

Child Trafficking among Vulnerable Roma Communities

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Results of seven
country studies:
BG, HU, RO, SK,
AU, GR, IT.



4 countries
applying
participatory
research methods.

“The invisible children”

- Profiles of victims and how they entered into situation of child trafficking
- What are the main challenges in identification and assistance of children victims of trafficking?

Data on child trafficking

- Is not centrally collected;
- Is not disaggregated by socio-economic indicators and ethnicity;
- Is misleading on the actual size of the phenomenon.

Austria: both in 2012 and 2013, only three child victims of trafficking have been identified;

Slovakia: in the past three years, there have been only 9 child victims of human trafficking identified all together, whereby in 2014 there was none;

Hungary: reports no international child victims of trafficking;

Italy: reports 8 and 16 cases of child victims of trafficking for 2012 and 2013 respectively.

Child trafficking for begging

Data reveals that registered cases are on steep decline; (AU: 650 in 2005 to 233 in 2006 and to 12 in 2007)

Proxy data reveals high instances of begging activities; (191 foreign begging children in Greece approached in 2010; 1800 clients of *Centre to combat child begging 2003-2006*)

Profile of victims- two main typologies: children aged 0-5 begging with an adult and children 5-18 begging alone, in groups or with adult;

Young children more “effective” in begging as well as children with disabilities

Child trafficking for begging

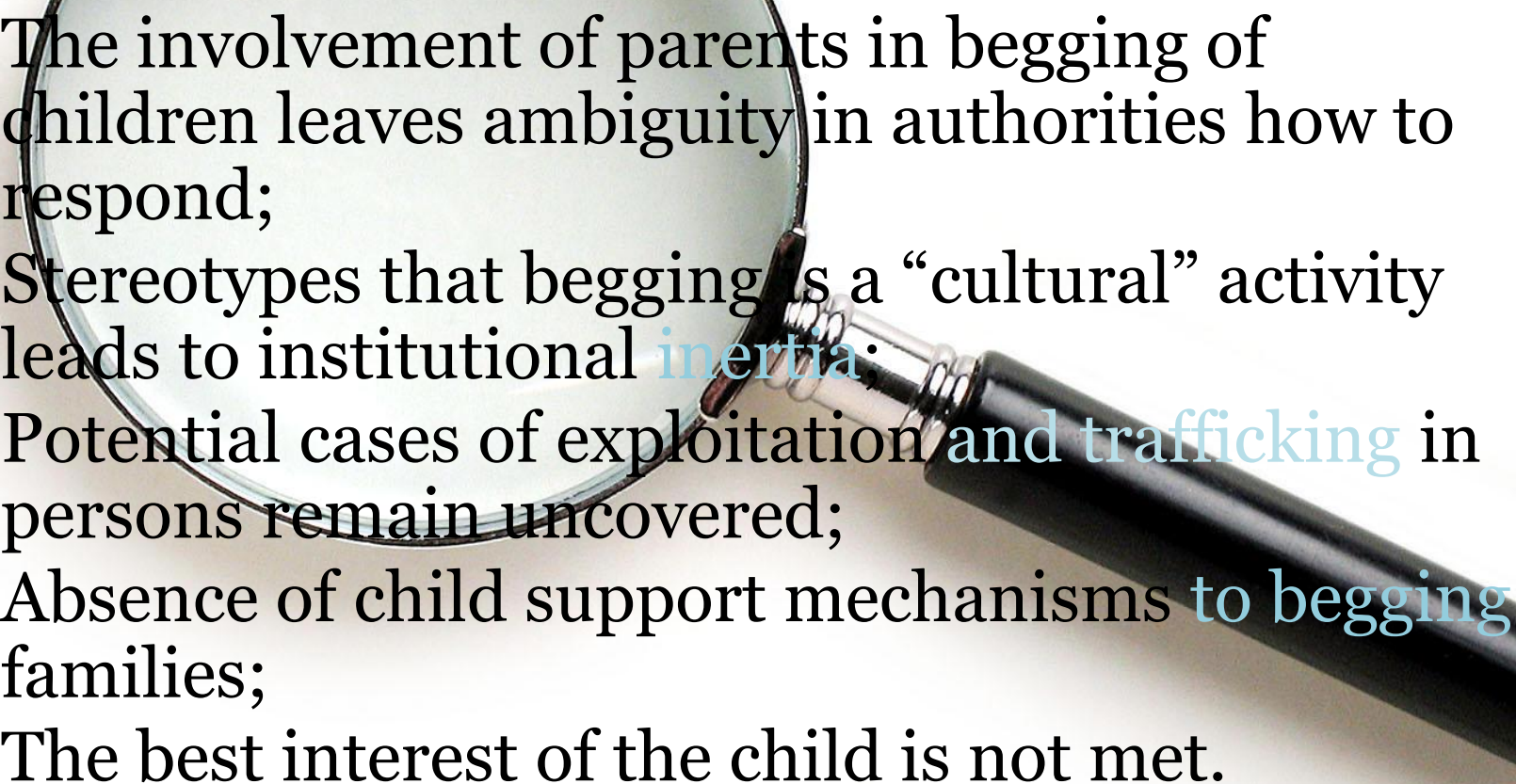
- **Recruitment through:** bonded labour, early marriage; entrusted care to relative abroad;
- **Profits?** 60,000 per month – investigations of trafficking network Milan 2013; Tandarei children sold at £20,000 for trafficking in UK.
- **Recent trends:** increased involvement of parents and families in the organisation of begging activities;
- Phenomenon of “poverty travellers” involved in begging.

Risk groups:

Children and families living in irregular settlements/camps;
Children in institutionalised care;
Poverty migrants.



Challenges in identification and assistance

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- The involvement of parents in begging of children leaves ambiguity in authorities how to respond;
 - Stereotypes that begging is a “cultural” activity leads to institutional inertia;
 - Potential cases of exploitation and trafficking in persons remain uncovered;
 - Absence of child support mechanisms to begging families;
 - The best interest of the child is not met.

Child Trafficking for Pickpocketing



**ATTENTION
AUX PICKPOCKETS
BEWARE OF
THE PICKPOCKETS**

Child Trafficking for Pickpocketing

- Statistics on pickpocketing victims available only in two countries studied.

Year/country	Bulgaria	Romania
2013	18	8*
2012	11	3

Proxy data: in Italy 342 foreign children detained by Juvenile Services, with the most common offence being theft (64%) Theft includes the crime of pickpocketing.

Out of 136 foreign children admitted in *Drehscheibe* Vienna - 63% had committed pickpocketing;

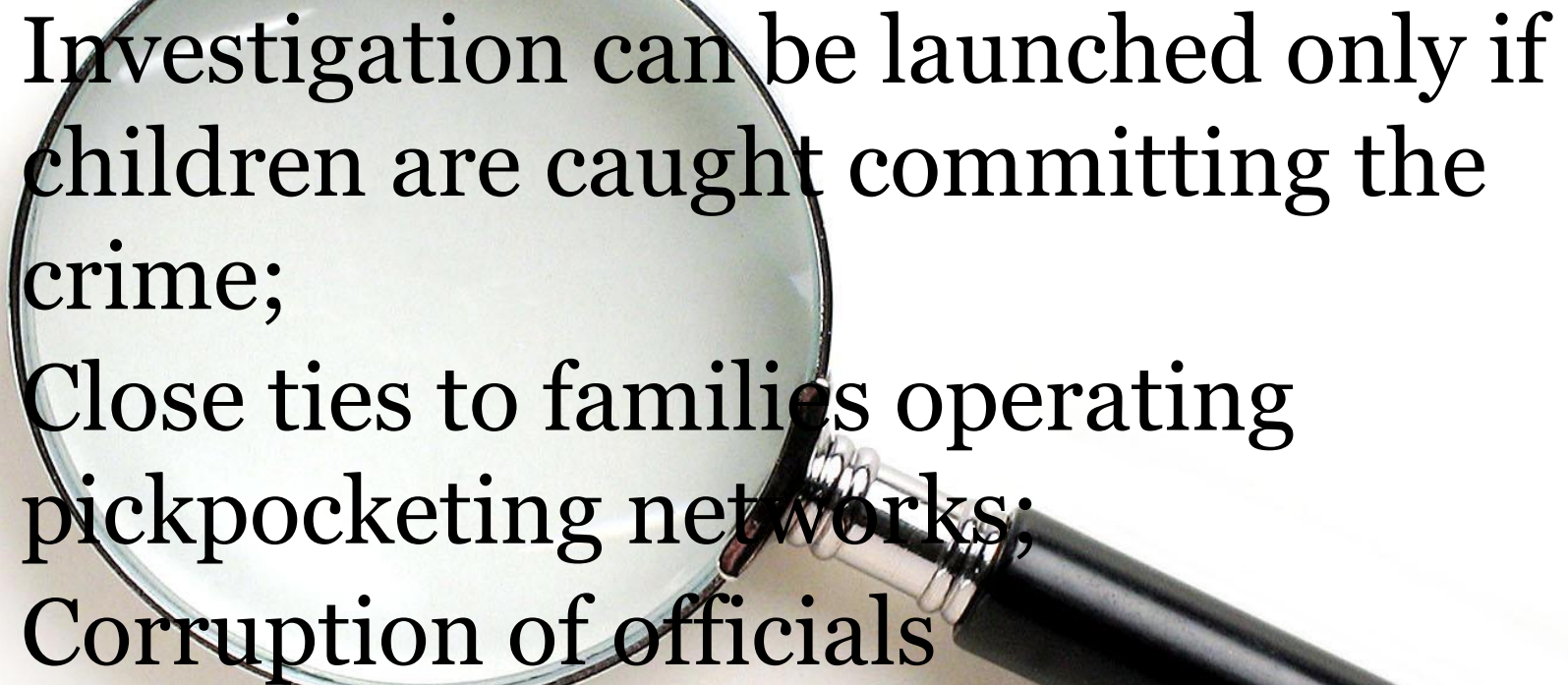
Child Trafficking for Pickpocketing

- **Profile of victims:** predominantly girls, 14-18 years of age.
- Low levels of education; impoverished (Ro) and well-off families (BG);
- **Recruited through:** early marriage, bonded labour;
- **Exploitation** at home and then transferred abroad;
- “Rotation system” of girls – movement to different country, once in contact with police.
- **Profits** of 350 day (*Drehscheibe* shelter in Vienna)

Child Trafficking for Pickpocketing

- **Risk groups:** SK: children aged 5-15 years old part of in families living in the poor socio-economic conditions and committing criminal activities such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, metal theft;
- HU: children, members of youth gangs;

Challenges of identification and assistance

- Investigation can be launched only if children are caught committing the crime;
 - Close ties to families operating pickpocketing networks;
 - Corruption of officials
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Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys and transgender persons

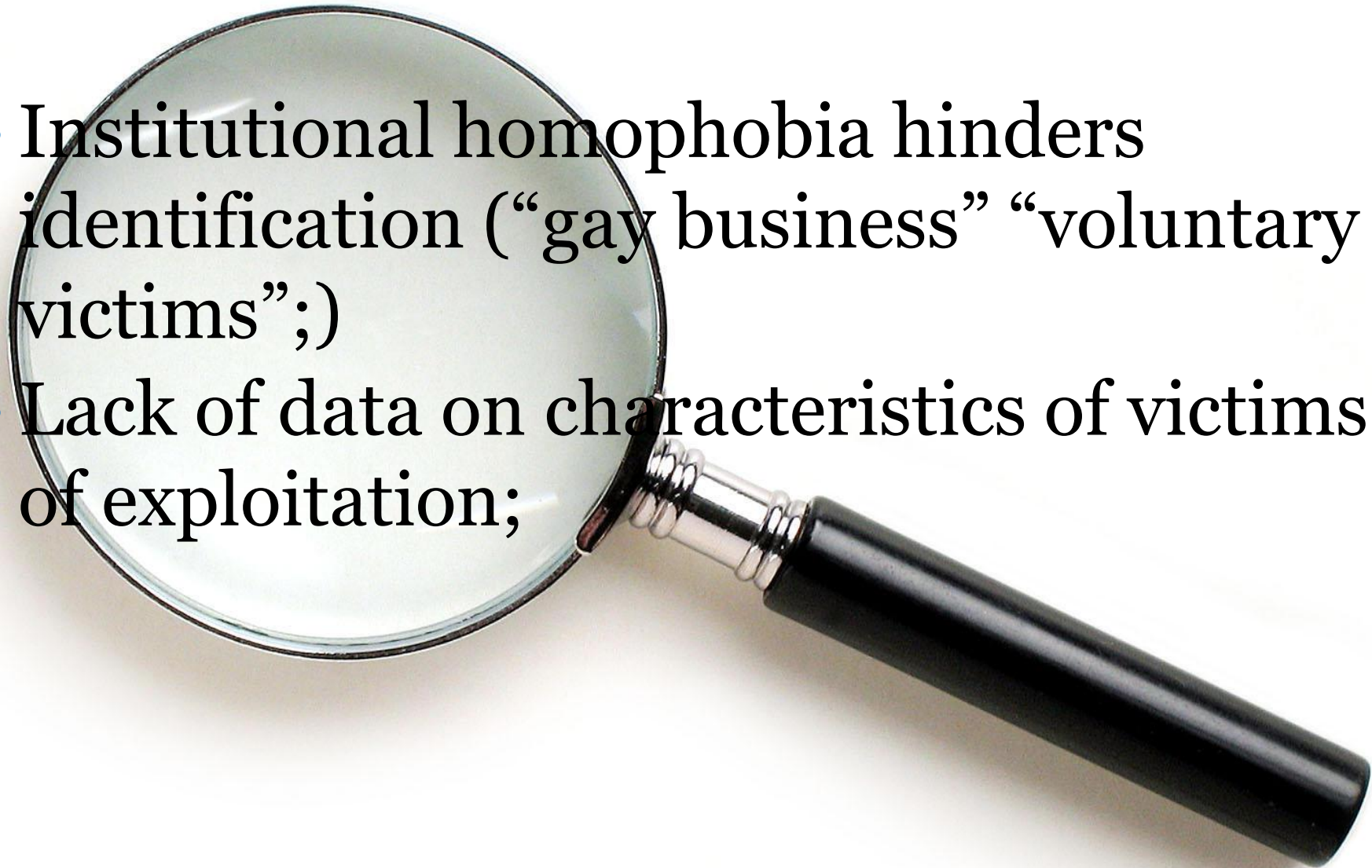
- BG: between 10-14 cases per year (2011-2013) - about one fifth of the victims of sexual exploitation.
- Ro: 8 cases in 2012; 14 cases registered in 2010.
- *None of the victims referred for assistance.*
- It: prostitution of Roma boys in Naples and Rome (peak in 2004-2006)

Child trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys and transgender persons

- **Profiles** of victims unclear;
- Life stories and testimonies reveal elements of coercion and **exploitation**;
- Methods of **recruitment**: “loverboy” method;
- **Risk groups**: transvestite and transgender persons selling sexual services; children victims of sexual abuse, children raised in state institutions, children involved in prostitution;

Challenges of identification and assistance

- Institutional homophobia hinders identification (“gay business” “voluntary victims”;))
- Lack of data on characteristics of victims of exploitation;



Recommendations: general

- Indicators on trafficking in persons and child trafficking in particular need to be regularly updated to reflect new phenomena and groups at risk.
- Building the capacity of local social and street workers to recognise signs of exploitation among groups at risk.
- Data on child trafficking should be centrally collected (including data of service providers, among other stakeholders) and regularly reviewed. The National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms should play central role in the collection and analysis of data on trafficking in human beings.

Recommendations: general

- The analysis of data, including disaggregated by ethnicity and socio-economic status, should serve to inform all policy actions.
- Empirical research and fieldwork based on participatory methods should be conducted in order to identify groups at risk of trafficking which have not come into contact with local authorities involved in counter trafficking.
- Local Roma communities should be involved in prevention, policy making and victims assistance

Recommendations



- Situations of child begging need to be addressed by state authorities and **carefully examined on case by case basis** with adequate consideration of the best interest of the child.
- Families, resorting to begging as subsistence strategy should be provided with the necessary **assistance for ensuring adequate child care**, including respect for the rights of the child, access to education and to decent accommodation.
- The existence of **coercion, bonded labour and exploitation** of both families and children should be carefully examined by law enforcement authorities and street workers who come in contact with begging families.

Recommendations



- Local and national authorities should undergo **training** on recognising indicators of exploitation and trafficking for the purpose of begging.
- Roma **community based organisations** should be involved in raising awareness among the most marginalised groups on the risks of exploitation through bonded labour, on the negative effects on the children from hazardous work and on the possibilities for assistance.
- **Further research** should be conducted on the situation and needs of poverty travelers, seeking to identify vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation.

Recommendations



- Law enforcement and child protection **authorities should be sensitised to recognise signs of influence and exploitation of children**, caught committing pick-pocketing activities. There should be careful review of cases of repeated offenders in view of identifying involvement of organised criminal activities.
- Specific attention should be devoted to **identifying** victims of trafficking or children at risk **among criminalised youth and children with delinquencies**. Questions and indicators should be developed to identify signs of exploitation.
- Investigation efforts should be strengthened to “**follow the money**” and investigate sources of conspicuous wealth in migrating communities.
- Roma organisations should conduct **awareness raising campaigns** about the risks and effects of early marriage, including early school leave and risks of exploitation.

Recommendations



- Indicators for trafficking used in identifying sexual exploitation of women need to be reviewed and adapted to reflect adequately the situation of male and transgender prostitution.
- Law enforcement, child protection and judicial authorities need should be sensitised towards the risks of trafficking for sexual exploitation of boys and transgender persons. Evidence, gathered based on life stories of boys and transgender persons, should serve to inform and raise awareness among all counter-trafficking authorities.
- Specific trainings should be developed for identification of male and transgender victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- Further investigations into cases of child sexual and physical abuse at institutionalised care.

Comments? Questions?

www.childrentrafficking.eu