

## 2. 4. TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEINGS

**Illegal trafficking in people is growing with alarming speed.** It includes the transfer of illegal immigrants, women to be engaged in prostitution, labour force to work under inhuman conditions, trafficking in children, and illegal adoptions at exorbitant prices. The illegal flows are under control of organized crime. Trafficking in people involves officials from passport control services who accept forged identification documents. Those involved in people trafficking often have double citizenship and use different names. Involved in the traffic are companies providing visa services and tourist agencies. Traffickers use networks of trusted hotel owners and people renting private lodgings.

The clandestine transfer of people across the border is done by traffickers that are often repeat offenders who continue to engage in this type of activity. The crossing of the border by land is typically done in groups led by a guide who is familiar with the area to be traversed. He has ties with the operations headquarters in one of the large cities where potential migrants form groups to be transferred en bloc. Candidate migrants usually have a meeting point – a railway station, a restaurant, or a private house. Then they are moved close to the border, boarded on the respective means of transportation and finally placed in the charge of the guides. The channels for people trafficking are controlled by organized crime and the organizers inside the country as a rule get a share of the proceeds.

People trafficking is very often done in secret compartments of buses and trucks. Typically the "shipments" are accompanied by the organizers or other trusted individuals using car. They escort the "shipment" to the border checkpoint and wait until the vehicle crosses the border. The clandestine migrants are often accompanied by their children, have little baggage and carry no money or identification papers with them.

### TRAFFICKING OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

According to the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal business in the world. **Southeast Europe is one of the most important transit regions for illegal immigrants from Turkey, China, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern and Asian countries on their way to the EU** (see chart 9). It is also an important source region, with Romanians, Albanians and Roma being among the most numerous groups of illegal immigrants in the EU.

One of the reasons for the exceptionally fast growth of the human trafficking business is that profits are incomparably higher than risks and costs involved. Unlike drug smuggling, human trafficking is considered in most countries as a minor offence which carries light sentences. No special equipment is needed and no organized network for distribution (like in the case of drugs) is essential. In case of danger, the immigrants (who pay in advance for the "service") can be easily abandoned by their guides, and in practice, they often are.

The financial gains made through the trafficking are enormous. Estimates, based on the recorded cases (40,000 immigrants) only in Austria and only for the year 1999,

amount to \$100 million. The overall estimates for the EU are \$3 billion in 1999. Today, the world-wide illegal immigrants "business" is worth between \$12 billion

(IOM estimate) and \$30 billion (US sources). On average, the EU-bound immigrants pay between \$2,000 and \$2,500 for their transfer from Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, between \$9,000 and \$14,000 for the transfer from Central and South Asia, and up to \$24,000 for the trip from China.<sup>100</sup>



### The routes

Due to their location, **Bulgaria and Romania are the most important entry points for illegal immigrants.** Until recently, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia were also significant entry points for numerous immigrants – most notably for Iranians (Bosnia) and Chinese (Serbia). The most popular land route leads from Bulgaria and Romania through Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia to Slovenia, and from there to Italy and Austria. Many illegal immigrants travel across Hungary. Equally important is the route across the Adriatic Sea. Numerous routes from Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria (via Macedonia) lead to Montenegro and Albania, where well-established channels for clandestine traffic across the sea exist:

- By various estimates, **up to 80,000 people tried to cross the Bulgarian border illegally during the past decade.** The information from the Border Police indicates that 22,733 border offenders were caught in 1999 alone, which was 4,500 more compared to the previous year. By some estimates the number of Bulgarian nationals illegally residing abroad ranges between 50-89,000 people.
- According to the government estimates, **up to 40,000 illegal immigrants annually pass through Romania on their way to the West.** Due to stricter border control, over 32,000 people were refused entry into Romania in 2001, and 21,000 were caught crossing the country illegally. The number of Romanians trying to get illegally to EU countries is also huge. In September 2001 alone, more than 1,400 Romanians were returned to Romania after being caught living illegally in other countries or trying to get illegally across their borders.<sup>101</sup>
- **Post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina became one of the most easily accessible European countries due to its exceptionally liberal visa regime.** Scores of Iranians, Kurds from Turkey, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Iraqis, Moldavians and Macedonians had been arriving to Sarajevo to embark on their illegal journey to Western Europe until recently, when the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina (under international pressure) introduced visas for citizens of some of the most

<sup>100</sup> "People's Trafficking: Europe's New Problem." *Jane's Information Group*. 23 September 2000. < [http://www.fsa.ulaval.ca/personnel/vernag/EH/F/noir/lectures/people\\_trafficking\\_europe.htm](http://www.fsa.ulaval.ca/personnel/vernag/EH/F/noir/lectures/people_trafficking_europe.htm) > .

<sup>101</sup> U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Romania." Barbara Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe: Current Situation and Responses to Trafficking in Human Beings." *UNICEF, UNOHCHR and OSCE – ODIHR*, June 2002. < <http://www.unicef.org/sexual-exploitation/trafficking-see.pdf> > .

"problematic" countries. **According to the UN estimates, in the year 2000, more than 50,000 illegal immigrants** (10 percent of all), who have reached the EU countries, **passed through Bosnia-Herzegovina.**<sup>102</sup>

- Under Milosevic, **Serbia became the most popular and easily accessible gateway to Europe for Chinese immigrants.** Milosevic's regime had more than cordial relations with China and Yugoslav consulates there have issued visas free of charge to tens of thousands of Chinese "tourists" during the second half of the 1990s. Two or three airplanes full of passengers used to arrive to Belgrade from Beijing every week, and then to return to China almost empty. The new Serbian authorities have significantly limited the traffic of Chinese immigrants by introducing restrictions to their access to Serbia.
- Most of the immigrants enter Croatia from Bosnia-Herzegovina, by crossing Sava or Una rivers. This inevitably leads to occasional tragic events. In May 2000, four Iranians drowned in Sava after falling from the overcrowded boat, taking 35 illegal immigrants across the river. In a similar accident few weeks later, three more people have died. It is almost impossible to estimate how many people have illegally crossed Croatia on their way to the West. In 1999, 8,000 illegal immigrants were caught by Croatian police. **In 2001, the number reached 24,000 and most likely still represents less than 20 percent of those who successfully cross Croatia.**<sup>103</sup>

### Immigrant "Terrorists"

At the beginning of March 2002 near Skopje, Macedonian police killed 7 alleged "terrorists" (6 Pakistanis and 1 Indian), who were, according to the information of the Macedonian security services, planning terrorist acts against foreign embassies in the Macedonian capital. The incident left many questions unanswered. As it later turned out, the seven killed were in fact illegal immigrants on their way to Athens, where a number of their relatives were already illegally living and working for years. They had no connection with terrorist groups and their only crime was passing the borders illegally. It is believed that the immigrants were used as scapegoats by the Macedonian government, which wanted to "prove" that Macedonia was endangered by "Islamic terrorism." This was a way for the authorities to get international sympathies and support for solving their domestic security problems.<sup>104</sup>

- **The majority of the migrants are crossing Macedonia on their way to Greece,** but the flow towards Albanian ports is also significant. Due to political and security considerations, Macedonian border police, which is ill-equipped and lacks human capacities, focuses on guarding the borders with Albania and Kosovo, leaving the long borders with Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece practically uncovered. In addition, it is estimated that there are more than 600 illegal border crossings along the Macedonian border, making trafficking of numerous Eastern Europeans,

<sup>102</sup> Ibro Kovacevic. "Krijumcarenje Kurda iz Turske na zapad." *AIM Press*. 18 March 1997. < <http://www.aimpress.org/dyn/pubs/archive/data/199703/70318-006-pubs-sar.htm> > .

Peter Beaumont. "People Trade Makes Bosnia Rich." *The Observer*. 28 January 2001. < <http://www.observer.co.uk/politics/story/0,6903,429988,00.html> > .

<sup>103</sup> Carlotta Gall. "China's Migrants Find Europe's Open Back Door: The Balkans." *The New York Times*. 23 August 2000. < [http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured\\_articles/20000823wednesday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20000823wednesday.html) > .

*Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans: A Study of Trafficking in Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation to, through and from the Balkan Region*. Vienna: International Organization for Migration, 2001, pp. 32-33. < [http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/balkan\\_trafficking.pdf](http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/balkan_trafficking.pdf) > .

Boris Raseta. "Sverc istocnjaka na Zapad." *AIM Press*. 27 June 2000. < <http://www.aimpress.ch/dyn/pubs/archive/data/200006/00627-002-pubs-zag.htm> > .

<sup>104</sup> Zeljko Bajic. "'Mudzahedini' iz Rastanskog Lozja." *AIM Press*. 7 March 2002. < <http://www.aimpress.ch/dyn/pubs/archive/data/200203/20307-001-pubs-sko.htm> > .

"At Rastanski Lozja, Pakistani Migrants which were Travelling to Greece were Killed, Not Terrorists of Al Qaeda." *The Balkan Human Rights Web Page*. 8 May 2002. < <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/balkanhr/message/3982> > .

but also of increasing number of Asians and people from the Middle East to Greece, an exceptionally profitable and almost risk-free illegal business.<sup>105</sup>

- Immigrants are arriving in Montenegro from Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo. After entering the republic, they are first transported to centers close to the Montenegrin coast and then transferred to various bays from which speedboats would take them on four-hour long night journey to Italy.

### Inhuman Trafficking of Humans

Albanian traffickers are known for their inhuman treatment of their "clients". They often dump them in the shallow waters near the Italian coast to save the time needed to properly disembark them on the land. In some cases, they throw their passengers overboard to avoid being captured by the Italian coast guards. In 1999, 170 illegal immigrants drowned as a consequence.

- **The trafficking of people has recently overtaken drug smuggling as the most profitable illegal activity in Albania.** The gang bosses have invested their drug-earned money into purchasing modern high-powered speedboats which can cover the distance between Albania and Italy in less than an hour. According to estimates, around 150 speedboats

operate in and around Vlore. **Italian authorities believe that between 500,000 and a million illegal immigrants were shipped to Italy since 1991.**<sup>106</sup>

### The organizers

Trafficking of illegal immigrants through Southeast Europe seems to be organized by the same groups who were previously engaged in the smuggling of weapons and drugs or in "assisting" refugees to reach safety for a price during the war. Similarly, the same routes are being used and the same partners from the other side of the border are involved. This seems to be especially the case in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. In Montenegro and Albania, the traffic of illegal immigrants across the Adriatic Sea to Italy is organized by the same people who are engaged in smuggling of drugs and cigarettes to Italy. Additional proof that the same people are really involved is offered by the findings of Italian authorities. According to the former Italian Finance Minister, the gangs, operating the smuggling across the Adriatic Sea often combine two businesses – trafficking of illegal immigrants and smuggling of drugs. Italian police has caught immigrants with heroin in their backpacks. The explanation is that they are forced to act as couriers to pay for their passage.

<sup>105</sup> "People's Trafficking: Europe's New Problem."

U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." *US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*. 25 February 2000.

< [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1999\\_hrp\\_report/macedoni.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/macedoni.html) > .

Zeljko Bajic. "Macedonia's Porous Borders." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting Balkan Crisis Report* no. 153. 4 July 2000. < [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr\\_20000704\\_4\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr_20000704_4_eng.txt) > .

<sup>106</sup> "People's Trafficking: Europe's New Problem."

Hammer and Semini. "The Gangster's Paradise."

Cillufo and Salmoiraghi. "And the Winner Is.... The Albanian Mafia."

Randall. "Italy and Its Immigrants."

### The profits

According to the estimates, **the organizers of trafficking of illegal immigrants to the EU earn over \$3 billion per year:**<sup>107</sup>

- Data collected by the UN and NGOs for Bosnia-Herzegovina shows that on average, illegal immigrants pay \$4,000 to the Bosnian traffickers. Considering the UN estimate that over 50,000 immigrants pass through Bosnia every year, **this means that the Bosnian trade with immigrants is worth around \$200 million a year.** It is believed that one third of this sum ends up with Bosnian police and politicians.
- The profits generated through human trafficking are similar in Albania. According to available information a boat transport across the Adriatic costs between \$900 and \$1000 per person. **This means that Albanian traffickers have been making over \$200 million annually in recent years.**
- Montenegrin traffickers charge between \$1,000 and 1,500 per person for transport across the Adriatic.
- In Bulgaria, experts estimate that some USD 30-50 million circulate in the illicit emigration market, which comprises the issuing of false and authentic visas as well as the transportation "fees." The illicit passage from the Middle East to Western Europe via Turkey and Bulgaria costs up to \$7,500 with migrants paying separately for each stage of the journey.

### TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR THE SEX INDUSTRY

Trafficking in women and girls is an even more alarming and disturbing aspect of the trafficking in human beings. In most cases, it involves coercion, violence and humiliation of victims. Trafficked women and girls are often forced into prostitution, held in slave-like conditions, and repeatedly raped, brutalized, denied food, water, sleep and medical care, and sold like property by one brothel owner or trafficker to another. Many of them are girls under 18 years of age, and numerous were either tricked to leave their homes (with false promises of well-paid employment or marriage) or kidnapped. In Albania and Kosovo, cases when families sold their own daughters or sisters to traffickers were registered. By various estimates, hundreds of thousands of women and girls are trafficked across European borders every year.<sup>108</sup> In most cases, women and girls from East Europe are trafficked to the EU, but many (especially from the former Soviet Union) are trafficked also to other Eastern European countries and "employed" in sex industry there. Often, the trafficked girls are forced into prostitution in Eastern European countries for a certain period while on their way to the EU.

<sup>107</sup> "Southern Europe: Smuggling." *Migration News* vol. 7, no. 12. December 2000.

< [http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/archive\\_mn/dec\\_2000-12mn.html](http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/archive_mn/dec_2000-12mn.html) > .

"People's Trafficking: Europe's New Problem."

Gaby Hinsliff and Peter Beaumont. "Blair War on Trade in Migrants." *The Observer*. 4 February 2001.

< <http://www.observer.co.uk/politics/story/0,6903,433341,00.html> > .

Beaumont. "People Trade Makes Bosnia Rich."

<sup>108</sup> The Swedish NGO Kvinna Till Kvinna estimates that 500,000 women are trafficked into EU every year. IOM estimates that roughly 200,000 are from Central and Eastern Europe, and from former Soviet Union. Between 10 and 30 percent of girls, trafficked to become sex workers, are under 18 years of age. In case of Albania, the underage girls represent alarming 80 percent. Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

In recent years (after the end of the war in the former Yugoslavia), trafficking of women from, into and through the Southeast European states rapidly increased. The

**Chart 10: Trafficking of women through Southeast Europe**



successor states of the former Yugoslavia (especially those with the significant international presence) have become important destination countries for women and girls from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and Romania. Belgrade became one of the most important transit centres. Due to their location, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania also became crucial transit countries for trafficked women (see chart 10).

#### Source countries

- **Romania is the most important regional source country for trafficked women and girls.** Together with Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan women, Romanians represent the largest group of women trafficked to and through Southeast Europe. They usually travel through Serbia and from there to

Bosnia or to Kosovo. Some stay there to work in local brothels. Others are moved on from Bosnia to Croatia and Slovenia, and from there further west, and from Kosovo to Albania and from there to Greece or Italy. Many also travel through Bulgaria to Greece and Turkey. In 1997, 7,000 Romanian women were deported from Turkey because they entered the country illegally and/or were engaged in prostitution. NGOs estimate that several thousand Romanian women are trafficked out of Romania every year. Reportedly, most of the women are sold to traffickers in Timisoara, usually for \$50 to \$200. When they reach their country of destination, they are resold for up to ten times more.<sup>109</sup>

- **Bulgaria is also an important source country.** Bulgarian women are most often transferred to Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Poland and the Czech Republic, mostly through companies for the recruitment of escorts and of women wishing to work abroad. There are about three hundred such companies in this country but none of them has been granted a license to recruit escorts or dancers. A survey made by the *Animus Association Foundation* revealed that 94 % of the ads offering work abroad actually sought attractive single women aged up to 25. "White female slaves" are exported from Bulgaria via three main routes: through Turkey and Greece to Cyprus and Italy, through Romania to Western Europe and through Macedonia to Kosovo or Albania and from there to Italy. Unofficial data suggest that at present there are some 10,000 Bulgarian women prostitutes abroad.<sup>110</sup>
- **Another significant source country is Serbia.** Serbian girls (especially of Roma origin) are trafficked to Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Germany and the Netherlands.

<sup>109</sup> U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Romania."

<sup>110</sup> *Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 35-36.

"Corruption and Trafficking: Monitoring and Prevention," pp. 32-33.

Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

- Trafficking of Albanian women and girls to the EU (predominantly Italy and Greece) represents an even more worrying problem, since (apart from the usual tricks and deceit, used to lure girls from their homes), traffickers often kidnap women and girls and sell them to mafia clans across the border. **It is estimated that during the last decade, over 100,000 Albanian women and girls have been trafficked to Western Europe.** According to some estimates, up to 80 percent of

#### Peacekeepers of Traffickers?

The most alarming case, involving trafficked Romanian women and Romanian traffickers, was the 2001 case of two Romanian members of the UN Police Task Force in Bosnia. In February 2001, an investigation was launched into allegations that two Romanian policemen were organizing the traffic of Romanian women to Bosnia. They were providing them with false documents, and after the girls reached Bosnia, they sold them to Bosnian brothel owners. Romanian women, who were interviewed during the investigation, named 10 more Romanian police officers. They accused them of cooperating with brothel owners either as traffickers or as informers, who alarm brothel owners in case of raids. By the summer of 2001, the investigation was canceled due to the lack of direct evidence and witnesses (all the women initially interviewed were moved out of Bosnia).<sup>112</sup> In a separate incident, Kathryn Bolkovac, an American member of the UN police force in Bosnia was fired for "timekeeping irregularities" after reporting to her superiors that her colleagues in the police force were cooperating with traffickers in the sex slaves' trade. A British court to which she appealed ruled that she was unjustly fired for making embarrassing disclosures.<sup>113</sup>

them have been under 18 years of age, and some have been as young as twelve.<sup>111</sup>

- According to the OSCE reports, **numerous young women and girls from Kosovo were abducted from the refugee camps in Albania during the 1999 war** and sold into forced prostitution to Italy. Many human rights experts expressed concern that Kosovar women who were victims of rape were particularly vulnerable and exposed to traffickers due to the conservative and patriarchal nature of the Kosovar society, which views rape as a disgrace for the family. Numerous cases of families selling their own daughters or sisters to traffickers provide another example illustrating the grimness of Albanian socio-

economic reality. NGOs estimate that more than 30,000 Kosovo Albanian women are working abroad as prostitutes.<sup>114</sup>

#### Transit countries

- Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are, just like in the case of illegal immigrants, inevitable transit countries, especially for women from Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. According to Elizabeth Rehn, former Special Representative of the Secretary General and Coordinator of the United Nations Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, trafficking in women is "the most disturbing" illegal activity in Bosnia. The most notorious place for buying and selling female sex slaves is the so-called "Arizona Market" in Brcko district, set up by the international community to foster economic and social interactions between Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs. According to the UN report, most of the women held in slave-like conditions and forced into prostitution all over the

<sup>111</sup> Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

<sup>112</sup> "Romanians Reported Topping European List of Illegal Migrants." *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 3 October 2001.

Colum Lynch. "U.N. Halted Probe of Officers' Alleged Role in Sex Trafficking." *The Washington Post*, 27 December 2001. < <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A28267-2001Dec26?language=printer> > .

<sup>113</sup> Barry James, "Whistleblower Upheld in the UN Bosnia Police Case," *International Herald Tribune*, 8 August 2002.

<sup>114</sup> U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Albania." *Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 51-52.

### Arizona Market

Arizona Market was set up by the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in 1996 with the goal of reestablishing some of the broken ties between the three Bosnian constituent nations through shared economic activity. To the huge disappointment of its creators, Arizona Market became one of the most notorious centers of criminal activity in the Balkans. Everything from smuggled and/or stolen clothes, home appliances, vegetables and cars, to drugs and prostitutes is sold there at bargain prices, keeping impoverished local buyers as well as over 3000 people employed in the market content. Smuggling and other criminal activities aside, the market nevertheless did manage to bring Muslims, Croats and Serbs together to do business with each other. For this reason, the Office of the High Representative of the International Community in Bosnia so far refused to close it down. For now, however, it seems that Arizona Market is causing far more problems than it is solving, and hampers rather than aids the Bosnian post-war development.

Balkans, were bought from traffickers at the Arizona Market. The usual price is \$1,500.<sup>115</sup>

- **Serbia is an even more important transit country.** Moldovan, Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian women cross Serbia on their land route through the former Yugoslavia towards Italy and Austria, as well as on the way to Montenegro and Albania, from where they are transported across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. According to the police data, 1,260 women from the above mentioned countries tried to enter Serbia in 2001, but were denied entry.<sup>116</sup>

- **Macedonia became a transportation hub for the women trafficked to**

**Greece and Italy.** Women usually enter Macedonia from Serbia or Bulgaria, and are then sent either to Greece, or transported across the lake Ohrid to Albania. No precise data is available, but the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior and the International Organization for Migrations estimate that more than thousand women were trafficked through Macedonia in 2000. The figure tends to increase every year. The majority of girls, trafficked through Macedonia, are from Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine.<sup>117</sup>

- **Bulgaria is no less significant** and is transited by women and girls, trafficked to Greece and Turkey.
- Due to their location and the well-established smuggling and trafficking routes across the Adriatic, **most of the women trafficked through the Balkans eventually end up in Montenegro or Albania.** Most of the women who reach Montenegro are transported by speedboats from Bar and other ports across the Adriatic to Italy, but many are also shipped across the lake Skadar to Albania and from there either to Greece or to Italy.<sup>118</sup>
- Apart from its proximity to Italy and the well-trodden smuggling channels, the notorious corruption of state officials, customs and police officers makes Albania ideal for trafficking. According to testimonies of women trafficked to Italy from Albania, Albanian policemen were directly involved in trafficking in at least 10 percent of the cases. Women most often enter Albania from Macedonia across lake Ohrid, or from Montenegro across lake Skadar. Both are well-known smuggling routes. Women, mostly from Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and

<sup>115</sup> "Emir Imamovic. "Bosnian Brothels Flourish." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting Balkan Crisis Report*, no. 210. 6 December 2000.

< [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr\\_20001206\\_4\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr_20001206_4_eng.txt) > .

United Nations News Service. "Press Briefing on UN Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *UN Press Briefings*. 23 July 1999. < <http://www.un.org/news/briefings/docs/1999/19990723.REHN.html> > .

Anes Alic and Jen Tracy. "Sanctioned Smuggling in the Balkans." *Transitions Online*. 14 September 2001. < <http://www.tol.cz/look/TOLnew/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=22&NrSection=2&NrArticle=2163> > .

<sup>116</sup> Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

*Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>117</sup> Zoran Radulovic. "Montenegrin Immigrant Trade." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting Balkan Crisis Report* no. 168. 29 August 2000.

< [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr\\_20000901\\_4\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr/bcr_20000901_4_eng.txt) > .

*Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 33-36.



Russia are bought from other East European criminal groups for on average \$1,000 and sold to Italian mafia for up to \$3,000.<sup>119</sup>

### **Destination countries**

All regional countries are to a considerable extent also destination countries. When trafficked women enter a particular country, they are usually kept there for a certain period and forced into prostitution in local brothels. After several months, they are sold to traffickers in the neighboring country. This is an established practice in Serbia. Serbian traffickers force girls to "work" in various Serbian towns until they "repay" their "traveling expenses," before selling them to Bosnian or Montenegrin traffickers.<sup>120</sup> However, several regional countries have become permanent destination countries and the problems with forced prostitution and women trafficking are turning there into an exceptionally alarming problem. As a rule, countries with significant international presence fall into this category.

- **According to estimates, there are over 1,000 brothels in Bosnia-Herzegovina,** around 700 in Republika Srpska, and around 300 in the Federation Bosnia-Herzegovina. Roughly 15,000 prostitutes, who were trafficked into the country work there. Approximately two thirds of them are foreigners, predominantly from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Most of them are held in slave-like conditions and forced into prostitution. Their documents are taken away and they are told that they have to repay their debt to the trafficker, who got them across the border. In practice, the debt can never be repaid since women are charged also with expenses for food, accommodation and medicine. The authorities seem either powerless or unwilling to put an end to this practice. Even if one brothel is closed down, another one immediately pops up in a near-by private house. Police usually arrests and deports only prostitutes, while traffickers as a rule go unpunished. The average monthly income of the owner of a brothel, where five girls are employed, is estimated to be over \$10,000.<sup>121</sup>
- **One of the most worrying problems of today's Kosovo is the growing sex industry,** most often involving women and girls forced into prostitution against their will and held in slave-like conditions. According to IOM, only 13.5 percent of women receive regular payment for their services, and 55 percent are frequently beaten and/or sexually abused by traffickers. Most of them are forced to have unprotected sex, and only 10 percent are granted medical care. After 1999, brothels and night clubs have mushroomed and can now be found even in small towns and villages. The almost complete break-down of social structures and the institutional vacuum are only a part of the explanation. Kosovo's sex industry was given an enormous boost by a presence of the large number of international troops and officers, but the significant social changes and abundance of cash now circulating in the province made visiting brothels both more acceptable and more affordable to local men also. IOM estimates that few thousand women work in the

<sup>119</sup> U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Albania."

<sup>120</sup> *Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>121</sup> U. S. Department of State. "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Bosnia-Herzegovina." *US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*. 25 February 2000. < [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1999\\_hrp\\_report/bosniahe.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/bosniahe.html) > . *Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 42-43.  
Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

Kosovo brothels, many of them against their will. There are suspicions that UNMIK international police officers might be involved in trafficking. Few have already been repatriated due to such suspicions.<sup>122</sup>

- **Situation is very similar in Macedonia.** Countless bars, motels and nightclubs can be found all over the country (most are located in the countryside, where police presence is not as strong as in the urban areas). Between 1500 and 2500 non-

### Enslaved on No Man's Land

The desperate situation of the girls, held in virtual slavery in the Macedonian brothels is exacerbated by the political-security situation in the republic. Many of the brothels, especially in western Macedonia, are held by Macedonian Albanians, who have allegedly close connections with the top of the National Liberation Army. Like so many times during the last decade in the former Yugoslavia, there is a very thin line between fighting for national rights and fighting for securing free reign in ethnically demarcated criminal empires. Women, ruthlessly exploited by traffickers in Macedonia, have been (for now) sacrificed in the name of conflict prevention. This will remain unchanged for as long as a raid of the Macedonian police on a brothel, owned by an ethnic Albanian, can be (and usually is) interpreted as police violence of the Macedonian state against its Albanian subjects.<sup>124</sup>

Macedonian prostitutes work there, bringing annual profits between \$150 and 200 million to prostitution organizers. The flourishing prostitution business is inseparably connected with corruption. Police officers are paid to turn a blind eye and politicians and civil servants are paid to issue licenses and permits. The presence of a significant number of international troops gave an additional push to the development of prostitution – an inevitable consequence of the presence of the large group of well-paid foreigners, separated for a longer period of time from their families.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> *Victims of Trafficking in the Balkans*, pp. 35-36, 45-48.

Limanowska et al. "Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe."

<sup>123</sup> Nanevska. "In the Quicksand of Corruption."

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<sup>124</sup> Preston Mendenhall. "Sold as a Sex Slave in Europe." *MSNBC News*. April 2002.

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