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COMUNITATE ȘI FAMILIE



CASA DEI DIRITTI SOCIALI FOCUS
Associazione di volontariato laica

AN INCREASE IN PROSTITUTION AMONG ROMANIAN MINORS IN ROME



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Results of a three-month
research project on unaccompanied
Romanian children
in Rome



International Federation
terre des hommes



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*Vorrei... ...
Vorrei gridare al mondo la rabbia
dei bambini in catene
Vorrei gridare al mondo il dolore
delle bambine sfruttate
Vorrei gridare al mondo la tristezza
dei bambini abbandonati
Vorrei gridare al mondo la paura
dei bambini maltrattati
Vorrei gridare tutto questo al mondo
Ma chi grida con me?*

Michele, 12 anni

(Children's Solidarity Concert –8 Giugno 2005, Roma)

*I would like... ...
I would like to shout to the world the anger
of children kept in chains
I would like to shout to the world the pain
of exploited little girls
I would like to shout to the world the sadness
of abandoned children
I would like to shout to the world the fear
of maltreated children
I would like to shout all of this to the world
But who shouts with me?*

Michele, 12 years old

(Children's Solidarity Concert –8th June 2005, Roma)

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ACRONYMS AND INITIALS USED IN THE TEXT

ANCI	National Association of Italian Municipalities
ANPDC	National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights
CDS	Casa dei Diritti Sociali
CFM	Committee for Foreign Minors
CPIM	Centre of First Intervention for Minors
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
DGASPC	General Direction of Social Assistance for Child Protection
FRCCF	The Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family
GIATMS	Group for the Reception and Help of Foreign Children
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TACT	Transnational Action against Child Trafficking
Tdh	Terre des hommes
UFMs	Unaccompanied Foreign Minors
UMs	Unaccompanied Minors

Warning

Male and female prostitution networks in Rome: a majority of Romanian children!

Today, Romanian girls aged from 14 to 17, walk along the main boulevards of Rome's suburbs. These groups of sex workers, all Romanian, are comprised of three to five minors, accompanied by an adult woman. Only a few hundred meters away, the pimps observe their activities, contacting the girls by mobile phone at any moment.

Romanian boys, aged from 16 to 18, are waiting for their clients in the heart of Rome. The average Italian or tourist would not notice them. The boys are well dressed; they just wait in this square, staring at the cars of their usual customers, hoping they will offer them money or a hot meal, or simply a place to sleep for the night.

How many boys and girls are there? It is impossible to evaluate the size of this underground commerce. However, experienced street workers agree on one fact - the turnover is high and the minors move from one place to another every day as the client looks for new faces...

The municipality of Rome is reacting to this problem but the flow continues to increase. During only the first six months of 2005, the number of Romanian unaccompanied minors registered by the public services almost reached the total for the year 2004. Social workers and legal advisors are overloaded with new cases.

"Everything starts in Romania. If we do nothing there, Romanian children will continue to come and fall into these networks!" a Romanian social worker states in exasperation. After four years of street work in the Rome, he keeps seeing new minors on the streets. He is a member of the Italian organization Casa Dei Diritti Sociali (CDS), one of the few NGOs providing specific outreach services to target foreign children exploited on the streets of Rome.

"A specific bilateral agreement is going to be signed soon."

What's happening in Romania? For those who walked the streets of Bucharest ten years ago, the changes are astonishing. You hardly see a child alone on the pavement. The beggars have disappeared and institutions are closing one after another. The young sex workers have been pushed away from the business centres of the capital to the suburbs. The streets appear to be clean...

The entrance ticket to the European Union is on the mind of every Romanian citizen. Many legislative efforts have been made to reach the standards imposed by Brussels: the laws have been changed and hundreds of new regulations are in place to reform the Romanian reality. The deadline is January 2007.

One of the heads of the National Agency for Child Protection (ANPDC) confirms: *"the Romanian government is very concerned about the migration of minors to Italy. It is a priority for us! A specific bilateral agreement is going to be signed soon."*

Furthermore, several Romanian organizations have been active for many years in the fight against the trafficking of human beings. Few of them focus specifically on child trafficking, although one is about to start transnational activities between Romania and Italy.

A young social worker from the Romanian NGO, FRCCF has just completed a three-month field mission in Rome, working with the CDS team. She actively participated in the street activities of their Italian partner, which offers psychosocial and legal support to Romanian minors, involved in the sex trade. *"Romanian boys are involved in male prostitution, and this is totally ignored in Romania!"*. She continues: *"When you approach the girls, they don't want to talk a lot, they are under pressure. This is trafficking!"*

She continues saying: *"Now I know the main cities they come from: Iasi, Galati, Calarasi, Craiova... Activities should take place there, to protect them from the risks of migration."*

She is now better informed than any other social worker in Romania. This young activist knows the whole path of the migrant minors, *"the more you are informed, the better you can prevent"*.

Back home in Romania, the struggle to obtain funding to support such activities continues. This is one of the multiple paradoxes of a transition towards EU. The needed budget lines for humanitarian purposes are disappearing from Romania. In fact, FRCCF is spending an inordinate amount of time and energy in trying to cover its basic core expenses rather than concentrating on the needs of beneficiaries.

Ultimate need for transnational cooperation

Today, CDS and FRCCF are together presenting an updated "Situation analysis of Romanian children in Rome". This short-term research, supported by the National Office of Tdh in Romania, intends to identify the immediate priorities to tackle child trafficking between both countries.

With the contribution of the relevant authorities in Bucharest and Rome, and with the active participation of both NGO teams, this research shows the high flexibility of the migration flows of minors and the complexity of responses, and highlights the ultimate need for transnational cooperation.

After reviewing these worrying facts, the findings show an apparent passivity among some duty bearers and inefficiency among most of the stakeholders.

The preventive and protective solutions to be found in Romania must originate in Romania. In the same way, social protection and support networks for Romanian child victims of sexual exploitation need to be organized and controlled by both the Italian public services and civil society in Rome.

In each country, the activities lack basic coordination, while the blatant exploitation of human beings continues, with the movements of young Romanian migrants increasing every day. Unilateral programs have been designed, discussed and approved. However, in reality, the search for reliable partners in the other country and the establishment of sustainable and concrete collaboration agreements often start only on the first day of implementation rather than during the planning stages.

Romanian and Italian solutions need to be combined, focusing on the principle of the best interests of the child and based on trust between partners. The solution must be a European one.

Terminology

Child, Minor, Youngster, Girl, Boy

These terms are used synonymously throughout the text for all females and males under the age of 18. The terms sometimes overlap in the author's attempt to preserve clarity and simplicity.

Generally the terms youngsters and minors are used to distinguish children around 15-17 years old from younger ones, since in Italy the term "bambino" is used to refer to children less than 11-12 years of age.

However, since International law designates persons under the age of 18 as "children", for most informants the term child meant a pre-pubescent or recently pubescent female or male.

Unaccompanied Foreign Minor (UFM)

In the text this term is used according to the Italian law that refers to an unaccompanied foreign minor as a minor having no Italian or European Union citizenship, and staying for any reason in the State's territory, without lodging an asylum application and without the assistance or legal representation of parents or guardians.

Child at risk of being trafficked

The child at risk is one that lives in conditions that are likely to endanger his/her health, safety, morality, education or his/her integrity, but who has not yet been approached by a trafficker.

Prostitution

The term is used for persons under the age of 18, and for adults who offer sexual services in exchange for money. At the same time, it is not intended that the term should be invariably equated with the terms trafficking or coercion. It is also used to refer to persons who are engaged in this activity with full knowledge and consent.

Child Trafficking - Child Exploitation

The distinction here is clarified since in the text reference is made to children that are trafficked from Romania to Italy, without knowing exactly what they are going to do; and children that are migrating to Italy and are exploited in illegal activities while there.

According to the legal approach, child trafficking occurs when a child is moved from one place to another, legally or illegally, within his or her country or across borders and then subjected to exploitation.

At his or her destination, the child is exploited through work, sexual exploitation or involved in unlawful or illicit activities. The child may also be sold for adoption. The principal aim of child trafficking is profit. In most cases, child trafficking involves additional criminal activities. Among other things, the reasons for trafficking children involve:

- Exploitation through work, including begging, slavery and forced labour,
- Sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography,
- Illegal activities, theft, drug trafficking, etc...,
- Commercially motivated adoption schemes,
- Traffic in organs.

1. KEY FINDINGS

- Rome today appears to contain the highest concentration of Romanian unaccompanied children in Italy.
- Although the number of those trafficked from Romania to Italy is a reality, the number of children from 14 to 18 years old who migrate from their country and become involved in, or fall victim to, exploitation once they are already in Italy seems increasingly high.
- Boys and girls are involved mainly in the sex trade, while younger children (from 11 to 13) are involved in petty crimes such as robbery and extortion.
- Unfortunately it is impossible to evaluate the size of the sex trade, although street workers agree that turnover is high and that children move from one place to another every day as clients look for new faces.
- The main areas where these minors come from in Romania are Bucharest, Calarasi, Craiova, Galati and Iasi.
- In both countries Italy and Romania, intervention activities lack basic coordination, while the blatant exploitation of human beings is still continuing with the movement of young Romanian migrants increasing every day. Unilateral programs have been designed, discussed and approved. However, in practice, the search for reliable partners in the other country and the establishment of sustainable and concrete collaboration agreements often begin only on the first day of implementation.
- Romanian and Italian solutions need to be combined, focus on the principle of the best interests of the child, and be based on trust between partners. The solution must be a European one.

2. THE STUDY

2.1 Methodology

This study provides a general qualitative and quantitative overview of the situation of unaccompanied Romanian children in Rome.

Research was divided into three different phases:

- **First phase**

Background information was collected and analyzed to provide a general view of the situation. It included:

- publications and reports
- consultation with institutions, NGOs, local and public authorities, and social workers dealing with child trafficking and the migration of unaccompanied minors.
- information on the legal status of unaccompanied minors and child victims of trafficking in Italy (especially in Rome) and in Romania.

- **Second phase**

An analysis was made of the situation of unaccompanied Romanian children present in Rome through direct interventions in the field. A team of Romanian and Italian street workers was organized and when possible children were interviewed. Unfortunately however, it was not possible to cross-check the information provided by these children with other sources.

- Third phase

In order to verify and better understand the exact areas where the children found in Rome came from, a direct assessment of the different contexts in Romania was made through a direct analysis. This was focused on a wide range of issues and aimed to reflect the point of view of the different people interviewed.¹ The tools chosen during the research were: direct observation, interviews and some informal discussions.² This stage included the collection of basic information about communities, and understanding the environmental and cultural context they live in.

2.2 Protection and Confidentiality

The sensitivity of the conducted research made it essential to guarantee the confidentiality of the information collected from the children, and to ensure that the presence of the field researchers did not have an impact on the activities of the local NGO that are continuing to work with those children.

2.3 Limitations of the Research

Given the complexity of this topic it is possible to list some of the limitations encountered during the three months of investigation:

- The primary limitation of the study was time. To build trust among street workers and children on the street needs repeated meetings and regular dialogue for a longer period than three months. Ice-breaking was possible after a few meetings but in-depth interviews were only possible with three children.
- Not all the children spoken to had the same attitude towards the street workers. Some felt more in danger or more embarrassed than others in sharing their experience. Some appeared very afraid to talk, while some others appeared quite open.
- It was not always easy to get in contact and speak with children, especially the younger ones. They were often accompanied on the streets or watched by adults.
- Data provided by the public institutions in charge was fragmented and not inclusive. No government institution has clear-cut information on internal and external unaccompanied minor movement.
- Generally, persons involved in the exploitation of the children do not see it as a real issue. Some parents of children involved in begging, labour or theft did not see it as exploitation because, they claimed, *“children were under their constant “care” and supervision”*.

¹ It was very important to understand the nature and practice of support relationships in the different communities, including the integration of people at different levels and their attachment to their social community.

² Although the period of the investigation was quite limited, meeting with Romanian people in different contexts and their spontaneous narratives and responses (outside formal interviews), helped to give an overall understanding of their environment.

3. CRISIS OF ROMANIAN CHILDREN IN ROME

The presence of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs) is not a new phenomenon in Italy. It dates back to the post second world war period, but over the past fifteen/twenty years it has undergone a drastic transformation.³

Throughout the 1990s, Romanian children did not constitute the majority of unaccompanied children in Italy. The situation changed slightly in 2002 when Romanian citizens no longer needed a visa for all Schengen states.

It was largely in 2003 that the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors in Italy began to be characterized by a strong prevalence of Romanian minors.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS 2003 <i>(only minors that have been reported)</i>		
Nationality	Total	Percentage %
Romania	2391	47%
Albania	1177	23%
Morocco	949	19%
Countries in the ex-Yugoslavia area*	262	5%
Moldavia	61	1%
Bangladesh	57	1%
Poland	32	1%
Iraq	22	0%
Others	150	3%
Total	5101	100%

* Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia
(Anci - Dipartimento immigrazione e politiche sociali)⁴

Rome today appears to hold the highest concentration of unaccompanied Romanian children in Italy.

Municipalities with the majority of UMs from Romania in 2003		
Municipality	No.	% on Total
Rome	556*	21%
Milan	304	13%
Trieste	399	17%
Bologna	141	6%
Florence	223	9%
Turin	140	6%
Udine	123	5%

(Anci - Dipartimento immigrazione e politiche sociali)

* Precise data received from the Municipality of Rome – V Department,
GIATMS Gruppo Integrato Accoglienza e Tutela Minori Stranieri.

³ IOM, "Trafficking in Unaccompanied Minors in the European Union – Italy", December 2004

"Up to the end of the 1980s, [UM migration] was linked to movements of minors fleeing conflict situations in and around their countries of origin. ...In the second half of the 1980s, the phenomenon took a new dimension: it was during these years that young adolescents started arriving in Italy from the Maghreb, (mainly Morocco and Tunisia), in a migratory flux almost identical to the influx of adult migrants from the same countries."

⁴ In 2004 a survey of over 346 Italian municipalities was conducted on the situation of unaccompanied foreign minors throughout the Italian territory, "Minori stranieri non accompagnati, un'indagine territoriale"

Romanian Minors in Rome: a 3-month study by CDS-FRCCF

Although these data refer to 2003, during the research period the street workers engaged in Rome remarked that a large number of unaccompanied children in the city today come from Romania.

*"The number of Romanian children in Rome today seems very high compared to other foreign children"*⁵.

Looking also at some data collected from the municipality of Rome it is clear that Romanian children are in strong prevalence over others.

Country of origin of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in Rome			
Nationality	2003	2004	2005*
Afghanistan	25	27	39
Albania	114	66	43
Area Ex-Yugoslavia (Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia)	81	75	57
Ethiopia	24	20	22
Morocco	84	39	46
Moldova	61	103	98
Romania	556	539	487
No identified	64	206	35
Others	119	53	112
Total	1128	1075	939

(Municipality of Rome – V Department,
GIATMS Gruppo Integrato Accoglienza e Tutela Minori Stranieri)

* First semester of 2005 (01/01/2005-30/06/2005)

Today the number of Romanian unaccompanied minors arriving in the city continues to increase. During the first six months of 2005, the public services registered 487 unaccompanied Romanian minors – almost the total reached in 2004.

This information was confirmed by social workers working directly with unaccompanied foreign minors.

*"In 2004 over a total of 636⁶ unaccompanied foreign minors that were received by Caritas, 364 were Romanian, while only in the first six months of 2005, of a total of 500 unaccompanied foreign children received by Caritas, 314 were Romanian."*⁷

⁵ Information received from the street workers.

⁶ This number represents the total number of all the entrances. The minors that entered more than once have been counted different times.

⁷ In Rome there are 114 centres of reception for unaccompanied minors. There are two centres of primary intervention (CPIM – Centro Pronto Intervento Minori) in Rome, managed by Caritas and Sacra Famiglia (with about 33 places). Information received from Caritas social workers.

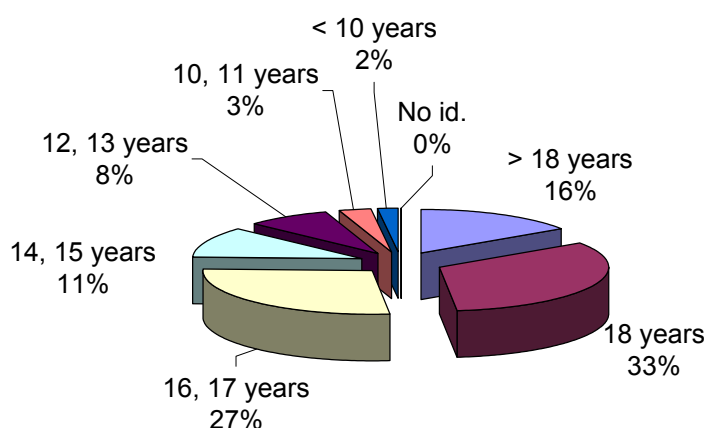
3.1 General information on Romanian Unaccompanied Minors in Rome

The age of the children

Although younger children are present,⁸ most of the Romanian children found in the streets of Rome are teenagers; boys and girls between 16 and 17 years old, who decide to migrate to Italy legally or illegally after they finish compulsory school.

*"The age of Romanian minors is increasing and teenagers between 16 and 17 years constitute an increasing portion against the whole number of Romanians present in Rome"*⁹.

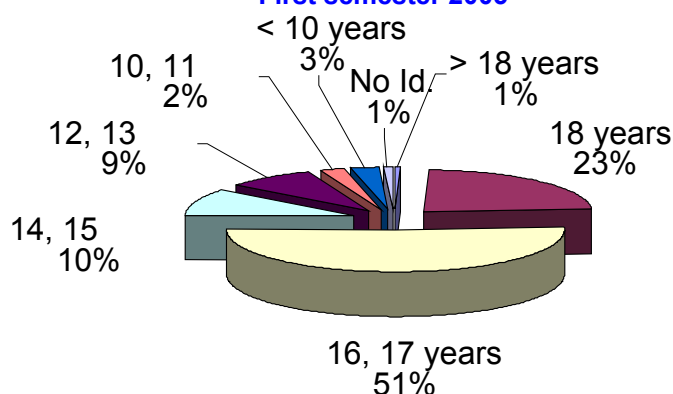
Age of Unaccompanied Romanian Minors in Rome - 2004



These older children find themselves alone and without supervision. They have few means of survival and they are influenced by older Romanians who have been in Italy for a longer time and who are able to earn lots of money.

These young Romanians are generally more easily subjected to the risk of exploitation after a few days. "Although the number of the ones who are trafficked from Romania to Italy is a reality, the number of children who migrate to Italy and fall victim to exploitation once they are in the country seems to be increasing enormously."

Age of Unaccompanied Romanian Minors in Rome First semester 2005



There are several illegal activities in which they can easily become involved: robbery, extortion, drug dealing and begging. Prostitution however is the main business in which the majority of Romanians (along with other unaccompanied foreign minors) become involved in Rome.

(Municipality of Rome – V Department – GIATMS Gruppo Integrato Accoglienza e Tutela Minori Stranieri)

⁸ According to the information collected, these children are often Roma.

⁹ Information received from a social assistant with the municipality of Rome.

3.2 Three main profiles

In order to have a better understanding of the situation of Romanian unaccompanied minors present in Rome, it is possible to describe three broad profiles:

- Minors not involved in illegal activities and living in the Italian reception centres;
- Minors engaged in theft or other petty crime;
- Child sex workers.

3.2.1 Minors not involved in illegal activities and living in Italian reception centres

Romanian minors who want to enter into Italian reception centres usually enter Italy legally. Very often they appear to be well aware of the laws and instruments of protection available to them.

“Many of the children now living in the reception centres already knew about their existence before leaving Romania. Their parents have usually consented to their travel, and may have paid their trip”¹⁰.

These minors are usually well-informed about the procedures they will encounter on their arrival.

Some social workers tell of minors arriving at social service centres or police stations with a “full list” of demands: residence permits, protection, admission into reception centres, insertion into the labour market, etc. Some of these minors are even equipped with the addresses of emergency child protection centres or the relevant police offices, as well as a birth certificate to prove their status as minors.

The Romanian minors that are better informed on all the Italian procedures prefer the north of Italy (Udine), where they know that *“the bureaucracy is not as slow as in Rome and it is quicker to get a stay of residence for minors”¹¹.*

Usually they have been informed by friends or relatives who have already been to Italy. Sometimes the same people also helped them to enter a reception centre. Some minors think of these centres as schools, since they tell their parents that here they are learning Italian.¹²

Duration of residence	No. of minors
From 1 to 5 days	772
From 6 days to 1 month	53
From 1 month to 1 year	218
> 1 year	142
Total	1185

(Municipality of Rome – V Department,
GIATMS Gruppo Integrato Accoglienza e Tutela Minori Stranieri)

“Unfortunately the unaccompanied foreign minors who decide to stay in the reception centres are greatly in the minority.” *QuoteA*

“The majority generally leave after a few days. They stay to receive some basic needs assistance and once they have recovered, they go back on the street.” *QuoteB*

Since the number of children who do not want to live in the centres is increasing every day, the following two profiles describe the most common – and at the same time, dangerous – situations in which they are involved.

¹⁰ An interview with a social worker in one of the primary intervention centres in Rome.

¹¹ An informal interview with a boy of 19 years old from Satu Mare who left Romania as a minor.

¹² The aim of these centres is to help minors re-enter the local community. Activities are usually focused on educational projects. They generally include: Italian language courses, training courses and work scholarships.

Quote A There is some evidence to prove that even the children who decide to stay and live inside the centres often become involved in illegal activities during their spare time. – Information received from CDS

Quote B Information received from a social worker with the municipality of Rome.

3.2.2. Minors engaged in stealing or other petty crime

Young Romanian minors aged between 10 and 12 years old consider stealing “*the main activity to practice in Rome*”. The street workers remarked that they are often in groups of four or five and it is very difficult to get in contact with them.

“They are continuously watched by adults. They usually steal bags and wallets. Very rarely they beg on the metro, accompanied by adults. They usually “work” in the main stations and around there”¹³.

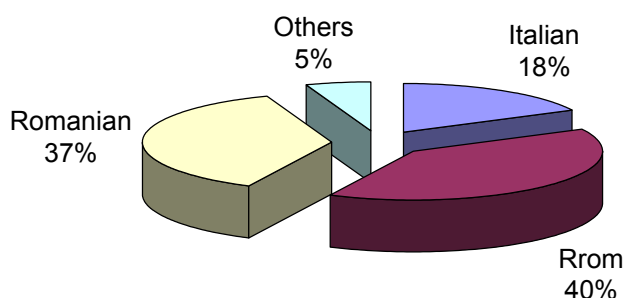
Robbery	278	84.70%
Extortion	3	0.90%
Receiving stolen goods	7	2.10%
Attempted murder	9	2.70%
Murder	4	1.20%
Rape	4	1.20%
Other assault crimes	5	1.50%
Drugs	9	2.70%
Other crimes	9	2.70%

Looking at data published by the Centre of Justice for Minors, it appears that the majority of minors stopped or arrested in 2004 for crime or petty crime were mainly accused of robbery.

(Penal Institute for Minors -Rome-)

Among these minors the Roma¹⁴ occupy the first place, followed by Romanians and Italians. Unfortunately there is no clear evidence of the country of origin of the Roma, although the street workers in Rome identified several Roma minors who came from Romania.

Origin of UMs into CPA – Rome 2004



(Centre of Justice for Minors in Rome)

¹³ Stazione Termini, Stazione Tiburtina and Piazza della Repubblica, but also in the centre of Rome. – Information received from NGO social workers.

¹⁴ They come mainly from Romania, Albania, Serbia and Macedonia.

3.2.3. Child sex workers

Street workers agree on the fact that the number of minors involved in the sex trade in and around the streets of Rome is increasing everyday.

“Unfortunately there is no reliable information regarding the phenomenon of sexually exploited minors. They are girls and boys, but the numbers are impossible to estimate”¹⁵.

Girls

Today the sex trade on the main avenues of Rome's suburbs¹⁶ is covered largely by Romanian girls between 14 and 17 years old.

They are usually in small groups of 3-5 minors, usually accompanied by an adult woman who seems responsible for them.

Not too far away the pimps observe the girls. Sometimes they drive around, stopping once in a while. Otherwise they contact them by mobile phone.

“While some of these girls are really afraid to talk, it is usually not difficult to stop and spend some time with some of them, but not more than 5-10 minutes, since they ‘have work to do’.

Sometimes they are afraid of their exploiters, but the majority of the time they see their pimps as someone who is really helping them. They trust them and see them as real protectors.

During the first weeks the pimps leave the girls all their earnings, so that they can buy new clothes, make-up and the latest model of mobile phone. It is only after some time that the pimps take half of the girls' salary, promising more help and protection, so that girls feel safe, and are convinced nobody can hurt them”¹⁷.

The girls smile when they recognize the street workers and the most courageous ones dare to give further information about their activities, without stopping to check if someone is looking:

“We usually pay between 200 and 300 euros for a place to stay during the day. The ‘luckiest ones’ manage to pay from 70 to 80 euro”.

Teenagers also work during the night together with the adults. Working at night is a bit harder: it seems that during this time the pimps control more carefully.

Do Romanian children beg in Rome?

Walking and using public transport in Rome today, it is noticeable that there are only few children begging.

“Begging is no longer considered one of the primary activities, especially by Romanian minors”¹⁸.

Begging is usually left to elderly people or young mothers with small children (2-3 years old and even younger), or to minors coming from other countries.

A Romanian “little man” of about 11 years old confirmed: *“You do not get much money by begging in Italy”.*

3.3 Trafficked from Romania or exploited once in Italy?

The backgrounds and routes that brought these young women to work on the streets of Rome are different.

- Some of them came by themselves. They wanted to make money. Sometimes they reckoned or even knew before their arrival they would enter the prostitution market. They had heard of other girls of the same age coming back from Italy with a lot of money and they wanted to try as well. They are keen to build their future and they believe prostitution to be the quickest way.

¹⁵ Information received by the street workers of CDS street unit.

¹⁶ Mainly the area of Cristoforo Colombo and Salaria.

¹⁷ Information received from one of the social workers of the CDS street unit.

¹⁸ Information received from an interview with street workers in Rome.

Monica¹⁹ is a lovely girl of about 16. She is from Iasi and she is quite new on the streets of Rome: *"I was alone when I left home. I took a bus from Romania and I paid everything with the money I earned doing some cleaning in private houses and saving the money I received from a school grant. My parents signed the paper to allow me to leave my country, even if at the beginning they did not agree. They trust me and know I am stubborn: once I decide to do something I usually succeed."*

She has no difficulty in admitting: *"I came here just to make money. This is what I have chosen and what I want to do now. I do not know how long I need to stay, at the beginning I thought just three months but now... I am not sure, maybe more, maybe less! My parents do not know what I am doing here; they think I am working as a cleaner in a private house"*.

She seems strong and self-confident: *"When I arrived here I was completely alone, but now I have a friend, a good one. I met her at Termini station. She is also from Romania and she is 17 years old. She arrived here a couple of months ago and knows, more than me, how things work here in Rome. She has already been caught by the police but she left the centre where they took her after few days."*

We work together now on the Cristoforo Colombo. We help each other: when one of us is out with some clients the other one keeps all the money. We share everything and trust each other very much. On a good night we manage to earn from 700 to 800 euros; but on a bad night only 100 or 200 euros."

Monica is not afraid of the street and knows how to protect herself: *"I know the men and if I think they'll hurt me, I don't get into their car. My friend helps me by writing down the licence number of the cars I get into, so that if something happens the client knows he'll get in trouble."*

She adds: *"I always use condoms and I never work with my ass and my mouth. I try to protect myself from infection and also from the other girls. We all agreed to use condoms. The other girls would be very nasty with me if they discovered I didn't use condoms: they would think I wanted to cheat and steal their clients to earn more money"*.

When the street workers ask her if she has ever been approached by someone who offered her protection or asked her money for the spot she was occupying, she becomes very pale and gives a quick answer: *"Once some Romanian men came and few days later some Albanians. They wanted to offer us some help but we said we were not interested and they left us in peace. I think that they probably leave us in peace because we are not in a 'good' place."*

Other girls came to Italy with someone they trust. Traffickers are usually friends, neighbours or relatives.

This is the case of Clarissa: *"I was alone, my mum died and my father left to go to live with another woman. When I was 15 years old I decided to leave to Rome with my aunt who was already living there and came to Romania during the holidays. She told me she would help me to find a job and she paid my journey to Italy."*

"Once we arrived here my aunt found me a job as a cleaner in a private house. She took all my money, telling me she had to pay the rent and buy me food. After two months she told me that the money I was earning was not enough and that I had to leave her house. She took me to a house where there were two other Romanian girls and one boy. She left me there and disappeared. I never thought she could leave me alone".

Clarissa becomes very serious and her eyes stare into space. She continues: *"...the girls in the house were always sleeping with different men. They made me do the same thing in order to pay for rent and food. I stayed there for about four months then one of my friends helped me to escape. He was also Romanian and helped me go to the police and denounce them"*.

Clarissa has now been in Italy for two years. She speaks Italian very well and she is under Italian protection. She is happy now and doesn't think about going back to Romania: *"My life has changed, and I know that it will continue to change only for good now"*.

It seems that young girls are chosen more and more by traffickers, since it is possible to earn more money with them than with adult women. They are usually recruited in similar ways to older girls: through direct contact. Women and girls, or their families, are approached by traffickers, who are often people they know and trust.

¹⁹ All identities have been changed.

"Sometimes they are also recruited through press advertisements offering jobs abroad as waitresses and domestic help, or through tourist agencies"²⁰.

Boys

Girls are not the only ones affected by prostitution. While it is evident that Romanian girls are sexually exploited whether they are approached once in Italy or trafficked from Romania, the situation of teenage **boys** is slightly different.

There was no evidence of real trafficking among boys but it seems quite clear that once these minors enter Italy they ask for help from those who already know how to survive and make money.

Romanian boys, aged from 16 to 18 years old, generally wait for their clients in the heart of Rome.²¹

"Unless you know that, it is not easy to notice them; they are well-dressed and standing in one of the main squares of Rome in the evening. They stare at the cars, trying to see if they recognize their usual customers. They hope to get some money, a hot meal, or even a place to sleep for the night."²²

They usually leave Romania for Italy with the intention of finding a job and making money, without preparing the journey.

The major reason for departures is the search for money.

"You cannot stay in Romania when you know how much money you can make in Italy"²³.

They find themselves alone or without supervision. In this case, the quicker they run out of means of subsistence, the weaker and more vulnerable they become.

Once in Italy, they are strongly influenced by their new environment and adopt the consumer approach typical of Italy. *"They want to own fashionable clothes and new mobile phones, just like Italian teenagers"²⁴.*

Depending on the contacts they make, they can easily enter in the prostitution market by being "exploited" by others who have been in Italy for a longer period. These others are usually of the same age or slightly older, creating affinity between them. The newcomers feel they are receiving help to earn money and survive.

In any case, once they have spent some time in Italy, they become very diffident and trust no one, *"when I am in Italy I just work and do not trust anyone, because everyone is just saying to him/herself: the most important thing is money and friends do not exist; I cannot even trust the people of my own country"²⁵.*

3.4 Where they come from in Romania

Based on some data received from the Municipality of Rome, it appears that the main areas where these minors come from are Bucharest, Calarasi, Craiova, Galati and Iasi. Comparing data of 2004 with the first six months of 2005 it seems that the number of minors coming from Bucharest, Galati and Iasi are increasing in comparison to others. Craiova still remains the area with the highest number.

²⁰ Information received from a Salvati Copiii social worker in Galati.

²¹ Mainly Valle Giulia, Piazza della Repubblica and Villa Borghese.

²² Information received from street workers

²³ Testimony of a minor interviewed in Rome.

²⁴ Information received from a CDS social worker.

²⁵ Interview with a Romanian youth in Iasi.

Romanian Minors in Rome: a 3-month study by CDS-FRCCF

Unaccompanied Romanian Minors registered with the Municipality of Rome

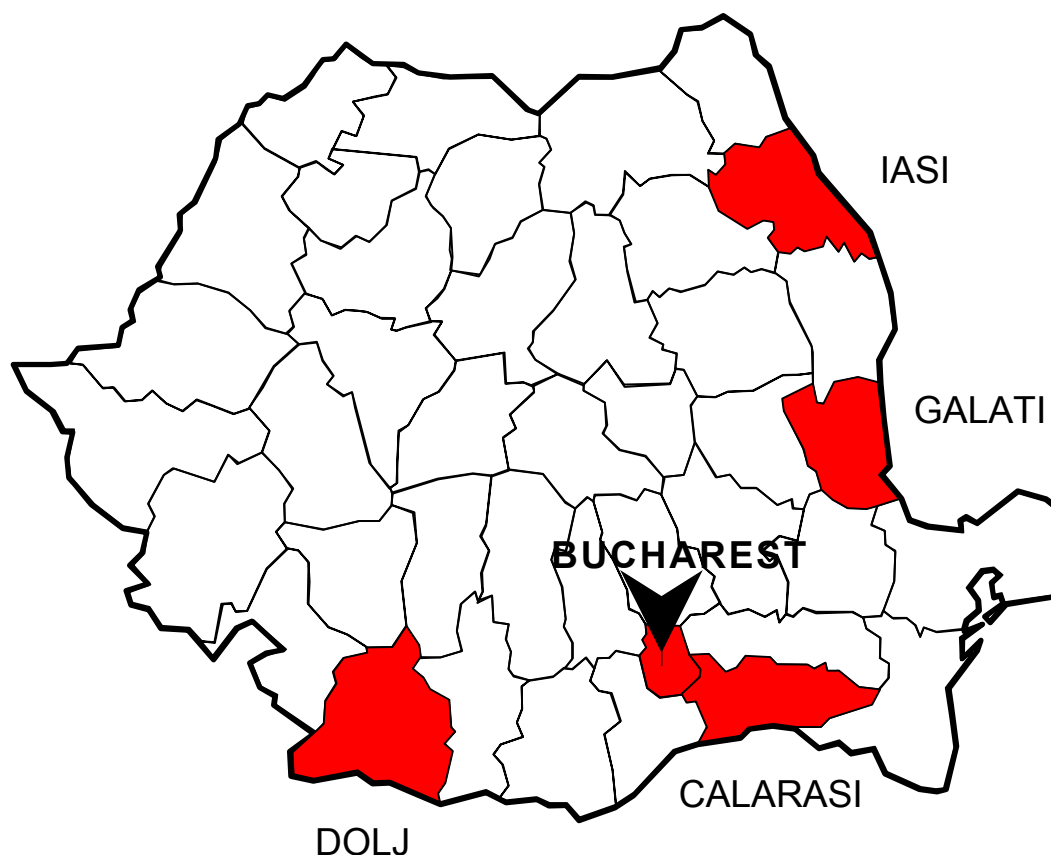
County	2004	2005*
Alba	1	2
Arad	0	1
Arges	2	0
Bacau	13	5
Bihor	2	0
Botosani	3	1
Braila	5	4
Brasov	10	3
Bucharest	15	10
Buzau	2	2
Calarasi	32	10
Caras Severin	1	1
Cluj	1	2
Constanta	8	6
Dambovita	2	2
Dolj	0	2
Dolj - Craiova	74	35
Galati	15	11
Giurgiu	2	1

County	2004	2005*
Gorj	4	3
Hunedoara	2	0
Iasi	11	8
Maramures	6	1
Mehedinti	6	1
Mures	1	3
Neamt	8	3
Olt	3	1
Prahova	2	3
Salaj	1	0
Satu Mare	4	4
Sibiu	1	1
Suceava	7	3
Timis	6	3
Tulcea	3	0
Valcea	2	0
Vaslui	3	6
Vrancea	11	5
Not identified	335	298
TOTAL	604	441

* The data for 2005 refer only to the first six months 01/01/2005 – 30/06/2005

Source: Municipality of Rome

Looking at the map, it appears that the main areas where these children are coming from are situated in the east (Galati and Iasi) of the Moldova Region on the border with the Republic of Moldova, in the south (Calarasi and Dolj) of the Muntenia Region, on the border with Bulgaria; and in the capital Bucharest.



4. SOME DEFICIENCIES TO CONSIDER

Although important progress has been achieved, Italy and Romania still do not have a coherent and unified method with which to estimate the numbers of trafficked children, nor a dedicated national data system on repatriated victims.

With regard to trafficking of children and youth, social services are not yet able to assist – for financial reasons, but also because of a lack of specialized personnel. Thus, in certain regions there are no services available, although the law prescribes a clear duty in this regard to social services. Unequal development of the social infrastructures in Romania makes prevention and reintegration efforts move very slowly and their implementation increasingly difficult.

It is also very clear that there is no real methodology to estimate the number of children that are trafficked or at risk at the national level.

According to information obtained in Romania, it seems that the primary purposes for trafficking children are sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. From the perspective of purpose, there is little difference between trafficking in girls and trafficking in boys. The majority of trafficked girls returned to Romania were trafficked for sexual exploitation, and boys for labour exploitation. However the instances of boys moved from the labour exploitation network to the sex trade network is increasing.

“Romanian boys are involved in male prostitution and this is totally ignored in Romania.”

In addition to the problem of trafficked children, there is the situation of children who migrate to Italy and are involved consciously or unconsciously in the sex market.

This situation is explained by a combination of several factors, in particular:

- their difficult conditions in Romania,
- the local success stories that they have heard from those who migrated abroad,
- the low level or complete lack of information on foreign countries that create illusions about life in Italy,
- and finally, but predominantly, the value of making money in their new environment in Italy.

It is evident that there is not enough information on the magnitude and characteristics of this problem, nor a comprehensive assessment of local efforts to deal with the phenomenon.

In this regard it is obvious that there is no direct contact between Romania (as country of origin) and Italy (the destination country). A lack of communication is very obvious not only between the two governments, but also among specific authorities, institutions, and local and international NGOs.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The problem of children who migrate from Romania and fall victim to exploitation once they arrive in Italy is increasing. There are many factors to support the argument that a significant number of minors found on the streets of Rome are either trafficked from Romania to Italy or become exploited during the first days of their stay in Italy.

The situation is grave and needs to be addressed urgently. Most of these children seem to be involved in the sex trade. They are between 14 and 18 years old and they hope to build their future quickly. Unfortunately it is impossible to evaluate the size of the prostitution business, although street workers point to the high turnover.

The first step to be taken in addressing the situation is to evaluate its size. There is a need for more investment in social outreach; to establish the link with children and understand their real situation, needs and hopes. The response can then be more effectively developed within the existing legal framework.

Although some activities have been implemented in both Italy and Romania, they lack basic coordination. There have been initiatives to find reliable partners in the other country and to establish sustainable and concrete collaboration, but unfortunately they have not been completely implemented. The authorities in both countries need to enhance their bilateral interaction to serve the implementation of the various agreements they have signed and, most of all, the best interests of the children.

It is in this regard that there is an urgent need to combine Romanian and Italian solutions, focusing on the principle of the best interests of the child and based on trust between partners.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Main activities

Consideration of the conditions that serve the best interests of each child is imperative.

- To focus in Romania and in Rome on child trafficking for illegal activities (prostitution, stealing, black labour, begging...), with a special regard to sexual exploitation of minors (boys and girls).
- Direct contact is needed between Romania (as country of origin) and Italy (as destination country), since a lack of communication is obvious not only between the two governments, but also among authorities, institutions, and local and international NGOs. It is important to facilitate this contact; to reinforce or build communication links and collaboration between the two countries. Reliable information on the situation needs to be available from both sides as well as the facilitation of partnerships among the different actors involved.
- To create a partnership link among the Romanian NGOs working on trafficking (of children or adults), and local NGOs in Rome, in order to start or to accelerate and improve an exchange of information and experience. In this regard it is also important to identify local NGOs that work in Romania on trafficking and child protection issues mainly in the identified areas: Craiova, Iasi, Galati and Calarasi.
- There is a clear need to train the actors involved in assisting children at risk of trafficking. An exchange of experiences between the local organizations is required.
- A clear and common mechanism needs to be set up in Romania and in Italy to detect children at risk or high risk of trafficking. For this purpose a common partner needs to be in place to facilitate communication and management.

6.2 Some suggestions for work in Prevention and Protection

- The creation of an efficient system for monitoring and evaluation.
- The development of dedicated family support services.
- Building family support services into a concrete reference point for families, promoting public awareness and improving relationships of trust among social workers and beneficiaries (increasing social workers visits to families).
- Promoting cross-cultural contacts among Italian and Romanian schools (e.g. children exchanging information about their own countries and becoming pen friends).
- The organization of debates within schools, based on the stories of other children who have gone through difficult situations abroad.
- Developing educational activities for young people (sports activities, psychosocial activities, etc).
- Supporting caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family that provide role models and offer encouragement and reassurance.
- Monitoring Romanian families whose children are in dangerous situations in Italy. This follow-up process would be accomplished in collaboration with the organizations which liaise with children in Italy in order to advise families about their child's situation.

Annexes

LEGAL PROCEDURES AND PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR UFM_s AND TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Italy

The situation of unaccompanied foreign minors is regulated partly by laws governing immigration in general, partly by the regulations regarding children, partly through ministerial memorandums and internal guidelines of the Committee for Foreign Minors,²⁶ and finally by the discretion of individual District Police Immigration Departments (*Questure*) and relevant Courts.

Once the unaccompanied minors manage to enter legally or illegally the State of Italy, they are immediately under the protection of the relevant institutions. After the moment of entry they acquire all the sanctioned rights derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) New York 1989, which was ratified by Italy and entered into force with Law 176/91.

Respecting the principles laid down in the CRC, the Italian legal system extends a wide range of rights and protection to foreign children. It is important to underline that the protective instruments provided for under Italian law are always temporary. They apply up to the moment the child reaches the age of adulthood, which according to Italian legislation is 18 years old.

While before their 18th birthday every unaccompanied foreign minor is considered by the law fully on a par with Italian minors (at least on paper if not in practice: for example they cannot work with the permit of stay for minors),²⁷ after the minor becomes adult, the situation changes and the minor may be immediately classified as an illegal immigrant. In such cases, any schooling, training or integration they have undergone during their stay as minors in Italy, suddenly become irrelevant.²⁸

From 2000, following several legislative changes (the last one Law 189/2002), the possibility to convert the residence permit has been significantly reduced.

Children can now apply for a legal residence permit²⁹ based on study or work, but they must have been in Italy for at least three years, and they must have been admitted for at least two years to a social reintegration project run by a registered organization³⁰.

²⁶ An administrative institution set up in 1994 within the Department for Social Affairs at the behest of the Italian Prime Minister's Office. The tasks of the Committee are laid down in detail in the Italian decree 535/99.

²⁷ Information provided by CDS.

²⁸ This is not applicable to the victims or author of crimes committed as minors, for whom care measures and reintegration are far more consistent. Such minors have already received the status of exemption from repatriation (*"non a luogo a provvedere al rimpatrio"*) from the Committee for Foreign Minors and under Law 184/83, before their 18th birthday, a residence permit is issued "for judicial purposes".

²⁹ There are several residence permits to which the child has access, depending on his/her situation:

- Permit of residence for family reasons
- Permit of residence for minor age
- Permit of residence for integration
- Permit for asylum - Permit of residence for social protection
- Permit of residence for guardianship

With the new rules in act in 2004, the permit for integration of the minor can be converted to a permit for major age with the approval of the Committee for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors.

³⁰ These conditions, however, cannot be easily proved, and the risk of deportation at eighteen remains high.

What happens when UFM's enter Italy

Once UFM's enter Italy they cannot be subjected to deportation. This is banned by legislation.³¹ Only the Tribunal for Minors at the express request of the relevant chief of police may order deportation "in the interest of public order". However children may, if they wish, follow their parents or legal guardian who has been expelled.³²

Unaccompanied foreign children in Italy must be reported by the police or other law enforcement agencies to the CFM, and removed to a safe place until final measures are taken for their protection.³³ The CFM undertakes the procedure for an investigation of the child in the origin country and it then decides whether to repatriate the child or not.³⁴ Investigations should in general start within sixty days, but no term is set for the conclusion of the proceedings.

The CFM informs the Romanian Consulate about unaccompanied children found in Italy and the latter makes all the contacts in Romania in order to identify and provide information on the child.

Investigations generally take a long time, due to practical difficulties and inadequate resources for launching investigations in the child's origin country. It is obvious that the waiting and uncertainty about their future can have a negative impact on children.

The law also requires that the social services in the municipality where the children live must seek the child's own views on their situation.³⁵

Pending the Committee's decision, minors are given a minor's residence permit which prohibits work, and cannot be converted into a work permit or an education permit when they reach the adult age³⁶.

Once they enter Italy, unaccompanied children automatically receive the right to access to all provisions for urgent assistance, essential outpatient and hospital care, even over long periods of time, for disease and/or accidents, in accredited private or public institutions³⁷.

Generally only after the CFM has decided that the minor may remain in Italy can further steps be taken in order to assist the child during their stay in Italy.

If the child is considered unaccompanied, the relevant judge orders proceedings on guardianship. This measure is formally adopted only after the judge reports on the existence of one of the conditions stipulated in Article 343 of the Italian Civil Code.³⁸

³¹ Italian Law 286/98

³² Expulsion in the interest of public order is usually an exceptional measure often replaced by assisted repatriation.

³³ The Italian system provides for "first, second and even third" stage reception centres (Italian Civil Code – Art. 403.) The aim of these centres is to help minors to enter into the local community and assist them in the labour market.

There is also the possibility for the minors to be placed in foster care, but this is not common. In Rome 99% of unaccompanied foreign minors are placed in the Reception Centre.

³⁴ Consolidated Act (Testo Unico) 286/98, Art. 33, DPCM 535/99.

³⁵ Memorandum of the Ministry of Internal Affairs 9.4.2001

³⁶ This happens only in cases where the time requirements introduced by Law 189/2002 are not established.

³⁷ Consolidated Act 286/98, Art. 35

³⁸ Italian Civil Code, Art. 343ff.; Law 184/83, Art.3

Repatriation³⁹

The criteria with which the CFM decides whether to repatriate the minor or to allow him/her to remain in Italy, are not clearly established by the law, nor have they been elaborated by the CFM.

At present, repatriation cannot be effected in the case of serious risks to the minor: if the parents or the guardian have not been contacted, if the parents have abused their child, or if the child comes from a country affected by serious calamities, such as a situation of war.

The present policy of the Committee tends to consider repatriation as the most appropriate solution to meet the child's interests. However, it is often applied without reference to the views of the child or his/her family, and without assessment of the economic and social conditions, or the existence of opportunities for study, training, work and support in the country of origin.⁴⁰

A repatriation order means that the child is informed that he/she is illegally present in Italy and asked to return voluntarily.⁴¹ No agency is responsible for enforcing repatriation. The child has the right to reject the repatriation order and to follow specific social and economic reintegration in his/her own country.⁴² He or she may appeal the repatriation order with the Magistrate.⁴³ In the appeal procedure, the role and support of the legal guardian is crucial.

As result, what often occurs in practice is that children simply run away rather than appeal their repatriation order. In such cases, the child's subsequent status is not at all clear. During the whole procedure the police are not supposed to be involved. If the minor does not want to go back, no forced repatriation can be made.⁴⁴ However in reality, because of the lack of clear guidelines for repatriation and reintegration, the involvement and use of the police is not explicitly forbidden. In the past, even within the same framework, forced repatriations have been carried out by the police, and we cannot be completely sure that this will not happen again.

"If the minor does not want to go back, no forced repatriation should be made".⁴⁵

Difficulties encountered during repatriation have underscored an intense distrust of the reintegration process among those concerned. Minors in particular do not believe in their chances upon return, and this feeling has led them to see return simply as an imposition. They are distrustful with regard to their own country: they do not believe they can profitably return. Thus their reaction to repatriation is usually refusal and escape.

Special measures regarding Child Trafficking

The first centre specifically for minor victims of traffic, "casa di fuga," was opened by the municipality of Rome during the summer of 2005. It provides a centre for primary intervention (4-6 places) and a centre for secondary intervention (8-10 places). The centre is managed by the Association "Virtus Ponte Mammolo".⁴⁶

Although the issue of child trafficking has recently received a lot of public and mass media attention in Italy, the degree of public awareness on this phenomenon is still low. Trafficking is commonly identified with adult women, while trafficking in children is forgotten or receives little attention. In Italy child trafficking is strongly connected to sexual exploitation.

³⁹ Unaccompanied foreign minors, who may be subject to persecution upon return in their own country, for reasons of religion, nationality, race, social group, or for their own political opinion, are considered under asylum legislation in Italy. In this case the minor is assisted through another regime and is not even reported to the CFM.

⁴⁰ The Rights of Children in Italy – Perspectives in the Third Sector. Supplementary Report to the United Nations.

⁴¹ Differently from expulsion and deportation, repatriation does not involve a re-entry ban of ten years.

⁴² Quite often the minor prefers staying in Italy as an irregular person and living underground instead of being a subject to a reintegration program.

⁴³ There are evidences of cases in which after the child's appeal, the repatriation order was revoked.

⁴⁴ Interview with the CDS team lawyer.

⁴⁵ Interview with the CDS team lawyer.

⁴⁶ An independent and democratic association which also manages three welcome centres for adult male non-European asylum seekers and refugees, one multinational integration centre, and five day-centres for refugee children.

“... during the last decade a number of other forms of exploitation and abuse have clearly emerged in direct connection with child trafficking, such as illegal labour exploitation, begging, international adoption, and in a few instances the sale of organs. However, there are no official data available on these types of exploitation.”⁴⁷

When children are recognized as victims of exploitation their situation is considered under Law 269/98: **“Provisions against the exploitation of prostitution, pornography and sexual tourism involving minors, as new forms of enslavement”**.

This law provides for specific instruments of protection for minors forced into prostitution and other forms of enslavement. Judicial authorities⁴⁸ must take immediate protective action, including placement of the minor under guardianship if necessary. The Tribunal for Minors shall order any and all assistance (including psychological counselling) required for the recovery and rehabilitation of the minor in question. In the case of exploitation of foreign children, the authorities of the country of origin of the children involved must be contacted.

Trafficked children also benefit from the right to a residence permit provided under Article 18 of Law 286/98. This article deals with immigration in general. It provides for a special permit for foreigners who have suffered abuse or severe exploitation. This permit allows a victim to remain in Italy and to work, study and access social and health services, and ultimately to gain a regular work permit.

“The right prescribed in Art.18⁴⁹ is unconditional upon the victim’s testimony against her/his traffickers. However the norm requires clear evidence of serious exploitation of the victim or violence used against her/him. Evidence should be shown as to the presence of real dangers for the victim as consequences of his/her efforts to try to escape from his/her trafficker. . This norm applies to both foreign adults and children.

There are different interpretations of the law and the Police Department in Rome (Questura), in particular, demands the victim’s statement as a matter of course. This is intended as a declaration that provides useful information for a police investigation.

This article in any case gives the victim the opportunity for real reintegration into society through the possibility of work, and it protects him/her from being repatriated once reaching 18. In any case, minors usually prefer to benefit from a stay permit granted to unaccompanied minors in general”⁵⁰.

The permit for social protection and the possibility to participate in a social care and integration program “is nearly always only applied in cases of exploitation for prostitution. This measure can also be applied to cases of abuse and danger, which are not necessarily linked only to prostitution, but to other activities (begging, labour exploitation, drug dealing, etc.)”⁵¹.

Moreover, in Italy there is an inclination to tackle the issue of trafficking with repressive measures, as just a matter of security and crime control. As a result, a wide range of fundamental rights are violated.

⁴⁷ Enact/ Save the Children: Italy - in *A Report on Child Trafficking*, March 2004.

⁴⁸ *“The Public Official or person in charge of public services, shall, upon learning that a minor under 18 years of age is engaged in prostitution, give immediate notice thereof to the Public Prosecutor’s Office at the Tribunal for Minors”.*

⁴⁹ Art. 18 anticipates that the victim accepts a reintegration project into Italian society.

⁵⁰ Information received from the CDS team lawyer.

⁵¹ Enact/ Save the children: Italy - in *A Report on Child Trafficking*, March 2004.

Romania

“The national legislation on human trafficking is rather new in Romania: the legislative acts were adopted in 2001. Although the existing legislation refers to human trafficking, there are some specific provisions regarding child trafficking, defined as ‘trafficking in minors.’

“Regarding international treaties and conventions, Romania has signed or ratified the most important documents relevant to human or child trafficking.”⁵²

In November 2002, Romania ratified the United Nations Convention against Trans-National Organized Crime, and the associated Protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

The Romanian Government signed cooperation protocols with most of the countries in the region for combating crime, especially cross-border crime.

A memorandum of agreements referring to the protection of unaccompanied minors was also signed in Bucharest in 2003 with the provincial government of Turin, due to the great number of unaccompanied Romanian minors found in Turin during 2002 and 2003 and at risk of exploitation.

The protocol was signed by the Government of Romania and the Local Counsel of the III District in Bucharest, and the Prefecture and Municipality of Turin.

The protocol's main objectives are:

- Facilitating the exchange of information between the signatories regarding Romanian minors found in difficulty in Italy;
- Collaboration between the signatories in order to identify Romanian minors and ensure the voluntary assisted return of unaccompanied Romanian children found in Italy;
- Collaboration between the signatories for the reintegration of Romanian minors with their families, and for the counselling and monitoring of the different cases;
- Collaboration between the signatories to take responsibility for repatriated Romanian minors, and for their care and counselling by child protection system where family reintegration is not immediately possible.

Procedures for the Return of Unaccompanied Romanian Children

The diplomatic missions, that is the Consulates of Romania, as soon as they receive information regarding unaccompanied children, are required to ask the local authorities to provide the child's personal data, especially if the child holds a passport or other identity document, or any other information that could ease the identification of the child and their protection, as well as other relevant information on their return, if the return day is established, and if so, when and how he/she will return.

In order to identify a child and his/her family, the diplomatic missions are required to send the identification data of the child and any other useful information for their return to the General Department for Passports within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, through the General Department for Consular Affairs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Once the identification data and the agreement regarding the return are sent to the General Department for Consular Affairs, the General Department for Passports will pass the information to the ANPDC, so that the internal procedures regarding the assessment of the family's social situation may begin.

The authority will ask the DGASPC from the region where the child and his/her family live to immediately begin an enquiry and to prepare an individual plan for the child's social reintegration.

⁵² Salvati Copiii “Joint East West Research on Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes in Europe: the sending countries – Romania”, October 2003.

After issuing the transportation and travel documents, the diplomatic missions and the Romanian consulates communicate through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Authority and the Border Police, the first and last name of the child and the series of the travel document, the means of transportation, the border he/she will cross to enter the country, the date and hour of arrival at the Romanian border, as well as the identification data of the child's companion, if necessary.

The Border Police then communicate data about the returned child, the border he/she will cross in order to ease the access of the child's legal guardian or that of the person who will welcome and accompany the child to his/her place of residence or specialized centre for unaccompanied children or victims of trafficking, belonging to the General Department for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC), or to a private organization authorized by law.

The DGASPC from the region where the returned child lives will begin all the necessary procedures for his/her reintegration to the family.

With regard to child trafficking, to ensure the welcome, accompaniment, representation, protection and monitoring of all cases regarding child victims of trafficking, the county counsels and the local counsels from Bucharest have organized specialized centres controlled by the DGASPC.

"The reality shows that usually these centres completely lack children so that they usually try to offer different help to other children that are abused or present any other kind of mistreatment, in order to justify their expense."⁵³

Despite the ANPDC's efforts to create "inter-sector teams at the local level" which include members of all institutions and organizations working in the field of child protection, and the law which provides child victims of trafficking the right to social services, in certain regions no proper structures are available.

It seems evident that the social services are not yet ready to properly assist children for financial reasons and also because of the lack of specialized personnel.

The procedure for recognition as a victim of trafficking

In order to be recognized as a victim of trafficking, the trafficker should have committed a criminal act as stipulated in Law 678/2001. Even if the author of the criminal act is not immediately identified, the investigation is begun upon the alleged victim's declaration. If evidence or proof of the criminal act is found, prosecution procedures are begun. The alleged victim of trafficking has to declare everything he/she knows so that investigations can be made and the author of the criminal act identified.

"In reality it is very rare that children go to the police to denounce their traffickers. The procedure is usually the other way around: it is the police which first identifies some traffickers and then has to find witnesses in order to have significant proof to accuse them."⁵⁴

Although there is a law on witness protection, it is very hard to convince minors to make an official declaration about their traffickers, since they are generally afraid of corruption and they do not feel safe.

It is also essential to consider that there is no real social work conducted with the returned children aimed at the identification of trafficking victims among them.

"Thus, the Application Rules for Law 678/2001 contain provisions related to work procedures with trafficked victims. There is confusion regarding the capacity, quality and abilities of the institutions authorized to work with the victims"⁵⁵.

"Usually a child returned from an EU country is sent directly to his/her family, instead of passing through a specialized centre. Ordinary public opinion in Romania is that these children do not want to enter and receive assistance in a specialized centre in order not to be later classified as "institutionalized children"⁵⁶. These problems explain the present reality in Romania, where the majority of the centres for child victims of trafficking are empty or have just a few children inside.

⁵³ Information received from a Romanian lawyer on Juvenile Justice

⁵⁴ Information received from a Romanian lawyer on Juvenile Justice

⁵⁵ This is expected to be developed upon confirmation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the law on child rights protection, approved and published in September 2005 in the Official Monitor of Romania No. 856.

⁵⁶ Information received from a Romanian lawyer on Juvenile Justice

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Registered in 1997 as a Romanian NGO, its **mission** is to protect children's rights focusing on the responsible and active role of the family, the community and the state.

All **FRCCF** projects promote the child's best interests; ensure the child's right to physical health and emotional and intellectual development, the right to grow up in a family environment, as well as all the other rights, as stipulated in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**, ratified by Romania in 1990.

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An Italian NGO based in Rome that has been engaged since 1985 in the promotion of human and social rights of the most vulnerable sectors of the society. In the field of child protection CDS works mainly with unaccompanied foreign minors through two main projects: "Solidea-idee e Solidarietà" and "Hora". Both Projects concern minors who are victims of exploitation and other forms of abuse.

CDS is also implementing field activities. A team of street workers operates mainly at night in some of the most vulnerable areas of Rome.

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The Terre des hommes movement was founded in 1960 in Lausanne (Switzerland) by Edmond Kaiser. Other Terre des hommes groups were subsequently created in various countries. In 1966 they joined together to form the International Federation Terre des Hommes (IFTDH*).

Terre des hommes was created to provide direct support to underprivileged children who were not being helped by existing relief agencies. Today its mandate and activities have evolved, while its focus on improving the daily life of the most vulnerable groups of children has been maintained.

* The IFTDH is a network of eleven national organizations with headquarters in Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland (comprising two organizations, the Terre des hommes Foundation in Lausanne and Terre des hommes-Switzerland), and Syria.