

Sociological program

In 2013, the Sociological Program focused on the following priority areas:

- **Policies for the integration of migrants and vulnerable groups:** a study focused on the causes of destitution and homelessness among migrants, in particular the Bulgarian Roma migrant community in Italy and France. The health status of Bulgaria's Roma minority was the subject of an initiative aimed at identifying inequalities and explanatory factors. It also developed mechanisms for data collection and monitoring as part of EU-wide research on Roma health.
- **Trafficking of children:** research was expanded to include several new forms of trafficking – child begging, labour exploitation for pick-pocketing and sexual exploitation of boys. The geographical focus is on EU Member States that are typical countries of origin for victims of trafficking (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia), and Member States that are traditional destination points for Roma victims (Austria, Italy, Greece). A two-fold assessment of the integration of vulnerable migrant groups was undertaken. The first approach was a review of integration policies and practices applied to vulnerable categories of migrants (women, children and victims of trafficking). This approach examines measures like granting of long-term residence, psychological treatment, vocational training and employment. The second approach assessed how obstacles to integration for particular categories of migrants increase their vulnerability to social exclusion, exploitation and trafficking and how such obstacles can be overcome.
- **Prevention of Internet bullying behaviour:** in cooperation with the Bulgarian Safer Internet Center and universities and organizations from 7 EU MS, the Sociological Program continued helping young people, school teachers, counsellors and parents in identifying the danger and risk associated with bullying behaviour on the Internet.

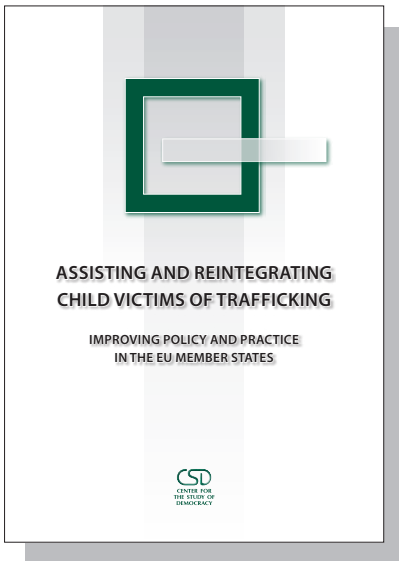
I. Policies for the integration of migrants and vulnerable groups

Reintegrating children victims of trafficking

In 2013, the Sociological Program completed its 2-year cross-national effort targeted at assisting and reintegrating children victims of trafficking. A handbook, *Assisting and Reintegrating*

Child Victims of Trafficking: Improving Policy and Practices in the EU Member States, was published. It presented the main results of an in-depth evaluation study of the legal, policy and practical frameworks for assistance to and reintegration of child victims of trafficking in six EU Member States – Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, and Sweden. The three reports included in the handbook are based on stand-

ardised methodologies for examination of legal and policy frameworks, for evaluation of programmes for assistance and re/integration of child victims of trafficking and for identification of good practices in this area. The reports discuss the relevance of legal frameworks for the needs of trafficked children and the effectiveness of provided services in different areas of assistance, such as: identification of trafficked children, appointment of a guardian, individual case assessment, regularisation of status, interim care and protection, durable solutions and long-term re/integration.



Policy recommendations were developed based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the design of policy and the implementation of measures for assistance and re/integration of child victims of trafficking (VoT). While the conclusions for each of the six covered countries reflected specific national conditions, when put into a comparative perspective they allowed for providing a set of recommendations relevant for the wider EU context. The most important of them were:

Guaranteeing the “child’s best interest” of trafficked children. To better guarantee the implementation of the principle that ‘child’s best interest’ should guide any actions or measures taken on his/her behalf Member States need develop formal provisions for the determination of best interest.

Improve guarantees for basic child rights of trafficked children in line with international legal standards. The non-punishment clause stipulated in Council of Europe Convention has to be established more solidly in the national legislation of the Member States. Criminal procedures need to be improved in order to fully protect child victims of trafficking. The procedures should be more sensitive to the victims and limit, as much as possible, the intervention of enforcement officers.

Establishment of centralised data collection systems. Centralised data collection mechanisms regarding child trafficking and assisted victims need to be established in all EU countries. These mechanisms have to rely on uniform and detailed indicators to be used by all responsible institutions and allow the aggregation of reliable and comparable data for analytical purposes. The present lack of well-designed or properly implemented centralised data collection mechanisms undermines the quality of the counter-trafficking response as it is not grounded on a sound evidence-based analysis of the main trends in trafficking in persons (e.g. types of exploitation, demographics, gender and age profiles of trafficked children, extent of the phenomenon).

Establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The adequate Counter Trafficking (CT) response could be formulated and enacted on the basis of an analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the CT measures.

For this purpose, Member States shall invest efforts in the design of adequate monitoring systems – based on well formulated indicators – that will serve the regular monitoring and evaluation of the CT programmes.

Strategic documents need to be more specific. Major national strategic documents such as CT Strategies and/or CT Action Plans need clear delineation of resources (human, financial and technical) and detailed realistic schedules of implementation of activities in order to guarantee a more effective policy formulation and to be testament to government ownership of the CT response.

Ensuring substantive rather than formal **civil society participation in the counter-trafficking response.** The proper anti-trafficking response can be ensured when public bodies co-operate with non-governmental organisations, especially in countries where NGOs are often the only service providers. Cooperation between the public and the non-governmental sectors needs to be strengthened by way of more regular consultations that lead to substantive rather than formal participation of the civil sector in the policy formulation process as well as in the monitoring efforts. The sustainability of NGO programmes and services for child VoT shall be guaranteed by more adequate state funding.

Identification of child VoT. The establishment of systematic and formalised identification procedures will improve the combating of trafficking in human beings, including trafficking in children as well as the overall re/integration and rehabilitation process.

Establishment of referral mechanisms. Functioning national and transnational referral mechanisms need to be established in order to ensure effective and

comprehensive assistance to child VoT and to rely less on the commitment of individual actors or ad hoc solutions. Such mechanisms will serve to outline the responsibilities of all parties for the return and re/integration of child VoT and will ensure standard lines of inter-institutional and cross-national cooperation.

Interim care for child VoT. Interim care for child VoT in countries of destination has to be grounded in standard operational methodologies. The lack of such methodologies or guidelines for the provision of interim assistance in countries of destination undermines the quality of care and hinders possibilities for monitoring and evaluation of the different types of assistance offered. Access to services and rights for child VoT at the interim stage must not to be made conditional upon a temporary residence permit or a humanitarian or asylum-seeking status.

Long-term reintegration for child VoT. Long-term reintegration shall be available for child VoT in both countries of origin and destination. Countries of origin must develop clear and effective long-term integration mechanisms or procedures and accompanying monitoring mechanisms to ensure adequate long-term re/integration of child VoT and to limit the risks of re-trafficking.

Accommodation facilities for child VoT. It is worthwhile considering the establishment of specialised and protected accommodation facilities for child VoT. Social care authorities must be very careful when accommodating child VoT in mixed groups of children such as unaccompanied minors, children victims of other forms of violence or with adult victims of trafficking.

Guaranteeing access to compensation for child VoT. Child VoT should also have access to compensation as victims

of violent crimes. However, from the six studied countries only Sweden has a well-designed and accessible compensation scheme for VoT, which may well serve as a successful example to other states.

More rigorous policies to avoid re-trafficking of child VoT. More research is needed in order to establish the factors and dynamics associated with child trafficking induced by families and the pros and cons of enacting family unification in such cases. In some cases, family unification may remain the best option for the child, even if the family was complicit with the act of trafficking. In other cases, separation from the family

may appear the better option in cases of involvement of parents in the trafficking of their child. To avoid risks of re-trafficking, however, countries of origin shall establish viable care alternatives to family reunification.

These findings and policy recommendations were presented on March 20, 2013 at a policy workshop and international conference organised by CSD. The event was attended by representatives of various national and local institutions with responsibilities in combating trafficking and assisting child VoT, including crisis centres for children victims of violence and trafficking. Among the participants were Ms.



Ms. Aimee Comrie, Adviser to the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combat-ing Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE, speaking at the Policy Workshop "Assisting and Reintegrating Children Victims of Trafficking – Improving Policy and Practice in Bulgaria"



Mr. Norbert Ceipek, Director of the Crisis Center for Unaccompanied Children and Children Victims of Trafficking, Drehscheibe – Vienna, at the Policy Workshop “Assisting and Reintegrating Children Victims of Trafficking – Improving Policy and Practice in Bulgaria

Aimee Comree, Adviser to the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE, and Mr. Norbert Ceipek, Director of the Crisis Center for Unaccompanied Children and Children Victims of Trafficking, Drehscheibe – Vienna, Ms. Antoaneta Vassileva, Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Mr. Kalin Kamenov, Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection.

Mr. Kalin Kamenov, Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection, noted that an important gap in the assistance of victims of trafficking, including children, is the lack of financial mechanism for the return of children and adults in

their home country. He stressed that the recommendations for improvement of the programs for assistance and reintegration of child VoT, developed by the Center for the Study of Democracy, reflect accurately and adequately the needs of the system.

Ms. Antoaneta Vassileva, Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons, pointed out that since 2005 there has been an improvement in the policy on child trafficking, but there is still much to be done in this area, at both international and national level. She emphasized the need to develop services for long-term care to be available to child VoT after they leave the crisis centre.



Ms. Antoaneta Vassileva, Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons, at the international conference “Assisting and Reintegrating Children Victims of Trafficking – Improving Policy and Practice in the Member States of the European Union”

Countering new forms of Roma children trafficking

Aiming to strengthen efforts to combat trafficking in persons across the EU, in 2013 the Sociological Program launched an initiative targeting the most vulnerable victims – children from socially excluded ethnic minorities. The initiative will address two deficiencies in the current counter-trafficking response: lack of in-depth knowledge of the new forms of trafficking affecting children and lack of active involvement of the Roma community – a group at high risk of child trafficking. It is focused on three new forms of trafficking: child begging, labour exploitation for pick-pocketing and sexual exploitation of boys. Activities take place in four EU Member States, typical

countries of origin (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia) for victims of trafficking and three Member States, traditionally destination points for Roma victims (Austria, Italy, Greece).

The initiative’s objectives are:

- to strengthen counter-trafficking efforts targeting Roma children by providing better understanding of new forms of trafficking through developing and testing new methods of participatory research and carrying out evidence-based analysis;
- to empower Roma communities to act as equal partner in counter-trafficking policies and measures;
- to enhance child victim support in countries of origin and destination by developing pilot initiatives for child victims of trafficking support and sensitising service providers and child protection authorities to new forms of trafficking and improving coordination.

Migration and destitution

In 2013 the Sociological Program performed a study on mobility, migration and destitution. The main objective was to provide insight into the extent and the causes of destitution among different categories of non-nationals in the EU, with a specific focus on homelessness as the most extreme form of poverty and deprivation. Its specific objectives included:

- to gain a general understanding of the causes of destitution among different categories of non-nationals, with reference to:
 - legal obstacles;
 - social obstacles;
- to provide information on the extent of homelessness among non-nationals and on characteristics of homeless migrants;

- to assess national and local policy responses which address the problem of destitution and more specifically homelessness among non-nationals and the identification of good practices;
- to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of EU policies and legislation in tackling the problem of destitution among non-nationals.

The study collected information on the extent of destitution, the legal and social causes of destitution with reference to various groups of migrants, i.e. EU-nationals, non-EU nationals, regular migrants, asylum seekers, irregular migrants.

To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of EU policies and legislation, the study applied three levels of analysis:

The first general level addressed the concentration, extent and causes of destitution and homelessness in the EU and in the Member States.

The second level referred to “country group studies”. These country case studies each represented one of the target groups. Their situation is then studied in specific countries where destitution and homelessness is either problematic or typical. In this way there were identified four country case studies, i.e.:

- for EU-nationals, a study into the situation of EU10 member state nationals in Britain and Germany, in particular with reference to jobseekers and overstayers;
- for Non EU-nationals regular migrants, a study into exploitative practices vis a vis third country workers in Poland and in Spain;
- for Non-EU-nationals irregular migrants, a study into their situation in Greece and in the Netherlands;
- for Roma and Sinti, a study into their situation in France and in Italy.

The third level is the normative one and includes policy development and recommendations. It addresses both the issue of national and local practices and evaluation of EU practices and legislation.

The case studies showed that good or promising practices to ameliorate the plight of homeless migrants are largely local level initiatives, often initiated by the NGO sector, sometimes in cooperation with local authorities. A variety of initiatives have been identified, such as efforts aimed at relieving immediate needs (e.g. food, shelter), efforts geared towards integration and (re-)integration in the labour market (e.g. by providing information, training, bilingual consultation hours) and programmes aimed at assisted voluntary return for those with no real opportunities to successfully integrate into the host society.

A number of recommendations aimed at better policies and services for destitute and homeless migrants were proposed:

Minimum social care responsibility for irregular immigrants should be recognised by EU Member States. This minimum care responsibility should express itself in the recognition of a duty to provide medical support, shelter or aid in individual situations of exceptional vulnerability and need, for example when young children are involved, in cases of medical emergency. States are responsible for ensuring that there is a system of services for the homeless in operation that guarantees these basic requirements.

Providing care, shelter or housing to irregular immigrants should not be criminalized and branded as a criminal offence. Private and charitable initiatives must be respected and even pro-

tected. Respecting informal social support means that migrants must be secured access to general facilities needed to effectuate their self-help, in particular the banking system, communication services and public transport facilities. Irregular migrant workers must at least be free to join trade unions and take part in union activities. They should also be able to walk the streets and use public transport without having to fear apprehension, detention and deportation.

States should refrain from inhuman practices of immigration control. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union (FRA) has reported that while states have a right to control immigration, certain enforcement measures, such as, data sharing or arresting migrants in front of schools, have a negative and often disproportionate impact on the effective exercise of the fundamental rights of irregular migrants. The measures taken cannot only be repressive (fining, imprisoning) but should also take into account social needs (rehabilitation, treatment of addictions, psychological aid, etc.).

Policies and services for the homeless and destitute migrants should aim at the long term integration in the society in terms of rehabilitation programmes, job training and education. The conclusion of 'participation contracts' with newly arriving immigrants on a local level for example, may be considered as a way to improve the integration of vulnerable migrants, provided that this is voluntary and not a mere bureaucratic obligation for obtaining social advantages.

The national government's final responsibility for services for the homeless does not rule out the involvement of EU institutions in policies regarding these services. EU Commission should develop a comprehensive the-

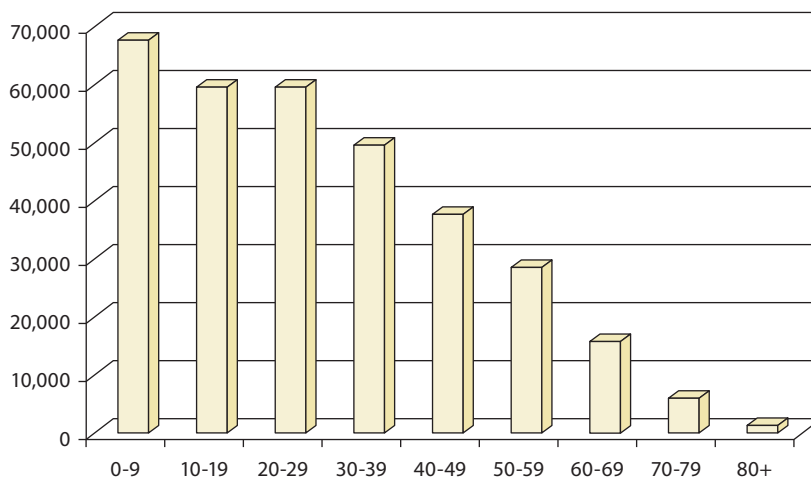
matic policy for the co-ordination of policies of destitution and homelessness among migrants, addressing both up to date policy questions and structural forms of services for the homeless. The co-ordination of policies on services for the homeless should not only include the member states but also other stakeholders, in particular NGOs with a well established reputation in this field, such as FEANTSA, PICUM and Defence for Children. It is also important that local government is properly represented in the consultations.

Roma health

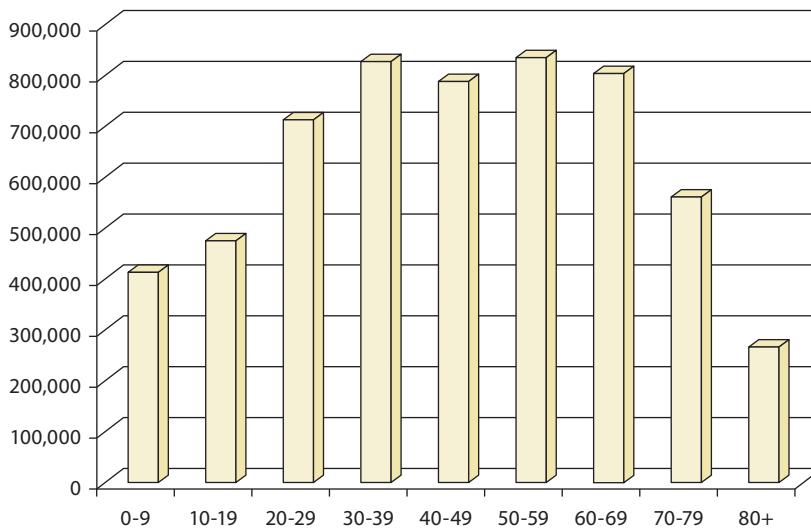
In 2013, the Sociological program started a study in the area of Roma health in EU Member States.

The absence of a sound evidence based data on health status of Roma is a major obstacle in the current EU Framework on Roma inclusion. Therefore, the aim of the study is to provide the most up to date picture possible about Roma health status as well as the measures currently being taken or planned to produce information on Roma health in the future. The specific objectives therefore, consist in:

- Preparing a report assessing the health status and health-related lifestyle attributes of the Roma population;
- Providing a report on Member States' existing and planned activities in data collection and development of specific surveys aiming to monitor the progress in the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategies in the area of health;
- Providing a report on Member States' existing and planned activities in data collection and development of specific surveys aiming to monitor the progress in the implementation of the National Roma Integration

Figure 5. Age pyramid – Roma population

Source: NSI, 2011.

Figure 6. Age pyramid – Bulgarian population

Source: NSI, 2011.

Strategies (NRIS) in the area of health.

The report focuses on seven policy-relevant public health topics, namely:

- mortality and life expectancy;
- prevalence of major infectious diseases;
- healthy life styles and related behaviours;
- access and use of health services and prevention programmes;
- prevalence of major chronic diseases
- health factors related to the role of women in the Roma community;
- environmental and other socio-economic factors.

The reports collect information on **the health status and health-related life style attributes of Roma** for the last five years. While all EU MS and EEA/EFTA countries are being covered, particular focus is placed on countries with large indigenous Roma population (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Greece, Spain and Croatia), and countries with migrant Roma population (particularly France, the United Kingdom and Italy).

In Bulgaria, Roma are characterised by an inverted age pyramid and a youthful population – Roma aged 19 and below constitute 39 % of the total Roma population, while among ethnic Bulgarians, only 15 % are under 19. Conversely, 15 % of the ethnic Bulgarians are aged 70 and over, while for Roma, the share of this age group is just under 2 % (National Statistics Institute 2011).

Assessing integration measures for vulnerable migrant groups (ASSESS)

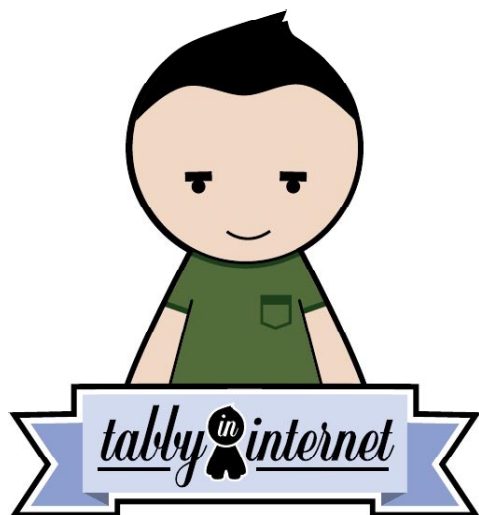
At the end of 2013, the Sociological Program started work on an initiative in 10 EU MS (Bulgaria, Malta, Slovakia, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Greece,

Belgium and Austria) on assessing integration measures for vulnerable migrant groups. The effectiveness of integration measures for three vulnerable migrant groups – women, children and victims of trafficking, will be monitored and evaluated. The aim is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the application of the Common Basic Principles on Migrant Integration when it comes to the integration of vulnerable migrant groups. The initiative will also foster the exchange of best practices among EU countries with different migration patterns, regimes and experiences.

Thus a gap in the analysis and evaluation of integration measures is addressed. While previous efforts have by and large adopted a generic approach, by looking at the specific vulnerabilities and integration challenges faced by migrant women, children and victims of trafficking, the current initiative offers tailored methodology and specific indicators for monitoring the integration of these vulnerable migrants groups.

II. Prevention of Internet bullying behaviour

The Sociological program, together with Bulgaria's Safer Internet Centre, started work on Threat Assessment of Bullying Behaviour in Youngsters and Transferring Internet Preventive Procedures in Europe covering 8 EU MS: Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece and Cyprus, France, Spain and Poland. In all the participating countries a training of teachers is conducted to explain how to work with teenagers in order to prevent cyber bullying. An online questionnaire is filled-in at regular intervals to follow up the changes in pupils' attitudes as a result of their training in cyber-bullying prevention and to help them self-assess their behaviour. A video game is being developed as another method of self-as-



assessment of bullying behaviour in the Internet. In Bulgaria, about 20 teachers and school counsellors from 16 schools in 7 towns are voluntarily taking part in this initiative.

III. Evaluation of policies and programs

In 2013, the Sociological Program prepared a Handbook *Assisting and Reintegrating Children Victims of Trafficking: Improving Policy and Practices in the EU Member States*. It contains evaluation of the programs for assistance and reintegration of child VoT in six EU Member States – Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Hungary and Sweden. The main findings and conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of the programs for child VoT in Bulgaria were as follows:

- The implementation of measures in the area of assistance and reintegration of child VoT in Bulgaria could become more effective if a number of measures are introduced at the level of strategic planning and policy formulation. It is highly recommended that Bulgaria's counter trafficking (CT)

annual national programs introduce clear timelines for implementation of activities; specify resources; delineate clear division of responsibilities and include indicators for measuring results. The involvement of civil actors in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs for child VoT is channelled through the presence of NGOs in the expert group at the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons and the National Consultative Council on Child Protection at the State Agency for Child. The current mechanisms for consultation between government and civil society however, could be improved to assure fuller integration of civil society organisations' viewpoints into policy formulation and implementation. The improvement of these mechanisms is to be considered the responsibility of both government and civil society actors.

- All practical efforts and resources for assisting and integrating child VoT in Bulgaria are concentrated in the stages of reception and crisis intervention, while the third stage, that of sustainable solution, is underdeveloped. The system of identification and reception of child VoT is well developed and the areas of accommodation and crisis intervention. However, a number of gaps and imperfections in the implementation of integration services at the first and the second stage of child VoT assistance are apparent. Those gaps include the institutional cooperation at local level, absence of effective legal service to child VoT, overstaffing of social workers at child protection departments, mixing of child VoT with children from other categories in crisis centres, prolonged stays of children in crisis centres, insufficient involvement of parents in the reintegration process, absence of alterna-

tive educational schemes for children with special security or educational needs.

- The third most crucial stage of the re-integration process, the phase of sustainable solution, is void of effective assistance schemes and monitoring mechanisms. The absence of effective accommodation solutions outside the family and the absence of effective assistance schemes for parents and relatives of child VoT may often lead to re-trafficking and re-victimisation of children. In this regard relevant authorities need to invest significant efforts at the third stage of reintegration, aiming at two directions. First, development of alternative community based long-term integration and accommodation services, tailored to the needs of child VoT. Second, design and development of assistance services for parents of trafficked children, to involve channelling of resources, conducting of trainings and adequate staffing of respective social service departments.
- One important area that exerts crucial influence over the assistance process of child VoT is that of prosecution. The lack of effective prosecution of perpetrators affects negatively the long term reintegration of children who are not effectively disconnected from their trafficking networks. It is highly recommended to consider the establishment of a body of specially trained independent legal representatives of child VoT to act in children's best interest along the process of integration.
- The system of assistance and reintegration of child VoT in Bulgaria will benefit from the establishment of a centralised data bank. Such data bank should be stored and main-

tained by the NCCTHB with statistics to be collected along coherent and clearly designed indicators. The aim of this data bank should be to allow the analysis of the trends in child trafficking, including methods and forms of trafficking and profiles of victims as well as the range of integration services and the level of integration of identified victims.

IV. Fostering institutional cooperation

The Sociological program has been providing sociological expertise (mainly of a methodological and analytical nature) in the development of research methods and instruments, the collection and analysis of data, the application of advance research techniques and tools, as well as policy evaluations and impact assessments.

Experts from the Sociological program took part in a number of governmental, civic and academic initiatives and forums, among which were:

- the Director of the Sociological program was appointed as governmental expert at the Horizon 2020 informal configuration for Societal Challenge *Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies*.
- Participation in the Advisory Board to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works – a body for consultations, cooperation and dialogue for the purpose of achieving transparency in public policy;
- participation in the Expert Working Group at National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons.