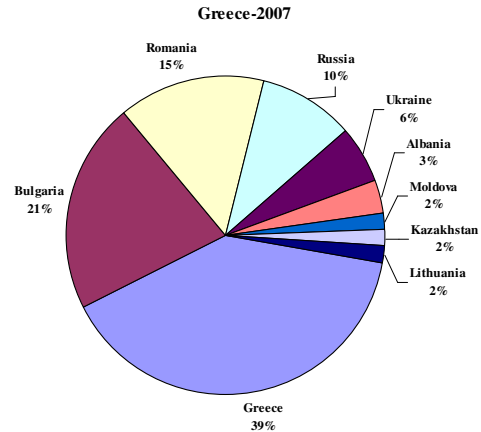


Source: National Anti-Mafia Bureau

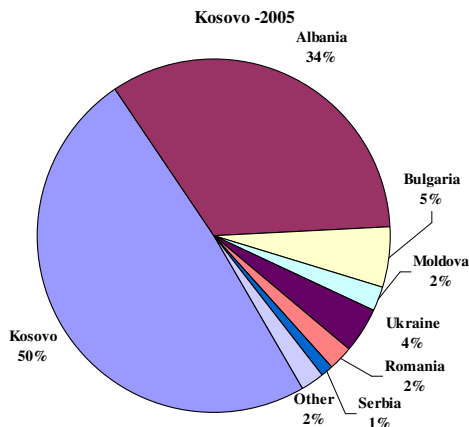
<sup>12</sup> UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, UNODC, 2009.



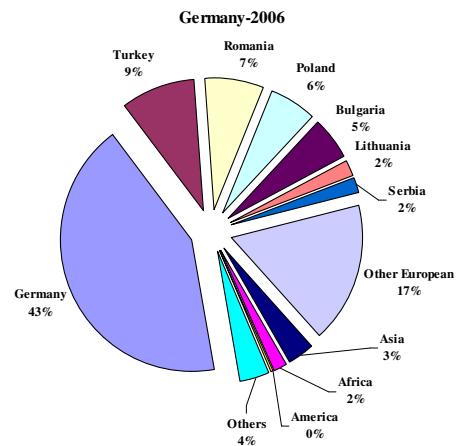
Source: Dutch National Rapporteur



Source: Ministry of Public Order, Greece



Source: Directorate of Crime for trafficking with Human Beings, Kosovo Police



Source: Bundeskriminalamt Trafficking in Human Beings,

In Europe, locals comprise the largest group of offenders. At the same time, the number of foreign traffickers (suspected or convicted) is substantially higher than in any other region. The nationalities of the foreign offenders are often related to the nationality of the victims.

In Italy, for instance, the large share of Romanian and Nigerian offenders is linked to the large share of the victims from these two countries. In Greece, the prominence of Bulgarian and Romanian offenders is related to the Bulgarian and Romanian victims trafficked there.

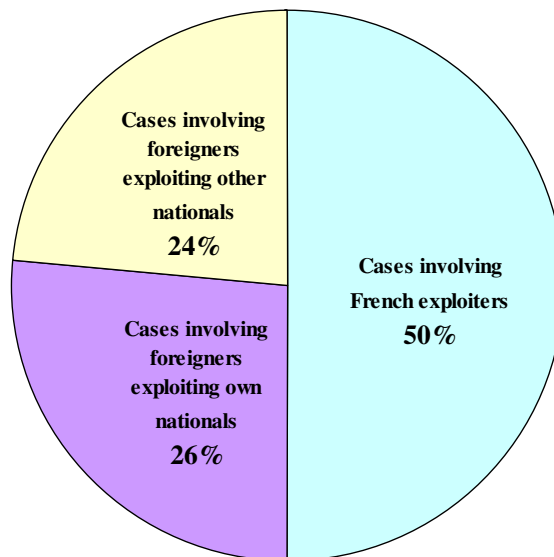
It can be concluded that when traffickers are foreign, they mainly exploit victims of their own national group. However, this conclusion does not provide an exhaustive interpretation of the trafficker-victim relation.

In Germany, where no Turkish victims were identified, Turks represent a large share of the number of suspects. A similar pattern can be found in the Netherlands, where many Turkish and Moroccan nationals were prosecuted. This suggests that victims are not exclusively exploited by either fellow nationals or locals.

Disaggregated data on the victims and the offenders of forced labour in France confirm this pattern. In 2008, the *Office central de lutte contre le travail illégal* registered 37 cases of forced labour prosecuted under different offences. In one case out of four,

foreigners in France exploited nationals of third countries not connected with the nationality of the exploiters. 50% of these cases involved French offenders exploiting French nationals or foreigners. 26% of the cases saw foreigners prosecuted for exploiting their own nationals.

**Figure 17 Distribution of criminal proceeding (tot: 37) for forced labour in France, according to the nationality of the offenders and of the victims**



Source: Office central de lutte contre le travail illégal (OCLTI), France

For some of these cases, there are linguistic ties between the offenders and victims (Portuguese trafficking Brazilians, Tunisians trafficking Moroccan). In other cases, no specific linkages exist between the exploiters and the exploited.

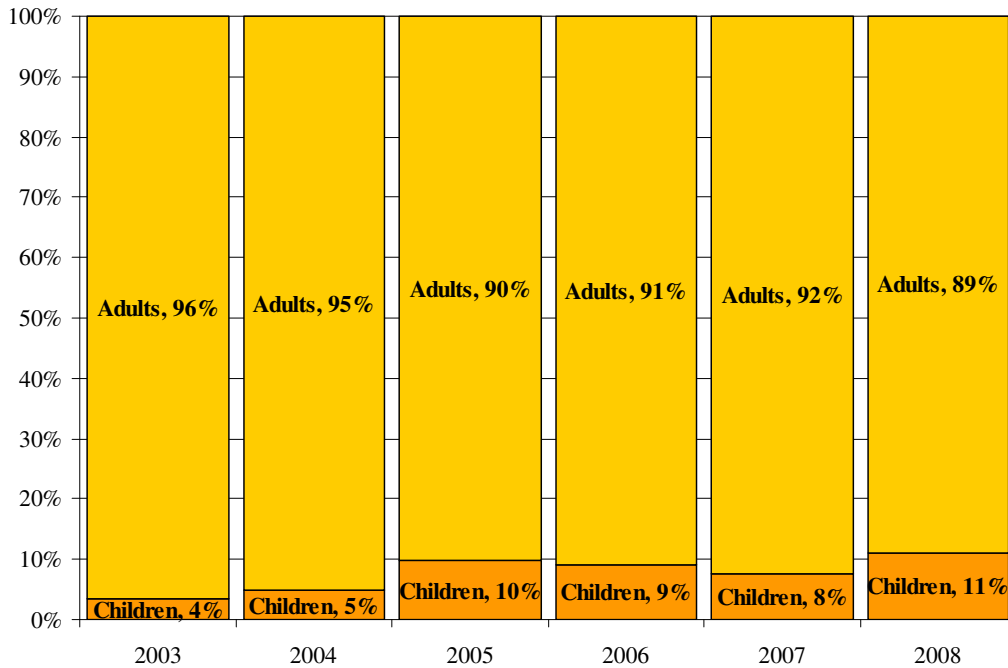
### ***B. The victims and the forms of exploitation***

Where information about the victims of trafficking in persons was available, females comprised the clear majority. Adult women were also more frequently reported as victims than girls.

Overall, child victims were less common than adults in most countries. In Europe as a whole, child victims account for about 10% of the victims detected. The share of minors increased from about 5% in 2003 to more than 10% in 2008.

The aggregated numbers hide great differences among the different subregions and countries. In South-East Europe the number of child victims identified or sheltered was generally higher than in the rest of Europe.

**Figure 18 Profile of victims identified in Europe where information was collected, by year**

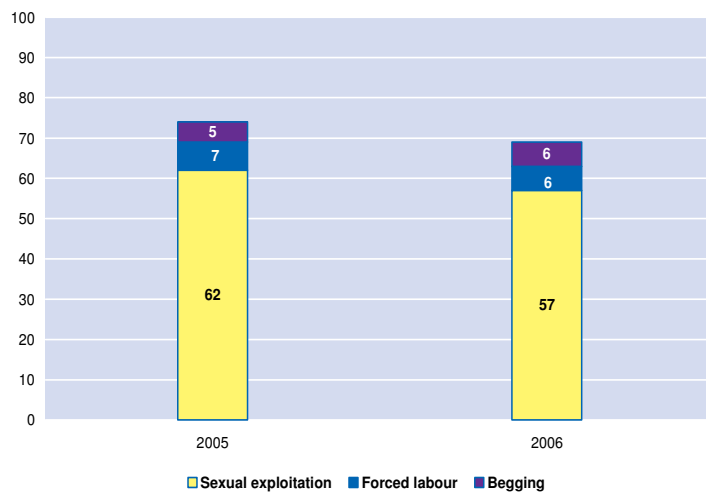


Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

Male victims were occasionally reported in most of the countries in the region. Adult male victims were detected in Southern and Western Europe, and both men and boys were reported as trafficking victims in South-East Europe.

The available data identified trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation as the most common type of exploitation. As mentioned above, this might also be due to the greater attention this form of exploitation has received from the criminal justice systems in Europe.

**Figure 19: Victims of trafficking in persons identified by State authorities in Albania, by type of exploitation (2005-2006)**



Source: National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking, Albania

However, a significant number of cases of trafficking for forced labour were detected in many European countries during the reporting period. Victims of trafficking for forced labour were identified in Albania, Belgium, France, Italy, Romania and Spain, and forced

labour was episodically detected in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Finland and the United Kingdom, to mention some.

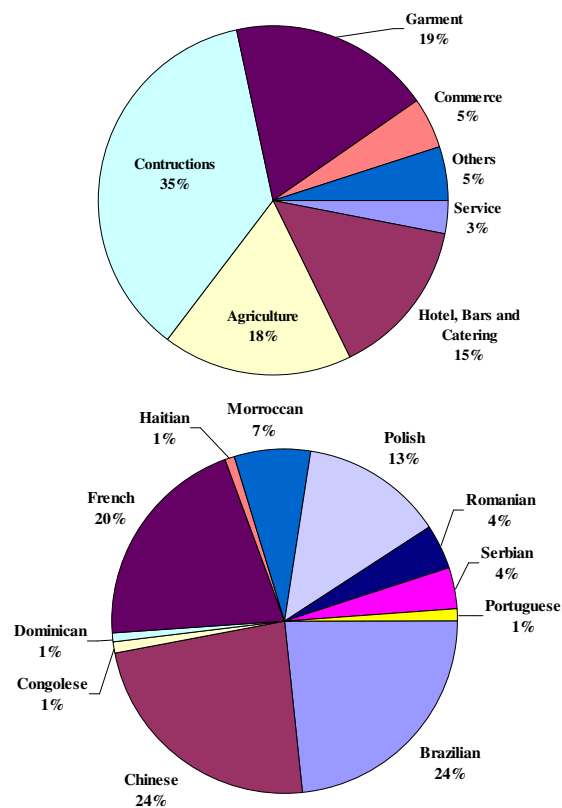
This suggests that trafficking for forced labour is likely to exist in other countries of the region as well, but goes undetected. Trafficking for begging is less frequently reported and was found mainly in South-East Europe and in some Western European countries.

### Exploitation for forced labour: the case of France

The French data on forced labour allow for detailed reporting about the economic sectors where victims were exploited. Construction is the area where victims are more frequently exploited in France. Brazilians and Central European victims in particular were reported to be exploited in this sector.

Agriculture is the second most important area of exploitation. Poles and North Africans victims were detected in this sector. Chinese victims were more frequently exploited in the catering and textile sectors.

**Figure 20 Victims of forced labour in France, by economic sector and nationality.**



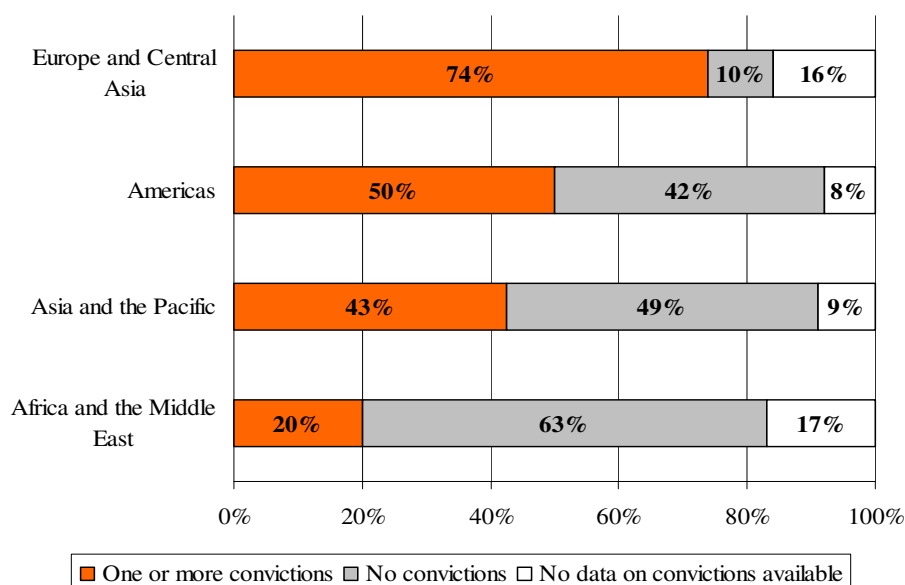
Source: Office central de lutte contre le travail illégal (OCLTI), France

## The way forward in international monitoring of trafficking trends, patterns and flows

Europe offers a relative wealth of information on human trafficking. When compared with the rest of the world, countries in Europe have by far the best and most systematized data collection mechanisms for trafficking in persons.

In addition, although the number of convictions are still very low, the absolute number of criminal proceedings in many European countries is much higher than those registered in the rest of the world. For instance, the total number of convictions registered in Germany per year are higher than those registered in the Americas, where 42% of the countries did not record a single conviction.

**Figure 21 – Percentage of countries where convictions have been registered, by region**



Source: UNODC/UN.GIFT

As a consequence, the patterns, flows and trends concerning Europe are based on a larger sample of victims, compared to the rest of the world.

The European Commission is strongly committed to improving the national data collection systems and the information-sharing mechanism at the European Union level. In 2009, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and The International Organization for Migration, with the financial support of the European Commission, published guidelines for the collection of data on human trafficking.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the International Labour Office and the European Commission finalized a list of indicators of human

<sup>13</sup>[http://www.iomvienna.at/files/Upload/IOM\\_Vienna\\_AT\\_MoI\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_the\\_Collection\\_of\\_Data\\_on\\_THB.pdf](http://www.iomvienna.at/files/Upload/IOM_Vienna_AT_MoI_Guidelines_for_the_Collection_of_Data_on_THB.pdf)

trafficking in Europe to be used by institutions in charge of data collection on trafficking in human beings at the national level.<sup>14</sup>

Other EC projects were conducted in this field, such as the SIAMSECT files<sup>15</sup> that aimed to elaborate an EU template and collection plan for statistical information and analysis on missing children and human trafficking.

Additionally, several initiatives took place at the subregional level, such as those carried out by ICMPD in South-East Europe and Central Europe.<sup>16</sup>

This momentum should not be lost. It is important to place such efforts in a broader monitoring framework that can help identify and trace transnational trafficking patterns and flows beyond European borders.

The first step in tackling a transnational issue is information sharing that has to be conducted through the creation of an international monitoring mechanisms on trafficking in persons. Without this effort, the international community will be fighting the problem blindfolded.

The UNODC Executive Director's foreword to the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* emphasizes the knowledge crisis on human trafficking. While the *Global Report* provides a significant contribution in a field where too many gaps still exist, the international monitoring mechanism's main goal should be to fill these gaps.

Tackling transnational trafficking in persons requires ongoing exchange of data between countries. The States Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) recognized this when they agreed upon the language in Article 28 of the Convention, which states that:

*States Parties shall consider developing and sharing analytical expertise concerning organized criminal activities with each other and through international and regional organizations. For that purpose, common definitions, standards and methodologies should be developed and applied as appropriate.*

Article 32 (b) of the TOC convention assigned to the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the UN Protocol the duty of “*facilitating the exchange of information among State Parties on Patterns and Trends in transnational organized Crime and on successful practice for combating it*”. Article 32 (d) assigns the duty to periodically review the implementation of the convention to the CoP.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_105023.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_105023.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Vermuelen, Balcaen, Di Nicola, Cauduro “*The SIAMSECT files; Standardized templates and blueprint for EU-wide collection of statistical information and analysis on mission and sexually exploited children and trafficking in human beings*”, IRCP and Transcrime, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> International Centre for Migration Policy Development “*Handbook on Anti-Trafficking Data Collection in South-Eastern Europe: Developing Regional Criteria*”, ICMPD, 2008.



All United Nations Member States, European or not, would benefit if more countries approached the knowledge problem systematically. The insights gained by pooling experience and sharing information would be invaluable in designing targeted interventions to this international problem. Engaging in multilateral collaboration to ensure enhanced gathering and analysis of primary data is an important step towards achieving full implementation of the Protocol.