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Evaluation of the PIP-project and assessment of victim assistance in Romania

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANITP | National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons |
| DCAF | The Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces |
| DGASPC | General Directorate for Social Welfare and the Protection of Children |
| EU | European Union |
| FIZ | Advocacy and Support for Migrant Women and Victims of Trafficking |
| FOM | Swiss Federal Office for Migration |
| GRETA | Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organization |
| NIRM | National Identification and Referral Mechanism |
| PCM | Project Cycle Management |
| PIP-Project | <i>P(revention) I(dentification) P(rotection) Project</i> |
| SCOTT | Swiss Coordination Unit against the Trafficking of Persons and Migrants |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SIB | Swiss Intermediate Body |
| THB | Trafficking in Human Beings |
| TiP | Trafficking in Persons |
| UN | United Nations |
| VoT | Victims of Trafficking |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

1.1.1. *Trafficking in Human Beings in Romania*

Although Romania is commonly classified as a source, transit and destination country for Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), most of the identified victims in the country are Romanian nationals. Romanian women, men and children are victims of sexual exploitation or forced labour in various sectors such as agriculture, hotels, domestic services, construction, etc. Another significant form of THB in Romania consists of exploiting children or disabled persons for the purpose of begging and carrying out minor offenses such as theft, shoplifting, and pick pocketing.

Traffickers who recruit and exploit Romanian victims seem to be for most part, Romanian citizens themselves, and often relatives or acquaintances of victims. Moreover, organized criminal groups have become increasingly sophisticated over the past years¹.

Romania is also a destination country for a small number of foreign victims, mainly sex trafficking victims from Poland and Moldova and victims of forced labour from Bangladesh and Serbia².

According to the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP), 896 victims of trafficking (VoT) were identified by both governmental structures and NGOs in 2013, more than half of which were victims of sexual exploitation. In 2013, out of 714 cases of human trafficking investigated by the Romanian authorities, 552 cases led to the prosecution of traffickers, 252 of which were convicted.³

1.1.2. *Measures to combat THB in Romania*

Significant efforts have been made by the Government of Romania to fight against THB. Since 2006, ANITP is responsible for the coordination, evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of anti-trafficking measures at the national level (prevention, protection and assistance policies). ANITP also elaborates prevention projects and campaigns in cooperation with various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and administrates the national helpline. The ANITP has 15 regional centres (one for each court of appeal district) that support the design of prevention measures and monitor the local implementation of national policies against THB.

A parliamentary group was established in April 2009 under the framework of the European Affairs Committee, in order to identify gaps in the implementation of the law. Its aims are to promote and improve the understanding of the phenomenon, identify emerging issues and help improve the identification of vulnerable groups.

Romania is party to the main international instruments in the field of human trafficking, such as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the ILO Convention for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

At the national level, Romania also has a comprehensive set of national regulations and standards, which form an updated legislative framework including the most recent forms of THB. The national anti-trafficking law No. 678/2001 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings provides measures for prevention, prosecution, assistance and protection. The national law is completed by secondary legislation including government decisions and orders. With regards to victim assistance

¹ Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report of the US State Government (2014). Retrieved from:

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014/?utm_source=NEW+RESOURCE%3A+Trafficking+in+Persons+Report+2014&utm_campaign=2014.07.16+NEW+RESOURCE%3A+Trafficking+in+Persons+Report+2014+&utm_medium=email>.

² *Idem*.

³ *Idem*.

and protection, the the law No.678/2001 sets up Governmental Centres for the Protection and Assistance of VoT and the National specific standards for specialized services to assist and protect the victims of human trafficking (GD 1238/2007) provide details on the specific services that should be available for VoT.

The National Identification and Referral Mechanism (NIRM), adopted by Government Decision No. 335/2007, enables the identification of a large number of victims each year. The NIRM determines guidelines for the identification of victims and defines the referral mechanism once a victim is identified.

ANITP developed a National Strategy (2012-2016) and an action plan in consultation with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions. The national strategy underlines problems in the fields of prevention and awareness raising, data collection, assistance and protection of VoT, prosecution of traffickers, and more. It formulates objectives to improve the quality and stability of the fight against THB in Romania.

1.2. The PIP-project

The “*P(revention), I(dentification), P(rotection)*” (PIP) project was implemented within the framework of the Swiss Thematic Fund Security, which is part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation’s (SDC) engagement in addressing Schengen Area related aspects. The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme falls within the scope of the efforts made by the Swiss government to enhance security and stability in Europe by reducing economic and social disparities within the enlarged European Union (EU). The establishment of the Enlargement Contribution Fund commits Switzerland to support the development of the twelve countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. In this context, the Swiss Thematic Fund Security is among others aimed at supporting joint projects between Swiss and Romanian stakeholders in order to both contribute to the enhancement of social security as well as the fight against organized crime and corruption. A consortium composed of three Swiss-based organizations (The Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Team Consult and Coginta), which together form the Swiss Intermediary Body (SIB) is responsible for the oversight of the thematic security projects in the judicial, police and migration sectors.

The Thematic Fund Security consists of two rounds of projects. The objective of the first phase (2012-2014) was to build the capacities of the relevant Romanian authorities through experience exchanges with Swiss authorities. The second round (2014-2017) will focus on counter-trafficking and anti-corruption.

The PIP project was implemented within the first round of the Fund for a period of 32 months, starting in April 2012 and with a deadline for completion in November 2014. The total budget available for the PIP-project was CHF 531,745 (85% financed by the Swiss contribution and 15% co-financed by ANITP). DCAF, as a member of the SIB that supervises projects related to migration, asylum and THB, had the responsibility to oversee the administration and implementation of the project whereas ANITP was the executing agency.

The overall objective of the PIP-project was to contribute to decreasing THB in Romania. Prevention, identification and protection should be strengthened thanks to the exchange of best practices and experience between Swiss and Romanian authorities. Specific objectives of the project were:

- to develop the capacities of Romanian governmental stakeholders (ANITP representatives, prosecutors, judges, police officers, etc.) involved in prevention, identification and repatriation of VoT;
- to target potential VoT in Romania through awareness campaigns focusing on the most vulnerable categories;
- to enhance local authorities capacity to seek and receive funding for anti-trafficking projects;

- to draft recommendations related to assistance provided to VoT and include lessons learned in the National Action Plan.

1.2.1. Purpose

This report consists of three parts, each being related to different objectives:

- ***The first part of the report is an evaluation of the PIP-project.***
The aim is to summarize the project's outcomes and explore the extent to which the PIP-project achieved its objectives. Each activity implemented will be assessed according to pre-determined expected outcomes in order to evaluate the general impact of the project.
- ***The second part of the report is an attempt to assess the current capacity and quality of services provided by NGOs with regards to victim assistance in Romania.***
The objective is to gain a better understanding of victim assistance and protection in Romania and ascertain specific needs of VoT. The multidisciplinary Swiss working group on victim assistance in Romania recently identified gaps in the area and suggested that future projects implemented within the second phase of the Security Fund focus on assistance delivered by NGOs to identified VoT. The implementation of a project providing the NGOs with grants in the framework of the Romanian-Swiss bilateral program is expected to start in 2015. This project will help solve the main issue faced by Romanian authorities in recent years: the impossibility of providing grants to NGOs. In view of this, an assessment of the current situation will help identify the main gaps related to assistance and the areas that will need the most support in the coming years.
- ***The last part consists of recommendations to improve the quality and capacity of victim assistance in Romania.***
Following the above-mentioned assessment, recommendations will be provided on how to improve victim assistance services in Romania. These recommendations will consist of a guiding framework to identify what are the most urgent needs of victims and will help reflect on how to allocate funds to service providers and NGOs in the most efficient way. This report can serve as a tool for future project implementation within the framework of the second phase (2014-2017), which will aim its attention at financial support to NGOs.⁴ Finally, the whole report aims to include lessons learned into the future National Action Plan.

1.2.2. Limitations

Several limitations of the present report should be acknowledged:

- **Time availability:** the consultant in charge of this evaluation/assessment was only granted seven working days to complete the three tasks mentioned above. This short time period is obviously not sufficient to gain an in-depth knowledge of the complex counter-trafficking practices and structures in Romania.
- **Methodology for the assessment of victim assistance:** given the short period of time available, the consultant was asked to base her assessment on the results of a survey applied at the National Conference in Bucharest on October 16th. Considering that such a method was not able to provide enough reliable data to identify gaps and draw recommendations, the consultant

⁴ The recommendations provided in this report should focus on how to improve assistance and services provided by NGOs especially. With regards to assistance services provided by governmental centres under the national anti-trafficking law, a detailed evaluation will be conducted by ANITP under the framework of a Norway EEA project. This evaluation will focus on state-run shelters and analyse whether the current geographical coverage of services provided responds the needs of VoT. Recommendations will be provided in order to better organize of the national assistance system. The exact timeframe of this evaluation has not been defined yet.

chose to complement her data collection via a desk review as well as informal interviews/discussions with a variety of stakeholders involved in victim assistance in Romania.

- Considering these limitations, the assessment of victim assistance in chapter 3 should not be understood as a thorough mapping of services provided in Romania, but rather as a compilation of general issues raised by relevant stakeholders.

2. EVALUATION OF THE PIP-PROJECT

2.1. Methodology

In order to evaluate the impact of the PIP-project, the consultant proceeded with a thorough review of all documents related to the implementation of PIP.⁵ To complete her assessment, the consultant informally discussed about the project's outcomes with various stakeholders who participated in diverse events.

The next section will list all activities implemented within the project. The outcomes described in the each activity report will be compared with the expected results and indicators defined in the project document. At the end of the chapter, the overall impact and the extent to which the project objectives were achieved will be discussed, as well as perspectives on future action.

2.2. Project outcomes and adequacy with expected results

2.2.1. Public Launching the PIP-project

On the 12th of July 2012, 41 stakeholders (eight representatives of EU States/Switzerland and 33 Romanians) participated in the public launch the PIP-project organized by ANITP in Bucharest. During the event, the project's objectives, planned activities and expected results were presented. Romanian and Swiss representatives' mutual engagement and strong efforts to strengthen cooperation were emphasized. The launching conference successfully reached out to the public via the presence of Romanian media representatives and provided visibility for the project at the national level. According to the activity report, all participants acknowledged the positive exchanges and reiterated the need to intensify the already well-established and fruitful cooperation between the two countries in the field of THB.

2.2.2. Trainings for ANITP staff

On 17th - 27th September 2012, trainings related to the project cycle management (PCM) were organized for 40 ANITP staff members in Bucharest,⁶ in accordance with the project objectives. An expert in PCM was mandated and participants were selected based on their involvement in activities related to project management and implementation, both at the central and regional levels.⁷

Two courses on project management took place between the 17th and 20th of September. Each course was attended by 10 ANITP staff and introduced key concepts and methods related to project management.

A second course on procurement management was organized on 24th- 25th September. Basic concepts, modalities and rules related to procurement were presented to ten ANITP staff members.

Finally, ten ANITP's representatives participated in the final course on financial management, which was held on 26th - 27th September. The course introduced basic concepts and methods related to the

⁵ Reviewed documentation for each activity included: agenda, list of participants, pictures, completed evaluation forms, activity reports and results, etc.

⁶ It should be noted that some ANITP participants have attended more than one of these courses. Therefore the total number of individuals trained is slightly lower than 40.

⁷ The expert was working for the private company S.C SIN TOUR OPERATOR S.R.L Bucharest.

financial management of projects, developed the capacity to draft and manage budgets and familiarized participants with financial systems/programmes and evaluation procedures.

At the end of each training session, grid tests were applied to participants in order to assess the theoretical knowledge acquired. All 40 trainees obtained the maximum score and gained the expertise needed for an efficient elaboration, implementation and financial management of future projects related to THB. According to evaluation forms completed by the participants, all courses reached a maximum level of satisfaction and ANITP trained staff being convinced of the usefulness of such an activity.

The skills acquired later ensured the smooth implementation of the PIP-project. Beyond the project, these training sessions built up ANITP's capacity to design, manage, implement and monitor projects related to the fight against THB. In order to maximize the benefits of these courses, trained ANITP staff members should pass on skills acquired to colleagues and new staff members.

2.2.3. Study Visit in Switzerland

On 13th – 16th November 2012, a study visit took place in Switzerland in order to exchange best practices regarding identification and referral of VoT, cooperation amongst governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, rehabilitation and assistance of VoT. A delegation of four Romanian representatives (three ANITP staff members and the manager of the NGO ADPARE) was accompanied by four Swiss representatives (the Chief Commissioner of Police, a representative of DCAF, the PIP-project coordinator and a member of the Swiss Foreign Ministry). The Romanian delegation met with relevant Swiss institutions/organisations, including the NGO FIZ, the Unit to Combat TiP with the Zurich Police, the Coordination Unit against the Trafficking of Persons and Migrants in the Federal Police (SCOTT), the Foreign Office in Bern, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Federal Office for Migration (FOM). Each of the latter presented an overview of his contribution in the anti-trafficking system in Switzerland. The main positive aspects as well as challenges were addressed during interactive discussions following each presentation. Documentation was distributed to the Romanian delegation, including fact sheets on cooperation mechanisms and services provided, statistics, the Swiss National Action Plan, etc.

According to the activity report, the meetings provided the four Romanian stakeholders with updated knowledge of the current anti-trafficking situation in Switzerland, of the modalities of victim assistance and voluntary return and improved their expertise on European policies and cooperation in the fight against THB. Professional contacts were established in view of further bilateral cooperation and knowledge acquired will be used in daily activities related to the fight against THB. Participants interviewed acknowledged the added value created by this activity and emphasized the valuable cooperation and the much-appreciated exchanges of best practices and information.

2.2.4. Study Visit in Romania

On 4th – 7th February 2013, a similar study visit was organized in Romania. A Swiss delegation composed of five experts from the FOM, the SCOTT, the Police of Zurich, IOM and FIZ, was received in Bucharest by a variety of Romanian stakeholders (Representatives of ANITP, public institutions and NGOs). This activity successfully fulfilled its main objective, which was to exchange information and expertise on Romania's THB combating process, the actors involved in this process and the modalities of assistance delivered to VoT. Interactive discussions focused on the identification and referral of VoT, victim assistance and protection, prevention programs and campaigns, inter-agency cooperation, prosecution and conviction.

According to the activity report, this study-visit enabled the Swiss representatives to gain updated knowledge of the current THB situation in Romania and on several aspects of the fight against the phenomenon. Professional contacts between Swiss and Romanian experts were enhanced and the main counter-trafficking challenges faced in Romania were discussed. Participants interviewed were not only satisfied with the excellent organization of this event but also appreciated the added value created as well as the relevance of the discussions and exchanges.

2.2.5. *Workshop in Switzerland*

On 22nd – 23rd May 2013, and on accordance with what was planned in the project document, a workshop took place in Zurich with the participation of 16 Swiss and six Romanian experts. Both delegations were composed of representatives of public institutions as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations. The aim was to bring together multidisciplinary experts from both countries to exchange best practices in the field of identification, referral and reintegration of VoT. A detailed report written after the workshop describes how concrete cases as well as main challenges were intensively discussed during the meetings. Main concerns were identified by participants, especially related to gaps in assistance services provided in Romania. Potential activities and projects aimed at addressing these issues were debated.

The second objective of this event was to reflect and decide on the exact content of a brochure, which was to be created within the PIP-project framework. The brochure should display background information on identification, referral and reintegration of VoT and provide a tool for experts working on combating THB in both countries.

At the end of the workshop, each participant completed an evaluation questionnaire to assess the quality and utility of this activity. Overall, the participants' feedback on the workshop was very positive and the opportunity to exchange with experts from the other country was greatly appreciated. However, the following critiques were raised:

- The exact aim and objectives of the brochure should have been better explained; more time should have been allocated for discussions focused on the brochure content;
- Although interesting, some of the themes were already presented during previous meetings and events and such redundancy could have been avoided;
- Less time should have been devoted to statistics and individual roles of actors. More time should have been spent on concrete cases and interaction between various stakeholders.

On the whole, the workshop was successful in enhancing the mutual understanding of anti-trafficking approaches existing in the other country and in exchanging best practices. Although the main objectives and expected results of this activity were achieved, a better allocation of time could have maximized its outcomes.

2.2.6. *Brochure*

Between June and August 2013, a Swiss expert was mandated to coordinate the creation of a brochure entitled "*Identification, Assistance and Voluntary Return of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings Between Switzerland and Romania*". The exact content of this brochure was decided in accordance with what had been discussed during the workshop organized in Switzerland in May 2013. The Swiss expert was responsible for the conceptual design of the brochure, the collection and compilation of relevant information, and the drafting/editing of the final version. The brochure was finalized in January 2014 and edited in English, French, German and Romanian. It was then printed and distributed to relevant actors in both countries.⁸

The output represents a practical and easy-to-read tool for professionals who may be confronted with cases of THB. It consists of a basic guidance on how to relate with potential victims and covers definitions, indicators and procedures related to identification, referral, assistance and voluntary return of VoT in both countries. Several stakeholders in Switzerland and Romania have given positive feedbacks on the utility of the product. However, more time will be needed to assess the real and quantifiable impact of this brochure on the identification and case management of Romanian VoT in Switzerland and Romania.

2.2.7. *Study on Begging as a Form of THB*

As intended, a study on begging as a form of THB was carried out in 2013 with the support of a Swiss research coordinator from the University of Neuchatel. She commented on the research outline,

⁸ The brochure was printed in 1650 copies: 600 copies in German, 600 copies in French, 250 copies in Romanian, and 200 copies in English.

conducted a literature review, helped with the development of interview guidelines, and advised on the qualitative analysis and structure of the report. The Swiss Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga and the Romanian Minister of Internal Affairs endorsed the final version and signed the foreword, which granted credibility and visibility to results of the report. The research was written in Romanian in August 2013, translated into English and published in 2014. It was printed in 600 copies, some of which were disseminated by post to a variety of Swiss and Romanian institutions/organizations.

Being the first study reflecting the overall picture of begging in Romania, this research has produced knowledge of the causes and aspects of begging as a form of THB as well as the vulnerabilities of potential VoT. It consists of a useful tool to facilitate future prevention campaigns design and cooperation in this field.

2.2.8. Conference Hall

To facilitate the project implementation, a new Conference Hall was equipped and furnished at ANITP's headquarters. During the implementation phase of the project, it was noticed that the budget allocated for this activity was not sufficient to cover all costs related to necessary equipment, due to an unforeseen and significant increase in prices. The issue was solved and ANITP now has a functioning conference room at its disposal, which has accommodated a majority of the project activities organized in Bucharest.

Equipping a Conference Hall at ANITP proves to be a sustainable activity to enable the agency to conduct cost-effective workshops and trainings for a variety of stakeholders involved in the fight against THB. Beyond the completion of the PIP-project, the Conference Hall will provide a platform for dialogue between public institutions and NGOs and facilitate information exchanges. In the long term, economic benefits will arise from savings in renting conference halls and technical equipment.

2.2.9. Workshops in Romania

On 9th- 10th September 2013, a workshop was held in Bucharest on prevention activities related to THB. During this two-day event, two Swiss experts (SCOTT and FIZ representatives) met with 33 Romanian practitioners in the area of crime prevention (public institutions as well as representatives of several NGOs). The objective was to exchange best practices and reflect on the design of an upcoming prevention campaign within the PIP-project framework. Participants presented current prevention projects and shared practical experience with their peers. Ideas regarding the potential target groups, the message and materials for the future campaign were discussed and gathered. The possibility of having a component of this campaign in Switzerland was debated.

At the end of the workshop, participants were requested to fill out an evaluation form to assess the results of the activity. In general, the participants' feedback of the seminar was very good. The quality as well as the usefulness of exchanges was stressed. Nevertheless, several critiques were raised:

- The exact purpose and content of the workshop should have been clearly defined and communicated to participants in advance;
- There should have been more in-depth discussion about practical implementation details and about campaigns with limited outcomes;

Overall, despite these small weaknesses, the workshop successfully served as a platform that helped identify the needs of prevention activities and the expected result of the workshop was thus achieved.

A second workshop was organized at ANITP's headquarters in Bucharest on 27th – 28th February 2014, with the participation of 43 stakeholders from various areas. The event gathered two Swiss experts (representing Zurich City Police and FIZ) and Romanian practitioners in the field of identification, reintegration and protection of VoT. The main objective was to exchange best practices in these specific areas of counter-trafficking. The discussions focused on transnational identification and cooperation between police officers and NGOs on identification and protection of

VoT. Swiss experts presented concrete examples of transnational cooperation for identification. The proposal for the future project "*Provision of support organizations NGOs in Romania to assist victims of human trafficking*" was also presented and debated.

At the end of the workshop, each participant completed an evaluation form in order to assess the quality and utility of this activity. On the whole, the participants' feedback and impression of the seminar was very positive and the opportunity to exchange best practices was very much appreciated. Romanian participants emphasized the need for a continuing cooperation between authorities of the two countries. Nevertheless, several critiques were raised:

- The content of the workshop should have been clearly defined and communicated to participants;
- More discussions amongst participants should have taken place, especially during breaks. Unfortunately, there was no time to discuss future models of cooperation;
- Less time should have been devoted to the description of actors' functions. More time should have been spent on practical experiences and best practices.

Overall, the workshop successfully addressed the positive aspects and challenges of identification, referral and integration of VoT in the two countries. Although the expected results were achieved, there is room for improvement in order to maximize the outcomes of such activities in the future.

2.2.10. Prevention Campaign and Launching Conference

Following the workshop on prevention organized in Bucharest in September 2013, a national campaign for preventing sexual exploitation has been elaborated and implemented in Romania between mid-June and September 2014. The main objective of the campaign was to raise awareness in order to reduce vulnerability amongst the main target group (young people aged 14-25). The possibility to implement a component of the campaign in Switzerland has been rejected due to legal issues and lack of funds. Thus, the original idea to give a transnational dimension to this awareness initiative was not realized in practice.

After an assessment of the needs and the identification of the target group, the message and communication strategy - *Don't be fooled – You too could be a victim of trafficking!* – were created. Materials were designed and produced. It encompassed a TV spot (also translated into English), posters, brochures, USB sticks, T-shirts and other promotional materials as giveaways. The campaign was implemented both at the national and local level and widely featured on TV, within various institutions, in airports, train stations, and public transportation, reaching a large number of people. ANITP organised a launching conference for the campaign on 11th June 2014, with the participation of a high number of stakeholders active in prevention (approximately 50). Swiss officials, representatives of public institutions, international organisations and NGOs participated in the conference. During the event, campaign material was distributed and the TV spot was broadcasted. External experts shared best practices and practical experience in preventing THB with the audience. The event and campaign visibility was secured through a press release and the presence of numerous media representatives.

In October 2014, an expert mandated to conduct a post-campaign evaluation and assess the impact of this activity wrote in details about the implementation of the campaign and the outcomes achieved. His assessment was based on surveys between two different target groups – young people aged between 14 and 25 years, as well a second group consisting of authority and community representatives. The overall assessment has been very positive, since the prevention campaign seems to be one of the most visible campaigns implemented at the national level so far. The strong and relevant campaign message is thought to have reached 27 350 individuals across the country, which goes beyond all expectations. This activity has thus contributed to an increased public awareness of trafficking risks for potential victims. However, it is too early to assess its exact impact on THB figures in Romania. Given the high success of this campaign, similar actions are needed to increase the sustainability of prevention in Romania.

In the framework of this activity, ANITP's website was reconfigured aligning with the campaign objectives. However, the website is currently not available in English and does not contain all relevant information related to THB in Romania. ANITP staff should ensure the functioning of the website as soon as possible and more information on current and previous prevention campaigns should be made available.

2.2.11. Local Seminars

Between April and June 2014, four two-day local seminars have been organized in Timisoara, Craiova, Suceava and Galati, each of them bringing together representatives of ANITP, NGOs and local authorities/institutions. A thematic expert on project management was mandated to share her expertise by presenting useful methods to maximize funding opportunities and resource mobilization at the EU level. The main objective of these events was to build local capacity by improving the project design skills of the participants as well as their ability to raise funds to combat THB at the local and central levels. The discussions focused on skills necessary for planning and implementing resource mobilisation as well as on methods to identify cross-border cooperation programs for transnational anti-trafficking activities. Basic concepts and steps of project design, implementation and monitoring were addressed (according to PCM). Hypothetical exercises were created in order to illustrate and apply the theory presented and participants were directly involved in interactive discussions. Documentation and handouts were distributed and a certificate was granted to participants who had actively taken part in the seminar. At the end of session, at least half of the participants filled out an evaluation form.

The first local seminar took place in Timisoara on 7th- 8th April 2014, with the participation of 35 local and central representatives with various profiles such as social workers, border police officers, police and labour inspectors, ANITP representatives, local counsellors, NGO representatives, etc. According to the evaluation forms, the overall impression of participants for this seminar was good. The large amount of knowledge acquired was much appreciated, as well as the opportunity to work in teams on practical exercises. However, there was not enough time to address all aspects of the topic and to tackle specificities. The thematic expert in charge of the organization nevertheless stated that the objective was achieved and stressed the very good cooperation with ANITP.

On 26th – 27th May 2014, 38 professionals participated in a similar seminar in Suceava. The content of this seminar was enriched with a short presentation made by three students from the local college on the main causes of THB from a child's perspective. By the end of the two days, the general feedback was positive and participants were confident that the information provided was a useful basis for future and effective fundraising activities. Nevertheless, they also regretted the lack of time available for discussions and would have appreciated to tackle practicalities and functional aspects of PCM more in-depth. Certificates were unfortunately not granted to all participants, because several of those who were not directly involved in project management, left the seminar after a few hours only. To avoid such situations in the future, the expert stressed the importance of an effective communication with potential participants on the exact content of the seminar. For this reason, the objectives were only more or less achieved. However, in comparison to the first seminar, the higher level of knowledge allowed more interactive and better discussions. The expert acknowledged the very good organisation of the event but mentioned that the conference room was not adequate for this activity.

A third seminar was held on 23rd – 24th June 2014 in Craiova with the participation of 36 trainees. It should be noted that NGOs were underrepresented in this seminar. The overall evaluation by participants was very good. The trainees expressed their desire to attend more of such seminars in the future to consolidate professional relationships and acquire valuable knowledge. They nonetheless recommended including more concrete examples and real situations in the presentations and allowing more time for discussions. According to the expert, the objectives of this seminar were fulfilled and the active participation a majority of trainees during the whole seminar was appreciated.

Finally, the fourth seminar on 26th – 27th June in Galati brought together 37 participants with various profiles. Unfortunately, the consultant in charge of the present report did not have access to the evaluation forms completed by the participants and therefore cannot draw conclusions on the quality of this last seminar.

Overall, the main objectives of this activity have been well achieved, although the planned transnational aspects of this activity do not seem to have been implemented in practice. The quality of the seminar seems to have improved over the sessions. Participants have acquired valuable knowledge and skills for future fundraising activities. They expressed the need to organize similar events in the future, as the information they were provided with was essential for them to develop effective projects in the area of counter-THB. It should however be underlined that for such a broad subject as PCM, two days are only sufficient to introduce basic concepts. The quality of such events could be maximized with allocating more time for discussion of practical examples.

2.2.12. National Conference and Project Closure

On 16th – 17th October 2014, a National Conference for facilitating experience exchange and closure of the project was organized in Bucharest. The conference did not only mark the closure of the PIP-project but also aimed at facilitating experience exchange between the Swiss and Romanian stakeholders. It was also the opportunity to celebrate the EU-Anti-Trafficking day on the 18th October and the focus was therefore put on prevention activities. On the first day, approximately 100 participants attended the conference, including representatives of the relevant embassies, EU and non EU States experts, NGOs and other relevant actors involved in the fight against THB in Romania. Although this number gradually decreased during the day and on the second day, interesting presentations and exchanges contributed to the success of this last event.

2.3. General impact and perspectives

The overall result of the PIP-project is very positive and its achievements are in line with the expected results. The project has created a strong basis for a fruitful and multidisciplinary partnership amongst authorities, public institutions and civil society of both Switzerland and Romania. The authorities of the two countries have shown strong commitment in joining efforts in the fight against THB and important professional networks have been established between various stakeholders. The high quality of exchanges between ANITP and its international partners was particularly visible.

At the national level, cooperation between Romanian NGOs, authorities and public institutions was intensified through the participation of NGO representatives in the majority of activities implemented within the project framework. The capacity of ANITP and local authorities/institutions to counter THB in the areas of prevention, identification, repatriation and reintegration was strengthened, especially thanks to skills and knowledge acquired during study visits, seminars and workshops. The project addressed the most relevant aspects of the fight against THB: discussions were held on the main challenges and issues, a very effective prevention campaign was implemented, concrete outputs such as the brochure and the study on begging also produced valuable knowledge and data.

Considering feedback the participants and overall impressions, there is nonetheless room for improvement in future similar activities. Content and themes discussed should be clearly defined, prepared and communicated in advance, duplication should be avoided, and more time should be allocated for interactive discussions and practical concrete cases.

Although it is too early to assess if the PIP-project will have a statistical impact on THB, its achievements will probably contribute to a decrease in THB in Romania in the long-term. The value added created by the PIP-project will need to be learned from in future cooperation projects.

The discussions held within the framework of the PIP-project have helped identify the main challenges and actions needed in order to address THB in Romania. Whereas Romanian stakeholders seem to have a strong capacity to produce prevention campaigns and raise public awareness, the area of victim assistance and protection will need more efforts in the coming years. Thus, future projects should focus more on activities that will concretely improve the quality and sustainability of assistance to VoTs. The future joint Swiss-Romanian project on supporting and funding NGOs that provide victim assistance to VoT will be an initial step in this direction. This project will benefit from the increased cooperation between authorities and representatives of civil society developed through the PIP-project. Its implementation is expected to start in 2015 and will help solve the main issue faced by Romanian authorities in recent years: the impossibility of providing grants to NGOs. In that respect, the next section will consist of an assessment of the current situation in Romania and will identify the main needs of VoT related to assistance and protection.

3. THE NEEDS OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN ROMANIA

3.1. Methodology

In order to assess the current situation of victim assistance in Romania, the consultant was requested to elaborate and apply a short questionnaire to at least 50% of the participants at the National Conference on October 16th in Bucharest. The survey was anonymous and consisted of a combination of eight open-ended and closed-ended questions about various aspects of victim assistance, such as the quality, the services available, the positive and concerning aspects, and the cooperation among stakeholders, etc. (see Annexe 2). In total, 24 conference participants completed and returned the questionnaire. Although this number doesn't correspond to 50% of the audience, it represents the majority of participants directly involved in victim assistance, the rest being members of embassies or public institutions who did not have a sufficient knowledge of victim assistance in Romania to give relevant information.

Before applying the questionnaires, a desk review was conducted to get better understanding of the content and findings of the existing documentation on victim assistance in Romania. A list of legislative instruments, reports and studies that were reviewed is attached in the Annex 1. This desk review was very helpful in obtaining a broad overview of the victim assistance system in Romania and to identify which questions should appear in the survey.

In order to complement the information collected from the survey, informal interviews and discussion were conducted with key informants during the National Conference on October 16th. These informants included government officials, members of NGOs providing services in Romania, and international experts on victim assistance.

Following the study in Bucharest, the data collected was analysed and a compilation of the main findings have been included in the next section. Given the short amount of pages available to assess the situation and considering that ANITP will be undertaking a full assessment (see footnote 4 p.6), only main aspects are highlighted.

3.2. Findings

3.2.1. Brief overview of the victim assistance services provided

Both the national law and the national standards on victim assistance provide for a wide range of assistance services to VoT, who are supposed to be granted special physical, legal and social protection and assistance. For instance, temporary accommodation in one of the nine state-run "Centers for Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings" should be provided, and VoT under 18 years of age should be accommodated in transit or emergency centres

for child victims of abuse.⁹ All shelters operated by the General Directorate of Social Welfare and the Protection of Children (DGASPC) should provide decent living conditions. VoT have the right to a 90 days reflection period to stabilize and think about their participation in criminal prosecution. They should receive free of charge vocational trainings and professional counselling and compensation should be granted to them. The law also stipulates that stakeholders that prove that they directly assist VoT (accommodation, food, physical and psychological assistance) should receive subsidies from the state or relevant local budgets. These are just a few examples concerning which kind of provisions are contained in the Romanian legislative framework in terms of assistance and protection.

After having analyzed information given by NGOs and various stakeholders active on the ground, it seems that there is a substantial gap between the principles stipulated in the national law and standards and what is actually provided in practice.

Implementation of victim assistance in Romania is carried out by NGOs, IOM and DGASPC, with oversight by ANITP. In 2006, ANITP conducted an evaluation of the medical, psychological and judicial services provided to VoT by governmental institutions. These services were considered as inadequate mainly due to a lack of qualified staff and insufficient budget allocations to victim assistance by county councils. According to mixed sources such DGASPC social workers and ANITP staff members, currently, not all DGASPC shelters are operational: out of the nine shelters provided for in the law, only a six are functional. Moreover, DGASPC provides different types of social services, from child welfare to supporting survivors of domestic violence and homeless. Consequently, despite what is provided by the national law, some of the above-mentioned shelters are not always specialized in THB and accommodate multiple categories of vulnerable people. Since DGASPC's work is not specific to victim assistance for VoT, the overall funding decided by counties towards social services can sometimes be insufficient to cover all needs of VoT.

Thus, in order to fill this gap and counter the low level of services provided by state-run institutions, there are 26 NGOs involved in counter-trafficking activities in Romania, delivering a wide range of services adapted to VoT's needs. Some of these organisations provide social and psychological counselling, medical care, legal assistance, reintegration counselling, etc. Six run a shelter with a total of up to 65 places for VoT.¹⁰ These NGOs are complementary and include:

- **Adpare:** offers services and accommodation in a shelter and protected apartment in Bucharest and works in cooperation with other NGOs when victims need assistance in remote regions. It is the main partner of IOM when it comes to organising returns of VoT from destination countries and it also cooperates directly with the NGOs based in these countries.
- **Generatie Tanara Romania:** provides accommodation and assistance services for VoTs in the region of Timisoara.
- **Reaching Out Romania:** runs a shelter for minors in Pitesti and is very active in providing reintegration services such as enrolment in school, professional workshops, assistance to find jobs, etc. Accommodation for men VoT in an apartment is also offered.
- **Pro Prietania:** offers a variety of reintegration services in the region of Arad but does not provide accommodation.
- **The Open Door Foundation:** runs a shelter and provides services in Bucharest.
- **Betania:** runs a shelter and provides transit and long-term services in Bacau.
- **People to People:** a Christian foundation providing accommodation and daily services for children in Oradea.

⁹ There are two different types of centres for children under the age of 18: 1) transit centres for repatriated unaccompanied minors or victims of trafficking (5 centres according to data made available by the National Authority for Child Protection in July 2014) and 2) emergency reception centres for abused, neglected, exploited children and victims of trafficking (at least one in every county).

¹⁰ These numbers are the result of a compilation of information obtained through research sources, NGOs, DCAF, and ANITP in 2014.

Most of NGOs representatives interviewed highlighted the good cooperation and referral processes amongst each other as well as with ANITP.

3.2.2. Main issues and most urgent needs

First of all, it should be underlined that current projects funded by international donors usually focus on prevention or identification, whereas only limited actions tackle victim assistance and protection in Romania. This point is also illustrated by the fact that more NGOs in Romania are involved in prevention activities rather than direct assistance and protection.

A second issue is the general confusion surrounding the type of assistance services delivered by whom, to whom, in which geographical area of the country and under which conditions. ANITP, despite being the national agency in charge of the monitoring and evaluation of victim assistance in Romania, has limited information at its disposal. This is partly due to lack of information provided by NGOs and to the shifting of NGO service provision because of the lack of funding. ANITP has a list of services provided by NGOs but no narrative reports containing information on the quality and the main challenges of victim assistance.

More importantly, what is striking is the failure to put into practice the core principles of assistance established on paper. According to NGOs representatives and preceding researches, in reality, it seems that assistance is provided only to a minority of VoT, and mainly by NGOs. However, it should be noted that according to the statistics available at ANITP, the number of VoT assisted by state-run institutions is higher than the number of VoT assisted by NGOs. This contradiction between different sources and data is an illustration of the lack of clarity surrounding victim assistance in Romania.

In any case, the number of NGOs specialized in assistance is rather low in comparison to the size of the country and number of VoT identified. Moreover, these few NGOs are not sufficient to provide “packages of services” to VoT in the whole country and some geographical areas are less covered than others.

According to a large majority of stakeholders surveyed, the main issue lies in the lack of funds granted to NGOs that provide direct assistance and protection to VoT. Before the entry in the EU in 2007, the number of NGOs involved in direct assistance was higher than today. However, since 2007 and with the accession to the EU, the availability of funds for direct assistance decreased and NGOs have not been financially supported. ANITP has nonetheless established the Programme of National Interest (PIN funding) to financially support NGOs that provide assistance services to VoT. In 2007, 90'000 Euro were available under PIN funding, enabling three selected NGOs to assist 109 VoT. In 2008, the amount of 250'000 Euro was granted to four selected NGOs, which could provide assistance to 241 VoT. Since 2009 however, PIN funding was blocked due to legislative issues. As a consequence, some of the service-providers were forced to change their field of activities. Efforts have been made to amend the legal basis and a new law allowing funding to NGOs is expected to enter into force at the end of this year.

Currently, the quality of services provided seems to depend on fluctuating funding levels and volunteering of professionals. NGOs are partially dependent on foreign donors and are financed on a project basis according to their donors' priorities. This does not only affect the sustainability of services and assistance but also renders NGOs unable to put in place long-term programmes and interventions.

Another issue concerns the lack of uniform and detailed procedures on how to provide services to VoT. This results in strong divergences between regions in terms of quality and capacity of assistance. For instance, the regional state-run centres share large disparities regarding internal organization, capacity and functioning. Neither a common action plan nor a unitary system exists with regards to how to deliver an integrated assistance. Staff around the country do not share the same qualifications and trainings and are sometimes not specialized in THB. Depending on the

geographical area, different actors are involved and assistance is provided with more or less quality, under diverse circumstances. In this respect, the Norwegian funded assessment of services provided by governmental centres will help have a clearer idea of the current situation (see footnote 4 p.6).

According to the informants, despite the need to address the general weakness of assistance, a few types of services require particular attention and should be tackled in priority in order to substantially improve both the quality and capacity of assistance:

- **Access to medical care:** this is the most urgent need. VoT have difficulty qualifying for medical care because they do not have health insurance. They only have access to emergency services but must pay for other treatments. The manager of an NGO stated that they could deliver medical care to VoT only because they can rely on personal networks of doctors. A large number of doctors and medical staff across the country are not aware and/or sensitive to THB. Consequently, VoT are often not considered as such and their specific medical needs are not recognised.
- **Accommodation:** as already mentioned, the current number of specialized and operational shelters that can provide long-term assistance is insufficient. Specialized shelters for men and minors are especially lacking. Often, VoT are treated in the same way as other socially vulnerable cases and staff are not specifically trained to deal with VoT cases.
- **Psychological social, and legal counselling:** the scarcity of specialized professionals available to counsel VoT was often underlined. This is true for psychologists, but also for lawyers. NGOs reported that appointed lawyers are not trained and sufficiently aware of THB to adequately assist VoT in legal issues. More detailed information about VoT's rights should also be communicated.

Beside these main concerns, it was stressed that all other components of victim assistance and protection should be strengthened, including access to information, financial compensation, etc. According to service-providers, a holistic approach encompassing all types of services is necessary to ensure reintegration and long-term recovery. For instance, not only is social, psychological and counselling support to VoT essential, but VoT should also be granted financial support in order to cover their basic needs until they find a job. It should be noted, however, that due to the issues of stigmatization of VoT, access to labour market could be challenging. Time is additionally an important factor, as most of the VoT need a long period of time to recover and reintegrate the society.

In this regard, NGOs pointed to the inefficiency of short-term and standardised programmes, which are not flexible enough to take into account the victims' needs. Instead, a long-term, victim-centred and flexible approach is needed in order to ensure the sustainability of reintegration and recovery.

To end this section on an optimistic note, the main positive aspects underlined by the informants was the fact that, despite the numerous difficulties and challenges underlined in this section, some NGOs in Romania are doing a great job. Experts working for these NGOs have the necessary expertise to assist VoT and with a good allocation of funds, their capacities as well as the amount of services provided could be enhanced. In addition, the cooperation and communication between NGOs and public institutions as well as among NGOs seems to be effective.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whereas ANITP, in cooperation with NGOs and public institutions, has put in a lot of efforts to create successful public awareness campaigns during the past years, the main focus and priorities of the fight against THB will have to shift to other areas in the coming years. Prevention campaigns and strong identification mechanisms do not make full sense if victim assistance and protection is not efficiently ensured. The previous section has highlighted some of the issues that contribute to the

insufficiency and inefficiency of current victim assistance in Romania. The aim of future projects should be to contribute to the actual implementation of a comprehensive legal framework in this area. An efficient way of doing this will be to focus on NGOs as main service-providers and grant them with the necessary funds to assist VoT taking and supporting in a long-term perspective.

In view of a future project in the field of victim assistance and protection and according to the issues and victims' needs identified above, the following points are recommended:

- ANITP's capacity to monitor victim assistance should be enhanced in order to **gain a better knowledge of the current situation** and identify NGOs who can best target specific VoT needs. In this regard, NGOs and service-providers should communicate with ANITP on a regular basis and provide them with anonymous data on assistance delivered. Each organisation/institution's role should be clearly defined and respected.
- ANITP should **facilitate access to funds for NGOs** that are part of the established network of service-providers. Once the new law will allow state authorities to provide financial resources to NGOs, administrative procedures should be simplified in order to guarantee an easy access to funds in case of emergencies. The financial model should be well thought and consider on the one hand NGOs' need for autonomy, and on the other hand, the State's need to justify its expenses.
- Financial resources granted to NGOs should be targeted at responding to the most urgent victims' needs. The priority should be put on **granting individual and flexible reintegration budgets adapted to the specific needs of each victim**. Such a victim-oriented approach will allow each victim's vulnerabilities to be addressed in the most efficient way and constructed with a long-term perspective in mind.
- In reference to the Romanian national law, it should be ensured that **all identified victims should be granted assistance, regardless whether they chose to cooperate** with law enforcement authorities and participate in criminal proceedings.
- **Free medical care** should be provided for all identified VoT. Moreover, to guarantee adequate medical treatments, doctors and medical staff should be targeted by awareness initiatives and receive specialized training on THB.
- **More specialized shelters** should be made operational and accommodate victims in each region of the country. There should not only be shelters specialized in the assistance of women VoT, but also separate shelters for children and men. VoT should not be accommodated with other categories of vulnerable persons and services delivered should respond adequately to the specific needs of VoT.
- **Psychological, social and legal counselling** should be provided to VoT as part of a long-term strategic support plan and for free. Networks of specialized and trained professionals such as lawyers, judges, and psychologists should be created. Social counselling should also be offered to VoT's families in order to prevent and avoid stigmatisation. Finally, assisted VoT should be supported in finding vocational trainings and jobs. An empowering approach helping them to present themselves and to showcase their qualifications is needed.
- Since funding might remain an issue in the short-term, local authorities and service-providers should **reflect on innovative solutions to counterbalance the lack of financial resources** available for victim assistance. For instance, potential solutions may lie in the involvement of local communities for the reintegration of VoT in the society. Members of local communities

may have valuable resources to help VoT recover in a sustainable way. Using this potential could also be a way to fight against stigma and victimisation and to ensure stabilization of VoT.

- The **current effective cooperation between all stakeholders should be sustained and intensified**. The cooperation between NGOs should also be reinforced in order to have a common voice on what is most needed in terms of assistance and to establish a strong network of service-providers.
- **New partnerships with the private sector** could also be explored. For instance, cooperation between NGOs and private clinics could be built in order to facilitate medical access of VoT.
- Authorities and service-providers should acknowledge the potentiality for identifying **non-national VoT** in the future. They should ensure that potential VoT from other countries have access to the same assistance services.

5. ANNEXES

ANNEXE 1

List of legislative instruments, reports and studies reviewed in order to gain a better understanding of victim assistance in Romania:

- The Romanian Law on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Law Nr. 678/2001);
- Romanian National Strategy on Combating Human Trafficking 2012 – 2016;
- Romanian Identification and Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking (NIRM);
- National Standards for Victims of TiP Assistance Services (G.D.1238/2007);
- Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report of the US State Government of 2014;
- GRETA Report 2012: Evaluation conducted by the Council of Europe about the progress in implementing the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Recommendation CP(2012)7 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Romania of the Committee of the parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Report by OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, following her visit to Romania, September 2013;
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Thematic Study on Child Trafficking in Romania, 2012;
- Preventing and Fighting Human Trafficking in Europe: the Situation in Romania, report by Daniela Marinache, 2014;
- External Assessment about Needs to Counter Trafficking in Human Beings/support Victim Assistance in Romania, Tanja Brombacher, 2013;
- Tables of statistics on Assistance provided for identified victims (1st semester of 2014, 2013) received from ANITP.

ANNEXE 2



**PROGRAMUL DE COOPERARE ELVEȚIANO-ROMÂN
SWISS-ROMANIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME**

Questionnaire on Victim Assistance in Romania

Please complete this form as fully as you can. Your answers will be used to assess the needs of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) in Romania and to identify gaps in the assistance services provided to them.

1. Overall, how do you evaluate victim assistance (VA) in Romania?

- Insufficient
- Sufficient
- Good
- Very good

Please specify:

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2. Which of the following areas of VA will need the most support and efforts in the coming years? Why?

- Information on victim's rights

Please specify why:

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- Accommodation

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- Social counselling

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- Medical care

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- Psychological counselling

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Judicial assistance

Financial and material support

Integration assistance

Professional counselling

Educational assistance

Recreational activities

Other:.....

3. What are the main positive aspects of the current VA in Romania (in terms of quality and capacity)? What needs are best covered?

4. What are the main concerns about the current VA in Romania?

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5. How do you evaluate the cooperation between the different actors (national and local authorities, NGOs, etc.) involved in VA in Romania?

- Insufficient
- Sufficient
- Good
- Very good

Please specify:

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6. In your opinion, how could we improve the quality and stability of assistance for victims of trafficking at the national level? Do you have recommendations?

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7. For which areas of VA do NGOs need the most support? What should be financed in priority?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR VERY USEFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY!