



Government of the Republic of North Macedonia
National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings
and Illegal Migration

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

*OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
COMBATTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN
BEINGS AND ILLEGAL MIGRATION*

Skopje, February 2023

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia reviewed and adopted the Annual Report of the National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration for the year 2022, as information material at a session held on 07/25/2023.

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1. SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK

1.1 COORDINATION STRUCTURES

The National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration¹ (the Commission) is a body that unites and coordinates all stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. The Commission is managed by a National Coordinator², with participation of two deputies³, one of whom is in charge of the situation and activities in the field of human trafficking, and the other one is tasked with the situation and activities related to illegal migration, the secretary and the members of the Commission⁴.

Working bodies have been operating within the Commission since 2003: the Secretariat⁵, in charge of implementing the Commission's decisions, and the Subgroup for Combating Child Trafficking (Subgroup) which monitors the specific needs of child victims, protecting their interests and rights⁶.

Throughout the year, the Commission maintained regular contacts with members and associates at national⁷ and regional level, where solutions and commitments were discussed and proposed for the advancement of the area of human trafficking (THB) and illegal migration (IM).

The National Commission continuously implemented activities as provided in the **National Strategy and National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration and National Action Plan for Combating Child Trafficking for the period 2021-2025 (NAP)**⁸.

The National Unit for the Suppression of Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking (NESKMTL) in 2022, successfully realized its main task - Detection and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes of trafficking in human beings and

¹ Decision published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 18/2001, 82/2015, 18/2019 and 240/2020

² "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 309/2020

³ "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", number 309/2020

⁴ Members of the Commission, representatives of: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, Judge of the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, the Ministry of Education/Bureau for the Development of Education, the State Labor Inspectorate and the Employment agency of the Republic of North Macedonia.

⁵ Members include representatives from: international organizations, citizens' associations and experts from government institutions: Ministry of Interior-Unit for fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy-National Referral Mechanism, US Embassy, ICMPD, OSCE, IOM, UNHCR, GIZ, Regional Center-MARRI, program office of the Council of Europe, MZMP, the Association of Citizens Against Violence and Human Trafficking "Open Porta-La Strada", the Civil Association "For a Happy Childhood", the Civil Association "Semper", National Council for Gender Equality, and the Red Cross of Republic of North Macedonia.

⁶ It is chaired by the head of the Department for equal opportunities at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy-National referral mechanism, and it is composed of: Ministry of Interior-NESKEKM, BRO, Program Office of the Council of Europe, ICMPD, OSCE, IOM, GIZ, UNICEF, Associations "Open Porta-La Strada" and "For Happy childhood", SOS Detsko selo, Children's Embassy MEDJAŠI, Roma Women and Youth Association "Luludi" and the deputy Ombudsman as an external member/observer.

⁷ Meeting was held last year on 07/08/2021 in the Members of Parliament Club.

⁸ The strategy and NAP were adopted at the 66th session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia held on April 20, 2021.

illegal migrants. It continuously acts in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (SOP), whereby all identified victims of trafficking in human beings are reported to the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (NRM), which upon performing security risk assessments, the victims are referred to the Center for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (the Center).

The police officers from NESKMTL are part of the National unit for suppression of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (Task Force) who participated in the exchange of information and data with relevant units from the Ministry of the Interior of the countries of the region on organized criminal groups and is part of the Western Balkan Task Force.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MTSP), the Sector for Equal Opportunities is coordinator of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and in 2022, continued the close cooperation with the Commission, as well as coordination with members of the Subgroup, the State Labor Inspectorate (DIT), the Public Prosecutor's Office for the prosecution of cases of organized crime and corruption for the suppression of crimes related to migrant smuggling and human trafficking (OJO GOKK) and the Ministry of the Interior/NESKMTL, the Center for Victims of Human Trafficking and the relevant citizens associations. The National Referral Mechanism continued to monitor and coordinate the activities (in 30 towns of the Republic of North Macedonia) in the Centers for Social Work (CSR), which have an exceptional role in the entire process from identification to resocialization and reintegration of THB victims and Child Victims.

The Commission is in continuous coordination with **the National Reporter for the fight against human trafficking and illegal migration**⁹, exchanging information on certain activities and data that are needed for the preparation of the Republic of North Macedonia National Reporter Report.

1.2 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Law on the payment of monetary compensation to victims of violent crimes¹⁰ was adopted on 16 of November 2022 which includes the crime of trafficking in human beings. This law addresses one of the main recommendations of GRETA for the consistent implementation of the Convention of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and international standards regarding the effective exercise of the right to compensation for the victims of this serious crime by the state. It regulates the right to monetary compensation for victims of violent crimes, the conditions for realization of the right to monetary compensation, the types of monetary

⁹ As of 01.12.2019, a person was selected to start his/her work as a National Reporter for the fight against human trafficking and illegal migration within the Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia.

¹⁰ "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No:247/22.

compensation, the foundation, the status and the competencies of the Commission for compensation of victims of violent crimes, selection of its members and their tenure, termination of tenure, as well as the dismissal of the President and the members of the Commission, funds for payment of the monetary compensation for the victims, information and remedies of the victims, procedure for realization of the right to monetary compensation, procedure in cross-border cases, as well as records keeping and storing data for realization of the rights from this law.¹¹

Draft **Law on Justice for Children** has been developed which transposes¹²: the Directives for the procedural protection of children who are suspected or accused in criminal proceedings and the Directive for establishing minimum standards for the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

Based on the National Strategy and the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration 2021-2025,¹³ The National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration at the session held on April 11, 2022 adopted a Decision to establish an **Operational Team for coordination, monitoring and management of cases of human trafficking, formal identification of victims and their status (Operational Team)**¹⁴. Based on the Decision of the Commission, at the meeting held on 26.09.2022, the Rules of Procedure for the operation and conduct of the Operational Team¹⁵ were developed, adopted by the National Commission and entered into force on the day of its signing, i.e. at the first meeting of the Operational Team which was held on 17.10.2022¹⁶. The task of the Operational Team is to coordinate and monitor cases of human trafficking and, based on the specifics of the criminal legal event, define the status of the person and carry out formal identification of the victims.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in accordance with the Rulebook on the method, scope, norms and standards for providing social services for temporary residence and for space, funds, personnel and necessary documentation for a center for temporary residence¹⁷ as well as with the Decision on determining the prices of home social services, for extra-family protection, for professional help and support and for temporary residence concluded an Administrative

¹¹Expert support for the preparation of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission for granting state compensation to victims of violent crimes and a template was provided by the Program Office of the Council of Europe in Skopje Horizontal Instrument 2 of the EU and the Council of Europe for the Western Balkans and Turkey through the Project for prevention and fight against human trafficking in RSM.

¹²EU2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the procedural protection of children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings and Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards for rights, support and protection to the victims of crime and to replace the Framework Decision of the Council 2001/220 / JHA.

¹³Adopted at the 66. Session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 20 April 2021.

¹⁴Decision No. 10-279/1 from 19.04.2022

¹⁵ With the support of IOM Rules of Procedure and work of the operational team has been developed, regulating the manner of work, authorizations of the members and the secretary, manner of organizing and holding means, attendance of meetings, administrative-technical support and other issues and activities.

¹⁶ The Operational team hold two meetings, on 17.10.2022 and 28.12.2022.

¹⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 91/21.

Agreement for 2022 and 2023, for financing the temporary residence service at the Center for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings - Agreement for the implementation of the allocated funds for the provision of the service for the Center for temporary residence of victims of human trafficking between the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Association for Action against Violence and Trafficking in human beings "Open Gate- La Strada" Skopje (Open Gate).

On the initiative of the Commission and with the support of the Council of Europe Office, the Macedonian Association of Young Lawyers (MZMP) drafted a **Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior and the DIT¹⁸**, in view of cooperation in detection of crimes related to human and labor trafficking, exploitation and referral of potential victims of human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation. The purpose of this Memorandum is to improve mutual cooperation between the signatory parties with a focus on strengthening cooperation in preventing, detecting and suppressing human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation as well as ensuring timely protection of victims and child victims from all forms of exploitation. This memorandum is in the final stage and it is expected to be signed during 2023.

"Open Gate" and the University Gynecological Obstetrics Clinic UGAK - Skopje formalized their cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation in order to provide the necessary medical examinations for potential victims and victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable groups, introducing contraceptive measures for victims and conducting training of medical personnel for proper handling of victims of human trafficking.

Starting from September 2022, cooperation has been established between "Open Gate" and the association "Joint Home for Mothers and Children from Ukraine", with a temporary stay in the Republic of North Macedonia-Skopje for direct help and support to people from Ukraine. The association is represented by the president Victoria Gegova, with whom "Open Gate" signed a Memorandum of Cooperation defining the cooperation activities. As part of the cooperation, food has been distributed for 30 families mostly located in Skopje, and also support was offered to three children by enrolling and paying fees to attend kindergarten and school.

¹⁸ The memorandum was prepared by the MZMP with the support of the project of the Horizontal Instrument II, of the CE and the European Union, in coordination with the competent services of both institutions

1.3 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS DEDICATED TO THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND ILLEGAL MIGRATION

In order to promote international and bilateral cooperation, the Ministers of Interior of North Macedonia and Slovenia signed an **Implementation Protocol for cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking and child trafficking**¹⁹. The purpose of this protocol is to improve cooperation in the field of human trafficking, the detection of all forms of child abuse, as well as the implementation of joint projects for raising public awareness and prevention in the field of human/child trafficking.

1.4 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

❖ *Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention*

In the period from March 14-18, 2022, the third round of evaluation was carried out for the Republic of North Macedonia, in accordance with Article 38(4) of the Convention of the Council of Europe on taking action against human trafficking, by the team of the Expert Group on taking action against human trafficking (GRETA), led by the vice-president, Mrs. Julia Planitzer. The representatives of GRETA made the third visit, conducted having submitted answers to the Questionnaire for the third round of evaluation of the implementation of the Convention by the competent authorities. Meetings with relevant representatives from government institutions and civil associations were held with the representatives of GRETA, through which a complete review of the degree of implementation of the activities arising from the Convention was possible. The visit was extremely important for the the Republic of North Macedonia because after the visit the third Report on the implementation of the Convention was drawn up, which is expected to be officially published at the beginning of 2023.

❖ *Network of Coordinators for Combating Human Trafficking*

On 2 June 2022 a meeting of the **Network of Coordinators for Combating Human Trafficking of South East Europe (SEE)**²⁰ was held in Budva, Montenegro. The meeting was coordinated by ICMPD, in the role of Secretariat of the Network of Coordinators to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeast Europe (NATC SEE), and the Ministry of the Interior of Slovenia, with the participation of the National Coordinator, Ms. Magdalena Nestorovska. It was dedicated to the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on SEE countries region and the possibilities for mitigating the risks of human trafficking in the context of ongoing mass

¹⁹ The implementation protocol was signed by the Ministers of Internal Affairs of Slovenia and North Macedonia on March 18, 2022 in Skopje

²⁰NATC SEE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, RSM, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia), representatives from the Regional Initiative for Migration, Asylum and Refugees (MARRI) and the International Center for the Development of migration policy (ICMPD).

displacement of people. The coordinators shared experiences and good practices in managing mixed migration flows, and exchanged information on innovative tools in the fight against human trafficking. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the Regional Workshop against Human Trafficking June 1-2, 2022, organized by ICMPD within the project "Development of Approaches to Improve the Functionality of Referral Mechanisms (RMEs) in MARRI Participants."²¹

Within the **Steering Group of the Regional project for prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings in Western Balkan (PaCT)** two meetings were held²² attended by the national coordinators for combating trafficking in human beings and illegal migration who are members of the MARRI network, representatives of the MARRI members and the MARRI Secretariat.

❖ *Other international activities*

The National Commission in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for the fight against trafficking in human beings of the OSCE and support of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, organized a conference entitled "*Assessment of risks and prevention of trafficking in human beings in supply chains*"²³. The conference was opened by Mr. Valiant Ritchie, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mrs. Trenchevska, Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Ambassador Koja, Head of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, and Mrs. Nestorovska, National Coordinator for Combating against trafficking in human beings and illegal migration. The purpose of the conference was to gather all relevant stakeholders to share experiences on the topic of prevention and combating human trafficking in supply chains.

The National Coordinator Mrs. Nestorovska together with members of the Commission hosted masters studies students and their professor from Johns Hopkins University from the International Legal Clinic for Human Rights from Washington, USA. Every year, students from the University gain practical experience through analyzes of the implementation of human rights in certain countries. North Macedonia was chosen by them for analysis in the field of International Human Rights Law and trafficking in human beings. The Commission was happy to be able to share the experience, the manner in which institutions function and work in the fight against trafficking in human beings, for which a report with recommendations was also shared.

²¹The project was funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and implemented in partnership with MARRI, as part of the wider regional project "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Western Balkans" (PaCT). The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro (Department for Combating Human Trafficking).

²²6. Steering Group meeting, Budva, Montenegro, 01.06.2022.

7. Steering Group meeting, Tirana, Albania, 22.11.2022.

²³ The Conference was held on 30 March 2022.

- With support of the **IOM Mission** the following international activities were held:
 - The National Coordinator Mrs. Nestorovska together with the members of the Commission hosted a delegation from Montenegro on June 20, 2022. The delegation's study visit was aimed at exchanging information, good practices and experiences that contribute to building capacities for a better response to human trafficking, especially in the field of labor exploitation. The delegation of Montenegro was led by Mrs. Tijana Šuković from the Ministry of the Interior together with representatives of the Police Administration, the Inspection Supervision Administration and the Ministry of Justice of Montenegro.
 - From June 30 to July 1 in Belgrade, a delegation from the Republic of North Macedonia led by the National Coordinator Mrs. Nestorovska attended a bilateral meeting on cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling between North Macedonia and Serbia²⁴. The meeting discussed the bilateral activities between the two countries in accordance with the Cooperation Agreements in the field of the fight against trafficking in human beings and the fight against the smuggling of migrants between North Macedonia and Serbia signed in 2018, and 7 representatives from the institutions took part (5 women and 2 men).
 - From September 26-28, a three-day meeting of ten representatives of the border police of North Macedonia and Greece was held in Dojran. During the meeting, representatives of the border police exchanged best practices and discussed the exchange of information and the promotion of cooperation in the fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The initiative was implemented within the framework of the IOM project financed by the government of Switzerland.
- At the beginning of 2022, **ICMPD** started implementing the project "Further strengthening of the network of international law enforcement coordination units (ILECUs) in the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE) and the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP)"²⁵. Within the project the following activities were carried out in which representatives from North Macedonia were involved:
 - On April 27, 2022, an online kick-off conference was held to mark the start of the project, which aimed to strengthen the mutual understanding of the goals and expected results of the ILECU project. In the same time, a workshop was held on the same day for the heads of ILECUs, which aimed to strengthen the cooperation of the international law enforcement authorities of the partner countries, as well as confirm the topics to be addressed in the upcoming workshops, during the implementation of the project. During the workshop, a network of contact persons for ILECU was established and two thematic areas were identified: migrant smuggling and cybercrime, as priority topics for the future.

²⁴ With IOM support, funded by the Swiss Confederation.

²⁵ The aim of the project is to reinforce the ILECU network in SouthEast Europe and the Eastern Partnership countries with focus on Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as to support concerned parties in the implementation of joint law enforcement activities in neighbouring countries.

- On April 28, 2022, an online workshop was held for ILECU representatives, with the aim of identifying information and data of common interest, as well as defining the type of information exchange or cooperation activities. The workshop underlined the existing channels for communication and exchange of information that are common to all partners and shared good practices that can be established in the future.
 - From June 6-10, 2022, the project organized a study visit for ILECU representatives to INTERPOL (Lyon) and EUROPOL (The Hague). The study visit aimed to support ILECU partners in order to develop analyzes of the latest trends and initiatives in international police cooperation on cybercrime and migrant smuggling, and to familiarize themselves with state-of-the-art information sharing procedures.
 - On October 3-7, 2022, a study visit was organized to the Hungarian ILECU + CEPOL, the purpose of which was to offer a platform for the exchange of international police cooperation, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings and sharing of good practices for cross-border surveillance and techniques for joint operation.
 - On November 7-8, 2022, within the framework of the project "*Strengthening migration management in the Western Balkans through deeper cooperation based on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (RePact)*", representatives of the Ministry of the Interior participated in a regional round table in Belgrade, Serbia, where the reforms for migration and asylum in the EU were presented, while the representatives from the countries of the Western Balkans in consultation with relevant experts, discussed the strategic and technical impact of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum on the region.
 - Within the framework of the same project, on December 15, 2022 in Vienna, Austria, a pre-consultative meeting was held with official representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia, with the aim of defining further joint activities regarding the impact of the EU Pact on Migration and asylum on the region, as well as identifying solutions regarding the impact that EU initiatives/legislative changes will have on migration management in the region.
- On September 20-21, through activities foreseen in **Horizontal Instrument II of the EU/CoE "Prevention and Addressing the fight against human trafficking in the Western Balkans"**, a Regional Conference was held entitled "Fight against human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation in Europe: standards, reality and new strategies for action" in Belgrade - Serbia, with the participation of representatives from the Republic of North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as from other countries of the Council of Europe, which was attended by over 100 participants.
 - Within the **GIZ Regional Project: "Prevention and fight against TL in the Western Balkans"** (PaKT) four thematic conferences were held:

- Development of identification capacities, 22-25.03.2022 – Durrës - Albania, a conference was held at which the regional documents related to Standard Operating Procedures for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and potential victims of trafficking in human beings in emergency situations, as well as Health indicators for identification of victims and potential victims of THB were developed and finalized²⁶.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

- On 31.03.2022, a webinar was held "Developing approaches to strengthen the functionality of the National referral Mechanism among MARRI members";
- On 01-02.06.2022, a regional workshop "Developing approaches to strengthen the functionality of referral mechanisms (NRM) among MARRI members" was held - Budva, Montenegro²⁷.

Raising public awareness, on 20.06.2022 and 22.06.2022, an online workshop for regional exchange was held in view of presenting public awareness raising campaigns on the subject of sexual exploitation of women and girls and cyber trafficking in human beings²⁸.

Mental health and psychosocial support in shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings:

- On February 25, 2022, the first regional meeting of shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings was held;
 - On July 18, 2022, the second regional meeting of shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings;
 - On September 19-20, 2022, Presentation of approaches to mental health and psychosocial support in shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings.
 - On 05-07.10.2022, in Belgrade, the third regional meeting of shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings was held;
- **The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** organized 5 regional workshops and trainings on various thematic issues related to Human Trafficking as part of the Regional Initiative on trafficking in human beings in South-Eastern Europe including North Macedonia (on each of the below mentioned activities participated two representatives from North Macedonia representing relevant institutions):
- Regional Expert Workshop (REGM): March 2-3, Sarajevo-Bosnia and Herzegovina: regional conference on "Financial investigations and asset recovery

²⁶ The Conference was attended by three representatives from the Republic of North Macedonia (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and the Citizen Association "Open Gate").

²⁷ Participants: National Coordinators for fight against trafficking in human beings and illegal migration who are MARRI members, MARRI Participants representatives, MARRI Regional Centre Secretariat, professionals working in the National Referral Mechanism in MARRI Participants.

²⁸ The workshop was attended by 3 representatives from the Republic of North Macedonia (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and MARRI Regional Centre).

from trafficking in human beings, including victim compensation, in SEE²⁹. The aim of the REGM was to advance the discussion on the trends and patterns of trafficking in human beings in SEE and to identify and analyze the challenges related to financial investigations, asset recovery, including victim compensation, in cases of cross-border trafficking in human beings:

- Regional Expert Workshop (REGM): March 2-3, Sarajevo-Bosnia and Herzegovina: regional conference on "Financial investigations and asset recovery from trafficking in human beings, including victim compensation, in SEE." The aim of the REGM was to advance the discussion on the trends and models of trafficking in human beings in SEE and to identify and analyze the challenges related to financial investigations, return of property, including compensation to victims in cases of cross-border trafficking in human beings.

- Regional Expert Workshop (REGM): May 11-12, Dubrovnik - Croatia: UNODC held a regional conference on "Improving the Response to Trafficking in Persons for Sexual Exploitation, Especially Women and Girls, by Addressing the Demand in SEE³⁰". The conference discussed measures to address human trafficking for sexual exploitation in SEE, focusing on the demand that drives sexual exploitation.

- Regional expert workshop (REGM): July 5-6, Kumbor - Montenegro on the topic: "Review of information technologies in the context of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, including children in South-Eastern Europe". The workshop aimed to address the current challenges in dealing with the misuse of information technologies in the context of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the exchange of good practices in detection, use of parallel and joint investigations in order to strengthen cross-border cooperation, especially using digital forensics, electronic evidence, sharing experiences on new trends in the recruitment of victims of trafficking in human beings via Internet, and ensuring protection and using a victim-centered approach.

- Regional Expert Workshop (REGM): October 5-6, Chisinau - Republic of Moldova on the topic: "Preventing human trafficking for labor exploitation with a focus on the supply chain in Southeast Europe". The goal was to improve knowledge and raise awareness about trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labor exploitation, including analysis in supply chains.

- Regional training, October 18-20, Belgrade - Serbia, "Strengthening the criminal justice response to address evidentiary issues for the investigation of cases of trafficking in human beings in South-Eastern Europe" which was aimed at increasing the capacity of practitioners in South-Eastern countries Europe to investigate and prosecute human trafficking and to engage in effective cross-

²⁹Over 50 criminal justice practitioners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 12-44 participated in the meeting together with representatives from regional and international organizations, CSOs, the private sector and the academic community.

³⁰ Attended by 50 experts for fight against trafficking in human beings from more than 20 countries.

border cooperation by promoting a common understanding of the forms of trafficking in human beings in the region

- The Association “**Open Gate**” took part at the following events:
 - From March 2-3, organized by ICMPD, part of the regional expert group for financial investigations and property recovery for trafficking in human beings, including compensation of victims in SEE in Sarajevo - Bosnia and Herzegovina.
 - From May 2 to 6, in Palermo, Italy, a training course organized for the purposes of the YU WOK 2 END HT project, with the aim of educating young leaders and reinforcing skills for active prevention of trafficking in human beings.
 - 7 volunteers of the Association had the opportunity to be part of the training for prevention of trafficking in human beings, in Malta from June 9-15. The participants of the youth exchange gained specific knowledge, information and learned about tools that should be used in the context of peer education as a useful tool for prevention and raising awareness of trafficking in human beings.
 - From June 21-29, in Malta, participated in the training "We train you to prevent youth trafficking." The training brought together more than 40 young people from North Macedonia, Malta, Canada and Romania and gave them the opportunity to get involved and learn about the risks of human trafficking and its prevention.
 - From June 20 to 22, the General Assembly of the European NGO Platform to Combat Human Trafficking – La Strada Internationale (LSI) was held in Helsinki³¹, where a panel was organized focusing on methods to improve access to justice to the victims of trafficking in human beings through complaint mechanisms. The annual assembly of "La Strada" served for reflection and adoption of the action plan for the period 2022-2025.
 - From July 4 to 7, at the forum "Living wage is possible!" The forum was held in Zagreb - Croatia. It was an event organized by the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) network. Issues related to labor rights and the living wage were discussed at the forum³².
 - On July 26th and 27th at the regional meeting held in Tirana to exchange experiences and organize mobile teams for identifying and referring cases of trafficking in human beings. Twenty representatives from the delegations³³ presented their country models in the region, discussed the necessity of drawing up guidelines for the Kosovo and Montenegro model and the further steps they should take for a sustainable model for Albania and North Macedonia.

³¹Over 50 criminal justice practitioners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 12-44 participated in the meeting together with representatives from regional and international organizations, CSOs, the private sector and the academic community.

³²<https://lastrada.org.mk/living-wage-is-possible/?lang=en>

³³The National Office of Albania, RSM, Montenegro and Kosovo, together with representatives from the Ministry of the Interior-NESKMTL, social workers and citizens' associations participated in the meeting.

- On August 22, representatives of Kosovo and North Macedonia held a joint cross-border meeting in Kosovo with the aim of exchanging experiences on prosecution of human traffickers, social assistance and providing services to victims/potential victims of trafficking in human beings. The meeting was aimed at continuing bilateral cooperation in efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking organized by "Open Gate" and Terre des hommes – Kosovo.

- From September 20 and 21, 2022, at the panel entitled "Access to justice and effective legal remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings" within the framework of the regional conference "Fight against human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation in Europe: standards, reality and new strategies for action" which was held in Belgrade supported by the Council of Europe.

- On the 14th and 15th of November, in Skopje in the organization of "Open Porta" and "Terre des hommes - Kosovo", the second border meeting between North Macedonia and Kosovo was held discussing the transnational cooperation between the countries in view of identification and assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings, with a focus on children, through unified standard operating procedures (USOP)³⁴. The meeting addressed ineralia: strengthening institutional efforts in dealing with human trafficking, including formal and early identification of victims, provision of assistance to victims, implementation of cooperation in specific cases between countries, the implementation of USOP, the role of contact points and identifying challenges.

- From November 18 to 19, 2022, at the third regional conference on "Improving the provision of services and awareness of the fight against human trafficking in the Balkans" in Tirana³⁵. The purpose of the conference was to share the achievements of the institutional and civil actors in Albania, Kosovo, the Republic of North Macedonia and Montenegro in the field of human trafficking, as well as to present the successful five-year cooperation that brought consolidation of unified good practices to support victims of trafficking in human beings, prevention and their rehabilitation.

- In the period from December 12 to 15, 2022, "Open Gate" organized a study visit to the Netherlands. The representatives from the institutions³⁶ had the opportunity to exchange experiences and practices in the area of protection of victims of trafficking in human beings and to visit existing shelters and organizations that offer services for victims. Within the framework of the visit, meetings were organized with various representatives of state institutions as

³⁴13 representatives from the Office of the National Coordinator of North Macedonia and Kosovo, representatives from the police and NESKMTL, border police, NMU/CSR, the Center for Victims of Human Trafficking and non-governmental organizations participated.

³⁵ Attended by national coordinators for fight against trafficking in human beings, representatives of government institutions and partner organizations of Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and RSM.

³⁶National Commission, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the National Referral Mechanism.

well as non-governmental organizations with outstanding experience in the field of direct assistance and support to victims of trafficking in human beings. The goal was to understand the experiences and practices from the Netherlands in terms of expanding the existing capacities in the the Republic of North Macedonia for assistance, support and care for the victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as to exchange good practices from the existing shelters in the Netherlands for the care and protection of children, women and men, victims of trafficking in human beings and experience regarding their sustainability.

2. PREVENTION

2.1 IDENTIFYING REASONS FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND ILLEGAL MIGRATION

- **The Council of Europe Office in Skopje**³⁷ developed several materials in view of improving the prevention, identification and the support in the fight against trafficking in human beings:
 - Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation: risk factors, trends and challenge in North Macedonia;
 - Brief guide for medical workers for identifying and support of victims of trafficking in human beings;
 - Revised brochure for Diplomatic consular representative offices in the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings;
 - Comparative analysis for the procedure of allocating compensation for damage on the part of the state for victims of trafficking in human beings and the application for damage compensation;
 - Media investigative stories on the basis of awarded micro-grants and³⁸
 - Promotional video.³⁹

- **ICMPD**, within the framework of the regional project "Developing approaches to improve the functionality of the national referral mechanisms (NRM) among MARRI participants "⁴⁰ in 2022, developed practical approaches in order to improve the functionality of national referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking in human beings in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The approaches contain streamlined

³⁷Within the framework of the project Horizontal Instrument II of the EU/Council "Prevention and Dealing with the fight against human trafficking in the Western Balkans."

³⁸Documentary movie "FROM DUSK TILL DAWN THEY BEG AT THE CROSSROADS AND DREAM OF BETTER TOMORROW."

- Investigative story: economic emigrants entangled in the web of labor exploitation.

- Nova TV - outside of the system - in the magic circle (research story).

- Nezavisen - Elena's closed circle, the most dramatic case of child trafficking.

- Svedok - Covid - 19 crises changes the course and forms of human trafficking in North Macedonia.

- Globi - Economic emigrants entangled in the web of labor exploitation.

³⁹ "Act against Human Trafficking" North Macedonia - HFII (subtitled).

⁴⁰ Implemented in partnership with MARRI and funded by the German association for international cooperation (GiZ).

methods, instructions, tools and good practices for: (1) inclusion/participation of survivors of trafficking in human beings as advisors in both the policy development process and the operational response; (2) improvement of communication and coordination channels between relevant stakeholders in NRM; and (3) developing criteria for reaffirming the participation of civil society organizations within the NRM in the MARRI region. Within the framework of the same project, on June 1-2, 2022, in Budva-Montenegro, a regional workshop was organized, with the participation of thirty practitioners from the countries of the region. At the workshop, the publications from the prepared approaches to improve the functionality of NRM were presented and distributed, and also, sessions were held to implement the approaches in practice and their adaptation at the national level.

- **IOM manual**, with procedures for checking passports⁴¹ – translated into Macedonian and available for further use by members of the border police.
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC** in May 2022. published a report "Exploitation and abuse: the scope and reach of human trafficking in Southeast Europe"⁴² which describes the most common forms of trafficking in human beings in SEE from a practical perspective, addressing the current challenges encountered by professionals involved in the various stages, from detection to prosecution, including prevention and victim protection. The report makes recommendations on ways to reduce demand, improve case detection, support victims and ensure more convictions. It also identifies several key areas, such as improving data collection on its prevalence and access to protection and rehabilitation services for victims.

- UNODC in collaboration with key actors from the Republic of North Macedonia prepared "Analysis of cases of trafficking in human beings and children: challenges for effective prosecution and sanctioning of perpetrators." The purpose of this analysis is to improve knowledge about risk factors and systemic gaps that shape the cycle of prosecution, from identification of victims to the trial of perpetrators in cases of trafficking in human beings.

- The findings and recommendations from the National review and analysis of 13 cases of trafficking in human beings were validated at a one-day workshop organized with 36 participants representing relevant stakeholders in the country. On the basis of this meeting, a "National report on trafficking in human beings and children: challenges for effective prosecution and sanctioning of the perpetrators" was prepared. The findings and recommendations from the analysis

⁴¹ The activity is part of the IOM project supported by the Kingdom of Netherlands.

⁴² Over 450 trafficking experts from 22 countries contributed to the report, which examines the root causes of trafficking, the profile of victims and perpetrators, and the recruitment methods of traffickers. The report, which consolidates the findings of five regional expert meetings, also highlights the successful actions some countries are taking to prevent human trafficking and prosecute the criminals involved. The publication can be accessed at the following link: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Exploitation_and_Abuse.pdf

of the cases of trafficking in human beings in the Republic of North Macedonia were presented to the members of the working group at the closed session for amending and supplementing the Criminal Procedure Law (CPC) and based on the recommendations, amendments to the CPC were made and included in the text.

- As part of the **Regional GIZ Project: "Prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings in the Western Balkans"** (PaCT) seven publications were produced within the framework of two thematic packages, namely⁴³:

In the thematic package Development of identification capacities, the following were developed:

- SOP for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and potential victims in emergency situations.
- Health indicators for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and potential victims.
- Brochure on standard operating procedures for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and potential victims in emergency situations.
- Brochure on Health indicators for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and potential victims.

In the thematic package National Referral Mechanism, the following have been developed:

- Practitioner's Guide, Involving Survivors in the Policy-Making Process and the Operational Response to Trafficking in Human Beings - Produced by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) by Ivanka Heinzl, ICMPD Anti-Trafficking Program.
 - Practitioner's guide, Improving communication and coordination between different stakeholders within the National Referral Mechanism in MARRI Participants – Produced by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), by Dr. Elena Petreska, Anti-Trafficking Program.
 - Practical guide, Improving the participation of civil society organizations in the referral mechanisms of MARRI Participants - Produced by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), by Edgar Federzoni Dos Santos.
- During 2022, "Open Gate" prepared and published the following analyses, manuals and researches:
 - Fourth monitoring report - Monitoring and evaluation of laws and policies for action against human trafficking and their implementation in the Republic of

⁴³The editions are published in the Macedonian language, as well as in the languages used in the Western Balkans (Albanian, Serbian/Montenegrin/Bosnian) and English..

North Macedonia for the period 2020-2021. This report provides an overview of North Macedonia's progress in four out of seven areas against human trafficking, namely: identification, assistance, reparation and institutional framework and cooperation⁴⁴.

- Shadow report, Chapter 24 - The report focuses on the fight against organized crime and human trafficking. The report covers the period 2021 and 2022 and assesses progress in the fight against human trafficking and presents recommendations for further actions⁴⁵.

- Research Online exploitation and trafficking of children - The general purpose of the research was to determine the current situation, the challenges they face and the help available to potential and identified victims of human/child trafficking via the Internet, prevention and provision of appropriate services⁴⁶.

- With the support of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health and the Center for Research and Policy Creation, a Brief Guide for Health Professionals to Identify and Support Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings was developed. The goal is to make the guide accessible and easy to use by general practitioners, nurses, ambulance teams, gynecologists, surgeons, that is, by all health professionals who may come into contact with potential victims of trafficking in human beings.

- ARE YOU A VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS- RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS The brochure was created to help people protect themselves from human trafficking, to inform themselves about available services and the rights they can exercise in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia⁴⁷.

- EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW - leaflet about Ukrainian refugees (in English, Macedonian and Ukrainian language), which was promoted through social networks and the La Strada network and La Strada Ukraine. The leaflet is of an informative and preventive nature on how to avoid trafficking in human beings and exploitation, instructs where to turn for help, what services are available to them and how to move around the country⁴⁸.

- STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY - BROCHURE on maintaining personal hygiene, health, mental health and gender-based violence⁴⁹.

⁴⁴On December 23, 2022, the report was presented in Skopje and discussed with the main stakeholders, responsible institutions, service providers and civil society organizations.

<https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/MONITORING-IZVESHTA-interactive-final-2-2.pdf>

⁴⁵<https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/IZVESHTA-VO-SENKA-INTERACTIVE.pdf>

⁴⁶In order to strengthen the prevention of child trafficking, the research also includes recommendations for reducing the online exploitation of children. On September 16, 2022, in Skopje, the preliminary results of the research were presented to the competent entities, whose recommendations and conclusions were integrated into the research report. Funded by GIZ.

⁴⁷The brochure is developed in 4 languages (Macedonian, Romani, Albanian and English). <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Broshura-Trgovia-so-lu-e-makedonski-2.pdf>

⁴⁸The leaflet was distributed at the border crossings and through other national civil society organizations. https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Leaflet_RU.pdf

⁴⁹ The brochure was produced in Farsi and English. <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Broshura-persiski-2-2.pdf>

- Within the framework of the project activities, the **Macedonian Association for Young Lawyers (MZMP)** during 2022 produced two documents:
 - In November 2022, a policy document entitled "Seasonal work - fertile ground for labor exploitation" was prepared, highlighting the problems faced by seasonal agricultural workers and the risk of labor exploitation⁵⁰. MZMP within the framework of the EU regional project Human Security and Borders - Combating Migrant Smuggling in the Western Balkans prepared an analysis of migrant smuggling in the the Republic of North Macedonia⁵¹.
 - MZMP, within the framework of the EU regional project⁵², prepared an analysis of migrant smuggling in the Republic of North Macedonia.

2.2 REINFORCING CAPACITIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND COMPETENT SERVICES

In 2022, 134 police officers (36 women, 98 men) from several services⁵³ of the Ministry of Interior participated in professional trainings⁵⁴ in the field of human trafficking and illegal migration.

- Within the framework of the joint program of the EU and the Council of Europe **Horizontal Instrument II**, several activities and trainings were organized through the **Program Office of the Council of Europe in Skopje**, measuring the knowledge gained by a test before and after the training, and also drawing up and conclusions and recommendations:
 - March 31 - April 1, Ohrid - "Basic training for detecting, identifying and referring potential victims of labor exploitation" attended by 25 people (16 women and 9 men).
 - April 20, Skopje - "Training for school psychologists and pedagogues for interviewing potential child victims of trafficking in human beings" attended by 26 people (24 women and 2 men).
 - May 26-27 and September 13, Skopje – three focus groups to develop "Short guide for health professionals on trafficking in human beings", with the participation of

⁵⁰The policy document has been sent to the relevant authorities and institutions and represented an initial point for further advocacy for changes, considering that a new law is currently underway to improve the legal position of seasonal workers, their registration and mandatory registration of contributions for health, pension, social and disability insurance through which activities and measures would prevent labor exploitation and the possible occurrence of human trafficking.

⁵¹The analysis is available in English and can be found at the following link: https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Krijumcarenje_migranata_NM_WEB-2.pdf

⁵² Human Security and Borders – Combating Migrant Smuggling in the Western Balkans, Analysis is available in English and can be found at the following link: https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Krijumcarenje_migranata_NM_WEB-2.pdf

⁵³NESKMTL, Department for border affairs and migration, and the Regional Centers for Border Affairs, the Departments of Internal Affairs, the Department for International Police Cooperation.

⁵⁴ According to the data of the Ministry of Interior, 29 trainings were held, along with 5 conferences, 3 workshops, 2 meetings and 2 study visits.

health professionals and citizens' associations. A total of 34 people, 25 women and 9 men, took part in the focus groups.

- October 18-19, "Training for prevention of child trafficking, inclusion and protection" was held in Skopje for representatives of the centers for support of foster families, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Centers for social work. 24 people attended the training, 17 women, 7 men.

- October 27, Skopje - Multidisciplinary training for the role of diplomatic-consular personnel on the topic "Prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings", and in the direction of detection, discovery, protection and referral of potential victims of trafficking in human beings. For this purpose, a brochure related to the topic was prepared, which was further disseminated within the framework of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (The training was attended by 17 people, 11 men, 6 women, or 12 people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who also received certificates for participation.)

- November 9-10, Skopje - Training on "Prevention of child trafficking" attended by 20 educators from 20 preschool institutions.

- December 5 - 6, Skopje - "Specialized training for fostering children victims of trafficking in human beings" was held in which 20 women and 2 men from the centers for support of foster families, the Centers for Social Work, the Institute for Social Activities, participated of the specialized module for prevention of child trafficking, support, resocialization and reintegration of victims of child trafficking.

- **United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** on the basis of the findings and recommendations deriving from the Analysis and the National Report developed a National Training Plan. In view of this and in cooperation with the Commission several events at national level were held:

- 22 - 24 June 2022, Ohrid, the first multidisciplinary training "Procedure of the competent authorities in case of suspicion of a potential victim of trafficking in human beings and children⁵⁵ which was intended to highlight the challenges in practical handling and cooperation, successful identification and care for the victim in order to more effectively prosecute and sanction the perpetrators. A total of 25 participants took part in the training, of which 10 were men and 15 were women.

- November 23-25, 2022 in Veles, UNODC in cooperation with the Commission, the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors and the Training Center of the Ministry of Interior organized the second national multidisciplinary thematic workshop "Investigation, prosecution and trial of cases of trafficking in human beings through a targeted approach towards the victim⁵⁶. The goal was to strengthen the professional capacities of the

⁵⁵ Attended by police officers, judges, citizen associations representatives and from the Police Training Centre and social workers.

⁵⁶ During the three-day training, 33 participants (judges, prosecutors, police officers, social workers, Department for equal opportunities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, lawyers, representatives of

practitioners responsible for the professional implementation of the investigation and trial in the cases of trafficking in human beings and children. The workshop was attended by 33 participants, 12 men and 21 women.

- April 14, 2022, a national round table was held in order to confirm the findings and recommendations resulting from the national review and analysis of cases of trafficking in human beings. The purpose of the conducted analysis was to improve knowledge and identify gaps and challenges in the prosecution cycle, from victim identification to the trial of cases. 36 participants took part in the round table, of which 25 were men and 11 were women.

- In addition, based on the prepared reviews and analysis of cases of trafficking in human beings, UNODC prepared a regional plan for mentoring⁵⁷.

- September 27-29, 2022 in Budva - Montenegro, the First multidisciplinary regional thematic training was conducted⁵⁸ which aimed to identify the gaps in the implementation and operationalization of the legislative and institutional frameworks in SEE through discussion, and to raise awareness of the seriousness and complexity of crime through sharing good practices and solutions with a special focus on international cooperation.

➤ With the support of the **IOM Mission to Skopje** within different projects in partnership with the Commission several events were held in 2022:

- 8 trainings on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants were conducted, including simulation training with a focus on: indicators for the detection of cross-border crime, including trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, international cooperation, collection and exchange of information and evidence and more. The trainings were attended by 85 representatives of the police and public prosecutors, of which 68 were men and 17 were women.

- 29 representatives of the police, 19 men and 10 women - members of the Task Force from the Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia participated in two specialized simulations⁵⁹ in Serbia based on the signed Protocol for cooperation between the two countries, with the aim of improving the skills for inter-institutional cooperation in the fight against cross-border organized crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

citizens' associations and police training center, labor inspectors) had the opportunity to discuss the challenges in dealing with the cases of trafficking in human beings/ trafficking with children.

⁵⁷The regional mentoring plan was developed in Albania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, as well as the conclusions of the subsequent validation meetings held, and includes the implementation of two regional multidisciplinary workshops and two regional simulations on human trafficking.

⁵⁸28 judges, prosecutors, police, non-governmental organizations from Albania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia (3 representatives: a judge, a prosecutor and a police representative) and Serbia participated in the training.

⁵⁹The activity is part of an IOM Project supported by the Kingdom of Netherlands.

- On July 11-13, 2022 in Ohrid, a three-day workshop⁶⁰ on "Interview techniques for victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings" was held for more than 30 members (15 men and 15 women) of 5 mobile teams and Task Force. The curriculum included a full-day session on stress management techniques, to best practices and techniques to further improve the effective performance of their daily duties as well as gender aspects in the fight against human trafficking.

- 59 members of the border police (51 men and 8 women) in the period November-December 2022 were part of three two-and-a-half-day trainings on topics related to: Humanitarian border management, SOP for identification, vulnerability check, gender-sensitive interviews, mechanism for referral of identified smuggled migrants, unaccompanied children, potential/victims of trafficking in human beings; human rights and the gender approach in border management; addressing migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, including the latest migration trends, routes and challenges.

- Within the framework of **the regional PACT project**⁶¹ implemented by the Terre des Hommes (TdH) Foundation in partnership with the GIZ/PaCT project and MARRI⁶², several activities were carried out:

Within the framework of Thematic package: Development of identification capacities the following activities were held:

- In March 2022, a working group⁶³ prepared SOPs for dealing with emergencies for trafficking in human beings and Indicators for health workers for identification of victims of trafficking in human beings in Durrës – Albania

- On 24-27.05.2022 in Skopje, a Regional Training for Trainers on the topic "Strengthening the capacities of professionals for identification of HCV - Health indicators for HCV and HCV and Regional standard operating procedures for HCV and HCV in emergency situations" . Six representatives from the Republic of North Macedonia⁶⁴ received training certificates.

- On 20.10.2022 the Ministry of Health and the Institute of Public Health in cooperation with the Commission, organized a training on trafficking in human beings, conducted by the six previously trained representatives from North Macedonia intended for health workers on the topic "Presentation of Health Indicators and Regional Standard Operating Procedures for the identification of

⁶⁰The workshop was opened by the National Coordinator for the fight against human trafficking and illegal migration, Mrs. Magdalena Nestorovska and the head of the IOM North Macedonia office, Mrs. Sonja Bozinovska Petrushevska. The activity is part of the IOM project supported by the Development Bank of the Council of Europe.

⁶¹Prevention and fight against human trafficking in the Western Balkans "Strengthening regional cooperation and strengthening identification mechanisms for victims of human trafficking and potential victims in the Western Balkans"

⁶² Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative.

⁶³Representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health, Centre for Social work - Skopje and the Citizen Association Open Gate/La Strada.

⁶⁴6 women - representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1), the Ministry of Health (1), the Institute of Public Health (2), the Center for Social Work - Skopje (1) and the Association of Citizens Open Gate/La Strada (1)

victims of trafficking in human beings". It was attended by 13 people, 6 men and 7 women⁶⁵.

Within the framework of the Thematic Package Mental health and psychosocial support in shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings, the following events were held:

- Trainings for psychological counseling of professionals who work with LTTE and migrants:
- On April 11, 2022, part I Basic training: What is counseling? "Process vs. content" and Understanding and adoption of key principles for gaining trust - online, 6 representatives from Citizens' Associations participated.
- On 20.04.2022Og, part II basic training: "Basic techniques of counseling, active listening and working with challenges" - online, in which 3 representatives from Citizens' Associations participated.
- On 09.05.2022, Advanced training: "Change of perspective, Defining goals, and the First interview" - online, 2 representatives from Citizens' Associations participated.

Points of You tool trainings⁶⁶

- On 23.05.2022, Basic training: Introductory part, "Coaching Game" and "Punctum", 5 representatives from Citizens' Associations participated.
- On 26.05.2022, Advanced training: Previous experience in using the tool, communication skills, working with a target group, 5 representatives from Citizens' Associations participated.
- On 30.05.2022 Specialized training: techniques "Flow" and "Face" and working with them, attended by 2 representatives from citizen associations.

- **Academy for judges and public prosecutors „Pavel Satev“** in 2022 in cooperation and organization of UNODC realized two events in the area of trafficking in human beings and illegal migration on the topics:
 - From 22-24.06.2022 the training „Ending impunity of human traffickers and justice for victims of trafficking in human beings in SEE“ attended by 13 participants, 7 men and 6 women.⁶⁷
 - 23 – 25 November 2022, training „Investigation, prosecution and trial for cases of trafficking in human beings assuming victim centered approach“ attended by 17 participants (6 men and 11 women).⁶⁸

⁶⁵A total of 13 individuals attended the training 6 men/7 women, participants from private medical facilities: 5; public medical facilities: 6; Ministry of health: 2.

⁶⁶7 employees of the Centre for victims of trafficking in human beings were provided with trainings such as working with victims of trafficking in human beings in the transnational mechanism and familiarization with USOP, gender-based violence, trauma and how to deal with it, recognition of labor exploitation, prevention of youth trafficking in human beings, visit to 4 trainings on the application of technique Points of you.

⁶⁷4 public prosecutors (2 men and 2 women), 2 expert prosecutors (1 man and 1 woman), 1 judge (man) and 6 police officers (3 men and 3 women).

⁶⁸6 judges (3 men and 3 women), 6 public prosecutors (women) and 5 police officers (3 men and 2 women).

- **Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MZMP)** from June 20-23, 2022, MZMP organized a national training on combating migrant smuggling in the Western Balkans for representatives of the Ministry of the Interior (various organizational units/sectors), the Basic Public Prosecution Office (JOOKK) and Citizen Association⁶⁹. 33 representatives (17 men/16 women) of state institutions and associations of citizens from Macedonia participated in the training. The aim of the training was to build and strengthen the capacities and skills of the national institutions and the concerned associations in the fight against the smuggling of migrants in the Western Balkans and the protection of the rights of victims of smuggling.
- In addition, during 2022, a conference entitled: "The fight against human trafficking through institutional and non-institutional mechanisms"⁷⁰. The conference emphasized the need to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation, cooperation with associations, the private sector and unions. There were 62 participants at the conference, 23 men and 39 women.
- The **"Open Gate" association** conducted the following trainings:
 - On June 12-13, 2022, organized an advanced training for the development of creative skills to deal with professional stress and prevention of burnout syndrome for 11 women, social workers and psychologists. The training was conducted by two external experts/trainers.
 - During 2022, work was done to strengthen the competencies of the personnel, especially for the personal and professional growth of the professionals from "Open Gate" who help the victims of trafficking in human beings. Supervisory sessions were conducted with the whole team (group sessions) as well as individual sessions conducted for each individual by expert psychotherapists.
 - On June 14, 2022, advanced training for 15 female professionals, "Effective help and referral to users of SOS services". The training focused on the mechanisms and techniques for effective help and assistance and rapid intervention especially for Ukrainian refugee persons at risk of trafficking in human beings who could call the SOS line.

⁶⁹ETLKM; Department for cross-border crime, migrations, foreigners and readmission; Department of Border Affairs and Migration; Department for International Police Cooperation; Regional Center for Border Affairs East, West, North and South; Unit for Internal Affairs Kisela Voda; Department for International Police Cooperation; Violent Crime Unit; Economic and Computer Crime Unit; Section for Criminal Affairs Gazi Baba;), Criminal Police Department; Sector of Internal Affairs Bitola; Sector of Internal Affairs Skopje). The training was organized within the framework of the regional project Human Security and Borders - Combating Migrant Smuggling in the Western Balkans, supported by the European Commission and implemented by Group 484 from Serbia, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Vasa Prava from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Belgrade Center for Human Rights rights from Serbia, the Albanian Helsinki Committee from Albania, the Citizen Alliance from Montenegro and the Danish Refugee Council.

⁷⁰ Mr. Ljupcho Markudov as the head of the Section for combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling and Mrs. Vesna Tomovska - invited as a speaker as the director of the State Labor Inspectorate as well as the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, presented the key conclusions and recommendations regarding seasonal work.

- On July 5, 2022, basic training on the topic of Prevention of trafficking in human beings, with teachers and professional staff from the Primary school "Nevena Gjorgjieva Dunja" in Skopje, in which 32 participants (2 men and 30 women) actively participated. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the capacities of the participants for appropriate and timely identification, referral and provision of help, support and protection of potential victims and victims of trafficking in human beings.

- October 31, 2022, training "Working with victims of trafficking in human beings" was held in Skopje (online). The training was aimed at providing professional support to people who work with young people, victims of trafficking in human beings, and recognizing and addressing burnout symptoms due to the nature of the work. A total of 21 participants (1 man and 20 women)⁷¹ strengthened their knowledge and skills for: Systematic and comprehensive approach to prevention of trafficking in human beings, support and care for victims; systems and services with knowledge about the trauma; Work with victims of trafficking in human beings; Social and emotional aspects related to work with young victims of trafficking in human beings.; Specific aspects of work with traumatized persons; Burnout causes, symptoms and treatment.

- On November 2, 2022 in Skopje, training on the topic "Unified SOPs"⁷². (Online).

- In December 2022, experts from "Open Gate" were hired by the Council of Europe to conduct training aimed at strengthening foster families to accept and work with victims of trafficking in human beings.

- On 21.12.2022 in Skopje, basic one-day hybrid training "Recognition and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings", as part of the cooperation with the company Slice Macedonia. The training was divided into three sessions, and 15 (female) employees of Slice had the opportunity to become familiar with the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, and to acquire new knowledge regarding the protection and identification of trafficking in human beings.

- On December 26, 2022, a panel discussion on the topic "Protect children on the street"⁷³. The panel discussion was attended by representatives of institutions working to combat human trafficking. The purpose of the panel discussion was to strengthen the capacities and cooperation of stakeholders to combat human trafficking and to exchange experiences and best practices in working with street children.

⁷¹ Employees of the Center for sheltering victims of trafficking in human beings, social workers and psychologists from the Centers for Social Work in the Republic of North Macedonia.

⁷²A total of 30 participants (12 men and 20 women) from NESKMTL, Centers for Social work, Mobile Teams who strengthened their knowledge of the measures contained in the Standard Operating Procedures and their practical use. This activity is within the framework of the project, "Improving the provision of services and awareness of the fight against trafficking in human beings in the Balkans, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo" financed by the US State Department through the J/TiP program implemented by the Association for Action Against Violence and human trafficking Open Gate -La Strada.

⁷³Citizen organizations specialized in working with street children, Roma workers' organizations, Centers for social work and the police.

- Representatives of the **Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia**, in the period from 08 - 10.04 2022 in Belgrade, attended an international seminar on "Migration and prevention of trafficking in human beings" organized by the Red Cross Serbia. The seminar was intended to exchange experience and seek possibilities of further cooperation, and presentations were made as to the activities of the the Republic of North Macedonia Red Cross for the support of refugees and migrants, as well as activities for the prevention of trafficking in human beings. The ultimate goal was the joint interactive creation of ideas that would allow mutual cooperation to implement activities on the topic of "Migration and prevention of trafficking in human beings."

In view of reinforcing capacities of professionals working in this area, trainings of more than 892 individuals, 480 women and 412 men have been conducted.

2.3 RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

❖ July 30 – World Day against Trafficking in Human Beings

The National Commission and the Ministry of Interior have also, on the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Human Beings - July 30, joined the UNODC campaign under the motto "Use and Abuse of Technology". UNODC has prepared a set of social media materials to raise awareness of trafficking in human beings in cyberspace. The message that the Commission emphasized was that technology can easily enable as well as prevent trafficking in human beings. Technology is often misused to facilitate trafficking in human beings, control victims, advertise services and hide the proceeds of crime. Online resources can become a trap, especially when it comes to fake travel arrangements, fake job offers and marriages targeting vulnerable groups.⁷⁴

- **The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)** as part of the campaign "There is no season for workers' rights" carried out in cooperation with the Commission, produced a video material that was used for promotion in order to mark the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings on July 30. With its promotion on the Facebook social network, it reached 783 views.⁷⁵
- On the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, **the association "Open Gate"** focused on emphasizing the importance of the

⁷⁴Tips on how to protect yourself from trafficking in human beings at the following link.
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/endht/index.html>

⁷⁵As part of a project supported by GIZ Office in Skopje,
<https://www.facebook.com/younglawyersmacedonia/posts/pfbid0PEET6DFj1L2pZ4VpPoTjjD7eguHXZrET7Q4gL6Jhv8YwE8Vd1kdsQR4ouok5isVxl>

protection of victims of trafficking in human beings and, through posts on social media, emphasized that in North Macedonia, the urgent adoption of the Law on monetary compensation is needed to victims of crime which will provide them with initial financial assistance to deal with the consequences of violent crimes such as trafficking in human beings.

❖ **European Day Against Trafficking in Human Beings (October 18)**

In order to mark the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, in cooperation with the Skopje Prevention Department and the "Open Gate" Association, a preventive campaign and a workshop aimed at raising awareness of child trafficking in schools was organized, which was attended by the National Coordinator. The presentation was held at the Municipal Elementary School "Dimitar Miladinov" in Skopje, guided by the campaign of UNODC and with the support of the European Union and the Council of Europe leaflets⁷⁶ were produced with educational content intended for young people, with advice on how to protect oneself and loved ones from trafficking in human beings, how to promptly recognize the risks and negative phenomena brought by the internet and social networks. The materials were distributed to schools across the country through prevention inspectors from the Sectors of Internal Affairs in order to convey the message of the Commission on timely recognition, protection and ending trafficking in human beings in the digital world.

- **The office of the Council of Europe** in Skopje organized a training on the prevention of child trafficking, inclusion and protection for representatives of the centers for the support of foster families, which it dedicated to the celebration of the European Day against trafficking in human beings.
- **ICMPD** as the Secretariat of the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators in SEE (NATC SEE), supported the Slovenian chairmanship of the network to mark the EU Day against Trafficking in Human Beings. The network supported a Joint Statement that addressed the vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and trafficking of the millions of people affected by the war in Ukraine.⁷⁷ The joint statement announced the release of public messages developed under the initiative of the Government of Slovenia to address vulnerability to trafficking in human beings among people fleeing the war in Ukraine. The messages were distributed through social media of the NATC SEE members in the period 18-21 October 2022.

⁷⁶The workshop was attended by 20 students from the ninth grade who, through a presentation and practical examples, got acquainted with the different forms of trafficking in human beings, the ways of recruitment and abuse with a particular emphasis on online exploitation due to the increasing availability and access of children to the Internet. 3000 copies of two leaflets dedicated to online child abuse and recruitment of victims of trafficking in human beings were printed, available in Albanian, English, Turkish, Serbian and Roma languages. <https://rm.coe.int/end-human-trafficking-mkd-/1680a8b5a1>
<https://rm.coe.int/booklet-on-internet-deceit-mkd/1680a4ba56>

⁷⁷The joint statement is available at: <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/capacity-building/anti-trafficking-programme/network-of-anti-trafficking-coordinators-of-south-east-europe-natc-see>.

- On 17-18, on the occasion of the European Day against trafficking in human beings, **"Open Gate"** conducted training for 18 people (4 men and 14 women) representatives from civil society organizations on their role in the fight against trafficking in human beings and realizing the rights of victims with special emphasis on labor exploitation. The training was intended for the members of the platform of Citizens' Associations for the fight against trafficking in human beings and was carried out in cooperation with partners from Serbia, with the aim of exchanging experiences and good practices for advocacy initiatives of civil society organizations and networking.
- **The Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia** participated in the commemoration of the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings by organizing 22 prevention workshops with youth from primary and secondary schools, with volunteers from Red Cross Youth Clubs, and one workshop with people from Afghanistan. The preventive lessons were aimed at raising the awareness of young people, recognizing the ways through which they can be involved in trafficking in human beings and their self-protection. Over 660 people were involved in the workshops, half of them boys and half girls.

❖ Week against trafficking in human beings

During the Week against trafficking in human beings, "Open Gate" implemented a social campaign - through personal life stories (storytelling) with the slogan CHILDREN ARE FOR LOVING NOT FOR SELLING.⁷⁸ The campaign aimed to strengthen the awareness of the public and institutions about the exposure of especially Roma children to exploitation, their substandard living conditions and their life as beggars, the risks of early forced marriages, etc. The campaign also covered the risks and dangers of trafficking in human beings, begging, preventive measures, including online and promoting an accessible national hotline where children can find help, psychological counseling and other support services.

- During the week of December, the Association **"For a Happy Childhood"** held three one-day trainings with students from 4 institutes from the Faculty of Philosophy, on the topic: "The causes, types and methods of protection against trafficking in human beings", during which the film: "Observers" was presented.

❖ Other preventive activities

- Through the project "Reaching out to street children" financed by the **OSCE Mission in Skopje, implemented by "Open Gate"**, it aimed to improve preventive activities and protection against trafficking in human beings of street children as potential victims of trafficking in human beings. The action seeks to increase information and awareness about trafficking in human beings with a particular

⁷⁸<https://lastrada.org.mk/kampanji/decata-se-za-saka-e-ne-za-prodava-e> The campaign was part of the project "Protect children on the street," financially supported by the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Skopje.

focus on labor exploitation and forced begging among the public, including children from marginalized groups.⁷⁹

- During 2022, "Open Gate" conducted:
 - 6 focus groups with women of Albanian and Macedonian nationality aged 19-68, to improve social skills and communication skills, especially with children. Focus groups were conducted in Skopje, Gostivar and Tetovo in which a total of 110 women actively participated.
 - The first phase of the "Action for Humanity"⁸⁰ project, in which 21 young workers from Greece, Germany, Turkey and North Macedonia participated. The training aimed to increase the skills and knowledge of youth workers to raise awareness and prevent trafficking in human beings and illegal migration. The group had the opportunity to meet and discuss with staff from the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers on issues related to the support services available to people with specific protection needs.
 - In cooperation with Roma non-governmental organizations from North Macedonia, conducted 8 workshops on the topic "Prevention of trafficking in human beings with an emphasis on begging aimed at increasing the awareness of children, on the street, about the dangers of trafficking in human beings" in Skopje, Prilep and Delchevo, in which 150 children and their parents participated. The workshops improve the knowledge of the Roma population (parents) about the negative effects of begging, child labor and the dangers of trafficking in human beings and at the same time enable them to make informed decisions about their children's future and make positive changes. The participants received educational material and were informed about the SOS helpline for trafficking in human beings and the services available to them.
 - 2 workshops on "Building leadership skills, self-confidence and raising awareness of girls' rights" in Delchevo and in Skopje (Shuto Orizari), with a group of 30 girls aged 10-21. The workshop aimed to raise awareness among the socially vulnerable categories of the Roma community, not only to get involved in the educational process, but also to finish it completely and acquire skills that will contribute to their personal growth and development, and also their contribution to the community.
 - 2 workshops on the topic "Early child marriages as a harmful cultural tradition" were held in Delchevo and Skopje with a group of 35 girls and boys of Roma ethnicity, with whom the negative consequences of child marriages on their physical and mental health and overall future were discussed.
 - On December 5, a lecture was held for the students of the "Justinian I" Faculty of Law, in Skopje, in which 14 postgraduate students (10 men and 4 women) took

⁷⁹ During the project: 1) six workshops were conducted with 150 children and their parents in Skopje, Prilep and Delchevo; 2) A social media campaign "Children are for loving not selling" was implemented and 3) Several locations such as squares, intersections, large supermarkets, etc. where they are visited to meet the children and their parents while begging.

⁸⁰ Within the Erasmus+ program supported by the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility from 03 to 11 October 2022.

part, who learned about the situation of trafficking in human beings in our country, the services which are available to the victims, as well as the participation of the victims in court processes and their protection.

- On December 19, an initial training was held for 20 professionals (3 men and 17 women), doctors - gynecologists, nurses about the existence of trafficking in human beings in our country, the way of identifying it and the possibility of referral to an appropriate institution where victims of human trafficking could be given adequate assistance and support.

- A documentary titled "EXIT" was produced to raise public awareness of the rights of survivors of trafficking in human beings. The experiences, memories and lives of women and girls who managed to get out of the chain of trafficking in human beings were documented in it. The film was presented on December 20, 2022 in Skopje through a public event attended by more than 50 participants (23 men and 27 women). The documentary was followed by a panel discussion with the director, a representative from "Open Gate", the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office.

- On December 20, 2022, within the framework of the project "Creation of a favorable and safe environment" in partnership with UNHCR, a New Year's bazaar was organized where the products made by asylum seekers were exhibited at the art therapies and creative workshops in the Reception Center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo. The event was attended by national and international stakeholders as well as citizens who had the opportunity to meet the asylum seekers directly. The purpose of the event was to raise public awareness against the stigmatization of these people, as well as to collect financial resources intended for direct support of the asylum seekers.

- From August 1 to December 31, 2022, within the framework of the project "Creating a favorable and safe environment" in partnership with UNHCR, "Open Gate" contributed to strengthening the conditions and inclusion of asylum seekers, offering them services and psycho-social support for their early integration into society. It also supported asylum seekers by providing psycho-social help and support, information and counseling depending on the interest/needs of the asylum seekers. Cultural and social activities were also carried out in order to integrate asylum seekers into society through activities such as creative and educational workshops with opportunities for social integration and economic empowerment. Direct specialized psychosocial support is also provided to accompanied and unaccompanied children, located in the Reception Center in Vizbegovo, through identification of the children's specific needs, access to support services, including referral to institutions and their access to national services for child protection.

- Through the program "Providing Structured Support through Child and Youth Friendly Spaces and Providing Targeted Protection Services for the Afghan Population," specialized services were provided to Afghan children and their parents. The program aimed to provide children and families with psychosocial and emotional support through an educational and creative approach, a safe place

to play and learning materials, and to identify, assess and refer children in need of specialized protection services.⁸¹

- **MYLA** in 2022 produced a video in English (translated into Arabic, Farsi and Pashto), posters and flyers, with a QR code placed that by scanning leads to the produced video in the specific language. The official campaign started on April 18, 2022, by sharing 6 videos⁸² on social networks to raise awareness of the risks of trafficking in human beings. MYLA made contact with the partner non-governmental organizations that are also members of the BRMC (Balkan Refugee Migration Council) and in 2022 began a process of regional dissemination of awareness-raising materials throughout the region, 84 posters and 780 flyers were distributed in the region to the above-mentioned organizations in order to be placed in transit centers, camps and centers for asylum seekers (Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Three info sessions for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers were also held to implement the activity to increase access to information about refugees and migrants for the identification of human trafficking.⁸³ The total number is 49, of which 35 men and 14 women (56 including representatives from the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association as well as from the Regional Network for Migration, Asylum and Refugees MARRI).

- There were 8 participants - asylum seekers, of which 3 were male and 5 were female - at the info session at the "Reception Center for Asylum Seekers".

- 16 migrant participants attended the info session at the "Vinojug" Transit Center, 13 of them male and 3 female.

- At the info session in the Transit Center "Tabanovce", 25 migrant participants were present, of which 19 were male and 6 were female.

During the info sessions, the created flyers were distributed to 49 people as participants of the info sessions. At the same time, the created posters (4 posters in each language) were attached in the premises of the above-mentioned

⁸¹76 children benefited from CYFS, 86 beneficiaries benefited from the mental health and psychosocial support program, and 48 individuals benefited from psychotherapy and family therapy.

⁸²The videos were promoted on social networks and made in Macedonian and Albanian. A total of 2,976 people were informed by the published videos to raise awareness among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers regarding the risks of trafficking in human beings through social media – Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [English] Closer than you think / Më afër se sa mendon- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/kazistop/videos/490412702820027> 1601 people reached

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [English] Closer than you think / Më afër se sa mendon (Youtube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8spkIcLAYA&t=3s> (103 views)

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [Arab] Closer than you think / Më afër se sa mendon Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHPrdVnYmqM&t=9s> (35 views)

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [Farsi] Closer than you think / Më afër se sa mendon Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFvHEMijMo&t=9s> (36 views)

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [Pashto] Closer than you think / Më afër se sa mendon Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAT9n7NXdIs&t=6s> (31 views)

18/04/2022 RISKS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS WHILE LOOKING FOR A JOB IN EUROPE! [ENGLISH] saystop Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/p/CcfKQ5CIDOP/> 467 views

⁸³In Transit Center "Vinojug", Transit Center "Tabanovce" and Public Institution Reception Center for accommodation of asylum seekers - Skopje.

institutions, i.e. a total of 12 posters were placed in the Transit Center Vinojug, Transit Center Tabanovce and PI Reception Center for asylum seekers - Skopje. According to the project activities, 7 information sessions with seasonal agricultural workers were planned.

During 2022, three info sessions were held:

- At the info session in Radovish, out of a total of 37 participants present, 22 of the participants were male and 15 were female.
- At the info session in Resen, out of a total of 12 participants present, 6 were male and 6 were female.
- At the info session in Kavadarci, out of a total of 19 participants, 13 were male and 6 were female.

This educational campaign was a field activity that directly influenced and increased the knowledge of seasonal agricultural workers about the possible risks of trafficking in human beings and raised awareness of existing reporting and self-protection mechanisms. In addition, information was provided to employers on how to legally hire agricultural workers and what they should be aware of when hiring seasonal workers. Information sessions are a preventive mechanism, but also an opportunity for workers to ask questions and get necessary information.

- **The association "For a happy childhood"** provided logistical support to the Faculty of Philosophy and with joint activities realized several trainings:
 - Basic one-day training for students from the Institute of Social Work on the topic: "Trafficking in human beings for labor exploitation" in which 29 participants, 18 women and 11 men, were trained.
 - Advanced two-day training for third-year students from the Institute of Social Work: on the topic "Trafficking for the purposes of labor exploitation of street children", in which 25 students, 14 women and 11 men, were trained.
 - Two-day training of students on working with street children: "Observation of street children and detection of potential victims of child trafficking, among street children"
 - Focus group with students, potential beneficiaries of the "Travel and Work" program
 - "Risks of trafficking in human beings, ways of protection" which was attended by 9 students, 6 men and 3 women, from 3 Faculties of the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"
- **The Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia**, through the Red Cross of the city of Skopje and 29 municipal organizations of the Red Cross in the country, during 2022, held 64 workshops for the prevention of trafficking in human beings, which included a total of 2,136 young people from primary and secondary schools.

3. SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS AND MIGRANTS

3.1 VICTIM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL MECHANISMS

In order to strengthen the national capacities and increase the efficiency of the police and the prosecutor's office in suppressing organized forms of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, the effective and efficient functioning of (NUSSMTHB), which was established in 2018,⁸⁴ continued in the past year, with the aim of better coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office for the prosecution of organized crime and corruption of the Republic of North Macedonia for the suppression of crimes related to trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling.

With the support of IOM⁸⁵, the 5 mobile teams (MT) continued to work for the identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings in Bitola, Gevgelija, Kumanovo, Skopje and Tetovo.⁸⁶ The five mobile teams were active in implementing program activities including regular meetings, field visits, contacts, referrals and assistance to vulnerable groups, identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings.

During 2022, the free SOS helpline for trafficking in human beings (0800 1111 and 02 2 777 070) continued to operate 24/7 every day with five SOS operators. A total of **422 calls** for help from trafficking in human beings were received, general information on the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, safety tips for working abroad, crisis intervention, emotional and psychological help, legal counseling (for potential victims and their parents, relatives, etc.) were provided. During the year, the SOS hotline for potential victims of trafficking in human beings referred five cases to the NUSSMTHB and the Mobile Teams.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION, REFERRAL AND DIRECT ASSISTANCE OF VICTIMS

In the RNM, according to the statistical data from the performed identification, this year, the dominant form of trafficking in human beings is forced marriage, but there are also two new forms that are registered for the first time in our country as exploitation of a person via the Internet/online exploitation and illegal removal of organs. All victims and potential victims are referred and cared for in accordance with the SOP.

⁸⁴More about NUSSMTHB in the Commission's Annual Report for 2018.

⁸⁵Within the framework of the project "Support of the capacities for the prevention and protection of the RNM" supported by the Council of Europe Development Bank – CEB.

⁸⁶The work of the MT is determined in the Memorandum of Cooperation concluded between the MLSP and the Ministry of Interior in January 2018. They continue to include representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and Citizens' Associations (CA "Otvorena Porta" participates with its own representative in the mobile team in Skopje, while MYLA has representatives in Tetovo, Kumanovo, Bitola and Gevgelija and provides legal assistance and information to VTHB and PVTHB as well as vulnerable categories of persons) who work in the field of fight against THB and contribute to the deepening of cooperation between institutions with the aim of identifying vulnerable categories of persons, including victims of trafficking in human beings.

During 2022, the institutions⁸⁷ and the Operational Team in charge of formal identification **identified 9 victims of trafficking in human beings**, of which 8 were female and 1 male. The largest number of identified persons are children (7), aged 14-17 and (2) adults aged 19 to 45. Out of the total number of identified victims, **two victims** are foreign nationals identified in the RNM (one child and one adult), **one child** citizen of the RNM was identified abroad (a neighboring country), while the remaining **6 victims** were internally trafficked within the RNM. In terms of nationality, the largest number are Roma (4), Macedonians (3), Serbs (1) and one Pakistani.

According to the type of exploitation, the most common type is forced marriage with 6 people, one person is identified as a victim of sexual exploitation, one person is identified as an online exploitation/over the internet and one person is identified as a victim of illegal removal of organs. The place of exploitation of the victims mostly takes place in the central, Vardar and south-western regions of the RNM, and one each in Serbia and Turkey

The cases identified by the Ministry of Interior, were followed up by 5 notifications submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office and 6 criminal charges against 19 persons (6 female and 13 male).

At the same time, during the year, **13 potential victims** were identified (of which 8 were children), 10 were women and 3 were men, of which one child was identified as a potential victim among illegal migrants and two people, domestic citizens, were identified as potential victims in Italy and Belgium.

The **Center for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings** (the Center) will operate at full capacity during 2022, and child victims of human trafficking will be cared for there. The identified victims were dealt with in accordance with the SOPs for dealing with VTHB, whereby in the current year 5 children were provided with accommodation in the Center, as well as in addition one child with educational and social problems and disturbed behavior was accepted and placed in a childcare center in Skopje. Realization of activities with victims of trafficking in human beings located in the Center are carried out through the implementation of the program for psychosocial support and reintegration by the Association "Open Gate" - Skopje.

In the current year, **the mobile teams** contacted, informed, and referred a total of **511 users** (of which 243 men and 268 women). Of the total number, 432 are domestic citizens and 79 are foreign citizens. From the total number of contacted persons, **6 have been identified as VTHB** (4 domestic citizens and 2 foreign citizens, 1 is a man and 5 are women), 87 potential persons from vulnerable categories, 60 domestic, and 27 foreign citizens (38 men and 49 women) and 418 vulnerable at no risk of Trafficking in Human Beings, 135 nationals and 7 foreign nationals (204 men and 214 women).

⁸⁷MoI/ NUSSMTHB, MLSP/NRM and the mobile teams.

During 2022, **9 beneficiaries**/children were accommodated in the Center⁸⁸ who were provided psycho-social assistance services, 6 newly accommodated and 3 from previous years, all female children. 8 are domestic citizens, 1 is a foreign⁸⁹ citizen, 2 are potential victims and 7 are identified victims of trafficking.

Within the framework of activities of the Center, "Open Gate", regularly implements the program for psycho-social assistance and support of victims of trafficking in human beings, for the purpose of their stabilization, overcoming of traumas, easier and more successful inclusion in the current processes of social life. In cooperation with the Center for Social Work, work is being done on their stabilization and resocialization, reintegration and professional activities that are applied according to prepared individual plans. Part of the activities undertaken relate to strengthening the personal potential of the victims through counseling and support, provision of alternative education, occupational and creative workshops to improve the intellectual capacities and psychophysical health of the residents. Psychosocial counseling is included in daily activities, which is given through individual and group sessions using techniques and interventions from different directions of psychosocial therapy.

In 2022, 72 psychotherapeutic sessions were conducted, of which 6 were group and 66 individual with each client separately by specialized psychotherapists. Specialized psychiatric expertise for one case was assisted outside the Center.

Four of the residents placed in the Center during 2022 attended a course in cosmetics and six residents attended a course to study the technique of filigree silk, in order to more easily join the labor market. Three of the residents who had not started the educational process were enrolled in the Primary School for Adults "Makarenko" in the first grade, one resident after the interruption of the educational process was again included in the 6th grade and 1 resident is enrolled in the 9th grade in a regular school educational process, and 1 resident continued her education in the third year of targeted secondary education. Six residents were given a summer vacation in Ohrid, accompanied by two employees from the Association.

One resident completed her stay at the Center and was returned to her biological family, she is included in the Program for Accompanying Social Work and receives psychosocial assistance and support for successful integration into the environment.

32 professional workshops (culinary and life skills workshops) were conducted. The activities were aimed at building the skills and capacities of the beneficiaries for an independent life after leaving the Center. New Year's decorations, greeting cards, filigree paintings, artistic paintings on canvas were made and they were

⁸⁸The overhead costs for the functioning of the Center are financed by the MLSP, while the service is financed by the Government of the RNM within the framework of the Program for the Support of the Civil Sector.

⁸⁹The foreign citizen was referred by the Association of Citizens ASTRA from Serbia to Open Gate and the case was immediately reported to Mobile Team Skopje and to NUSSMTHB.

exhibited at a charity bazaar held in the Cinematheque of Macedonia, and the collected funds are intended for the needs of the victims. 11 art therapy sessions have been implemented in order to treat the mental health of users experiencing psychological conditions including anxiety, trauma, abuse and neglect.

3.3 LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND MIGRANTS

- In 2022, the association **"Open Gate"** provided legal assistance to one victim of trafficking, identified in the current year, in the proceedings before the public prosecutor. The 6 ongoing cases from the previous year were provided with legal assistance and representation at various stages of the procedure for the protection of their rights. That is, 3 victims were supported in execution and collection of compensation and 4 were represented in court proceedings.
 - One victim was compensated by a defendant when, in the procedure for execution of a final criminal judgment, the executor collected the entire amount from the property of one of the defendants and paid it to the injured party. The case has been active since 2008.
 - For one victim, an execution procedure was initiated before a competent executor and it is ongoing, for which an urgency was submitted to the executor during the reporting period. For one victim, after the executor provided confirmation that the amount cannot be collected from the convicted, a request was submitted to the Basic Civil Court for the adoption of a decision to confirm the amount for collection from the Fund for Victims of the Ministry of Justice.
- **MYLA** provided legal counseling and representation before competent authorities in the criminal proceedings of **one identified victim** of trafficking in human beings (child), who gave a statement to the public prosecutor regarding the criminal legal event. With regard to the established office for providing legal advice in relation to female workers performing seasonal work, during the past two years, MYLA has provided a total of **70 legal advice** and information regarding workers' rights and seasonal work. Of these, 50 legal information and advice were provided during 2022, in connection with labor rights and performing seasonal work, to a total of 31 people, of which 18 were male and 13 were female. Most of the questions were in the direction of the conditions for working abroad, working in EU countries. As a result of the information sessions conducted with agricultural seasonal workers, MYLA received calls for legal advice regarding the published open calls for workers to engage in seasonal work abroad. The biggest problem that the workers pointed out was the contracts for their seasonal employment, which are delivered to them in a foreign language, which is incomprehensible to the workers themselves. In relation to the above, awareness of the risks of exploitation and trafficking in human beings has increased among seasonal workers.

- UNHCR provides continuous support to the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in the implementation of the SOPs for dealing with unaccompanied foreign children and the SOPs for dealing with vulnerable categories of foreign persons by providing access to legal aid.

4. INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

4.1 PRE-INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

4.1.1 *Trafficking in human beings/child trafficking*

- **Ministry of Interior**⁹⁰

In 2022, unlike the previous two years, positive results were observed in the detection of cases and crimes of trafficking in human beings and child trafficking. NUSSMTHB conducted 6 reactive investigations.

- **1 reactive investigation** under **Article 418a** in which 6 perpetrators were identified, 2 of whom were female and 4 were male. Of the 4 identified male persons, 2 are users of sexual services.
- **2 reactive investigations** under **Article 418-d** in which 7 perpetrators were identified, 2 of whom were female (1 person is a citizen of the Republic of Serbia) and 5 of whom were male, 2 of whom were foreign nationals from Belgium and the Republic of Serbia.

In the three investigations conducted in 2022, the victims were forced into forced marriages against their will.

- **3 reactive investigations** that were started in 2021, i.e. one under **Article 418-a**, in which 1 male perpetrator was identified, and 2 investigations under **Article 418-d**, in which 5 perpetrators were identified, 2 of female and 3 male. Victims of these crimes are 2 female persons forced into labor and sexual exploitation, and one of the victims was forced into forced marriage and one into begging.

Within the MoI – Sector for Reporting and Coordination of Situations there is a functioning application „Red Button“ which provides the citizens with the possibility to electronically report a committed crime, intelligence or information related to abuse of children, child trafficking, trafficking in human beings and hate crime. In 2022, no cases with indications of trafficking in human beings were registered through the application.

4.1.2 *Action controls in catering facilities*

In 2022, 27 action controls were carried out in catering facilities with the aim of discovering foreign nationals who are illegally staying and working as dancers and singers. According to the place, 16 of the controls were carried out in the area

⁹⁰Data obtained from the Department of Criminal Intelligence and Analysis..

of Tetovo, and 11 in Gostivar. During the controls, 192 foreign nationals were found (55 from Russia, 48 from the Republic of Albania, 38 from Ukraine, 20 from the Republic of Serbia, 18 from Moldova, four from Kosovo, three from Colombia, two from Montenegro and one from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina) of which two (one each from Ukraine and Serbia) did not have a regulated residence, which is why they were fined by a competent court.

No cases of potential/victims of trafficking in human beings have been registered/detected from the implemented action controls and measures taken.

- **The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption (BPPO for POCC)**

During 2022, 3 notifications were submitted by the Ministry of Interior to the BPPO for POCC for the criminal offense of **Trafficking in Human Beings according to Art. 418-a of the CC**. 8 indictments have been submitted to the competent court by the BPPO for POCC, in which 6 men and 2 women are accused. The competent court has issued **5 verdicts** for this crime

For the crime of **Child Trafficking under Article 418 d of the Criminal Code** during 2022, this prosecution office received 5 notifications from the Ministry of the Interior. 9 indictments have been submitted to the competent court, with which 9 men and 4 women are accused. The competent court has issued **2 verdicts** in relation to this crime

In the course of 2022, there were no recorded cases in which police officers or other public officials appear as the perpetrators of the above-mentioned crimes.

2022				
9 VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IDENTIFIED				
Children 7			Adults 2	
Domestic 6		Foreign 1	Domestic 1	Foreign 1
Type of exploitation			Type of exploitation	
Forced marriage 5	Sexual exploitation 1	Online sexual exploitation 1	Forced marriage 1	Removal of organs 1
Potential victims of trafficking in human beings are 13 people (8 children), 10 female, 3 male persons of which one child has been identified as a potential victim among illegal migrants				
The cases identified by the Ministry of Interior resulted in 5 notifications beings submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office and 6 criminal charges against 19 persons (6 women and 13 men).				

Table 1: Tabular presentation of identified victims of trafficking in human beings

4.1.2 *Smuggling of migrants*

- **Ministry of Interior**

During 2022, a proactive investigation was conducted under Article 418-b and 418-c, leading to suppression of an organized criminal group, in which 13 male perpetrators, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia, were identified. Furthermore, 3 reactive investigations under Article 418-b were also conducted, in which 7 male perpetrators were identified, 5 of whom originated from Pakistan and 2 from Afghanistan.

As for the crime **"Smuggling of migrants" under Article 418-b, 79 criminal acts** were registered, for which criminal prosecution measures were taken against 122 persons, of which 120 were male and 2 were female, with 119 are of legal age, and three children have been recorded as perpetrators. In the current year, a total of 13 persons were reported, of which 12 for committing 2 criminal acts "Organizing a group and encouraging the commission of the acts of trafficking in human beings, trafficking of minors and smuggling of migrants" under Article 418-c, **while 1 person in the capacity of a police officer is reported for the crime of "assistance" in connection with Art. 418-c.**

- ❖ **State of play of illegal migration**

Illegal migration in the RNM is a current threat that greatly affects the security situation in the country, which is why the members of the Ministry of Interior continuously took measures and activities to deal with it, which is currently a strategic priority and a threat that countries in the region and wider. The signing of the Status agreement with Frontex and the deployment of their police officers on the borders of our country is of great importance, and it is emphasized that even during 2023, the implementation of joint mixed patrols with foreign police officers from eight countries will continue as part of the activity of IOM since 2015

The border police has an increased detection activity of 31.2% in preventing attempts at illegal crossings. At the borders with neighboring countries, **27,391 attempts at illegal crossings were prevented.** The southern border is still a key point for the entry of migrants and their further movement, which is reflected in the number of prevented attempts at the border with the Republic of Greece - 24,965, where an increase in attempts by 35.5% was recorded.⁹¹ Changes have been noticed on the border with Albania, where during 2022, attempts for entry of people from India, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey were prevented, which was not specific for previous years, while on the border with Serbia, the situation is stable, and the number of prevented attempts is at the same level as during 2021.

The pressure on the borders shows a seasonal development - from April to September (the most attempts are during August - 3,984 and September - 3,770)

⁹¹Most of them are migrants who have been in the territory of Greece for a long time, and on several occasions they try to leave, but they return and wait for a certain period to pass in order to leave again for the final destination..

when an increased frequency of migrants is observed due to good weather conditions, and in the last two months of the year with the beginning of winter and bad weather conditions, their number decreases and averages around a thousand prevented attempts.

	2022	2021	decrease/ increase
Greece	24.965	18.424	35,5%
Albania	111	130	-14,6%
Serbia	2.270	2.277	-1%
Kosovo	41	37	10,8%
Bulgaria	4	6	-33,3%
Total	27.391	20.874	31,2%

Table 2: prevented attempts to illegally cross borders in 2022/2021.

❖ Prevented attempts of illegal border crossings by country of origin

According to the structure of migrants, in 2022, the attempts of people of Syrian origin dominate - 11,018, whose number has significantly increased by 4.2 times compared to the previous year. These are followed by the attempts of people from Pakistan - 5,594, and this year the number of attempts from Morocco - 2,541 - has increased. A new phenomenon that has been identified in the countries of the Western Balkans is the abuse of the visa-free regime introduced for persons from Turkey, Tunisia, India, Cuba, Burundi, China, Russia and Egypt. Confirmation of the same is the large number of attempts prevented in North Macedonia by persons of Indian origin - 1,656, persons without citizenship - 1,366, Congo - 597, Iraq - 320, Palestine - 277 and Cuba - 204.

❖ Migrant smuggling

In response to the increased presence of illegal migrants on our borders and territory, operational activity at the strategic and regional level was also strengthened, which resulted in increased efficiency of the detection function. The smuggling of migrants has increased (the number of detected cases, criminal acts and perpetrators and the number of prevented smuggled migrants have increased), and the number of detected cases-107 has increased by 68.2%, and the number of prevented migrants by almost 80%

	2022	2021	decrease/ increase
Detected cases	107	64	67,2%
Number of criminal acts	79	49	61,2%
Number of perpetrators	122	77	58,4%
Number of migrants	1.454	815	78,4%
OCG	1	2	-50%

Table 3: Detected cases of migrant smuggling - 2022/2021

The largest number of cases - 73% were detected by police officers from the Regional Center "South", whose efficiency is due to the joint action of mixed patrols with foreign police officers from eight countries who perform enhanced surveillance on the southern part of the state border. With the realized cases, the **smuggling of a total of 1,454 migrants was prevented**, with migrants from Syria dominating - 759, then Pakistan - 405, India, Afghanistan and Cuba

❖ Suppressed organized criminal groups

The number of suppressed organized crime groups is decreasing. This year, one organized criminal group was suppressed (in 2021/two), consisting of 13 members (including **1 police officer**), which operated for a long period of time on the territory of the RNM and organized the smuggling of a large number of migrants, originally from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and other countries from the Middle and Far East and a smaller number of migrants originating from India. Prosecution measures have been taken against the persons for the criminal acts of "Organizing a group and encouraging the commission of the acts of trafficking in human beings, trafficking in minors and smuggling of migrants" and "Smuggling of migrants".

❖ Modus operandi

Migrants are accepted at pre-determined and agreed locations in Athens-Greece, from where they are brought in an organized manner near the border line with the RNM and they make an illegal entry on foot. Then they are taken on our territory by motor vehicles and taken to the northern part of the country (villages near the border with Serbia). The transport is carried out by passenger motor vehicles on which false license plates from other vehicles have been placed, and in a small number of cases also by trucks and vans, and the drivers, after noticing the police patrols, leave the vehicles with the migrants on the side of the road and escape.

❖ Routes of movement

The route of movement of criminal groups engaged in migrant smuggling is the Gevgelija-Skopje-Kumanovo road, especially the Gevgelija-Demir Kapija and Marvinci-Udovo main roads, the Miravci interchange, the Smokvica and Demir Kapija toll plazas, the Negotino-Gradsko regional road, and some of the migrants were discovered in the area of Strumica and the road routes Strumica-Shtip-Sveti Nikole-Kumanovo. In the northern part of the country, the places where smuggled migrants were discovered are gas stations near the Kumanovo-Tabanovce border crossing point, the villages of Dolno and Gorno Kojnare and the Kumanovo-Kriva Palanka main road.

❖ Number of persons accommodated in the Reception Center for Foreigners
In the current year, 139 people were accommodated in the Reception Center for Foreigners in Skopje, of which 113 were male and 26 were female. According to the

country of origin, most of the people are from Syria-30, Turkey-23, Kosovo-15, 10 each from Cuba, India and Albania, seven from Afghanistan, etc., and in terms of age, the most numerous are aged 18 to 35 years-98, 32 are people aged 36 to 59 years, six are aged 14 to 17 years, two are over 60 years old and one child from Syria aged up to 13 years

- **The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption (BPPO for POCC)**

For the crime of **Smuggling of Migrants under Article 418-b of the Criminal Code**, during 2022, a total of 82 notifications were received from the Ministry of Interior. 100 indictments have been submitted to the competent court, with which 118 men and 2 women are accused. The competent court has issued 83 verdicts for this crime.

Regarding the criminal act of **Organizing a group and encouraging the commission of trafficking of human beings, trafficking of minors and smuggling of migrants under Article 418-c of the CC**, during 2022, 1 notification was issued by the Ministry of Interior. Competent public prosecutor has issued an order for investigation against 11 men, for which the procedure is ongoing

4.2 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

For crimes related to **trafficking in human beings** and illegal migration during 2022, a total of **108 cases** were received in the Basic Court Skopje 1- Skopje, in which 175 **persons** were accused.

In 2022, there are 85 final cases in which **83 people were sentenced to prison**, while 26 people were sentenced to probation. The duration of **mandatory prison sentences** ranges from 1 to 18 years in prison.⁹²

In two cases, police officers were convicted, and according to Article 418-b, one person received a suspended sentence, and according to Article 418-g, one person received a final sentence of 18 years in prison.

Three persons who claim to be injured have requested compensation, of which two persons have been awarded a damage claim and one person has been referred to a civil dispute.

There are no convictions that result in the closure of a business or organization.

⁹²Duration of the awarded prison sentences:

Art. 418-b: up to 1 year for 20 persons; from 1-2 years for 13 people; from 2-3 years for 7 people; from 3-4 years for 3 persons; from 4-5 years for 22 people; from 5-6 years for 5 people; 8 years for 3 people; 9 years and 6 months for 2 people.

Art. 418-c: from 2-3 years for 2 persons; from 4-5 years for one person; 7 years for one person, 9 years for one person.

Art. 418-d: 18 years of imprisonment for one person.

Art. 418-a: 3-4 years of imprisonment for 2 persons.

Article from CC	Received			Completed			Final			Final decisions – by persons					unsolved/postponed
	cases	Accused persons		cases	Accused persons		cases	Accused persons		Prison sentence	Conditional sentence	Accused denied	Acquitted	The plaintiff withdrew	
		m	w		m	w		m	w						
Art.418 a	4	8	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	/	/	2
Art.418 b	92	139	2	93	128	2	78	95	3	75	25				22
Art.418 c	5	11	/	7	17	1	5	5	/	5	/	/	/	/	10
Art.418 d	7	6	6	6	6	2	1	1	/	1	/	/	/	/	3
Total	108	164	11	107	153	6	85	103	4	83	26	/	/	/	37
		175			159			107							

Table 4: Overview of court cases and accused persons⁹³

⁹³Data submitted through a search in AKMIS - the system for managing court cases in the Basic Criminal Court Skopje 01.01.2022-31.12.2022.

5. BUDGET

The implemented activities were realized in partnership between the Commission, institutions, international organizations and citizens' associations. Donors and partners contributed to the implementation of activities to combat trafficking in human beings and illegal migration

MoI	180.310,00 denars
Reception Center for Foreigners	1.177.891,00 denars
MLSP for the CVTHB ⁹⁴	1.500.000,00 denars
Associations of citizens ⁹⁵	29.358.984,00 denars
International Organizations ⁹⁶	2.807.458,00 EUR

Table 5: Implemented activities through funds provided by institutions, international organizations and citizens' associations

⁹⁴**MLSP** covers the overhead costs of the Center for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings for 2022 and has secured funds of 1,500,000.00 MKD for 2022. An administrative agreement for the financing of the service for temporary residence at the Center for victims of trafficking in human beings was concluded - Agreement for the realization of the allocated funds for the provision of the service for the Center for temporary residence for victims of trafficking in human beings between the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Association for action against violence and human trafficking Open Gate - Skopje, our no. 10-4422/14 of July 15, 2022.

⁹⁵**Citizens' Associations:** "Open Gate/La Strada" provided funds of 27,767,250.00 mkd for activities intended for human trafficking. MYLA for the implementation of the project activities supported by the regional project PACT, a total of 972,775.00 MKD was spent, 618,959.00 MKD was spent for the implementation of the activity - organization of national training to combat migrant smuggling in the Western Balkans.

⁹⁶**International organizations:** The International Organization for Migration IOM Skopje within the framework of regional and national projects/activities financed by the Kingdom of Denmark, the Government of Switzerland and the Kingdom of Norway provided project budgets of around EUR 150,000.00. For the activities that were carried out at the regional level UNODC provided 153,000.00 dollars or 144,122.00 EUR. The total budget of the OSCE for the presented realized activities is EUR 14,000.00. Given that the activities are implemented within the framework of larger regional projects, the orientation amount of ICMPD for the budget and implemented activities is EUR 200,336.00. The Council of Europe office in Skopje provided 268,000.00 EUR through the project of the Horizontal Instrument for the Western Balkans, GIZ through the Regional Project PACT amounts to about 2,014,500.00 EUR with which activities were realized for the representatives of all 6 countries of the Western Balkans, including also the RSM. (In addition to these activities, GIZ also set aside about EUR 16,500.00 for activities directly intended only for the partners in the RNM).

6. PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

- Development of an Operational Plan to combat trafficking in human beings and an Operational Plan to combat child trafficking, with activities for 2023 in accordance with the National Action Plan 2021-2025;
- Elaboration of a Draft Criminal Code and a Draft Law on Criminal Procedure
- Maintaining regional cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans in the fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling;
- Continuous maintenance of the network of National Coordinators, exchange of experiences and participation in international activities;
- Building cooperation and functionality of the Operational Team for the coordination and management of cases of trafficking in human beings;
- Providing assistance in finding a new location for the Center for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Continuous implementation of multidisciplinary trainings at all levels in order to strengthen the capacities of professionals for the purpose of recognizing and improvement of the identification of victims and potential victims of human trafficking;
- Building the capacities of the actors involved in NRM;
- Continuous support of the work of the 5 mobile teams for identification, referral and assistance of people and potential victims of trafficking in human beings and establishment of additional 3 mobile teams;
- Revising the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Revising the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied Foreign Children and the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Vulnerable Categories of Persons - Foreigners;
- Strengthening the system for combating trafficking in human beings, especially in the area of labor exploitation by signing a Memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the State Labor Inspectorate;
- Continuous implementation of preventive activities.