SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SOME GROUPS OF CHILDREN AT RISK IN BULGARIA
PROJECT “MARIO - JOINT ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION IN EUROPE”

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SOME GROUPS OF CHILDREN AT RISK IN BULGARIA

Sofia, 2012

PROJECT “MARIO - JOINT ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION IN EUROPE”

„Protect children on the move”

funded by OAK Foundation, coordinated by Terre des Hommes – Child Relief, Hungary and realized by Terre des Hommes – Albania, Terre des Hommes - Kosovo, Save the children–Albania, Nobody’s Children Foundation – Poland, ECPAT – Netherlands and ECPAT – Bulgaria, Neglected Children Society

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Situational analysis is realized in the framework of the international project “Mario – Joint Action to Protect Children from Exploitation in Europe” funded by OAK Foundation, coordinated by Terre des Hommes–Hungary and realized by the organizations: Terre des Hommes - Albania, Terre des Hommes - Kosovo, Save the Children - Albania, Nobody’s Children Foundation - Poland, ECPAT Netherlands /End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking for Sexual Purposes/ and ECPAT - Bulgaria, Neglected Children Society. Mario project is realized in the period – January 2009 – March 2012 and includes a number of national and transnational activities – detailed information can be obtained from www.marioproject.com

In 2009, for the purpose of the Project, ECPAT Bulgaria published and disseminated the first situational analysis with the title “Situational Analysis of the Actions against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Bulgaria”. The purpose of the report was to present basic information about the extent and nature of different forms of child sexual exploitation related to the children of Bulgaria; it analyzed the actions of the state and NGOs for prevention and counteraction of this phenomenon.; it also tended to point out the recommendations and comments of international and Bulgarian organisations related to the engagements of Bulgaria concerning the fight against the forms of child sexual exploitation. The Analysis also tried to make popular good practices in Bulgaria in counteracting child sexual exploitation and indicate the gaps in the solution of the problems with the protection of children from the manifestation of child sexual exploitation – forced prostitution, child sex tourism, child pornography (including Internet), sexual abuse, etc. These was information about the advance made and the problems faced by our country in execution of its engagements related to international documents and standards for protection of children from sexual exploitation, as well as information about the inter-institutional interaction and international cooperation in preventing and combating different forms of child sexual exploitation on national and international scale.

The first Situational analysis devoted to the problems of sexual exploitation of children became a basis for implementation of different activities of ECPAT Bulgaria and the Expert Group in Mario Project. The analysis served as a starting point for realization of the planned project activities like: advocacy activities of the Expert group on problems of child victims and the existing discrepancies in the activities of the Crisis centers for children – victims of violence and trafficking; trainings with police officers, social workers, directors and psychologists from Crisis Centers for children, professionals working in the institutions for children at risk; advocacy actions and lobbying for counteraction of exploitation of children on national and international level; informing government organisations and NGOs in the country and the parliamentarian commissions on the situation of the prevention of child sexual exploitation and protection of child victims; presentation of Bulgarian good practices at international expert meetings for exchange of experience and international monitoring organisations. We hope that this Situational Analysis has served
also as a valuable information and analytical material for a number of institutions, NGOs and specialists who work with children and are interested in the problems related to protection of children, prevention and combating all forms of child sexual exploitation and particularly – trafficking in children for sexual purposes. The first Situational Analysis also contributed to the other existing reports on the situation in Bulgaria related to the implementation of international and national mechanisms for protection of the rights of children, as well as the realization of national strategies, programs and action plans of state institutions, international organisations and NGOs in the field of combating child sexual exploitation and its different forms (child prostitution, trafficking in children for sexual purposes, child pornography in Internet, child sex tourism, etc.).

There was a conclusion in the Introduction of “Situational Analysis of the Actions against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Bulgaria” which we would like to repeat in the Introduction of the present Analysis, namely: “International experience shows that the degree of responsibility and the role which one government assumes to establish and keep standards for protection of child rights changes the nature, quality and scope of care given by one country to its children. Governments can have and achieve progress in combating sexual exploitation of children and they often find out new important instruments and methods for action. Nevertheless, these actions are united neither on national level nor worldwide. The analysis shows that in some countries urgent and timely multistakeholder actions are needed to protect children from the horrible sexual abuse which is being committed around the world”.

With this quotation we make a transition to the subject matter of the present Analysis in the framework of “Mario” - “Situational Analysis of Some Groups of children at Risk in Bulgaria”, devoted to a considerably wider range of problems related to groups of children in different risk situations; the problems of some institutions in delivering social services for protection of children; comments and recommendations of international organisations on critical moments of social reality related to the protection of children and realization of their protection as victims of crimes, abuse and exploitation. National and transnational activities under Mario Project are oriented towards different groups of children at risk and children – victims of different forms of crimes, exploitation and violence which necessitated a wider thematic scope of the second Situational Analysis compared to the first Analysis devoted only to the problems of sexual exploitation of children. The Motto of Mario Project is: “Protect children on the move” – and the category “children on the move” includes different groups of children who at certain times are in a process of movement and at the same time they are not offered protection and/or a placed in a situation of a concrete risk, including the risk of exploitation. For example, these children on the move can be: - children-migrants from other countries (with or without their parents); unaccompanied children; runaways from accommodation homes or institutions; uncontrolled, begging and wondering children; children – victims of different forms of exploitation (labour, sexual exploitation); children – victims of trafficking (including for sexual purposes); children – victims of violence and/or crimes; children – perpetrators of asocial acts and/or criminal offences; children from institutions providing social services, accommodation or children from correctional schools, etc. Practically, the children from each of the listed sub-groups could be at criminogenic or
victimogenic risk at certain moments of their lives and quite often both categories of risk situations are interrelated.

The present Situational Analysis includes statistical data, analytical materials, information, data from reports, conclusions and recommendations for the following groups of children at risk who are included in two main big categories: "Children at criminogenic risk" and "Children at victimogenic risk", namely: runaways from home, runaways from school, runaways from institutions; wandering and begging children; alcohol and drug abused children; crime perpetrators and victims of crimes; victims of prostitution, trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation; maltreated children; children-migrants in EU member country, etc. These groups of children have been chosen to be included in the analysis and for the only reason that for these categories there exists statistical information in the database of the National Statistical Institute, Ministry of Interior and the specialized institutions for children, as well as in comments from information and analyses of Bulgarian and international organisations working on the problems of children at risk. In order to have continuity between the two situational analyses prepared within Mario Project, the second part of this report again focuses on the problems of child sexual exploitation expressed in all its forms and traces the comments of the monitoring reports of international organisations supervising the implementation of the engagements of different countries in observation of the requirements set in important world documents, instruments and standards related to compliance with human rights and particularly – protection of the rights of children. The important objective of similar situational analyses is that, by presenting information and conclusions, these reports become tools for exchange of experience and knowledge between different acting institutions and NGOs in the country and also tools for popularization and exchange of practices between different countries in relation with the policies and actions taken for prevention of attempts against children and protection of children from different forms of exploitation and inhuman attitude toward them. In this way an important analytical basis for lobbying and advocacy actions is created and also this makes it possible to initiate a dialogue between countries, institutions and experts on national and international level. On its part this helps the optimization of the future struggle against child exploitation and the mobilization of all organisations and persons responsible for the protection of child rights according to the requirements of the UN Convention on the rights of children and its optional protocols, as well as the international conventions, framework decisions and instruments for protection of children from violence.

We would like also to remind that the present Situational Analysis, realized under the guidance of ECPAT Bulgaria within “Mario – Joint Action to Protect Children from Exploitation in Europe”, comes as a result of the wide cooperation of the organisation with state institutions, international and national partner organisations, NGOs and different Bulgarian experts. The team of ECPAT - Bulgaria, Neglected Children Society express their gratitude to everyone who took part in the preparation of this Analysis, cooperated with us and granted their expert support by means of researches, analytical materials and evaluations. We would like to thank to those who responded to our appeal and contributed to the
systematization of the information in this report. We hope that this *Situational analysis of some groups of children at risk in Bulgaria*, realized in the framework of the European project *Mario*, will be useful for different specialists, researchers and representatives of organisations from the civil society who work on institutional and non-government level for prevention and protection of children against different forms of crimes and violence against them. We also hope that the Situational Analysis will be useful for the experts working on these problems as well as for providing knowledge on the problems for journalists, professors and citizens with active civil position who participate in the fight against exploitation of children, including exploitation for sexual purposes. With the present “Situational Analysis of Some Groups of children at Risk in Bulgaria” *ECPAT – Bulgaria* joins the global process of making efforts to prevent, restrict and eliminate different forms of child exploitation which are the most sinister phenomena of the present day directed against child innocence.

Lydia Zagorova

Chairperson of ECPAT-Bulgaria
Neglected Children Society,
National Affiliate Group of ECPAT International,

National coordinator for “Mario – Joint Action to Protect Children from Exploitation in Europe” - an international project funded by OAK Foundation
1. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Definitions and descriptions used in the analysis:

- **Children at criminogenic risk** – persons under 18 who due to their individual, personal and behavioral peculiarities and the characteristics of their social micro environment have perpetrated or have been in a potential situation of perpetrating violence, antisocial manifestations and offences and who can possibly develop criminal biographies.

- **Children at victimogenic risk** - persons under 18 who due to their individual, personal and behavioral peculiarities and the characteristics of their social micro environment have been victims or are in a potential situation of becoming victims of crimes, trafficking, exploitation and other forms of violence.

Risk factors - the analysis adheres to the definitions for risk factors, criminogenic and victimogenic risks published in a research of a team of judges concerning criminogenic and victimogenic factors among children.


According to the authors of the publication:

- Risk factor is a term which identifies one circumstance or a combination of circumstances which increase the possibility for a certain child to develop negative deviation in his/her behaviour compared to the abstract possibility of such deviation to be developed in a child chosen at random from the community.

- Criminogenic risk – when the deviation represents a socially reprimanded behaviour the risk which determines it is criminogenic.

- Victimogenic risk – when the risk increases the possibility for the child to suffer harms from a concrete crime this risk is victimogenic.

Definitions of “children at risk” in the Child Protection Act (CPA)-the analysis also takes into consideration the definitions set in the Child Protection Act. According to the Additional resolutions, Art.11 of CPA:

- “Child at risk” is a child:
  a) a child whose parents are deceased, unknown, deprived of parental rights or whose parental rights have been restricted, or the child has been left without their care;
  b) a child who is a victim of abuse, violence, exploitation or any other inhuman or humiliating treatment or punishment in or outside his/her family;
  c) a child in danger of possibly being harmed in terms of his/her physical, psychic, moral, intellectual and social growth;
  d) a child who suffers from injuries and difficult to cure disorders identified by a specialist;
e) a child who faces a possible risk of dropping off from school or who has dropped off school.

- **Working terms used in Mario Project - Joint Action to Protect Children from Exploitation in Europe** which this analysis has been prepared for within the project framework – the analysis complies with the terms defined by the leaders of the Project for the respective categories of children which are included as a target group in the activities of the Project:

  - **Children on the move** - According to the documents of Mario Project the term “children on the move” should be conceived as a term including the following categories of children: children-migrants (who migrate within one country and abroad legally/illegally, accompanied/unaccompanied); children seeking asylum or children-refugees; trafficked children (trafficking for sexual purposes, begging, pickpocketing or other forms of exploitation); children – temporarily accommodated in Crisis Centers, shelters and other institutions; children– moved within the country and children who are out of protected environment.

  According to a definition of INICEF:

  - **Unaccompanied „children on the move”** as a term refers to 3 basic categories of children:
    1. Children who migrate to seek possibilities without prior approval to enter the country of destination;
    2. Children who are exploited in the context of migration and occasionally through trafficking;
    3. Children who go abroad to escape from dangerous situations and seek refuge.


  - **Children-migrants**

    According to the documents of Mario Project the term “children – migrants” includes “children who migrate from one place to another within one country or across its borders.”
2.2. List of abbreviations of laws, institutions and organisations used in the text:

CJDA – Combating Juvenile Delinquency Act
CCCJD and LCCJD - Central and Local commissions for combating juvenile delinquency – bodies of state and local executive power, created under a special Act for coordination, control, and methodological supervision of prevention activities for restriction of the factors for asocial behaviour of children.
CPA – Child Protection Act
SAA and RISAA – Social Assistance Act and Regulations for Implementation of the Social Assistance Act
HTAM - Homes for temporary accommodation of minors to Ministry of Interior
CPBS - Social-pedagogical boarding school
CBS - Correctional boarding schools
SACP - State Agency for Child Protection
CPD - Child Protection Department
SAA - Social Assistance Agency
CCCVTV - Crisis centers for children - victims of trafficking and violence
CWSC - Centers for work with street children
CTA - Centers for Temporary Accommodation
CAFT - Centers for accommodation - family type
CPS – Centers for public support
CSSC - Complex for social services for children
MI – Ministry of Interior
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCCTHB – National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
BHC – Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
NSI – National Statistical Institute
ECPAT International and ECPAT Bulgaria – acronyms of the international organization ECPAT - End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking For Sexual Purposes and its branch in Bulgaria

2.3. Sources used during the preparation of the analysis

Information from the following sources has been used in the Situational Analysis: National Statistical Institute (NSI) – according to indicators given by the Central Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (CCPJD) to the Council of Ministers; Ministry of Interior (MI); State Agency for Child Protection (SACP); National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings(NCCTHB); studies of Neglected Children Society – ECPAT – Bulgaria; advocacy materials from the Expert Group within Mario Project, reports of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, GRETA, reports on Mario Project, State Department of USA, and other international organisations mentioned hereunder in the text - UPR.
4. CHILDREN AT CRIMINOGENIC AND VICTIMOGENIC RISK

3.1. Analysis objective

This analysis aims at outlining the status, processes and tendencies of two particular interrelated groups of children having fallen and living in a situation of extremely high social risk - the children in criminogenic risk and the children in victimogenic risk.

These two risk categories have been provisionally differentiated according to the characteristics, behaviour and results of “external” social influences on the children who fall in the corresponding group as subjects and objects of violence and crimes. At the same time most of the children, who are in criminogenic risk, are in fact parallel victims of violence and criminal attempts and vice versa - the children at victimogenic risk, especially those who have suffered crimes, develop deviant behaviour and often commit violence and crimes. This is why the basic factors which set the pattern for both phenomena are similar and they have been attached as a separate section at the end of the analysis. The existence of “children at criminogenic risk” and children at “victimogenic risk” is extremely important phenomenon in the light of the social-economic crisis in the Bulgarian society and the possibility of possible intensification of the influence of the impact of some factors on the children as a consequence of the existing crisis.

Generally, all children at social risk are to a great extent at criminogenic or victimogenic risk. The analysis contains comments and illustrations of the status and processes only referring to such sub-groups of children at criminogenic risk and victimogenic risk who are most susceptible to the increasing risk for them and where there is accessible statistical information or records of special researches and reports of state institutions, NGOs and international organisations.

The analyses has used records and information from different sources available to its authors as the predominant part of the statistical data included in the tables refers to a ten-year period which permits a more detailed tracking of the particular phenomenon in its process of development.

At the moment of preparation of this analysis statistical and other analytical data for 2011 had not been compiled and officially published and due to this fact it was not possible for this information to be used by the authors of this publication.

3.2. Children at criminogenic risk

Children at criminogenic risk are subjects of the activity of a specialized prevention system of institutions (created under the provisions of the Combating Juvenile Delinquency Act - CJDA)– Commissions (Central Commission for Combating Juvenile Delinquency to the Council of Ministers-CCCJD and Local Commissions-LCCJD to municipalities); Child Pedagogical Offices to the Police – CPO; Homes for Temporary Accommodation of Minors - HTAM to MI; Social-Pedagogical Boarding Schools – SPBS and Correctional Boarding Schools - CBS; asylums for street children.

Children with many criminal offences and deviant behaviour are kept under record and they are under the supervision and care of the specialized police bodies - CPOs. The number of children with criminal records supervised by CPOs is not big compared to the children in the country and this number is decreasing in absolute values, but in recent years there is a
tendency of increasing this share compared to 100 00 of the child population which probably is a consequence of the negative effects among the population caused by the economic crisis.

Children at criminogenic risk monitored by the specialized police bodies - Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs)

(according to data of the National Statistical Institute - NSI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registered and monitored by CPO (number of children)</th>
<th>Child population in the Republic of Bulgaria (aged 8-17)</th>
<th>Coefficient /number of children compared to100000 of the child population in BG (8-17)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17629</td>
<td>1063299</td>
<td>1660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>17817</td>
<td>1025698</td>
<td>1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>17877</td>
<td>900086</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18019</td>
<td>859396</td>
<td>2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17390</td>
<td>918290</td>
<td>1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15969</td>
<td>793484</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>14502</td>
<td>905777</td>
<td>1601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>13572</td>
<td>871762</td>
<td>1557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13155</td>
<td>840204</td>
<td>1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12076</td>
<td>668619</td>
<td>1806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=933#cont

Minors kept on record by Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs)
3.2.1. Children who run away from home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Runaways found by the Police (number)</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>2265</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>2053</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1548</td>
<td>1494</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=934#cont

Running away from home is a serious risk prerequisite for developing deviant behaviour by children and their falling into criminogenic or victimogenic risk. There is a clear tendency of decreasing the number of runaways for the past 6 years. According to data from the Ministry of Interior 1500 minors and underage passed through the five Homes for temporary accommodation of minors (HTAM) in 2010. And 241 of them were accommodated there due to being runaways, compared to 218 children accommodated in 2009.

3.2.2. Children who run away from school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children who constantly run away from school and are reported to the police (No.)</td>
<td>No info.</td>
<td>no info.</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>2367</td>
<td>2044</td>
<td>1615</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>1621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=934#cont

With regard to running away from school, after reaching a certain peak in 2006, this phenomenon marked a descending tendency in the next years which stopped in 2010. Researches of specialized bodies for prevention of child crimes in Bulgaria show that systematic running away from school becomes a criminogenic factor which determines asocial behaviour and leads to dropping out of the education system which is at the same time a victimogenic factor. This also happens in the age of compulsory education which is set until 16 in Bulgaria.
3.2.3. Children who run away from specialized institutions

Running away from specialized institutions is a specific criminogenic factor which puts children in situations of increased risk of deeper deviations of behaviour and falling in criminal circles, respectively committing crimes. There is no reliable data concerning this indicator. Summarized operative information of the specialized police bodies (Child pedagogical offices) responsible for runaways from specialized institutions represents indirect statistics which gives at least some idea about this problem. According to police statistics 266 children were accommodated in Homes for temporary accommodation of minors (HTAM) in 2010, compared to 274 children in 2009, accommodated due to running away from Correctional boarding schools (CBS). And 518 children (compared to 426 in 2009) were accommodated there due to running away from Social-pedagogical boarding schools and Homes for children without parental care. This information shows that nearly half of the children accommodated with court decisions in the correctional schools often run away from them and fall into high criminogenic risks.

3.2.4. Wandering (street) children and begging children

3.2.4.1. Data from National Statistical Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wandering and begging children who have passed through the specialized police bodies (CPOs) (No.)</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>1537</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=934#cont

The number of wandering and begging children- 671 in 2010 has significantly increased, compared to their number in 2009 - 561 children. However, the number of such children who passed through Homes for temporary accommodation of Minors (HTAM) is smaller 166 children in 2010, compared to 189 children in 2009.
3.2.4.2. Information from NGOs

The Alliance for Children and Youth in Sofia with its Day Center “16+” keeps its own register of contacted begging children. These children are identified and offered social services. For a period of one year (between 2009 and 2010) the organisation has identified between 100 and 155 begging children. The greatest number of children is between 7-12 years of age and also 1-year-old babies being used for begging by their parents and relatives.

3.2.4.3. Information about international survey on begging children

In 2011 Neglected Children Society - national group of ECPAT International conducted a national expert research in 2 parts within the framework of an international project called Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Child Begging in the EU (coordinated by ICMPD, Vienna and funded by a program of EU). The research in the Eastern European countries was coordinated by the international organisation Terre des Hommes, Child relief – Hungary. Participants in the research were partners from all 27 countries – members of EU. Bulgarian partner – ECPAT Bulgaria made a research on local and national level including interviews with experts; interviews with begging children; monitoring on begging children; good practices analyses, legislation, institutional and NGO experience. At the end of each stage the European partner organisations, including the Bulgarian national partner prepared extensive reports in compliance with unified methods; local reports and analyses of collected data from children and experts. ICMPD, Vienna, prepared comparative analyses based on the data received from different countries which are due to be officially presented. The research results could be published after the official launch of the international project report on the Study on Typology and Policy Responses to Child Begging in the EU. But for the purpose of the current Situational analysis it is useful to quote the “Child Begging” definition proposed for the project goals.

The project working definition of “Child Begging” given in the project materials by ICMPD was intended for the experts to be interviewed for clarification of the phenomenon.

“Begging covers a range of activities whereby a child under 18 asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donations for health or religious reasons. They may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money, that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale. We also include the provision of token services, such as windscreen washing, or performances, such as singing or playing a musical instrument. The money is given as charity, or in return for token goods or services, on the streets or going door-to-door, in the company of an adult, or other children, or unaccompanied. Where a child is in the company of a parent or other adult who is begging, even if they are not begging themselves, we define this as a child begging situation. It may be carried out during school hours or be reconciled with school attendance.”

Here we give the opinions of experts - police inspectors and social workers who outline the following factors leading to child begging in a number of other national reports, namely:

In the first place, most of the indicated factors for child begging are rooted in the lack of finances, poverty, inability to ensure subsistence, dead-lock, misery and destitution. However, the economic crisis, isolated from other factors, cannot give enough grounds for
explanation of the phenomenon because a number of other social groups are also impoverished but their children do not go out in the streets to beg.

Secondly, the experts indicate factors closely related to the previous group like: easy way to earn money and the constraint put on the children by their parents and adults, the exploitation of children by adults, using children for organised activities providing financial benefits and the influence of the way of living.

In the third place, there are family factors like: influence of family background and the way of living, family traditions, lack of good parents and upbringing, lack of control on the children.

In the fourth place, the experts point out social factors like lack of values and wrong social behavioral attitudes.

All indicated factors can be considered as an explanation of the appearance and existence of the phenomenon “child-begging”, more precisely - “Roma child-begging” because these factors can be examined mainly in the context of the traditions and lifestyle of Roma ethnic group in Bulgaria whose children mainly beg in the streets of the capital and around the country.

The experts state in their reports that begging children vary in age from babies to full legal age. Most begging children are aged 7 - 16 and the most numerable group of begging children are up to 12 years of age; mothers beg with babies in arms and when the children become 3 - 4-year-old they start begging on their own; a special category of exploited begging children are those with clearly seen (visible) disabilities. Begging children come from poor, mainly Roma families, families where children are neglected and these families survive by begging, as well as from orphanages. Begging children are from big cities but quite often there are begging children from small towns and villages and children coming from the city suburbs, Roma ghettos.

Usually child begging is accompanied by other activities. According to experts begging children are most often involved in stealing and pickpocketing. A great part of them are close to criminal groups and are involved in shop-lifting, street assaults or offering paid sexual services. Some of the prostituting begging children become victims of pedophiles. Many begging children use drugs, most often inhaling stuff based on acetone like glue, paints, etc.

3.2.5. Wandering (street) children.

Street children are in a position of high criminogenic and victimogenic risk. These children are constantly subjected to physical, psychic and sexual violence, malnutrition and diseases. Their main human rights are violated. At the same time these children have antisocial behaviour and commit crimes—they beg, steal, use and distribute drugs, prostitute… In many cases they exhibit aggression and violence, and violate the rights of children and adults. Extremely hard is the problem with street minors (under 14), who - by living “in the streets” - assume models of behaviour without social rules, norms, values and morals.

According to NSI data the number of street children who were identified by Child Pedagogical Offices (CPO) was 140 in 2010. In 2009 these children were 206, and in 2008 they were 218. This shows a growing tendency towards decreasing their number. This is due to the effective work of the mobile teams including representatives of the Local commissions for juvenile delinquency, CPOs and Child Protection Departments (CPD), who work in most municipalities of the country. Street minors were 88 (more than a half of all street children).
Street girls were 47 (compared to 77 in 2009 and 78 in 2008). Here we see also a decreasing tendency. Street underage children (14-18) were 52.

In 2010, 296 street children with asocial behaviour (compared to 252 children in 2009) who passed through HTAM (Homes for temporary accommodation of minors).

There are three types of specialized institutions for protection, prevention and reintegration of street children which operate in the country - Asylums for street children, Day care centers and Centers for temporary accommodation.

Asylums for street children, regulated by the Combating Juvenile Delinquency Act, are institutions for social services where street children are accommodated temporarily and free of charge until they are collected by their parents or the persons executing parental functions, or until these children are accommodated in appropriate medical, social or correctional institutions. Accommodation in orphanages aims at providing social, medical and public services, as well as psychological help to street children.

### Number of wandering (street) children accommodated in Asylums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of orphanages</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of street children who have passed through orphanages:</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- boys</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- girls</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children by age:</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- up to 7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 8 to 14.</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 15 to 18.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- over 18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the Regulations for Implementation of the Social Assistance Act (RISAA) Day Centers represent social services offered in the community. As of 31.12.2010, there are 10 Centers for work with street children (CWSC). They are situated in the cities of Bourgas, Sliven, Plovdiv, Rousse - 2, Varna - 2 and Sofia - 2.
Wandering (street) children in Day care centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Day Centers:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of children:</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- boys</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- girls</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of children by age:</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- up to 7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 8 to 14.</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 15 to 18.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- over 18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>141 (not included in the total number)</td>
<td>162 (not included in the total number)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://sacp.government.bg/programi-dokladi/statistika/

According to the Regulations for Implementation of the Social Assistance Act (RISAA) Centers for Temporary Accommodation (CTA) represent social services offered in the community. As of 31.12.2010, there are four CTA working with children - 2 of them are in Sofia, 1 is in Varna and 1 is in Dalbok Dol (Lovech District)

Wandering (street) children in the Centers for Temporary Accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Centers for Temporary Accommodation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- boys</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- girls</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children by age</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- up to 7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 8 to 14.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from 15 to 18.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- over 18</td>
<td>50 (not included in the total number)</td>
<td>35 (not included in the total number)</td>
<td>142 (not included in the total number)</td>
<td>33 / included in the total number /</td>
<td>14 / included in the total number /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://sacp.government.bg/programi-dokladi/statistika/
3.2.6. Children using alcohol and drugs.

Number of children who passed through Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs) because of alcohol and drug abuse (according to National Statistical Institute data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol abuse</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=934#cont

Data in the table shows that according to these indicators the number of children identified by the police varies between 400-500 cases - for alcohol abuse and about 300-350 cases – for drug abuse. This number is considerably smaller than the corresponding number of children for the period between 2003-2005, as a result of the good work done by the bodies of the prevention system.

Alcohol and drug abuse among children are characteristics of their hazardous behaviour determined by personal characteristics and negative influence of family background and friend circles. They lead to deformation of values and in many cases result in asocial and criminal behaviour.

In 2010 (according to Ministry of Interior data) Child Pedagogical Inspectors worked with 425 children who used drugs, (compared to 395 children in 2009; 475 children in 2008; 530 children in 2007; 589 children in 2006; 750 children in 2005 and 915 children in 2004). According to this indicator the five-year tendency of constant decreasing number of such children has been stopped.

Alcohol and drug abuse among children is a consequence of a number of factors which are still operating in popular social micro-environment which on its part is a prerequisite for these children to fall into high criminogenic and victimogenic risk.
3.2.7. Children - perpetrators of crimes

Discovered crimes
(according to data from Ministry of Interior - MI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Committed by all age groups (number)</th>
<th>Including crimes committed by children up to 18</th>
<th>Relative percentage compared to the total number of perpetrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>80692</td>
<td>15299</td>
<td>18.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>88224</td>
<td>15543</td>
<td>17.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>84197</td>
<td>16084</td>
<td>19.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>86370</td>
<td>16389</td>
<td>18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>83577</td>
<td>14883</td>
<td>17.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>70233</td>
<td>12649</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>69054</td>
<td>10392</td>
<td>17.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>65137</td>
<td>8490</td>
<td>13.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>57984</td>
<td>7673</td>
<td>13.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>58977</td>
<td>8059</td>
<td>13.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that during the past years the percentage of “child crimes” in comparison with crimes in general is 13-14% - crimes committed and 8-11% - perpetrators of crimes. **The structure of criminal acts committed by children does not change in time.** Crimes (including burglary and pickpocketing) in their predominant part constitute about 75% of all crimes committed by children. **60% of all perpetrators of pickpocketing are children who generally commit these crimes in organized groups together with their mothers.** A considerably lower number of crimes are: robberies, crimes related to drugs (production, possession, distribution, transportation of drugs); thefts of motor vehicles, etc. About 35-40% of crimes are committed by groups, most often in partnership, of 2 or more persons aged 14-18.

Social characteristics of children with records in Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs) for committed crimes:
- **75% of children with records** have lived in **unfavourable micro-environment** during 2010. These are mainly children with criminogenic and conflict family background and circles of friends, as well as children of divorced or practically separated parents, children from poor families, orphans and half-orphans. Bad living conditions, criminal surroundings and inferior family background are strong factors for social deformation and formation of criminal behaviour;
- **1.4% of the children with records in CPO were not studying or working in 2010.** In 2009 their percentage compared to all children with records was 13.0 % while in 2008 their number was 13.8%. There is a decreasing tendency.

3.3. **Factors which determine criminogenic and victimogenic risk among children**

The main factors for child crimes according to experts from the system for prevention of juvenile delinquency are the following:
- **Social and economic factors** - they influence directly the socialization of children – low living standard, unemployment, bad living conditions. These factors are considerably active in Roma communities; it can be expected that in the near future the crisis in the country will lead to the aggravation of the impact of these factors and their reflection on family background, friends circles and socio-economic factors;
- **Family background** - crimes, conflicts, violence in the family; lack of positive models of behaviour; low level of education and cultural background of parents; problems in communication between parents and children; irresponsibility and impunity of parents; weak parental control and lack of interest in the problems of the children; emotional isolation in the family; negligence in upbringing or faults, inconsistency and mistakes in the upbringing of the children;
- **Negative influence of friend circles** - involvement of groups and situations with higher criminogenic risk; oppressive methods of communication in informal groups; using force in solution of conflicts; alcohol and drug abuse, visits to night clubs and discos, etc.;
- **Personal factors** – inadequate interaction between individuals and society, personal characteristics; defects in values and emotional conflicts; emotional deficit; lack of significant interests; pedagogical and emotional negligence; lack of self-control; inability to
react in crisis situations and surmounting difficulties; imitation of asocial behavioral models; aspiration for self-imposition and deviant aggression; disrespect and ignorance of legal and moral norms, etc.;

- **Socio-cultural factors**: deformation of values in society; negative value models tolerating aggression; violence, pornography in media, Internet, computer games and films; undeveloped system interesting and useful occupations of children in their free time, etc.;

- **Socio-pedagogical factors** - reduced social control; dropouts and runaways from school; problems with school regulations and discipline; underestimation of educational work; ineffective system of civil education; aggression and violence among students; insufficient number of psychologists in schools and inadequate psychological assistance outside schools; limited possibilities for out-of-class and out-of-school activities, etc.;

- **Legal-normative and judicial factors** – legislation related to child rights and protection which is not working properly despite the constant changes and unsatisfactory functioning of the legal system.

The indicated factors act in a complex way and the dominating factor is different in different situations. Their power and intensity depend on the specific nature of each separate case. The factors are interrelated and in some situations they generate criminogenic risks whereby children are perpetrators of asocial acts and crimes and in other situations these actors generate victimogenic risks whereby children become objects of crimes or other attempts at them. Despite their concrete configurations these factors are in social-risk positions and lead to deviations in the behaviour of children, asocial acts and involvement in situations with high victimogenic risks when the children become victims of different impacts and quite often-victims of violence and crimes.

### 3.4. Children at victimogenic risk

#### 3.4.1. Children - victims of crimes

**Children who suffered crimes**

/according to data of the Ministry of Interior/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Murders accomplished</th>
<th>Murders attempted</th>
<th>Rape accomplished</th>
<th>Rape attempted</th>
<th>Debauchery</th>
<th>Debauchery</th>
<th>Bodily injuries</th>
<th>Bodily injuries</th>
<th>Kidnapping</th>
<th>Kidnapping</th>
<th>Homosexual abuse</th>
<th>Homosexual abuse</th>
<th>Robberies</th>
<th>Robberies</th>
<th>Thefts</th>
<th>Thefts</th>
<th>Victims of bullying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2614</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3427</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4536</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>1606</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4681</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4187</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>1535</td>
<td>174</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3697</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3282</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2937</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2282</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the Ministry of Interior a 6-year tendency of decreasing the number of children - victims of crimes was established in 2010. The number of discovered crimes for this period has decreased 2 times.

There is an emerging tendency of a decreasing number of victims of thefts and victims with bodily injuries.

The heaviest crimes - accomplished murders and murder attempts, mark stability in their number. Rapes mark a decrease. About 1/3 of the raped are underage girls.

As for debauchery, in 2010 the tendency of decrease stopped. The greater part of the acts of debauchery- 75% (or ¾ of the children) were attempts against girls under 14. This indicator marks stability in the past years. Due to the young age of the victims these crimes are extremely dangerous for this group of children because they cause deep disorders in their growth and serious deformation of their behaviour.

The next table with statistical data from NSI lists the number of children – victims of crimes during 2010. There are small differences from the data of the Ministry of Interior but this is due to the different indicators used for collecting the information. Despite the recorded tendency of decreasing the number of children – victims of crimes, the size of the crimes committed against children is evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINORS AND UNDERAGE CHILDREN – VICTIMS OF CRIMES, 2010</th>
<th>(No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder (accomplished)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder (attempted)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape (accomplished)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape (attempted)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily injury</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debauchery</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MINORS AND UNDERAGE CHILDREN – VICTIMS OF CRIMES, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Incl. female</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>8 - 13</th>
<th>14 - 17</th>
<th>14 - 17</th>
<th>8 - 13</th>
<th>14 - 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including with the purpose of disposal for acts of debauchery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>348</td>
<td></td>
<td>329</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud and blackmail</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading to begging</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading and forcing children to prostitute</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment in the family</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking in human beings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child pornography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment out of the family</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The situation related to **maltreatment of children** is extremely problematic. It appears that these children have become objects of work of the specialized police bodies - CPOs due to different reasons but most often because of crimes committed by them. However, these acts are results of exerted violence on the children who, after being victims of torment, have fallen in criminogenic risk and accomplished deviant acts. In these cases criminogenic and victimogenic risks are interrelated.
3.4.2. Maltreated children

Maltreated children who have passed through and were registered by Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs)

(according to National Statistical Institute data)

| Years | Total number | Including women | % maltreated women compared to the total maltreated | minors (under 14 total) | % maltreated minors compared to the total number of maltreated | Including women | % of girls minors compared to maltreated minors | Maltreated underage (14-18) | % compared to total number of maltreated | Including women | % of underage girls compared to total number of maltreated underage |
|-------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 2001  | 978          | 295            | 30.2                                          | 414                    | 42.3                                                          | 139            | 33.4                                          | 564                         | 57.7                                          | 156            | 27.7                                          |
| 2002  | 944          | 297            | 31.5                                          | 446                    | 47.2                                                          | 152            | 34.1                                          | 498                         | 52.8                                          | 145            | 29.1                                          |
| 2003  | 1004         | 318            | 31.7                                          | 470                    | 46.8                                                          | 140            | 29.8                                          | 534                         | 53.2                                          | 178            | 33.3                                          |
| 2004  | 849          | 296            | 34.9                                          | 407                    | 47.9                                                          | 132            | 32.4                                          | 442                         | 52.1                                          | 164            | 37.1                                          |
| 2005  | 824          | 277            | 33.6                                          | 354                    | 43.0                                                          | 114            | 32.2                                          | 470                         | 57.0                                          | 163            | 34.7                                          |
| 2006  | 531          | 174            | 32.8                                          | 251                    | 47.3                                                          | 87             | 34.7                                          | 280                         | 52.7                                          | 87             | 31.1                                          |
| 2007  | 505          | 189            | 37.4                                          | 241                    | 47.7                                                          | 85             | 35.3                                          | 264                         | 52.3                                          | 104            | 39.4                                          |
| 2008  | 644          | 242            | 37.6                                          | 338                    | 52.3                                                          | 122            | 36.1                                          | 306                         | 47.7                                          | 120            | 39.2                                          |
| 2009  | 563          | 226            | 40.0                                          | 247                    | 43.0                                                          | 91             | 37.0                                          | 316                         | 56.0                                          | 135            | 43.0                                          |
| 2010  | 692          | 277            | 40.0                                          | 305                    | 44.1                                                          | 115            | 37.7                                          | 387                         | 55.9                                          | 162            | 41.9                                          |


The high percentage of girls stands out against the general stability of the total number of maltreated persons and this share tends to increase.

Maltreatment is accomplished in the closest social surroundings. In 74% of the cases violence has been accomplished by parents, relatives, friends, classmates, teachers. These cases are difficult to discover due to the emotional reticence of the family, the strong informal control in the small groups, the fear of revenge if suffered maltreatment is disclosed or confessed by the victims and shame of what they have suffered.

3.4.3. National hotline for children – 116 111

A lot more children in the country are actually at criminogenic and victimogenic risk. SACP information shows that the total number of calls and consultations for violence against children made in 2010 is 1047 (only on the National hotline for children - 116 111) The total number of signals sent to Child Protection Departments for violence against children is 2881 for the same year. After investigation and evaluation of the signals SACP opened cases for protection of 1529 children which means that in 53.1% of the cases real risks for the children have been established. The total number of children - victims of violence who the social workers from Child Protection Departments and Social
Protection Departments have worked with is 2155 in 2010, which is with 40% more than the previous year.

The National hotline for children plays the role of a prevention factor and anonymous consultant which helps children and parents in crisis situations of risk. The trust in this service is proved by the facts from the statistical data of SACP where it is said that in January 2012 there were 8630 calls made to the hotline - 116 111, and they are about two times more by comparison with the calls received in January 2011. The consultations given in the first month of 2012 are 1381.

The basic reasons for the calls of the children continue to be related to their love affairs and the problems related to them – about 1146 consultations. The calls on these topics are made mostly by teenagers. Statistics show that in January 2012, 83 % of the calls are from children. If some of the children do not receive psychological help in these delicate moments, even from a distance, they may fall in crisis and try to find inappropriate counselors or direct their own aggression toward themselves. In some cases they may put themselves in situations of victimogenic risk and become victims of abuse due to their weakness, vulnerability and psychological instability.


3.4.4. Children - victims of domestic violence against children

After investigating the data concerning the period 2001 – 2010 it becomes clear that family violence tends to be permanently leading. 1752 children have been victims of domestic violence which is 81.2% of all children who have suffered violence. 1666 children have experienced violence in their biological families. In 1438 cases the perpetrators are parents and in the rest 228 cases these were other members of the family. An alarming fact is that 84 of the children who have experienced domestic violence are brought up by relatives and 2 of them are from foster families. The number of children - victims of violence, who have been accommodated to live with their relatives or friends, has increased more than two times compared with the previous year and this protection measures have been taken in compliance with the provisions of the Child Protection Act.

The analysis of the cases which Child Protection Departments have worked on during 2010 shows that cases of violence against children like neglect and physical torment are most frequent in the families where the children are being brought up. The incapability and impossibility of the parents to meet the living needs of the children is a leading type of maltreatment which endangers their physical and mental health and growth.

A great part of the calls made by parents to hotline 116 111 are related to the separation of the other parent. In January 2012 thirty four (34) consultations were given related to divorces and parental rights. There are several consultations with children whose parents are working. It is evident that although the missing parent is not defined as a main problem, the situation strongly reflects on the lives of the children.

6% of all calls in January, 2012 were made by parents and 10 % - by other adults who call in relation with some children. In 98 of the cases the persons were guided to contact Child Protection Departments, in 34 cases – to contact the Police and emergency aid, and in 15 cases – to contact school psychologists.
3.4.5. Children - victims of violence among children

In 2010 Child Protection Departments worked on 135 cases of violence accomplished by children against other children. The increased number of such cases is 31% compared to the cases from the previous year. In 2011 social workers worked on 177 cases of violence against children in schools. Analyses show that in many schools children do not receive understanding and support which leads to an increased number of cases of violence and aggression there. Teachers and school counselors are not prepared to cope with this problem. A great part of the schools do not have enough capacity to create school programs related to prevention of violence. Most of the cases of physical or psychic violence in educational institutions show the necessity of developing activities directed towards both teachers and students for competent coping with aggressive behaviour and conflicts.

3.4.6. Children-victims of sexual exploitation

The Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) define this phenomenon as: “A fundamental violation of children’s rights. It comprises sexual abuse by adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.”

The primary, interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children – often referred to as CSEC – are prostitution of children, child pornography and trafficking in children for sexual purposes. Other forms include child-sex tourism, and in some cases, child marriage. Children can also be commercially sexually exploited in other, less obvious ways, such as through domestic servitude or bonded labour. In these cases, a child is contracted to provide work but the employer believes that the child can also be used for sexual purposes.”

Source: Questions & Answers about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children; An information booklet by ECPAT International; 2008;

3.4.6.1. Children - victims of forced prostitution

One of the worst forms of sexual exploitation is child prostitution. It has a disastrous effect on mental and social development of personality and leads to deep psychological traumas and deformations of values for the rest of the lives of individuals. Prostituting children are undoubtedly victims of criminal groups and organised crime despite that some people assume that prostitution is deviant behaviour.

The number of prostituting children who have passed through Child Pedagogical Offices tends to decrease for the past five years.
Prostituting children whom Child Pedagogical Offices (CPOs) have worked with
(according to National Statistical Institute data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prostituting children (number)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=25&a1=931&a2=932&a3=934#cont

In 2010 the greatest number of minors and underage girls who were prostituting was established in the towns of **Plovdiv, Sofia-city, Stara Zagora and Pleven** - bigger cities near motorways.

### 3.4.6.2. Children - victims of trafficking

#### 3.4.6.2.1. Information from the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) referring to the Coordination mechanism for referral, care and protection of repatriated Bulgarian unaccompanied children (UAM) and children – victims of trafficking returning from abroad

According to [Ministry of Interior data](http://sacp.government.bg/programi-dokladi/dokladi/), in 2010 **96 children** were victims of trafficking. The same year the National State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) was engaged with **48 cases** in compliance with the **Coordinating Mechanism** for Referral and Care of Unaccompanied Children and Children - Victims of Trafficking Returning from Abroad. There were **15 cases** of children - victims of sexual violence and exploitation and 2 cases of trafficking and sale of babies. During the same year **34 girls and 14 boys** were victims of trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation.

% of cases from countries where victims have been trafficked to:

- 28% Greece
- 22% France
- 13% Germany
- 13% Austria
- 9% Italy
- 5% Poland
- 4% Bosna & Herzegovina
- 2% Slovakia
- 2% Portugal
- 2% Finland

Source: http://sacp.government.bg/programi-dokladi/dokladi/
The Chairperson of SACP proposed to the Minister of Interior to impose a compulsory administrative measure as per Art.76a of the Law for the Bulgarian Identification Documents on 31 children who had been involved in acts harmful to their growth.

In 2010, 10 children were repatriated from other countries to Bulgaria.

3.4.6.2.2. Data from the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB)

Data for 2010 from the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB) shows that 17% of the total number of persons who suffered trafficking were children (minors under 14 and underage 14 - 18):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trafficking in human beings</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of victims</td>
<td>Total number of male persons</td>
<td>Total number of female persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of them:</td>
<td>under age (14-18)</td>
<td>minors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking for sexual purposes</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking for sexual exploitation (forced labour + keeping under subjection)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking of pregnant women with the aim of selling babies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to clients of victims of trafficking</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Общо</strong></td>
<td><strong>580</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 2010 NCCTHB received 22 reports for persons involved mainly in international trafficking of human beings including 8 children and the cases were redirected to competent state institutions and NGOs.
3.5. Conclusions and recommendations to Bulgaria related to sexual exploitation of children, trafficking in children for sexual and labour exploitation, included in international reports.

3.5.1. Conclusions and recommendations from the Annual report of the State Department of USA for the status of trafficking in human beings in 175 countries in the world for 2010


The report quotes are reduces and the excerpts focus only on comments related to trafficking in children.

BULGARIA (Tier 2)

“Bulgaria is a country of origin, transit country and to a less extent – a country of destination for trafficking in men, women and children for the purpose of forced labour. Bulgarian women and children become victims of trafficking in the country, especially in the resorts and the towns near the borders and also in the Netherlands, Belgium France, Austria Italy, Germany, USA, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Spain, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey and Cyprus. from Ukraine, Moldova and Romania to and through Bulgaria to Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Norway, Czech Republic, Poland, Greece, Turkey and Macedonia with the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Roma women and children are rather vulnerable to trafficking and their number among identified victims is disproportionally big. Bulgarian men, women and children become victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour in Greece, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Slovenia and Great Britain. There are Bulgarian children who are forced to beg and commit petty crimes in the country and in Greece, Italy and Great Britain. The Bulgarian government does not cover the minimum standards of eliminating trafficking; nevertheless it makes considerable efforts in this aspect. During the period this report covers the government marked progress by approving a National mechanism for referral and support of victims of trafficking and made serious efforts to guarantee that victims would not sentenced by the court. During 2010 the number of victims identified by law enforcement bodies increased and the state increased the amount of funds granted to children – victims of trafficking.”

Recommendations to Bulgaria

One of the recommendations is related to school education, namely: “...the state should continue its efforts in restricting trafficking in human beings, including activities for prevention in a greater number of schools with a prevalent number of Roma children.”

Protection

During 2010 Bulgarian authorities marked humble advancement in identification and protection of victims of trafficking. In November 2010 the government adopted a National mechanism for referral and support of victims of trafficking for coordinating the efforts of government institutions and civil society for protection and support of victims. The authorities identified 558 victims of trafficking in 2010, including 89 children and one
foreigner. This number has considerably increased compared to 2009 when 289 victims, including 44 children, were identified. NGOs identified another 55 victims in 2010. During the same year the child centers funded by the state ensured shelter to 79 children – victims of trafficking. Their number has considerably increased in comparison with 2009 when this number was 44. The Bulgarian government increased the amount of funds for children – victims of trafficking to the amount of $725 000. These funds have been given to the Crisis centers for children who provide rehabilitation, psychological and medical assistance to children identified as victims of trafficking and children at risk.

**Prevention**

During the reported period the Bulgarian authorities made considerable efforts for prevention of trafficking in human beings. They funded several information campaigns on the problems of trafficking, organised *trainings for more than 300 teachers and distributed among students 10 000 interactive CDs devoted to the fight against trafficking which contained films, songs, videos and interviews with victims of trafficking*. The government, together with the local commissions, organized information campaign on the problems of trafficking under the title “Time for Action”. There were a number of initiatives for raising awareness, including theater performances, simulations of court trials related to trafficking, debates, competitions for essays and drawings related to trafficking. Local authorities in Varna ensured $20 000 for activities related to prevention of trafficking, including the campaign called “Summer without risk” and 3000 students joined this campaign in 2010. At the same time the authorities made efforts for restricting the demand for paid sexual services and elimination of child sex tourism. Seven persons were taken to court and accused of using the services of victims of trafficking for sexual purposes. Night clubs and bars were supplied with leaflets for prevention purposes in order to raise awareness of potential customers regarding trafficking. In 2010 the Bulgarian government adopted a Plan for combating trafficking in human beings.

3.5.2. Conclusions and recommendations from GRETA report of the Expert group for action against trafficking in human beings regarding the realization of the Convention of the European Council for action against trafficking in human beings in Bulgaria, 2011

**Source:** GRETA, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings_GRETA(2011)19; Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Bulgaria; First evaluation round; Strasbourg, 14 December 2011.

The report is quoted with excerpts and they focus only on comments related to the problems of trafficking in children.

**Appendix I: List of recommendations of GRETA:**

**Comprehensive approach to THB**

2. GRETA considers that the Bulgarian authorities should take further steps to ensure that the national action to combat THB is comprehensive, and in particular:
- to pay increased attention to preventive measures among vulnerable groups, such as the Roma community, children and disabled persons;

Co-ordination

..........................................

4. GRETA invites the Bulgarian authorities to invest in the human resources of the NCCTHB and the local commissions for combating THB so that they can effectively carry out the full range of tasks within their mandate.

5. GRETA also invites the Bulgarian authorities to further strengthen co-ordination between national and municipal authorities and NGOs active in the field of action against THB and to ensure that NGOs are involved in the planning of the national policy. This could involve the conclusion of formal agreements between state authorities and NGOs setting out the specific framework for cooperation. Particular attention should also be paid to involving Roma NGOs in the fight against THB.

Training of relevant professionals

6. GRETA invites the Bulgarian authorities to design future training programmes with a view to improving the knowledge and skills of relevant professionals which enable them to identify victims of trafficking and to assist and protect them. Training on THB-related issues should also be provided to the staff working in homes for children without parental care and the local commissions for combating juvenile delinquency.

Identification of victims of THB

..........................................

16. GRETA encourages the Bulgarian authorities to ensure that the legal and institutional changes introduced by the new State policy in the area of juvenile justice lead to improved prevention, identification and assistance of child victims of trafficking.

3.6. Bulgaria migrant children in street situation in Greece

3.6.1. Bulgarian children - Migrants in Greece. Results from an international report: Vulnerability to Exploitation and Trafficking of Bulgarian Children and Adolescents in Greece


The report is published in English on the above-mentioned website of Mario Project. Some of the basic results and recommendations are quoted below in a contracted form.

In the framework of Mario Project a street observation and analysis of migrant children in street situation (including Bulgarian children and adolescents) were made in November-December, 2010 in Thessaloniki. The results are published in the research report Vulnerability to Exploitation and Trafficking of Bulgarian Children and Adolescents in
In the Foreword of the publication Mr. Nikos Gavalas – Director and founder of ARSIS explains the objectives of the research: **“The immediate objective of this research is to give an indicative as well as detailed picture of the extent and specific dimensions of the phenomenon of mass begging in Greece, particularly of children and families from Bulgaria. This group has increased rapidly in recent years, particularly in Northern Greece, with Thessaloniki, where the research was mostly carried out, as a main destination. The data gathering exercise lasted a month and through social work on the street and interviews with relevant services, providing thereby relevant information. This goal takes into account the transnational/European dimension of the problem and is based on the involvement of the relevant frontline services and stakeholders in both countries (Greece and Bulgaria), as well as the concerned European bodies and institutions.**

The information gathered throughout the research and the main conclusions reached point to the **clear and urgent need for transnational coordination and immediate adoption of measures in both countries.** These measures should be part of a **comprehensive and effective plan of action** aimed at understanding, monitoring, tackling and ultimately addressing the phenomenon as well as creating/activating a web of services for social assistance and protection of children. **The key elements of such a plan should include:**

- Conclusions included in a specialized **intergovernmental agreement**;
- **Transnational coordination and cooperation** between law enforcement authorities, the judiciary and social services of both countries;
- Creation or activation of **national networks of services and agencies for the direct management of cases** in the country of origin, that is Bulgaria, and the destination country, Greece.

**Main areas of intervention should be:**

- **In Greece:** information and public awareness actions; **intergovernmental social research – assistance and temporary accommodation** – voluntary repatriation keeping the best interests of the child as a primary consideration.
- **In Bulgaria:** prevention – reception and assistance as well as reintegration as part of durable solutions keeping the best interests of the child as a primary consideration.

The Project Mario partners and ARSIS are willing to provide all the necessary support to any initiative of Greek and Bulgarian authorities going in that direction.

**The two organizations therefore call:**

- **Both governments to tackle adequately and in a timely fashion the child protection concerns** identified in the research, especially by setting up concrete transnational programmes involving public and private stakeholders.
- **The European Union and other regional organisations to increase their efforts to identify and address highly sensitive child protection issues** between Member States but also with non Member States.
- **Donors to support transnational activities** immediately addressing the needs identified in this research.

The analysis underlines that “a number of stakeholders and staff in various agencies and organisations have also taken time to provide us with relevant information on the situation of Bulgarian children and adolescents in the streets of Greece. Among them: the police unit for minors and of organised crime, both in Athens and Thessaloniki,
prosecutors working on cases of minors and trafficking in Athens, Bulgarian Embassy in Athens and Bulgarian Consulate in Thessaloniki, the Children’s rights department of the Greek Ombudsman’s office.

The aim of the research is to assist the process of elaboration of policies and active programs for child protection by contributing to the acquisition of better knowledge of the situation with the street children and adolescents. The research has also a specific focus on the Bulgarian children in the streets of Thessaloniki as part of the activities under Mario Project. This resulted in establishment of partnership between the organisations involved in Mario Project, Terre des Hommes and ARSIS Thessaloniki.

The main methods used in the case study were: street observation and informal interviews with children, adolescents and adults, as well as stakeholders and organisations which have different ways of communicating with persons who are working and living in the streets of Greece.

In the period between November and December 2010 the teams identified 62 Bulgarian children and adolescents and most of them were performing some kind of economic activity on the streets. Four young people aged 18-19 were also included in the research because they were accompanying other children and adolescents or demonstrated economic activity which could be associated with exploitation of the other children. Two of them were disabled and were begging at traffic lights. And one 19-year old girl was arrested for deviant behaviour, together with another 15-year-old girl.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children and adolescents by age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age of the children and adolescents varied. In some cases, they were vaguely assessed by social workers. Notably, there were considerably more younger children and adolescents in the street than primary school children. Babies and toddlers, as well as children as old as five years old, were often found in the arms of adults begging and this particular economic activity explains their notable presence on the streets: more than one third of the children encountered are aged 5 or younger. Given the generally low ages, it is not surprising that most of the children encountered were directly supervised by an adult (40 cases). Most of the adults claimed they were the mothers (30 children and adolescents). In one case, informants identified the adult accompanying the child as the father and in nine cases as a relative, either grandmother or more often aunt. Unsurprisingly, adolescents have more often been found working at traffic lights cleaning wind screens, begging or selling small items.

The situation of Bulgarian nationals in the street stands a little in contrast with what was observed in groups of other nationalities. As mentioned above, Albanian children, for instance, often work in groups moving more freely, although an adult will be present at a reasonable distance. In Athens, a small number of very young children, including two girls as young as five, were working apparently unaccompanied by adults. This might be due to the fact that Bulgarian nationals are not established in the streets of Thessaloniki and, as we shall see later, some of them seem to circulate repeatedly between Greece and
Bulgaria. A few adults expressed a number of fears in relation to their children, for instance babies being taken away from mothers giving birth in Greek hospitals or ‘white’ children being ‘stolen’. This seemed to reflect a feeling of insecurity which might trigger stronger supervision of younger children. The classification by different indicators of identified Bulgarian children on the streets of Thessaloniki is as follows:

**Division of identified children according to their activities in the streets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic activities</th>
<th>Number of children / adolescents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother / carer begging with a baby/ child in his/her arms or nearby</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windscreen cleaning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begging</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling tissues, candles</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a musical instrument or helping parent/carer who plays music</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickpocket</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the possibility that children and adults carry out more than one economic activity, information on that likelihood has to be handled with care. At the time of contact, a significant proportion of children were begging or supporting adults begging in the street and a smaller number of them sold small items. Among adolescents apparently working on their own there were a small number of disabled young people begging at the traffic lights outside the city center. Boys and girls aged 17 and 18 were moving between cars stopped at traffic lights and supported themselves with walking sticks. We also met three other unaccompanied minors, aged 12 or 13, who were begging or selling small items. They usually displayed a distrustful attitude towards the social workers; so that the first and generally sole contact with them did not allow gathering precise information about their situation.

**Division of children by origin from cities in Bulgaria:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of origin</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rousse</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleven</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elin Pelin</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shumen</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kostinbrod</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The origin of the Bulgarian nationals found in Thessaloniki varied and included a number of provinces in the north, east, west and centre of the country. Amongst the places of origins given by informants were Varna region, Dobrich, Pleven, Ruse, Sofia, Shumen and Vidin. A considerable number of children, making up nearly one third of the total number, appeared to have originated from Ruse. A couple of our informants furthermore described belonging to a group of women and children travelling together. They tended to have young children with them and begged with a child or baby in their arms.

A general assumption among professionals and most of the stakeholders is that Bulgarian children and their families in the streets are all of Roma origin. Bulgarian ethnic and Roma identities are however relatively complex issues in Bulgaria and elsewhere. In Bulgaria, the so called Roma community includes groups of different origins, religions and practices. Roma identity is more a matter of being imposed by other ethnic groups and has less to do with identification of themselves in terms of particular characteristics or practices. Beside relatively larger families in comparison with the general population, very few practices can be assumed to be a reference in terms of identity. As Kostova indicates, 90% of the Roma population in Bulgaria is defined as sedentary rather than nomadic. For the purpose of this research, there was no systematic attempt to investigate ethnic origin case by case. Many informants spoke about Roma language or explicitly identified themselves as Roma.”

The report concludes with exhaustive conclusions and recommendations which outline the basic characteristics of migrant children on the streets of Greece and the possibilities of influencing the phenomenon.

Comments on the main research results:
The results are fragmentary and more adequate information can be obtained only after appropriate preparation and design of the research. However, a number of characteristics of migration and survival strategies in the research are extremely appropriate for advocacy purposes and creation of programs for action.

Conclusions of the research:
1. Sixty two children and adolescents of Bulgarian nationality were met during the research period in Thessaloniki. Most of them were accompanying an adult who was begging or doing so themselves whilst others were selling small items or services. Amongst the places of origin given by informants were Varna region, Dobrich, Pleven, Ruse, Sofia, Shumen and Vidin.

2. Temporary migration, mainly circulatory, is the main trend among Bulgarian nationals. This includes repeated short trips to Greece in some cases or regular movements in others. In the words of a good number of adults, economic activities in Greece are economically more viable than any they could carry out in their home country. Yet, some children and adults face very harsh living conditions including sleeping in the street and difficulties in covering the basic needs of children.

3. Migration strategies more or less explicitly focusing on very insecure street trade or begging appear to coexist with other strategies whereby Bulgarian nationals intended to find a job in agriculture or other sectors. When the job anticipated did not materialise, begging became the only available strategy. Some families in this situation faced difficulties accumulating the funding necessary to return home. It is also worth bearing in mind that, despite its extreme riskiness, marginal street activities and begging do not constitute the
very worst option for these populations. Prostitution and delinquency are well within the range of economic activities on hand to these populations. These were not sufficiently examined in this research. In two instances, women described an attempt to traffic them for the purpose of sexual exploitation from which they escaped.

4. Only formal identity checks could confirm actual relationships between adults and children. Yet, research findings reasonably point out that an important part of economic activities carried out in the streets are family based survival strategies organised around a female adult. Whereby a young child (and sometimes two) often accompany the woman, other children are apparently left at home in the care of relatives. In relation to these situations, concerns are to be expressed in three areas.

- Firstly, most of the migrants face extremely harsh conditions and serious deprivation including temporary homelessness. Yet, some of them appear to claim that incomes generated do make a difference to the family budget. Deprivation can entail serious effects on children’s development.

- Secondly, possible concerns related to child protection were expressed by social workers in a particular case where a young child was repeatedly found asleep in the mother’s arms. The use of substances to induce sleep in babies and young children for the purpose of begging is an issue regularly raised by media. Clearly this kind of issue requires appropriate analysis of germane literature, if any, as well as systematic investigation, which would necessitate incontrovertible evidence, well beyond simple observation. If so, this should be done in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner avoiding rumours and prejudices that often characterise the field.

- Thirdly, the organised nature of begging deeply rooted in family networks which police officers claimed this was the case, should be explored further. In the examination of such a network, care should be taken to examine patterns of mutual support as well as possible aspects of exploitation.

5. The alternative situation in which a significant number of older children and adolescents were found was in street economic activities, apparently unsupervised by adults. Where information could be gathered, migration appeared often to be with relatives. No information on migration patterns could be gathered from unaccompanied adolescents and young people with disabilities begging at traffic lights. Concerns were expressed about potential patterns of exploitation within both groups. In this case too, care should be taken to investigate cooperation and supportive practices beside possible exploitative or abusive behaviours.

6. Information provided by stakeholders, organisations and actors in contact with Bulgarian nationals in the street was very fragmented. Many informants seemed to better describe the difficulties they encounter in their actions due to the economic crisis, lack of co-ordination or clear policy but lack any picture of the problems encountered by Bulgarian children and immigrants in the street. Many professionals seem to be unable to rely on a conceptual framework to identify exploitation or abuse within survival strategies, particularly when it is family based. Within that conceptual vacuum, the risk is that one begins to see stereotypes and prejudices that are used instead of evidence and knowledge. Those situations clearly add the risk of increasing stigmatisation and discrimination that Bulgarian nationals in poverty already suffer.
7. Lack of shelter or accommodation for children is the main barrier expressed by professionals concerned with procedures for the identification of child and adolescent victims of trafficking. Research would suggest that protection measures for children and adolescents are not in place. In Thessaloniki, no places in shelters appear to be available and professionals say that minors in conflict with the law or involved in legal proceedings are accommodated in inappropriate settings such as adult shelters, hospitals or police stations. Beyond procedures that strictly focus on trafficking, the overall services for children and families require assessment”.


On the 26th of May 2011, in the framework of Mario project a conference “European Migrant Children: What Protection” was organised in the EU Parliament - Brussels by ECPAT Bulgaria, ECPAT the Netherlands, Nobody’s Children Foundation, Save the Children in Albania and coordinated by Terre des Hommes - Child relief-Hungary. The conference was hosted by MEP Mariya Nedelcheva and it was attended also by Bulgarian MEP Iliana Yotova, representatives of ECPAT Bulgaria and ARSIS - Greece; General Directorate for Combating Organised Crime (who presented the work of specialized agencies of the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria); Ministry of Justice of Bulgaria; National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings - Bulgaria.

The conference aimed at drawing the attention of European institutions and EU Member States to the lack of protection of migrant children who hold citizenship of one EU Member State and who are involved in street based activities in another Member State, either travelling alone or with their families.

A research report was presented outlining the vulnerability of Bulgarian children and adolescents to trafficking and exploitation in Greece. The report represented the results of a one-month monitoring on street children in Thessaloniki in November 2010, realized by Ms. Ulyana Matveeva - Alliance for Children and Youth and Ms. Valbona Histuna, ARSIS - Greece. The aim of the research was to identify Bulgarian children on the streets of Thessaloniki who are at risk of exploitation and need protection. Based on these findings in the report of Dr. Antonella Invernizzi, as well as on evidence of similar situations in other EU Member States, an open discussion took place with Members of the European Parliament, European Commission officials, Bulgarian and Greek government representatives and international NGOs.

In the course of the debate, the positive commitments of the EU to children’s rights as enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights were recognized whilst acknowledging the lack of general competence of the EU on national child protection systems.

Among others, the European Commission (EC) communication “An EU Agenda for the rights of the Child” is considered as a useful starting base as it sets out a number of political priorities and aims at mainstreaming children’s rights in all EU policies. The recently approved “Europe 2020 strategy” and the “EU framework for National Roma integration
strategies” recently issued by the European Union are also relevant when addressing the issue of European children who leave their place of origin.

Taking in consideration the EU policies and the primary and secondary legislation, the partner organisations in Mario project announced their **Recommendations for actions to be taken which would result in positive changes in the lives of vulnerable European children who migrate from one EU country to another.** The recommendations are directed to: EU institutions (EU Parliament, European Commission and Council of Europe); governments; donors and non-governmental organisations.

**Recommendations to: EU institutions: EU Parliament, European Commission and Council of Europe:**

Mario project partners wish to reflect on these different policies and on relevant EU primary and secondary law\(^1\), as well as on the discussions held during the conference, to recommend actions that could bring about positive changes in the lives of vulnerable European children who moved from one Member State to another.

**1) Promote knowledge-and-evidence-based actions:**
The experiences of Mario project partners in their work in Central and South Eastern Europe have given them reasons to be concerned about the protection of European children in vulnerable situations moving between European countries. Reflecting on the EU Agenda on the rights of the child which outlines the need for building evidence-based policy making, the EU should promote further research on children and family movement trends. This would allow better plans and programming as well as adequate and specific actions to be implemented.

**2) Make the most of available funding:**
The right of the child to protection and care as it is necessary for his/her well being is enshrined in Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Ambitious actions to promote protection of these children have become a requirement and the EU should identify and implement actions that aim at providing opportunities for children and their families in their areas of origin. These should include both economic incentives as well as support and protection measures for vulnerable children. Funding programmes, including structural funds, should be used for this as well as for the strengthening of child protection structures.\(^2\)

The EU should also better integrate the issue of EU children in vulnerable situations moving between European countries in its social inclusion and protection policies and promote better coordination between Member States. The Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion may prove useful in that regard.

**3) Foster protection of children in a freedom of movement context:**
EU citizen children (either within their families or alone) benefit from the provisions –subject to certain restrictions - of the directive on the right to move and reside freely in the territory of another Member State. The EU should explore how to support child protection safeguards

\(^1\) Such as Article 24 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union and Articles 10, 45, 79, 83 and 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as well as the Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States; and directive 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

\(^2\) For example, the previous EQUAL Community initiative, funded under the European Social Fund presented programmes fostering the inclusion of Asylum Seekers. The European Commission also contributed to a better protection of migrant children through funding initiatives of networks such as “Dynamo” and “PICUM”. These initiatives should be strengthened and enlarged.
in the context of this movement, including in relation to the assessment of children’s best interests when return to their country of origin is being considered.

4) **Trafficking action and protection of migrant children**
The provisions on assistance and support to child victims in the recent EU antitrafficking directive and the forthcoming antitrafficking strategy need to be made available without restrictions. The EU should ensure that EU antitrafficking prevention and protection activities - such as early identification – pay particular attention to the situation of all children who have been trafficked or are at risk of trafficking and explore possibilities for a coordinated prevention and protection mechanism at European level, with child protection and the best interests of the child at its core. Moreover, after the release of the EU antitrafficking strategy, a proper implementation of its provisions should be ensured with specific attention given to the particular vulnerability of migrant children. The roles of the European Commission, the EU AntiTrafficking coordinator as well as the network of national rapporteurs will be paramount to achieve the ambitious goals that need to be set in the strategy.

5) **Mainstream child participation in all potential actions:**
It is the Mario project partners’ view that child participation should be at the centre of any decision that has an impact on children. As outlined in the research and recalled in numerous EU policy documents, the child concerned should have the opportunity to express his/her views over matters affecting his/her situation. The EU should therefore explore available opportunities to ensure participation of children in decisions that affect their lives and take children’s views into account in policies and programmes that impact the lives of children who move between countries.

6) **Migration of children in the enlargement strategy:**
All the above mentioned recommendations should also be integrated in the enlargement requirements adopted with candidate countries by the EU. Guiding documents and financial support should strengthen efforts aiming at the social inclusion of vulnerable groups to curb unsafe migration driven by lack of economic opportunities and/or widespread discrimination of ethnic minorities. Additionally, support for effective, sustainable and inter-connected child protection systems should be prioritized.

**To National governments:**

1) **Protection of non national children and non discrimination:**
Member States are primarily responsible for the overall protection of children on their territory. Based on the UNCRC provisions, and especially in the light of its article 2, non-national children should benefit from the same level of protection as nationals. Member States should therefore put in place adequate child protection measures to address the situation of vulnerable non-national children and their families who have moved to their territory.

2) **Implementing a human rights based and gendered approach:**
Street based activities involving children are often organized around their mother or a female relative who have to conciliate child care with economic activity. The specific role they play and their difficult situation should be reflected in actions aiming at the implementation of child protection measures. Member States should therefore implement a human rights approach - including a gender perspective - in all actions aiming at the protection of migrant children and their families in vulnerable situations.
3) Developing transnational and multistakeholder collaboration:
The research identified as a critical precondition for an adequate protection the need to put in place transnational collaboration schemes. Therefore such transnational collaboration, including all relevant public and private stakeholders, should aim to find adequate short and mid term as well as durable solutions for children migrating alone or with their families.

To Donors:
The difficulty to fund innovative approaches and campaigns related to migration issues is a challenge for NGOs. Donors are called on to fund awareness raising activities to prevent unsafe migration of children, be it internal or crossborder, and to provide solutions for safe movement. Donors should focus on those actions that are based on the views of the child.

To Non Governmental Organizations:
NGOs often play a fundamental role in the protection of vulnerable children outside their country of origin where state authorities are not in a position to offer adequate protection to them. The role of NGOs ranges from direct service provision to advocacy work addressing the gaps in national child protection systems. NGOs should therefore (continue to) develop projects that contribute to the protection of children in situations of vulnerability, when informed by well devised situation analyses, researches, empirical evidence and the views of concerned children and their families. They should also ensure better (trans)national collaboration and multi-stakeholder approaches, including state agencies and the academia.

3.7. Recommendations related to the work of institutions and NGOs for prevention of criminogenic and victimogenic risks for children.

Mainly two institutional interrelated systems deal with the problems of children at criminogenic and victimogenic risks - a system for prevention of asocial behaviour and a system for protection of children, as well as a great number of NGOs. The data from the previous analysis shows that their good functioning in the past years led to successful controlling the risks for children and avoiding the negative influence of social surroundings.

Both institutional systems expect conceptual reforms and government conception and normative acts have been prepared in compliance with international documents. In order to be successful these reforms they need to be evolutional, i.e. these changes need to be made based on proved efficiency of existing forms and activities and well trained professionals.

For this reason changes need to be oriented toward mastering the whole picture of criminal activity, criminal offences and violence against children in the context of child rights, paying attention at the same time to the variety of asocial behaviour acts of children.

- In the first place, it is necessary to mobilize financial and human resources for creation of effective centralized national information system with unified indicators for collection of exhaustive data related to child rights and synchonization of the information about identical processes and phenomena collected by different institutions. It is also necessary to develop software compatibility between the specialized information systems of different institutions for children - victims of different criminal attempts and violence.
(including trafficking and sexual exploitation) with the information system for children - perpetrators of asocial acts; authenticity and adequacy of information need to be guaranteed by elaborating the indicators specified by municipalities, gender, social background and their constant updating, in order to get the whole picture of the situation in the country especially concerning the most vulnerable groups of children, so that suitable forms of prevention and crisis intervention can be applied. Competent specialists of the related institutions and NGOs need to have access to statistical information with big information massifs as well as information concerning every separate case, by strictly observing the protection of personal data. It is advisable for the information system, its specialized sub-systems and the systems of the other institutions to be compatible with similar information systems of the European Union.

- **In the second place**, the problem with human resources should be solved by:
  - preservation of experts and professionals with proved experience, who work in institutions which are subject to closing down, and redirecting them to newly opened structures;
  - provision of a constantly operating system for improvement of the competence and qualification (including abroad) of experts and specialists who work with children at social, criminogenic and victimogenic risk; orientation of universities towards training of persons who will work in a modern way in the new changing social conditions; training of specialists for work with children - victims of trafficking and children with asocial behaviour. It is of special importance to prepare prosecutors and judges who are specialized to work on the problems of children and for the purpose they need to be given not only judiciary education but also - additional psychological and pedagogical schooling.

- **In the third place**, the coordination between the actions of different institutions on local and national level should be improved and their coordination with NGOs working with children at criminogenic and victimogenic risk should also be improved. Also, it is necessary to expand cooperation on international level with a focus on the provision of high mobility when working with concrete cases (for example, discovered trafficking of children, assistance in repatriation of trafficked children) and exchange of experience between professionals, staff training, information exchange according to unified and empirical indicators. For this purpose, concrete joint projects between Bulgarian and foreign institutions, national and foreign NGOs, need to be initiated and funded by attracting international donor organisations.

- **In the fourth place**, the state and the municipalities have to initiate, stimulate and ensure finances for information, educational and prevention campaigns and projects directed towards the public, schools, families and children. They can be realized in partnership with institutions and NGOs in different variants - according to the characteristics of the particular target groups. In this respect, special attention should be paid to policies related to the riskiest and most vulnerable groups of Roma children, homeless children, children in institutions. Campaigns and programs need to engage the media with programs and publications addressing children. The opportunities given by Internet are infinite in this respect.

- **In the fifth place** - expansion and enrichment of socio-pedagogical practice, psychological and legal support to children at social, criminogenic and victimogenic risk. This requires modernizing and increasing the efficiency of the work of the specialized bodies and NGOs. The accumulated experience and created units (social prevention centers, consultation offices, crisis centers, centers for public support, complex centers for social
services for children, protected homes, etc.) suggest the accomplishment of complex and interdisciplinary measures for prevention, protection and social integration, accompanied by improved services in the community, healthcare and psychological assistance given to victims of violence, crimes and sexual exploitation or assistance in correction of behaviour or re-socialization of children with asocial behaviour and children - perpetrators of crimes. An effective system for signaling and obtaining feedback from responsible institutions, NGOs and specialists should be implemented in practice when there are cases of children at victimogenic and criminogenic risk. Here again it is important to pay special attention to the most vulnerable groups of children and families through the realization of different programs and projects consistent with the ethnic background, gender and age of the corresponding children. Target groups in these programs should be also parents, teachers and the public as a whole.

- **In the sixth place, the elaboration of legal normative basis related to children at criminogenic and victimogenic risk**, including creation and maintenance of the database in the court system, with special indicators created for children, included in legal proceedings: minors who are perpetrators of crimes; a number of cases involving children; perpetrators of crimes against children; measures need to be undertaken for quicker, effective and impartial jurisdiction in this field.
4. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POSITION OF SOME INSTITUTIONS OFFERING SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AT RISK AND THE LEGISLATION CHANGES RELATED TO CHILD PROTECTION

4.1. Crisis centers for children – victims of trafficking and violence

4.1.1. Comments from researches of ECPAT– Bulgaria and analyses from the advocacy platform of the Group of Experts within Mario project, 2011:

Analysis of the problematic areas related to the operation of the Crisis centers in Bulgaria

ECPAT Bulgaria - as a national partner in “Mario - joint action to protect child from exploitation in Europe” and the Group of Experts within the project identified serious problematic areas related to the operation of Crisis centers and the practices for accommodation of children there. This was a result of the deep analysis of the legislation and the existing practices for accommodation of children in Crisis centers, the working meetings organised with the directors and the staff of the Centers; the practical seminars organised with representatives of a wide range of professionals from the child protection system; the regular visits paid to three Crisis centers (in Montana, Sofia and Balvan, V.Tarnovo district) and the multidisciplinary meetings for exchange of experience with opinions of different experts who work on these problems. ECPAT Bulgaria - national partner in project “Mario - Joint efforts to protect children from exploitation in Europe” and the National Group of Experts identified serious problematic areas, related to the functioning of the Crisis centers in the country and the practice for accommodation of children in them. In September 2011, special advocacy letter with attached analysis, conclusions and recommendations was sent to ministries, deputy ministries, heads of agencies, municipalities, organisations, MEP to appeal for establishing adequate status and good functioning of the Crisis centers, keeping the best interests of children and ensuring good professional cares for children in crisis situation.

The conclusions of the National Group of Experts and the national project partner - ECPAT Bulgaria are as follows:

- There is a serious violation of the rights of the children accommodated in the Crisis centers. More than that, some of the existing practices are contrary to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the principle of “the best interest of the child” which is in the basis of the now existing Child Protection Act. In some cases the stay of the child neither leads to overcoming the trauma and psycho-social stabilization nor to possible social and family integration and psycho-social rehabilitation after leaving the Center.

- Based on this, the below-listed problem fields need immediate reaction in the name of the best interest of children and the realization of the engagements of Bulgaria concerning the UN Convention on the Right of the Child:

- **The Crisis Centers for children should be specialized.** The existing practice of the so

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2 The Analysis is prepared by Iva Nikolova, National Group of Experts Coordinator within project “Mario-Joint efforts to protect children from exploitation in Europe”.

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called “mixed” accommodation of children - victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, labour exploitation and children in conflict with the law is in contradiction with all international norms and must be terminated.

- There is need of trainings of social workers from the Social Assistance Directorate (Child Protection departments - CPD) for implementation of differentiating approach in accommodating children in the Crisis Centers in conformity with the concrete reasons and the results of already made careful assessment of the cases and the individual needs of the children.

- Crisis centers need to function as centers for emergency units for urgent and short-term accommodation of child victims. The tendency of merging the functions of Crisis centers with the functions of residential-type institutions for children should be ceased because this is in contradiction with the very idea of “crisis” accommodation. Also, Crisis centers should not give accommodation to children due to considered social factors.

- Crisis Centers need finances for employment of psychologists, for their training and increasing their qualification (and the qualification of the rest of the staff of the Centers). Some of the Crisis Centers have no psychologists or the psychologists are with the statute of outsource consultants who are not in the capacity of giving daily assistance to children in crisis and post-traumatic trauma. Supervision of psychologists who are beginners should be provided by qualified and experienced psychologists on concrete cases.

- Purposeful trainings of the staff of the Crisis centers is needed on the following topics: psychological supervision, psychological crisis intervention, identification of trauma symptoms, victims recovery, professional “burnout”, etc. And these trainings should be conducted regularly and systematically.

- It is evident that there is acute shortage of social services for the children who leave the Crisis Centers and lack of financial resources for their future life outside the institutions. It is of utmost importance to create long-term psycho-social and rehabilitation programs and services for the rehabilitation of child victims and their reintegration and acquisition of skills for self-dependent life.

- There is need of sufficient financial resources for supporting municipalities in their efforts to offer the services of the Crisis centers and develop services meeting the needs of the children during the period of their crisis accommodation and their reintegration in the community.

- The conclusions concerning the above-mentioned problem spheres come as a result of a one-year monitoring and researches conducted by the team of ECPAT Bulgaria (Neglected Children Society) - national partner in the project: “Mario - Joint Action to Protect Children from Exploitation in Europe”, funded by OAK Foundation. ECPAT Bulgaria, the Expert group created within the framework of Mario Project, all its members and its partner organisations express their firm support to the conclusions and recommendations of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in their report : “Crisis Centers for children: between the social service and the institutions” and declare their readiness to provide expert assistance to the Bulgarian government and the respective institutions in their efforts to solve this serious and pressing problem.
4.1.2. Comments from the report of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee “Crisis Centers for children: between the social service and the institutions”, 2011


Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) in its report: “Crisis Centers for children (BHC): between the social service and the institutions” makes critical comments on the situation in Bulgaria and concludes that “The state is not in the capacity of protecting children at risk”. According to the observations of BHC “There are serious violations of the rights of children the Crisis centers for children in Bulgaria”.

In her presentation at a conference in July 2011, Ms. Elitsa Gerginova - a researcher in BHC, reports the following: “Cases of raped children in their families are only illustrations of the problem of child abuse in Bulgaria. Child victims many times seek help from the persons in their close surroundings without receiving protection. Specialized care realized in the Child Protection departments within 147 Directorates for Social Assistance to the Social Assistance Agency is not able to protect children at risk. The question why the situation is this and what should be changed provoked the research of BHC in the system of the Crisis centers where children victims of trafficking and violence are accommodated as a final measure”.

The report shows that the Crisis Center profile has been considerably changed as the Centers (12 centers in Bulgaria) accommodate not only children - victims of trafficking and violence but also children with asocial behaviour and acts of thefts, prostitution, runaways, children accommodated due to social needs. At the time when the visit was paid there was only 1 child - victim of trafficking (about 1% of all accommodated children). 69% of the children in the Centers are victims of internal trafficking, 20 % are victims of domestic or other kinds of violence, 5% are homeless and 5% are accommodated due to committed asocial acts. According to BHC such mixing of the children is intolerable so it is necessary to be considered how trafficked children can be separated from the children - victims of domestic violence.

Another key problem is that in their greater part the accommodations in these institutions are arbitrary. Despite the fixed period for accommodation (six months) the research of BHC shows violations of the law because some children are accommodated for longer periods of time. “Giving that Crisis Centers are closed type institutions and the stay there is practically imprisonment, so every imprisonment can give grounds for penal prosecution. In most of the Crisis Centers the stay duration continued up to 8 - 9 months and after their reintegration failed there were cases of second accommodation of children for 6 months. In other cases, after the expiration of the 6-month period, the children are sent to another Crisis Center - again for 6 months”, explains Mr. Stanimir Petrov - coordinator of the Closed Institutions Program of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. About 10% of the children in the Crisis Centers stay more than 6 months there which is a violation of the law.

The accommodation procedure and long stay of children in these centers give grounds to consider that in its present mode this social service permits serious deviations from international standards of the rights of children.

According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee the stay in the Crisis centers should be as shorter as possible – maximum period of 3 months. Keeping the children longer there
goes beyond the idea of social service and leads to educational deficit and permanent institutionalization of the children. It is intolerable to keep children in a closed type of institution only because at that moment there is no other place where they can be accommodated.

Accommodation in Crisis centers should be used as an extreme measure for children who really need psycho-social intervention. In all other cases children can be directed to Centers for accommodation - family type or other social services.

According to BHC accommodation in Crisis centers needs to be done not only “by documents” but after personal acquaintance with the children in every particular case. For this purpose, it is necessary to have enough qualified and well paid social workers in the Directorates for Social Assistance. It is important to solve the problems with accommodations by administrative or court orders. The staff of the Crisis Centers should be well paid for their work. In order to avoid second acts of violence and trafficking psychologists and social workers need to continue their work with the children after they leave the Centers.


This material is presented in a contracted form.

National Network for Children (NNC) welcomes the efforts of state stakeholders to support children and persons – victims of violence, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. The present feedback has been prepared on the basis of the experience of the member organisations of NNC which have experience in offering the service “crisis center”. International Social Service Foundation –Bulgaria has also been consulted on this matter.

In relation to this Draft Methodology we – NGOs, have the following comments:

Term for providing services:
It has been commented and arguments have been provided at the meeting organised in the National Social Assistance Agency that the stay in the crisis center should be for a term not longer than 3 months. So we appeal that the regulation for a 6-month term should be revised with regard to the specialization of the Crisis Centers. There is an argument in this respect that after the second month there is a notable regress in the work with the children. More than that, the quick solution of the problems should be a priority for all institutions working on them. At the moment there is a serious problem with unaccompanied children. The reason for that is the existing inertness of the administration and coordination. It is in the best interest of unaccompanied children to have a really short stay and be relieved at the most from the procedures of their accommodation and their check-out. Experience shows that it is imperative to have a clear definition of the period of accommodation. We suggest that the period of stay should be considered from the date of registering the child to the date of checking out, instead of starting from the date of the decision of the court.
Mobile teams for crisis intervention:
We propose that the functions of the teams are accurately defined. We also think that it should be defined whether the teams will work with Child Protection Departments, what will be the procedure of signalization, etc.

Capacity of Crisis centers:
The methodological guidelines of the Crisis Centers provide for the capacity of 10 children. The experience of NGOs offering this service shows that cases where the number of children is 10 are extremely rare. Most of the time 15 - 17 persons use the services of the Crisis Centers. This is why we think that fixing a maximum number of service users is rather a restricting condition than a prerequisite for effective and qualitative work. Our recommendation is that the permissible number of users should be indicated as an interval (10 to 20 persons) because the capacity and quality of services depend to a great extent how work is organized. The capacity of 10 persons is suitable for Centers for children only. It is a fact that at the moment Crisis centers are overcrowded and the reason for that are the small number of available services and the financial status.

Specialization of Crisis Centers:
The Draft Methodology of Crisis centers provides for 6 different profiles of the centers. We highly appreciate the idea of differentiation of the specific problems and respectively different approaches for their solution but at the same time we are apprehensive of their excessive segmentation. The problems of the persons who usually need such services are complex and quite often one user of service does not belong to only one of the indicated groups. We think that we could have differentiation between children in conflict with the law and those who are victims of abuse and trafficking. We could also think of separation of services for victims of trafficking and the services for victims of domestic violence due to the difference in the specific nature of the work with these two groups. At present these children are being accommodated in Crisis Centers but the work with them requires different approaches.

Target Groups:
We suggest that corresponding target groups should be indicated for each profile. The target groups indicated in the Methodology Guidelines exclude children aged 0 – 7 from the circle of users of services. We understand that this in general prevents accommodation of small children in residential type of places which is in the spirit of deinstitutionalization and demand for these children to live in family environment. However, the services of Crisis Centers are actually needed for very small children, together with their mothers, who are victims of domestic violence. We appeal that there should be no fixed minimum age so that children would not be separated from their mothers who in most cases are victims of violence and trafficking together with their children. We also propose that the Methodology Guidelines should indicate the groups which this type of service is inappropriate – for example, children with some mental disorders.

Crisis accommodation:
The proposed definition for “crisis intervention” is extremely important. We appreciate that it is accomplished “after an occurred incident” and here we propose an additional specification for a maximum period of accommodation from the moment of the incident to the moment of accommodation. Our argument is that this would eliminate the practice of some Child Protection Departments which issue orders for accommodation of children and women who are neglected and homeless. As a whole the definition does not clarify what determines a
given situation as “crisis” situation for a certain child and requires his/her accommodation in a Crisis Center.

**Admission of the service “Accommodation in Crisis Centers”:**

We suggest that the Methodology Guidelines should include regulations for implementation of the Coordination mechanism for referral, care and protection of repatriated Bulgarian UAM and children – victims of trafficking returning from abroad. The Methodology Guidelines should clearly describe the obligations for accommodation and transportation of these children and it should be explicitly indicated that this will be done by social workers from Child Protection Departments. Cases where police protection is needed for accommodating children should also be indicated.

**Work on cases in Crisis centers:**

The Guidelines indicate that the key social worker coordinates the activities for preparation of a specialized assessment and implementation of the action plan. The coordination of the staff of the Crisis Centers in the preparation of the individual plan for care is not mentioned and not described in the Guidelines.

The Methodology Guidelines provide for periodical meetings of multistakeholder teams for discussion on the development of the cases. With regard to the difficulties in realization of such meetings we suggest that the obligations, responsibilities and regularity of such meetings should be explicitly indicated.

**Termination of the use of the service “Crisis center”:**

It is necessary to make some additional provisions for the supervision of cases after the children have left the Crisis Centers. There is no specification that after the children return to their original environment there is an obligation of the Child Protection Departments to investigate whether this is in the best interest of the child because there are cases with lethal end for the victims. It is necessary to be specified that the Child Protection Departments in the area of residence of the children who have been in Crisis Centers monitor these cases and if needed a protection measure in the family environment is taken. There is no clear definition about how exactly Social Assistance Directorate monitors the cases of young people over 18 who have returned to their environment after being taken out of the Crisis centers.

**Health care:**

In its part about health care the Guidelines indicate that Crisis Centers provide assistance for receiving dental care. Here we ask the question what happens when the children are not health insured and who are liable to pay for their dental care. This is also valid for the rest of medical services. As a whole the Crisis Centers face extremely complicated cases related to the medical status of the users of the services and ensuring specialized care for them becomes a serious problem.

**Education:**

The Guidelines indicate that the key social worker from the respective Crisis Center assists the enrolment of the children in appropriate schools. However, in some cases there are objective obstacles to the enrolment because children who are eligible to go to school do not have documents for a finished previous class.

**Acquisition of life skills for self-dependent and independent life:**

According to the Guidelines the persons who want to use the services of the Crisis centers submit applications to the offices of the competent bodies in the area of their permanent
residence. But in practice there is no such possibility for them because they are not registered at the addresses of the Crisis centers for security reasons.

**Work with parents and families:**
The Guidelines state that the provider should ensure possibilities for the children to contact their parents, foster parents or guardians “in the best interest of the child”. Such provision in many cases would be inconsistent giving the specific nature of the children accommodated in the Crisis Centers. Our proposal is that this provision should be applied to a clearly and exactly specified group of children.

**Location:**
The Guidelines indicate that the Centers should be located in areas where there are providers of medical services for the children. We understand the arguments for this condition but we think that the Guidelines should take into account that some Crisis centers are situated in locations where there are no medical providers. There is one Center where, when necessary, emergency aid is received from the nearest city (10 minutes by car).

**Protection of children/persons from abuse and violence:**
We propose that the provider of the service should have a prepared internal policy for protection of the children. The Guidelines should also include some guidelines for interviewing children-witnesses with a clearly specified place for this purpose and the distribution of responsibilities among stakeholders.

4.2. Comments of the National Network for Children from the Alternative Report for Bulgaria on the Universal Periodical Review (UPR), 2011


Comments are excerpts from the NNC Report for 2011.

The objectives of the Report of the National Network for Children on UPR are as follows: to present the opinions of NGOs on the basic problems related to the rights of children in Bulgaria; to make recommendations for overcoming these problems and give support to the efforts of the government, local authorities, civil organisations and all parties interested in the application and compliance with the rights of children in the country.

I. General review of the policies for the rights of children

(2) The analysis of the development of the system for protection shows a considerable fragmentation of functions and repetition of elements in the State Agency for Child Protection and in the Agency for Social Assistance, where Child Protection Departments are responsible for the implementation of protection measures. At the same time there are norms and structures which are old-fashioned and rely on philosophy which is in contradiction with the UN Convention on the Rights of Children and the rest legislation on the rights of children.
The work in many Child Protection Departments is extremely unsatisfactory. This opinion is supported by many researches of different Bulgarian and international organisations. As of 31.12.2008 the number of persons who worked in the Child Protection Departments was 750, as 450 of them were social workers in the whole country. According to information from the report of the Social Assistance Agency in 2008, one social worker works on 112 cases. In order to be in compliance with the international standards for quality of social work one social worker should work on no more than 20-30 cases a year. Salaries of social workers are some of the lowest in the sphere of the professions for assistance and quite often they do not receive primary and regular training, as well as professional supervision.

The number of social services for children and families and their distribution around the country is extremely insufficient. The situation is extremely hard in small villages and towns where children and families have almost no access to consulting, social assistance, accompanying and accommodation in cases of risks or violation of rights. Quality of social services is often unsatisfactory and does not contribute to real protection of children at risk and their reintegration. In 2010 there were 104 new social services which were left without funding.

Recommendations:

1.1. The objectives and the concepts of the system for protection of children, social assistance and family policy need to be reviewed with the aim to accept a broad concept for the welfare of all children and families at risk, prevention of risks and family support.

1.2. The strategic and administrative framework of the implementation of the policy for protection of children should be simplified, clearly outlining and effectively distributing the rights and responsibilities of the bodies for child protection. There is a necessity of introducing Child Ombudsman in the system, both on national and local levels.

1.3. Adequate professional capacity should be provided for effective functioning of the system for child protection. Standards should be introduced for the number of cases one social worker can work on. Decent remuneration, provision of human resources and career growth should be ensured for the persons who work in the sphere of child protection.

III. Children in Institutions

The rights of the children living in institutions continue to be violated. According to SACP information in December 2009 their number was 6730 children. On 24 February 2010 the government adopted a national strategy named “Vision for Deinstitutionalization in Bulgaria”. Undoubtedly, the adoption of this program document and the long-term political engagement for closing down the institutions is a big step ahead.

The average period of stay of the children in institutions is approximately 14 years which is a very long period of time while the quality of care given is low. Despite the idea of deinstitutionalization the buildings of the institutions continue to have planned repairing. Individual plans for action and care are rather formal and their realization is not related to planning and development of new alternative care and services.

Sufficient services and a system for supporting young people who leave institutions are missing, which leads to negative consequences like unemployment,
exploitation, no place to live, etc., and a whole this hampers the socialization of young people.

Recommendations:

3.1. The Government should engage itself to cut the road to institutions by providing funding and popularization of prevention measures against abandonment of children. For this reason it is necessary an effective system to be implemented for rendering support to families living in high-risk communities.

3.2. Child protection system and its financial and resource provision should be reformed in order to provide quality measures for the protection of children in institutions and children living at risk of being abandoned.

3.3. The development of alternative services should be bound with analyses of the accommodation of children in homes and their needs in terms of care and services. In other words, the development of alternative services should result in closing down the institutions of boarding-house type.

3.4. Efforts should be made in continuing the tendency of consigning the whole process of foster care to external providers and they should be professionalized in delivering this service. Providers of social services should be most relieved in the process of opening new ones.

3.5. Mechanisms for supervision of the care and services given to children and families should be changed both in specialized institutions and in alternative services for children and families. The control and monitoring accomplished by the government should be oriented to the situation of the children and not to documentation and administrative procedures. A system of monitoring and control should be established, based on sufficient data giving proofs of the policies for deinstitutionalization.

3.6. Changes in the legislation should be made, so when young people leave the services they should be considered as a specific social group. This will guarantee continuity and systematic approach to services for them.

4.3. Position of the National Network for Children related to the Bill for amendment of the Ombudsman Act


National Network for Children (NNC) actively participates in the process of preparation and implementation of the policies for children and families in Bulgaria. As a confederation of 100 NGOs working for creation and implementation of quality policies and services for children and families, NNC strives for building a system which creates better conditions for upbringing and protection of children in Bulgaria.

In relation to the forthcoming discussion of the Bill for amendment and additions to the Ombudsman Act, the non-governmental organisations have the following comments concerning the Bill:

We welcome the explicit indication of the responsibility of the institution of ombudsman for defending child rights and submitting to the Council of ministers and the National Assembly (the Parliament) opinions on bills related to the protection of human rights.
With regard to this we propose that in the structure of the Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Bulgaria there should be created a special position “Ombudsman for children’s rights”

In its work NNC is guided by the main principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and lobbies for observation of the recommendations made to Bulgaria by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The proposal of NNC is based on the recommendation: “A mandate should be assigned to an independent agency for monitoring and popularizing the rights of children as well as providing an open mechanism for submission of complaints by children and their parents.” From June 2008 the Committee adopted its final recommendations on the last periodical report of Bulgaria related to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The problem of observation of the rights of children has been tackled again by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is reported that the recommendations from the first report in 1997 for creation of an independent agency for observation of the rights of children have not been applied. The Committee insists that the state should put all necessary efforts for implementation of the final recommendations of the initial report that have not been realized yet.

Creating a separate independent agency would cost big administrative resources and in this connection NNC proposes the existing Ombudsman Office to be used and a specialized Ombudsman for the rights of children can be assigned to it

We also propose that there should be found a possibility for this Ombudsman to be nominated by NGOs too and the Ombudsman for children’s rights assignment should be a priority of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria. This is necessary in order that a mechanism can be established for independent monitoring of policies related to children. The specialized Ombudsman for the rights of children would be able to give opinions, standpoints and recommendations on all strategic topics and submit comments on legislative initiatives related to child problems.

The proposal of NNC for Ombudsman for children’s rights creates an opportunity for Bulgaria to start implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the basis of the now existing state structures.

4.4. Position of the non-government organisation “Parents Initiative Committee” (PIC) on the Bill for amendments and additions to the Ombudsman Act, 2012

Source: We want Ombudsman for children’s rights; NNC newsletter 103/13 – 19 February 2012; http://nmd.bg/newsabc/bg/17/#a1

The non-government organisation “Parents Initiative Committee” (PIC) uses the opportunity given by the non-governmental organisations united in the National Network for Children (NNC) to express its opinion in relation with §2 of the Bill for Ombudsman. In a stand submitted to the Chairperson of the Commission for education, science, and problems of children, youth and sports, PIC expresses its attitude to the problem that texts are missing in the Law concerning the assignment of an Ombudsman for children’s rights. It is also indicated that the amendments stipulated in the Bill which refer to the rights of the Ombudsman related to protection of child rights are insufficient and do not correspond to a satisfactory extent to the recommendations of
the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as from 06.06.2008, adopted at its 48th session in relation with the second periodical report of Bulgaria on 21.05.2008. In one of the items of the Report it is indicated that:

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2. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends the state to entrust an independent agency with a mandate for monitoring and popularization of the rights of children, as well as to ensure an open mechanism for submission of complaints from children and their parents. This agency could be a separate body for the rights of children or it could be a part of the Ombudsman office with an authorized deputy-ombudsman for children’s rights. The committee also recommends to the Ombudsman to apply for accreditation to the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC).

The present Bill does not provide explicitly for a Deputy-ombudsman for children’s rights as it has been indicated in the above-mentioned recommendation. According to Parents Initiative Committee” (PIC), giving the condition that the Republic of Bulgaria is equally engaged with the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and with a view to procedure savings, considers that the legislative initiative for amendment of the Ombudsman Act should include the condition for implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2008. Most of them can be realized if the institution of Deputy Ombudsman is legally regulated and civil control is possible on the efficiency of the administrative bodies, different organisations, the court system and all state bodies.

The appointment of Deputy-Ombudsman for children’s rights with his/her corresponding legal rights would be an additional guarantee for observation of children’s rights and the implementation of the norms in this sphere could be monitored by a specialized expert NGO which would have legislative initiative and exercise publicity in society.

4.5. Position of the National Network for Children (NNC) with regard to the national discussion on the Draft of the Child Protection Act

Source: http://society.actualno.com/news_369292.html, NNC about the Child Protection Act: The responsibilities of the institutions are unclear!

One of the basic recommendations of the participants in the public discussion organized by NNC on the Draft of the Child Protection Act, proposed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Assistance at the end of 2012, is:

The responsibilities of the institutions for realization of the engagements related to children and families should be defined.

The opinion of more than 200 participants from 17 regions included in four meetings around the country is that the proposed text does not give an answer to the question that is responsible for the creation of the policy for children in this country. Representatives of civil organisations, parents, teachers and social workers proposed that in the new Child Protection Act there should be stipulated not only sanctions for families, journalists and specialists working with children but also sanctions for mayors or ministers who have violated their engagements towards children. According to the Executive Director of NNC, Mr. Georgi Bogdanov, the civil society welcomes the efforts of the government to modernize the policies for children and the new law for children is a serious step in this direction. However, during
the work on the texts, the opinions of the participants in the discussions should be regarded, because they are related to key fields of this matter.

**Here are some main recommendations made to the government during the discussions by the representatives of the civil sector and the specialists working with children:**

- **Maintaining support to all families** – a flexible system needs to be created for provision of services to families. This does not mean only financial support but also social work and support for better parental care;

- **Special focus on all vulnerable groups of children** – the text of the present Child Protection Act pays special attention only to children with malfunctions. It is necessary to add specialized measures for support to other vulnerable groups of children as well, like children who live in poverty, children in conflict with the law, etc.;

- **Limitation of the abandonment of children** – abandonment of children under 3 in institutions should be banned. However, this is difficult to realize due to the insufficient number of foster families and the underdeveloped services for prevention of abandonment and work with biological families.