

GREEK NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

FOR THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Following the provision of art. 6 para. 7 L. 4198/ 2013, the **Joint Ministerial Decision 30840/2016** regulated the Establishment and Operation of the National THB victims' Identification and Referral System **(NRM/ EMA), which is being managed and operated by EKKA (National Centre for Social Solidarity) and coordinated and supervised by the Office of the National Rapporteur against Human Trafficking.**

It is worth mentioning, that art. 58 para. 5 L. **4636/2019** on *International Protection and other provisions* establishes the obligation of the competent authorities to inform NRM upon identification¹ of a human trafficking victim.

NRM's competence includes:

- **Collection of victims' protection requests** (identified by any public Actors or NGO, not necessarily officially recognized as victims¹)
- **Monitoring of cases**
- **Creation and operation of the victims' protection requests Registration System** (reliable statistics)

The Greek NRM was first launched on 1st January, 2019 and the Report hereby presents data extracted by the cases, referred to the Greek NRM within the time period 1st January 2019 until 1st January 2020, concerning victims of human trafficking, who had been either receiving protection services or identified in Greece **during 2019 (regardless of the period and the location that the crime of trafficking took place).**

The fact that the response of the agencies involved in the detection and protection of victims of human trafficking during this initial period of the operation of the NRM was more than satisfactory, is particularly encouraging.

General remarks

It should be noted that according to the Greek NRM standard operational procedures, the officially recognized victims and the presumed² ones are included, regardless of when and where the

¹ When it comes out that at least one action took place, using at least one of the means, with the purpose of exploitation of any form, the victim is identified as a presumed victim and referred to NRM. In case of a minor victim, the use of any means is irrelevant.

² Presumed victim is any person for whom there are grounds to believe that he/she may have been or is currently in a situation of human trafficking but has not been formally identified by the relevant authorities (e.g. police) as a trafficking victim

offence of human trafficking took place, as long as protection services linked to their trafficking experience are currently provided to them. The primary aim of the NRM is to ensure the respect of the basic rights of the victims, as well as their protection, along with their access to the proper agencies for assistance and services.

In this regard, the NRM Referral Form includes all the necessary information (e.g. pregnancy) that is required for the holistic assessment of each victim's vulnerability and the detection of additional needs. Moreover, the specific details of each case (e.g. the most frequent means used for each action) may be a base for understanding the phenomenon in each period, in order to develop raising awareness and prevention activities.

During the aforementioned time period, **154 victims of human trafficking** were registered in the NRM. Each referral is followed by direct contact of a member of the NRM Support Team with the Agency professional who had completed each form and preferably had direct communication with the victim. Through this communication, specific data of the completed form are clarified, referral and protection alternatives are suggested and challenges in case management are discussed, always respecting the victim's anonymity.

Further monitoring of each case is foreseen in the NRM standardized procedures (SOPs) by the submission on a quarterly basis of the "Protection Services Monitoring Form".

The amount of data collected this year is of course satisfactory at this early stage of the NRM operation, but at the same time inadequate to reach safe conclusions about the country's response to trafficking victims' identification and protection. Nevertheless, the statistical data, the correlations and the conclusions presented in this Report can give valuable insights about the NRM possibilities, regarding the type, quantity and quality of the information that may be extracted, as well as the possibilities of data processing, in order to reach safe conclusions on the trends of the phenomenon in Greece.

More specifically, the following public actors submitted referral forms concerning sixty-eight **(68)** victims during 2019:

1. Greek Police
2. Asylum Service
3. First Reception and Identification Service
4. National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA)
5. National Public Health Organization (EODY)

Within the same period, NRM received referrals, from the Non-Governmental and International Organisations listed below, concerning eighty-six **(86)** victims:

1. «Arsis» - Association for the Social Support of Youth
2. The A21 Campaign

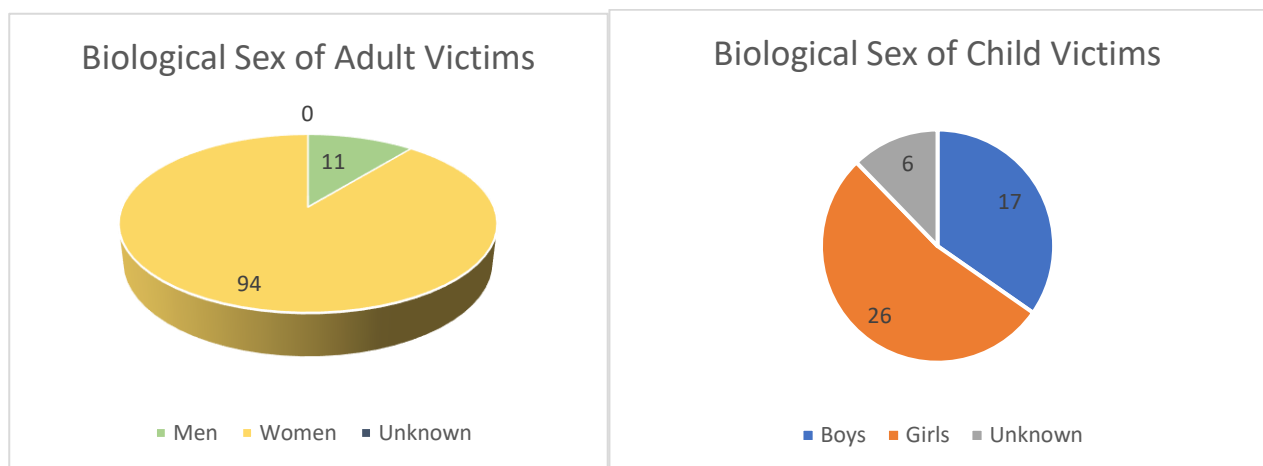
3. Network for Children’s Rights
4. Centre for Research on Women’s Issues “DIOTIMA”,
5. HIAS Greece,
6. NGO “Praksis”,
7. NGO “Solidarity Now”,
8. The Smile of the Child,
9. Greek Council for Refugees
10. The UN Refugee Agency in Greece (UNHCR)

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING REGISTERED IN THE NRM

I. Gender

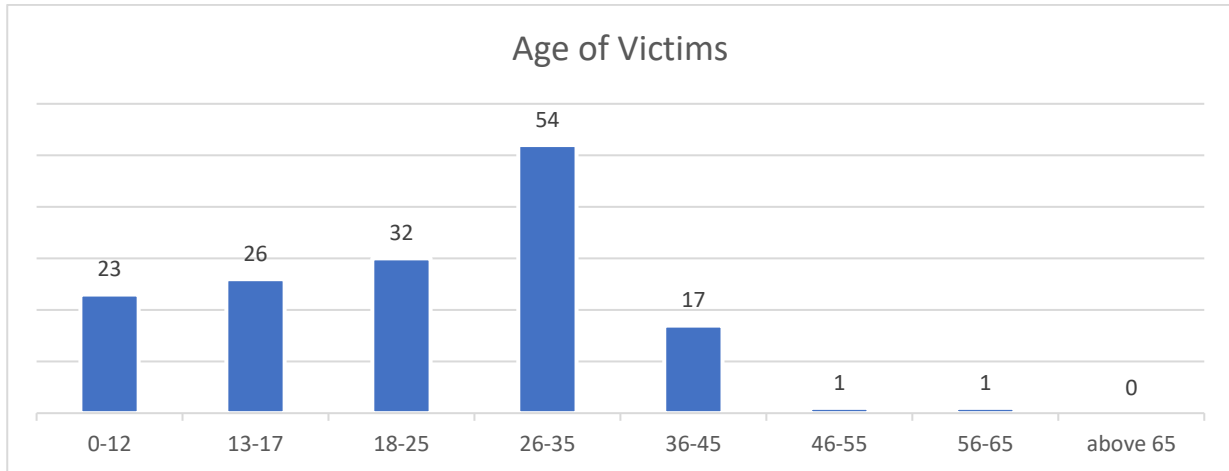
A hundred and twenty (120) of the one hundred and fifty-four (154) individuals registered in the NRM during 2019 are women and girls, twenty-eight (28) are men, two of them (2) transgender, and boys. In six (6) cases the gender of the victim was not specified. It is obvious that women constitute the majority of the adult victims, while the number of girls and boys is almost equal. Moreover, eleven (11) women were pregnant at the time of the referral, and twenty-one (21) were accompanied by their children.

The graphs depict the biological sex of the trafficked victims.



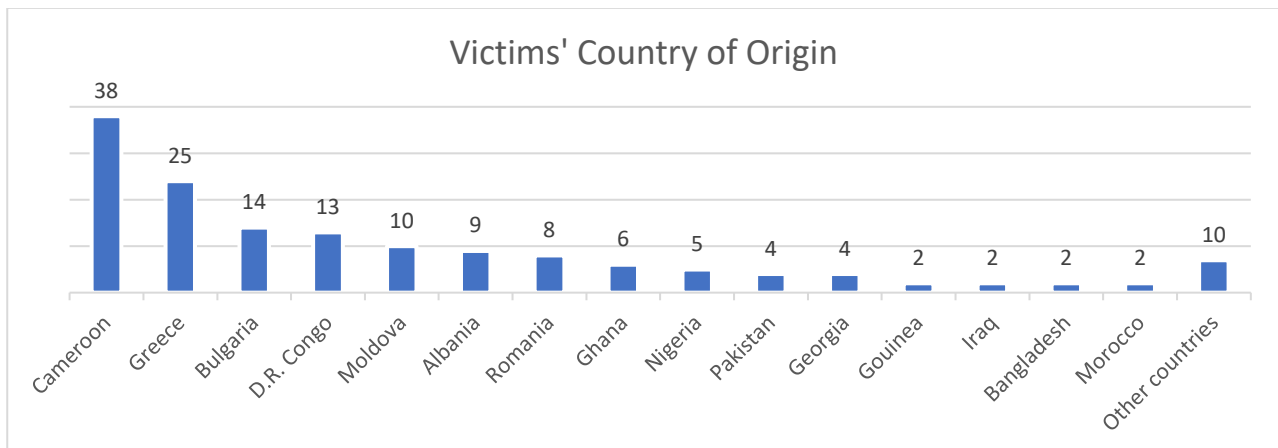
II. Age

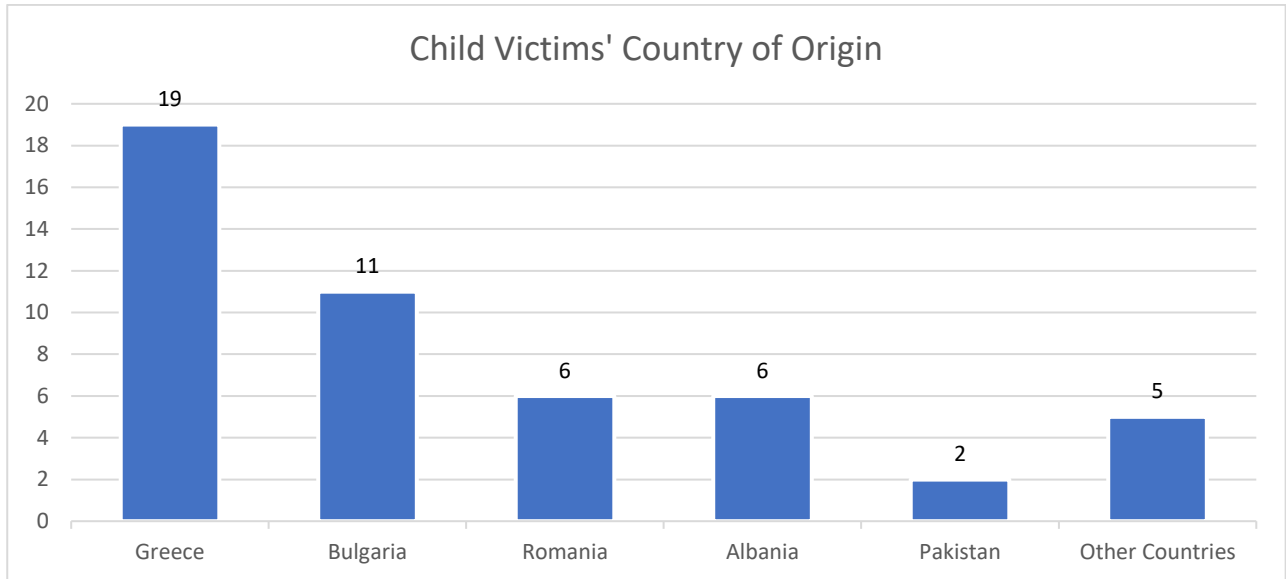
Regarding the victims’ age, the majority of the adult victims are below 35 years old. Forty-nine (49) out of the one hundred and fifty-four (154) referred victims are children, eleven (11) of whom unaccompanied.



III. Nationality

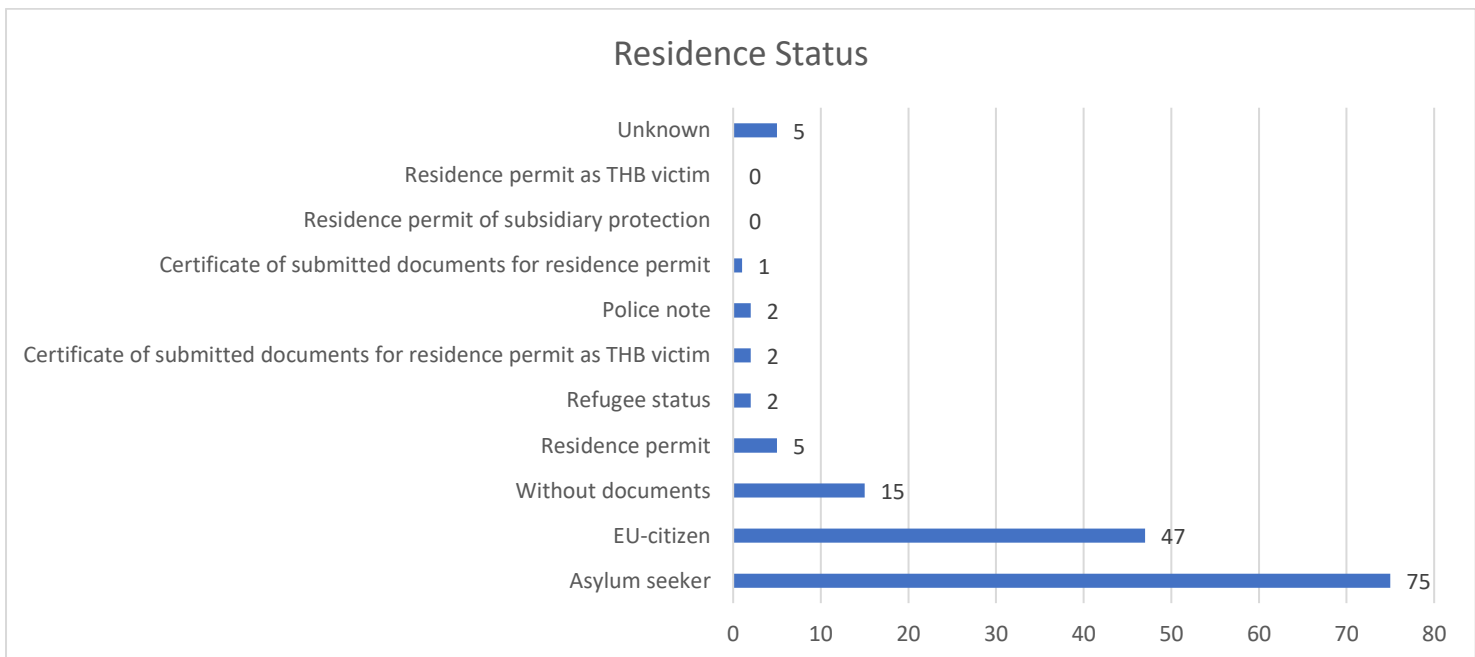
Regarding the nationalities of the victims, it is remarkable that twenty-five (25) of the victims are of Greek nationality, nineteen (19) of whom are children - victims of exploitation of begging.





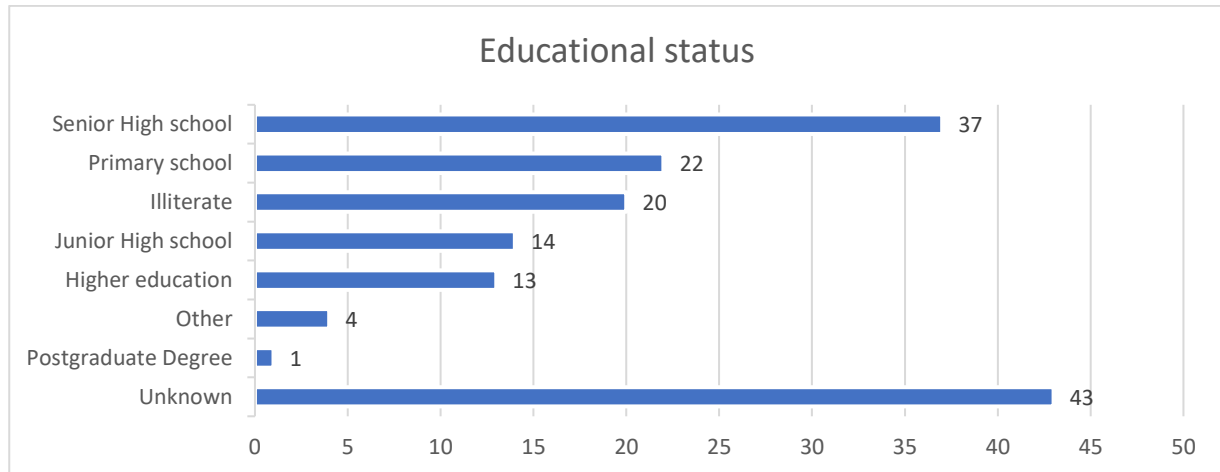
IV. Residence status of the victims referred to NRM

The vast majority of the victims, who were referred to the NRM and are currently receiving protection services, are asylum seekers. A large number resides legally in Greece, forty-seven (47) of whom are EU citizens (incl. Greek nationals). It is important to note that for those victims who are irregularly staying in the country, all necessary actions to resolve their residence issues are being taken by the actors, that offer legal assistance.



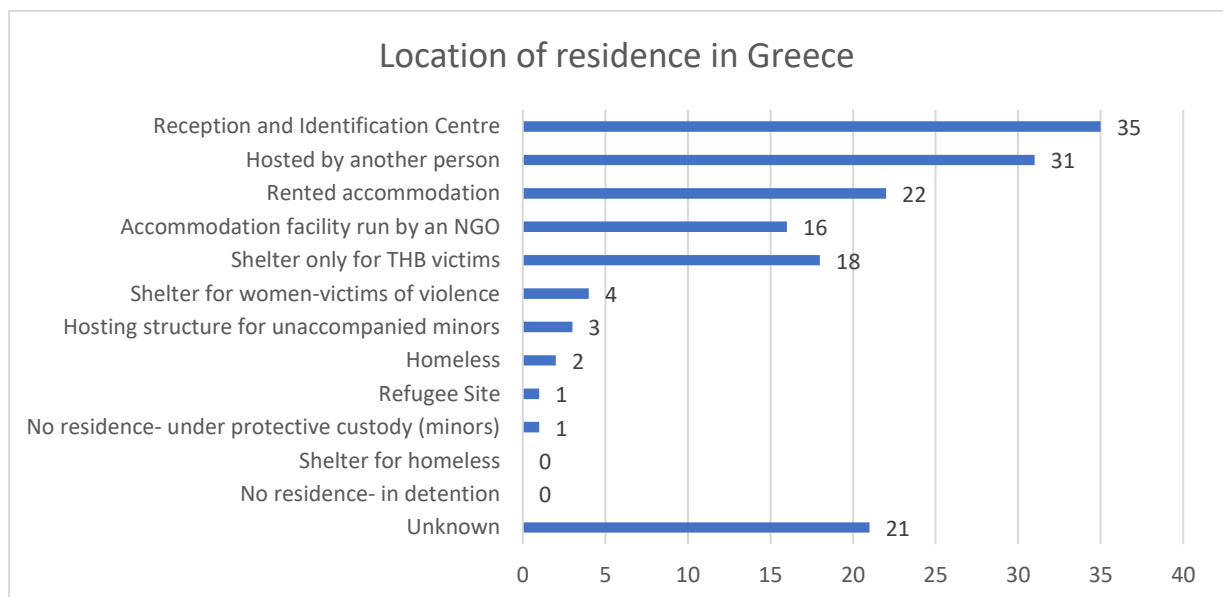
V. Educational status

The graph concerns the total of the referred victims.



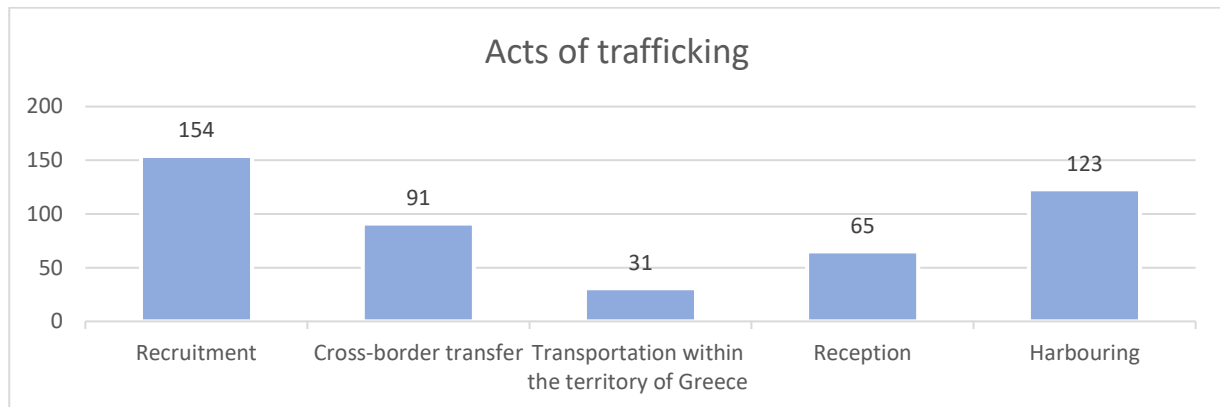
VI. Location of residence in Greece

It is specified that any reference to the place of residence – as well as any reference to the residence status – relates to the time period the victims were referred to the NRM.



B. ACTS OF TRAFFICKING

The following graph depicts the acts of trafficking that took place, according to the victims' narrative/ description of events. It should be noted that in each case there may have taken place more than one act (e.g. recruitment, then transportation and receipt, followed by harbouring).

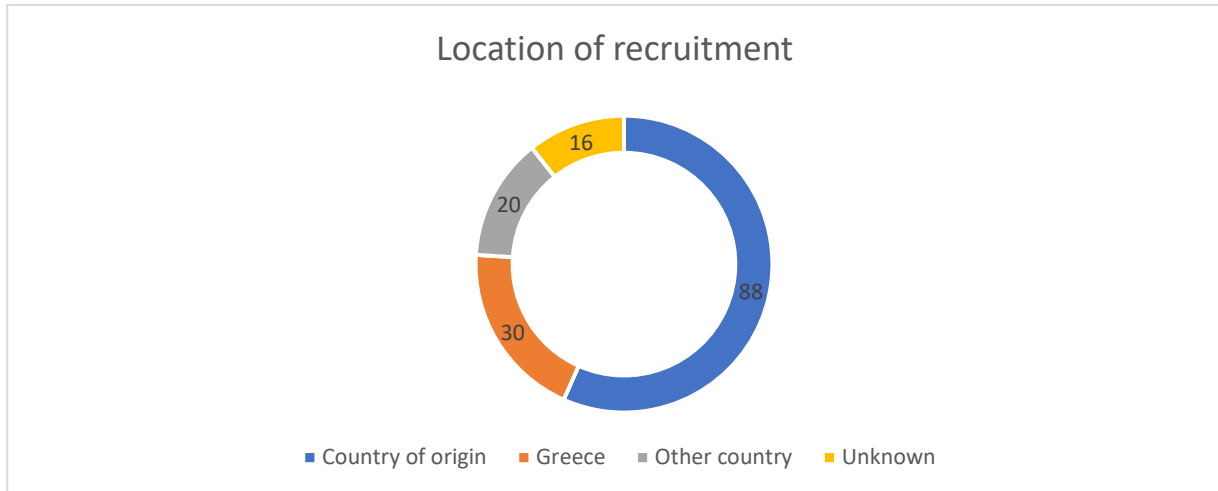


C. INFORMATION REGARDING RECRUITMENT

I. Country of recruitment

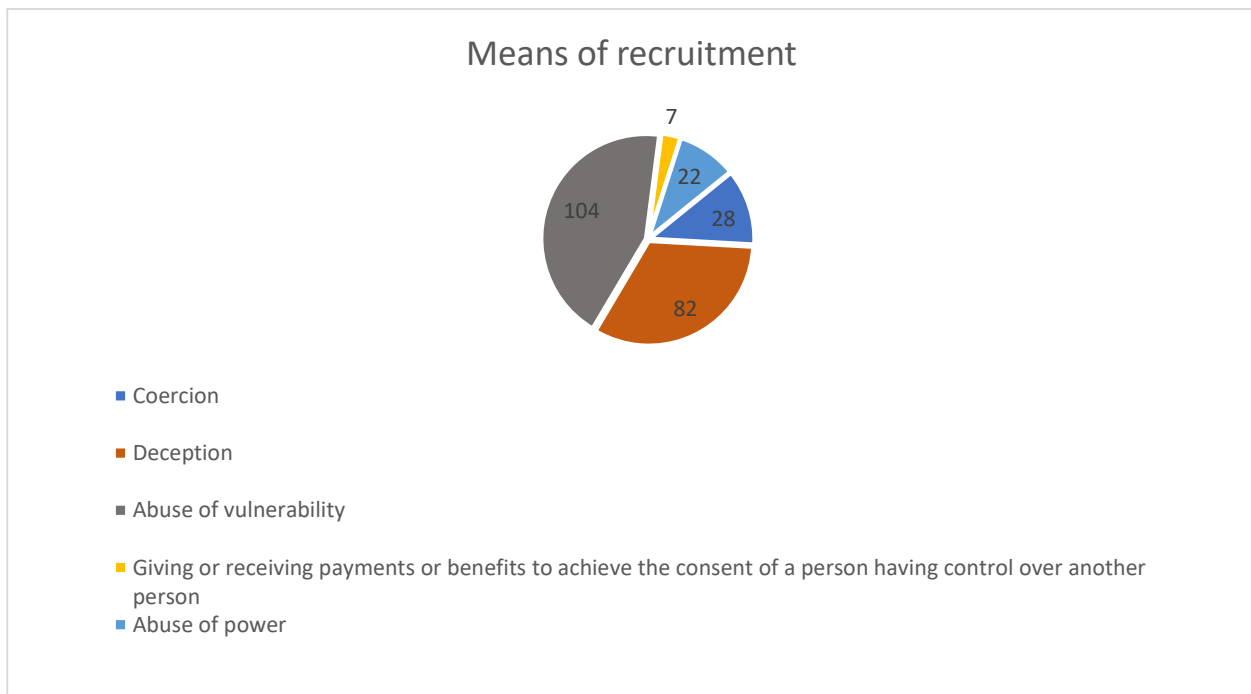
Recruitment is one of the main elements of human trafficking and it must be examined thoroughly, because it will help us better understand the phenomenon. The means used on victims to fall into the hands of traffickers can be a very useful piece of information, as they play a critical role to the early identification of a trafficking victim. At the same time, the information on the means of trafficking acts can also be used as a preventive measure to raise awareness of vulnerable groups, so as to avoid getting trapped in attempts of recruitment.

The annual data show that the majority of foreign victims have been recruited at their country of origin.



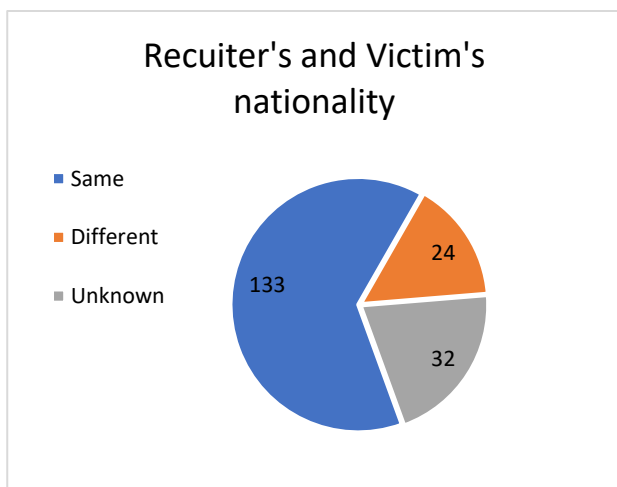
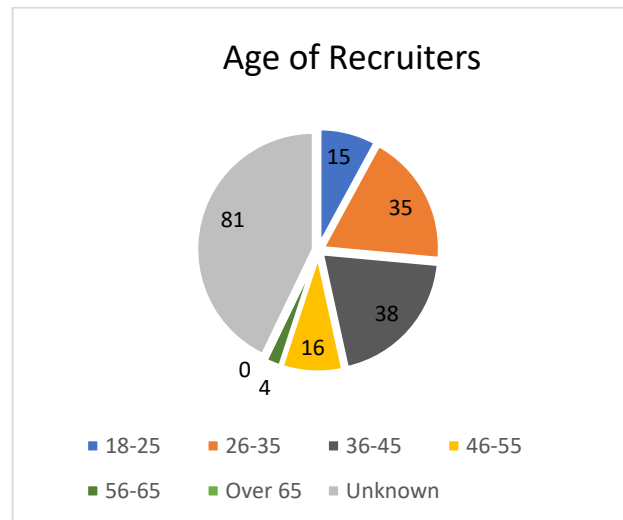
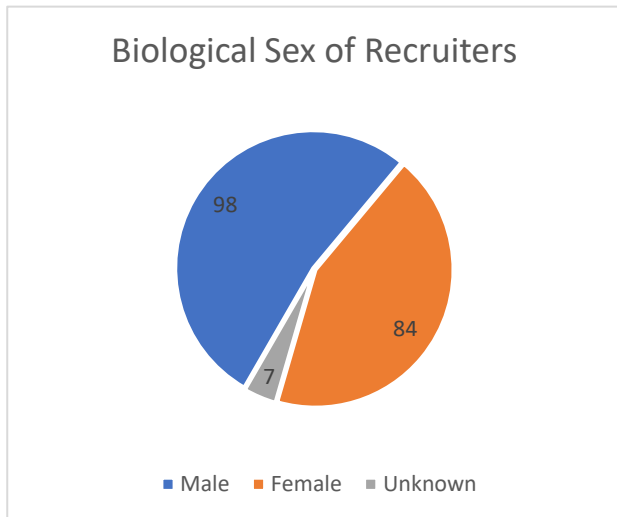
II. Means of recruitment

It should be noted that information on the means of recruitment is not necessarily recorded in all referral forms, given that in case of a child victim, it is not necessary to identify the means of the trafficking actions. Needless to say, that it is common to use more than one means in performing the trafficking actions and specifically recruitment. However, it is obvious that the vulnerable situation of a person is the main risk factor for him/her.



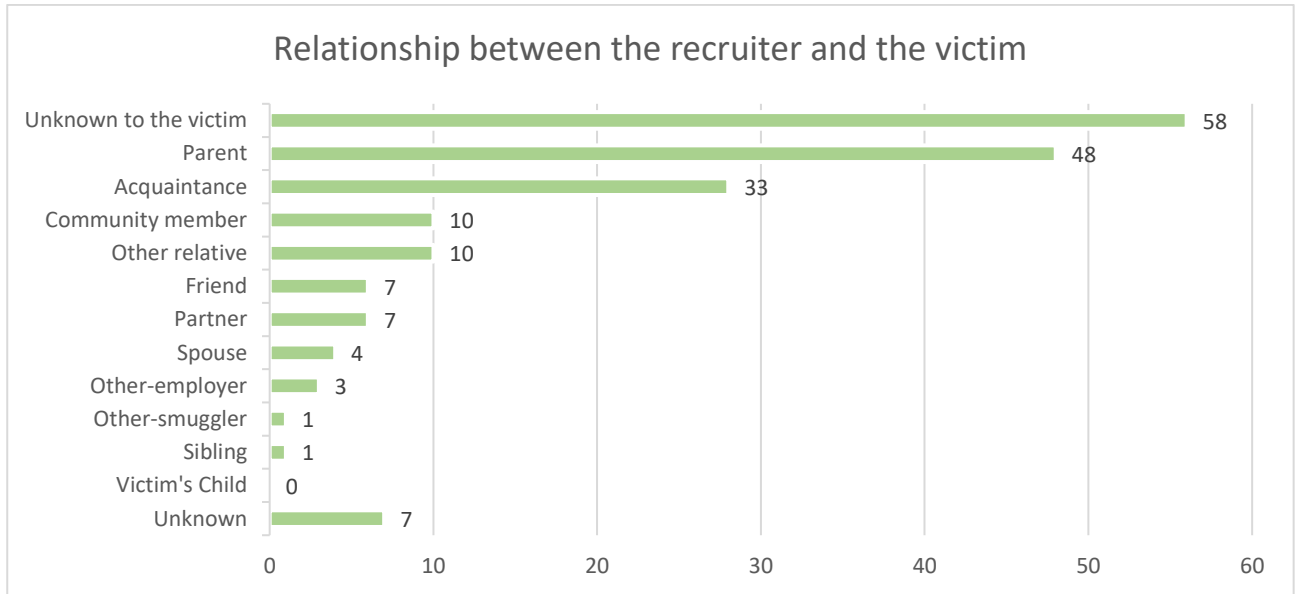
III. Information on recruiters

The graphs below show information about the recruiters' profile and their relationship with the victims. Note that more than one recruiters were reported in thirty-five (35) cases.

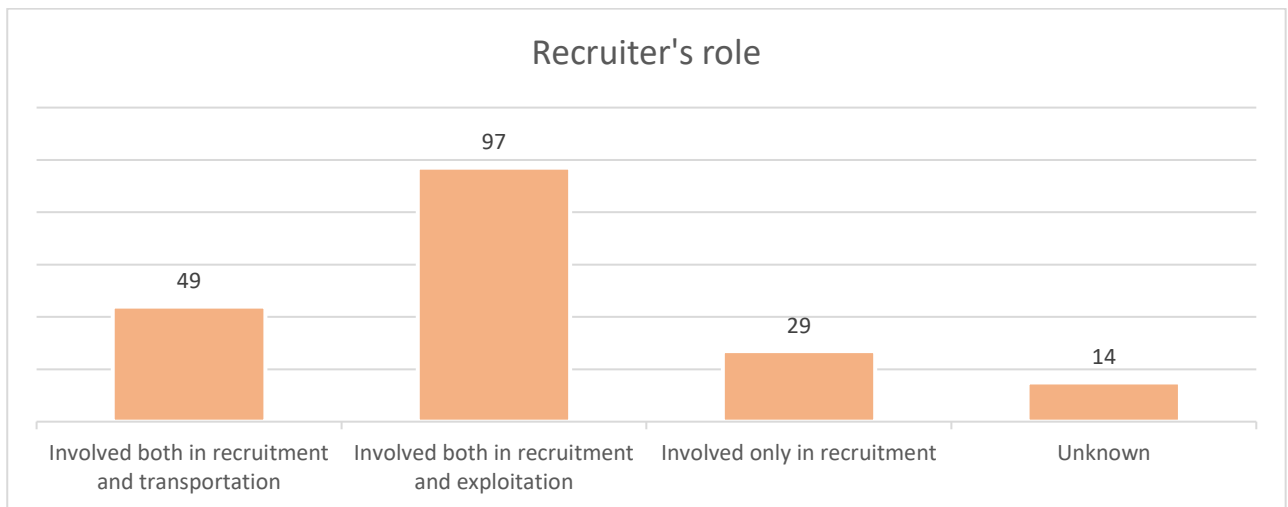


This graph shows how often the nationality of the victim is the same as the nationality of the recruiter. This finding is in alignment with the finding that recruitment often takes place in the country of origin. One could say that recruitment by a co-national is a trafficking trend.

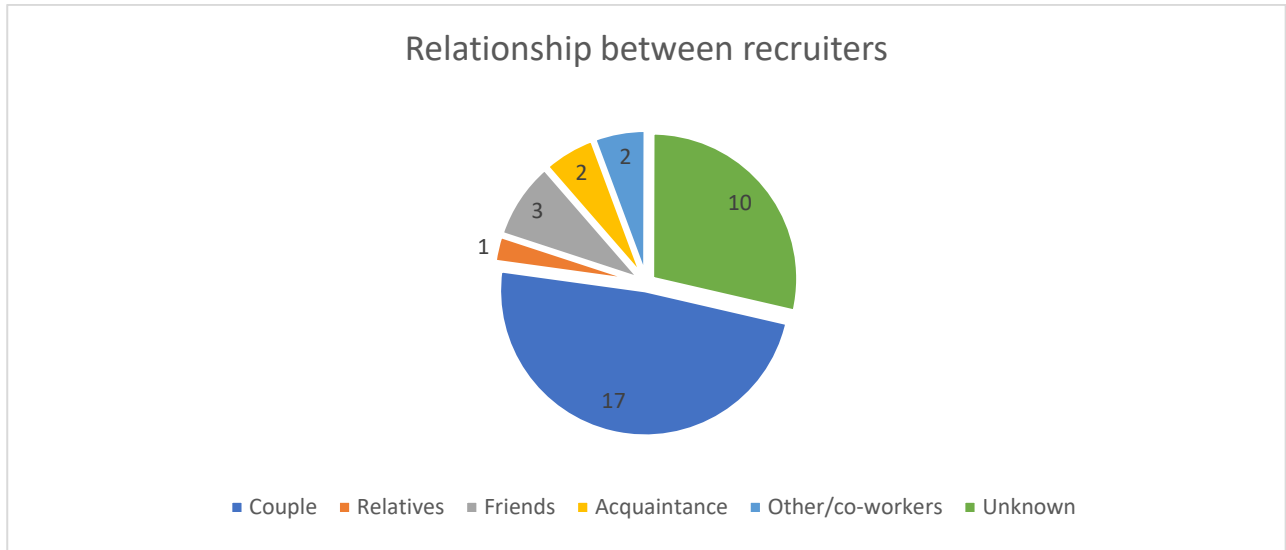
Regarding the relationship of the recruiters with the victims, a percentage above 30% were persons unknown to them. In most child victims' cases, their parents are being indicated as the recruiters, in relation mostly to exploitation of begging. Note that the indicator "other relatives" includes the parent's partner, whereas "acquaintance" includes also friends of the broader family.



The graph below shows the structure of the roles of the persons involved in trafficking. In most of the cases the recruiters are the same persons as the exploiters.



In thirty-five (35) cases the recruiters were more than one. In most of these cases the recruiters are spouses or partners.



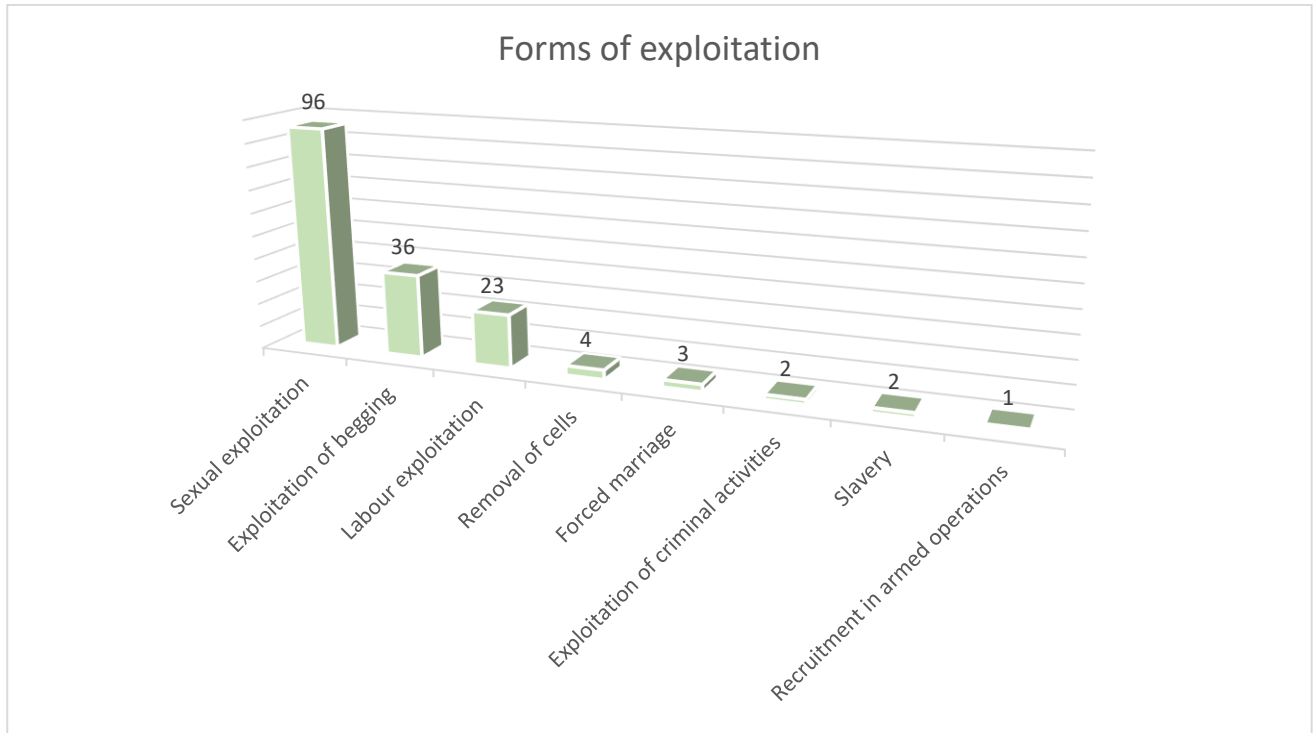
D. INFORMATION ON THE EXPLOITATION

I. Forms of Exploitation

In several cases, victims were subjected to exploitation of multiple forms, as indicated in the graph below.

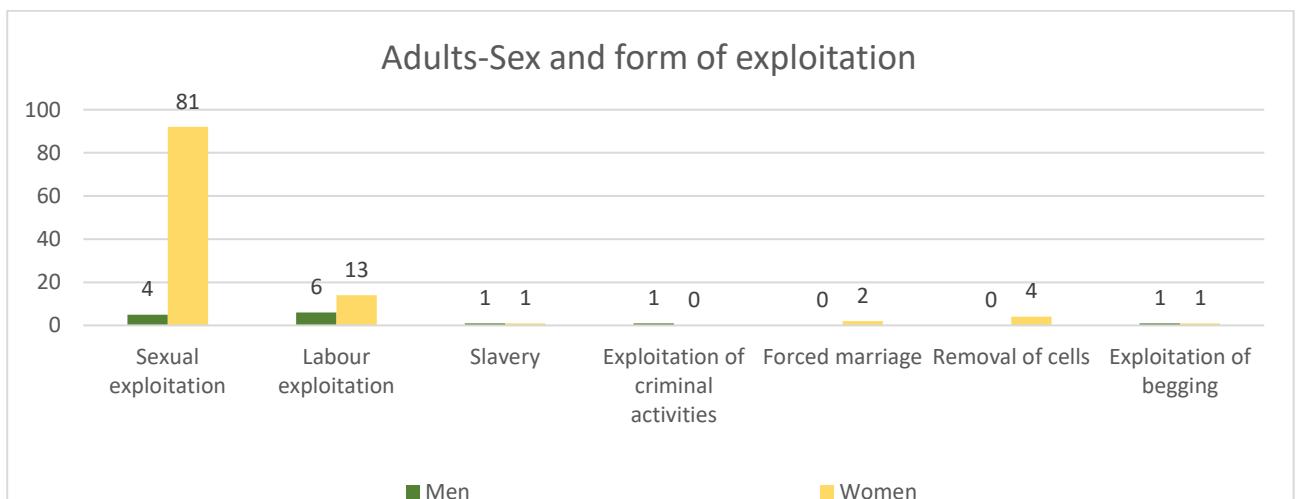
It is clarified, that slavery is defined in article 1 para. 1 of the Slavery Convention as *“the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised”*. In both cases which are indicated as “slavery” in the graph, the “trading” of the victim took place.

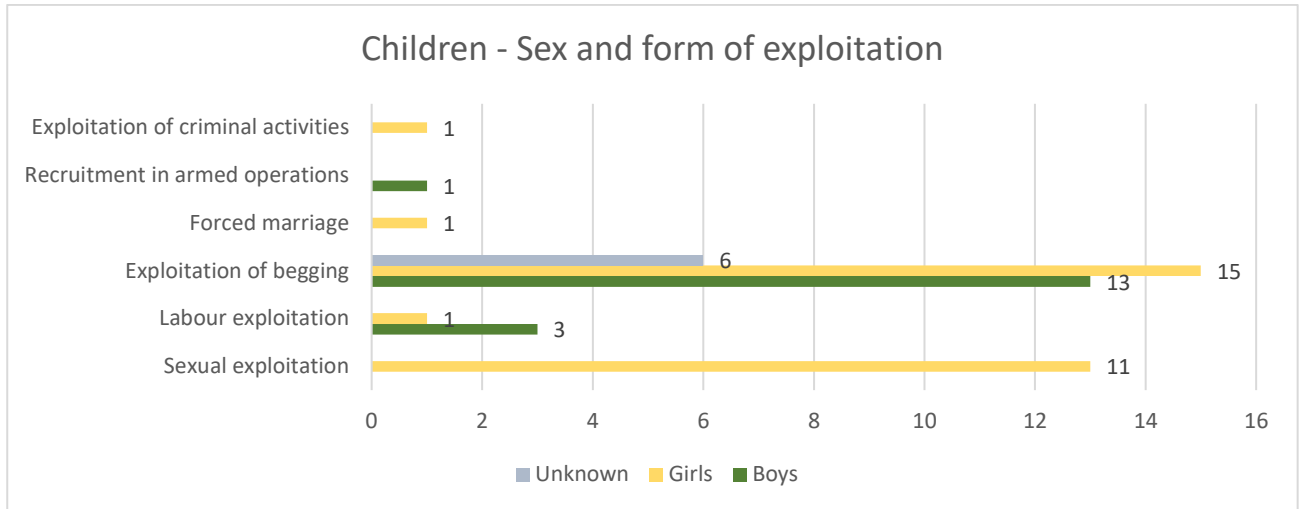
We also clarify, that the registered cases of cells removal regard removal of ova.



II. Biological sex of the victims and form of exploitation

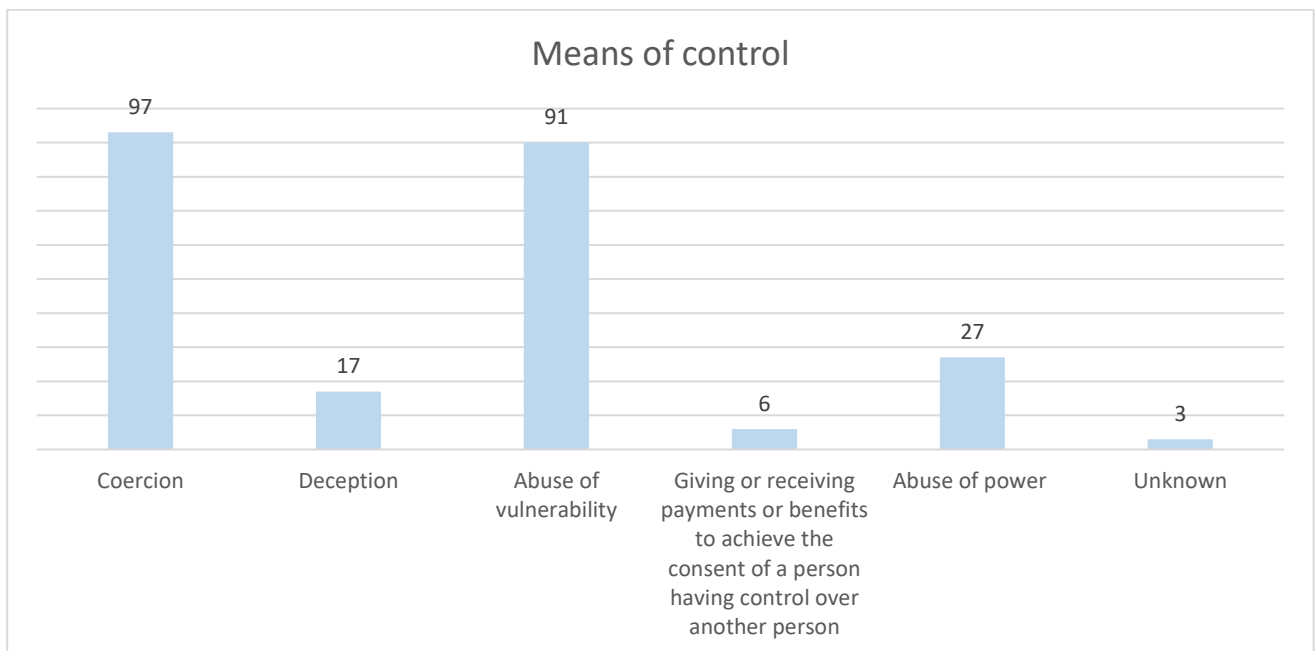
The vast majority of trafficking victims reported to NRM in 2019 were women, victims of sexual exploitation. It should be noted that two (2) of the victims of sexual exploitation, recorded (and presented in the graph) as of male biological sex, are actually transgender. In addition, it should be clarified that the exploitation of begging is related almost exclusively to children victims.





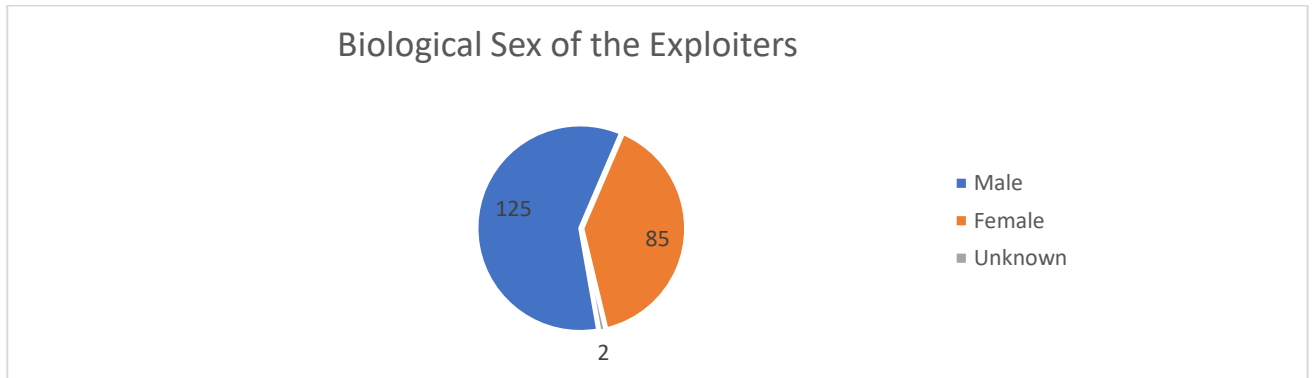
III. Means of control

As in the act of recruitment, more than one means of control have been used during the victims' exploitation. Coercion and abuse of vulnerability seem to be the most common means of control, while abuse of power mainly applies to cases of minors. Abuse of vulnerable situations appears as a means of control, in almost all cases, but it does not seem to be enough by itself to keep the victim under the control of traffickers and therefore it appears more often in combination with the use of coercive means.

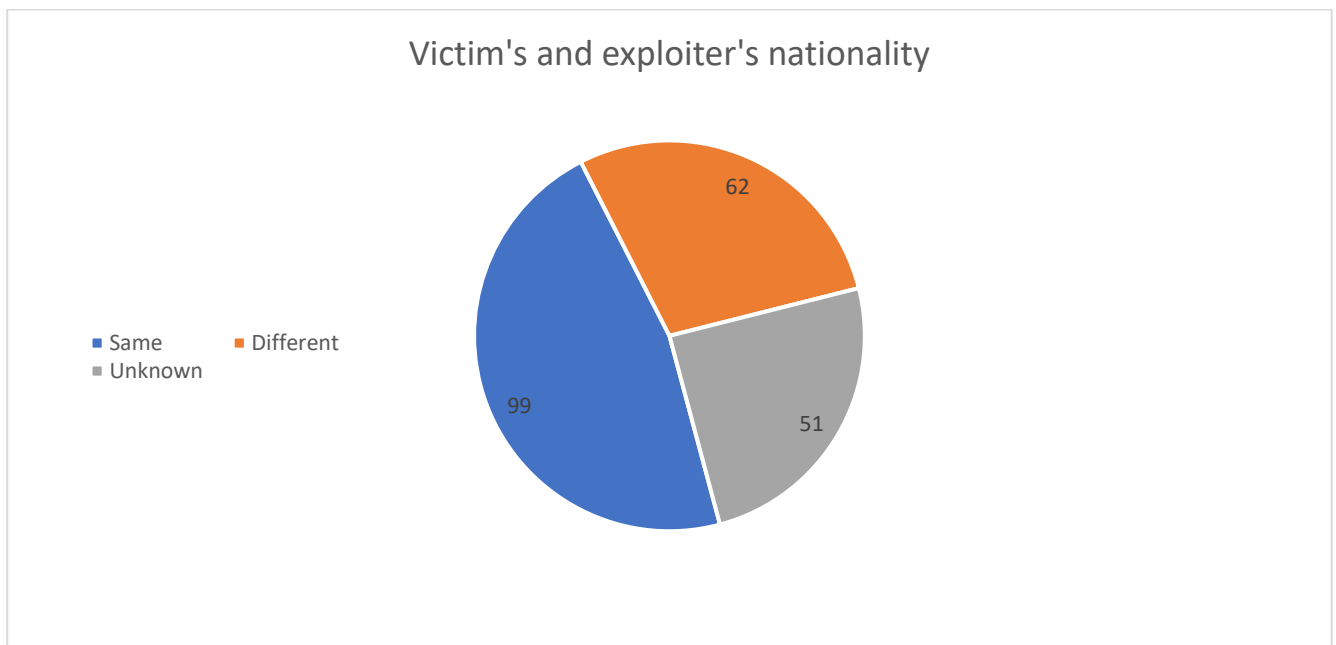


IV. Information on exploiters

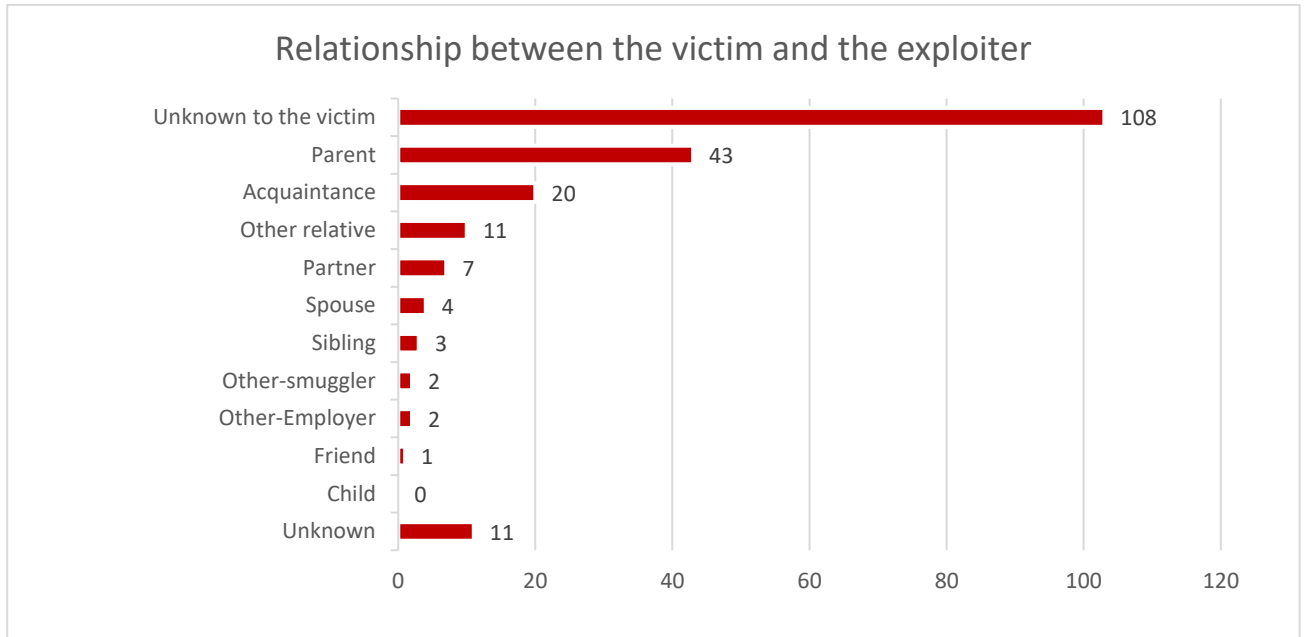
The graphs below show information about the profile of the persons involved in exploitation and their relationship with the victims. The number of exploiters exceeds the number of the victims, as very often more than one exploiter is reported in a victim's case.



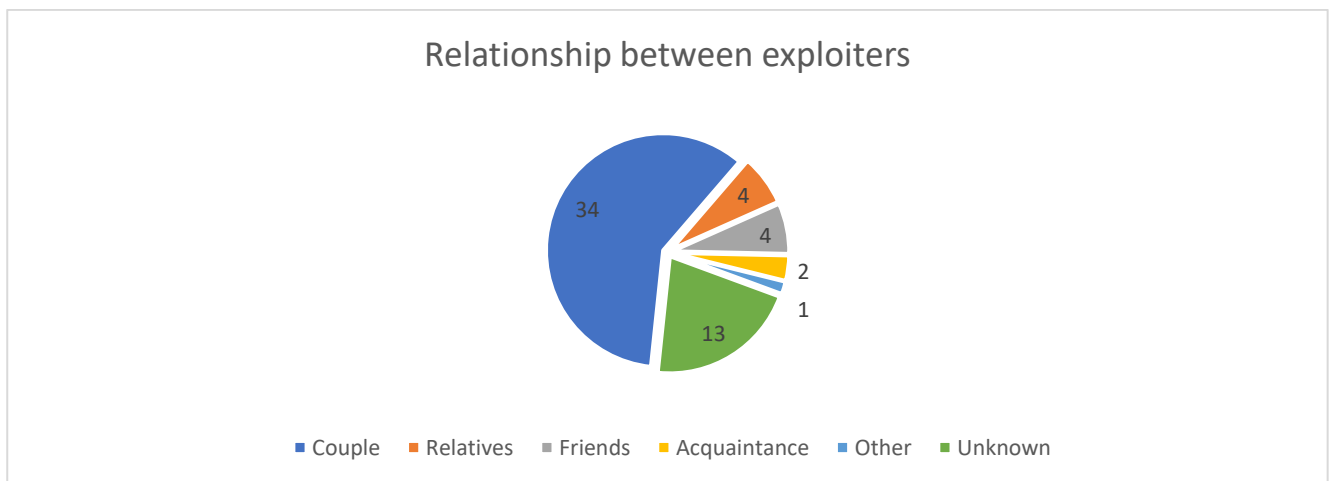
The following graph shows how often the nationality of the victims is the same as the nationality of the persons involved in the exploitation. In most of the cases that the nationality of the exploiter is known, the latter and the victim are of the same nationality.



In most cases the persons involved in the exploitation, although mainly co-nationals, are completely unknown to the victim. The data of the referral forms show that, in most of the cases, in which the parents are recorded as the exploiters, the form of exploitation is exploitation of begging.



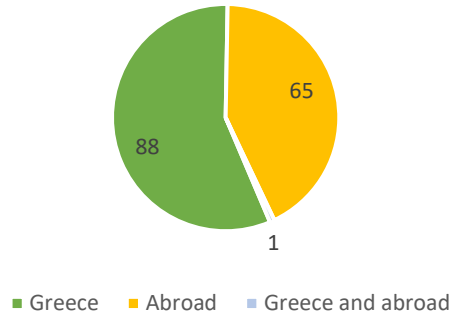
The majority of those cases that the persons involved in the exploitation were more than one, those were spouses or partners.



V. Countries where the exploitation took place

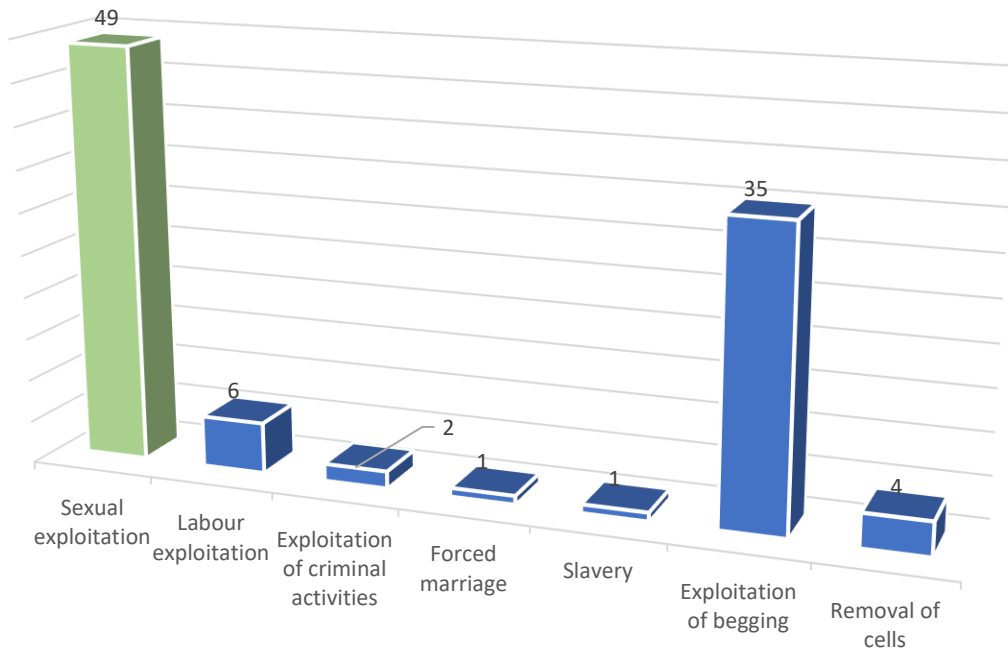
Greece was the location of the exploitation in most cases reported to NRM. Forty-four (44) of the victims who were exploited only abroad, were subject to exploitation in Turkey.

Location of exploitation



In the cases that the exploitation took place in Greece, the recorded forms of exploitation were mostly sexual exploitation and exploitation of begging. It is worth noticing that the Referral Form field “location of exploitation” is filled only in case the exploitation actually took place (147).

Forms of exploitation in Greece

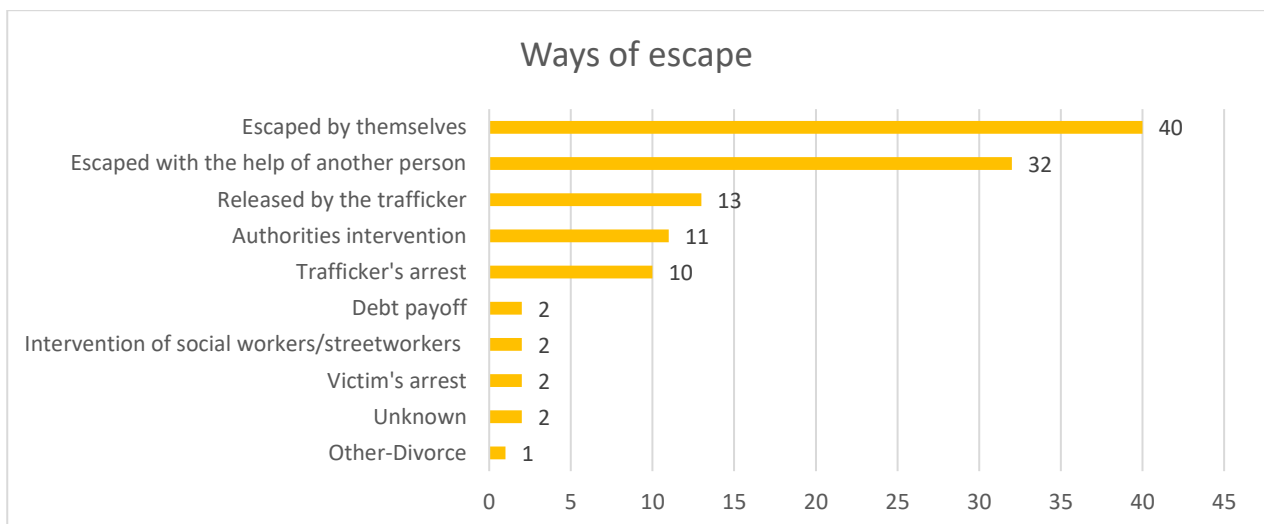


VI. Ways of escaping trafficking condition

Out of the 154 victims of trafficking who have been referred to the NRM, a hundred and fourteen (114) have escaped the trafficking condition. The sixteen (16) victims, who were under exploitation – mostly of begging -, at the time of their identification and referral to NRM, were children. The Social Service mobilised the Authorities. Finally, for twenty-four (24) cases, the referral actors could not clearly state at that time whether the victims had permanently interrupted their relationship with their exploiters.



Regarding the one hundred and fourteen (114) victims that escaped from the trafficking condition, the ways of escape were the following:

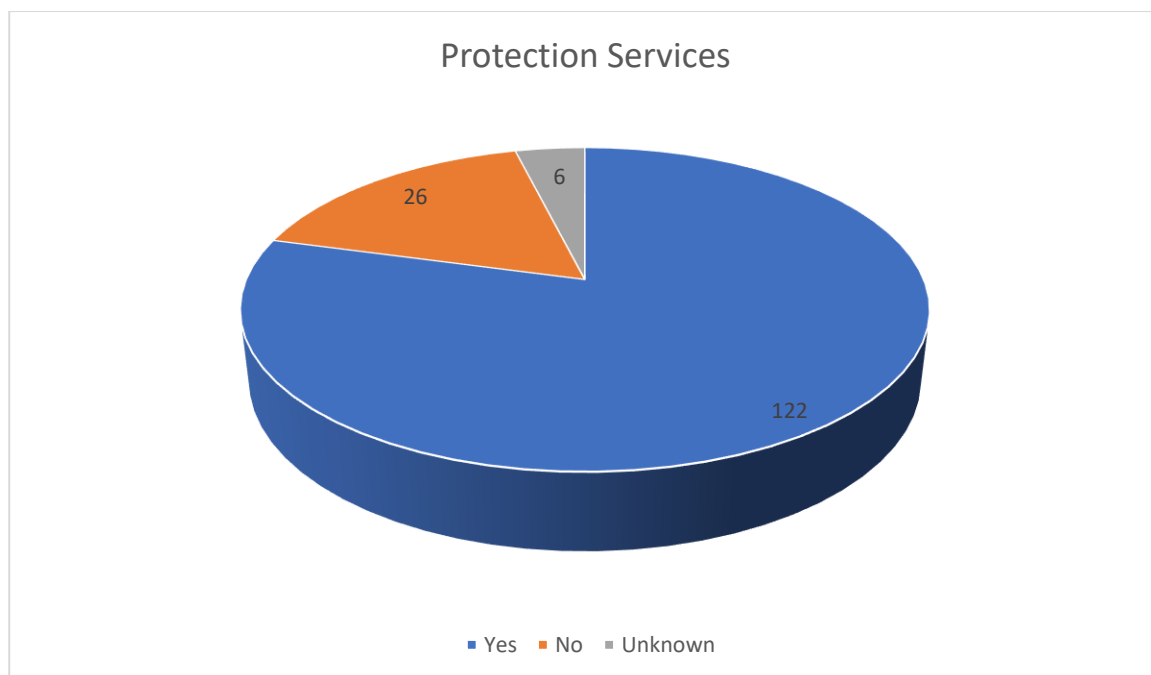


In one case, two ways of escape were recorded; the victim escaped with the coordinated intervention of social workers followed by the Authorities' intervention. The answer "other-divorce" is about the divorce between the victim and the trafficker. In fourteen (14) of the thirty-two (32) cases, that third persons helped the victim to escape, those were clients of sexual exploitation. The rest were also victims, room-mates or co-workers. In two cases, the victims asked for help from a stranger.

D. PROTECTION

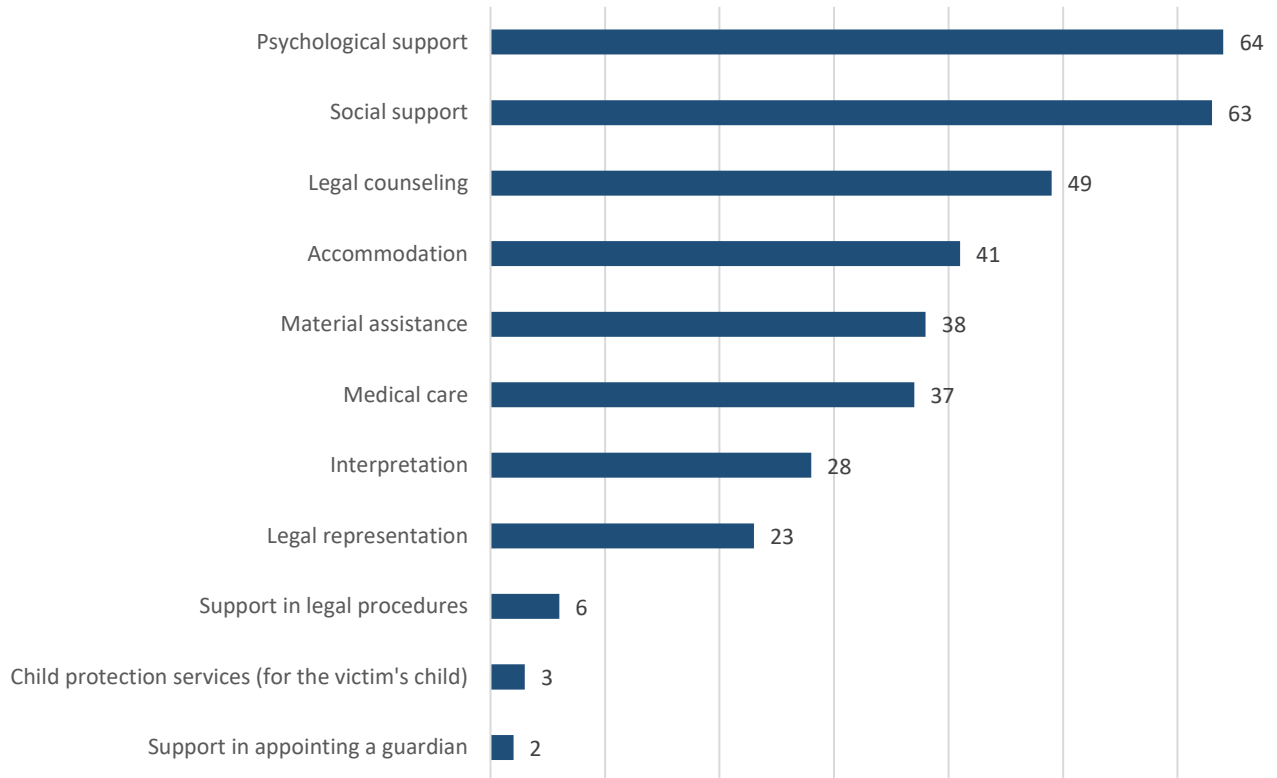
Protection services provision

The graph below depicts the number of victims to whom protection services were provided, either upon their detection/identification or during their subsequent cooperation with support Agencies (one hundred and twenty-two - 122). Amongst the twenty-six (26) victims, who did not receive protection services, are those who stated that they are not willing to receive such, as well as those who were not provided with protection services upon identification, mainly because the identification Actor did not provide support services at all, e.g. the Asylum Service. In the latter case, the victims were informed about protection actors, but the beginning of any cooperation was not confirmed. Finally, the provision of help was not possible in some cases, as the victims were still under exploitation. In cases of child victims, reporting to Juvenile Prosecutor was prioritised.

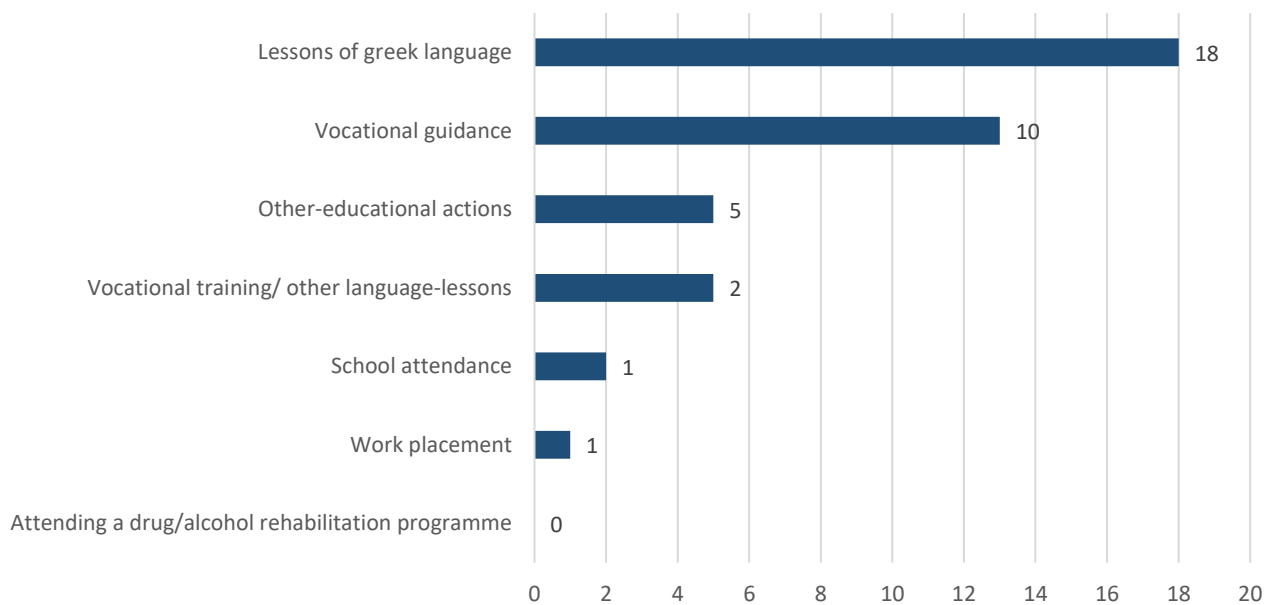


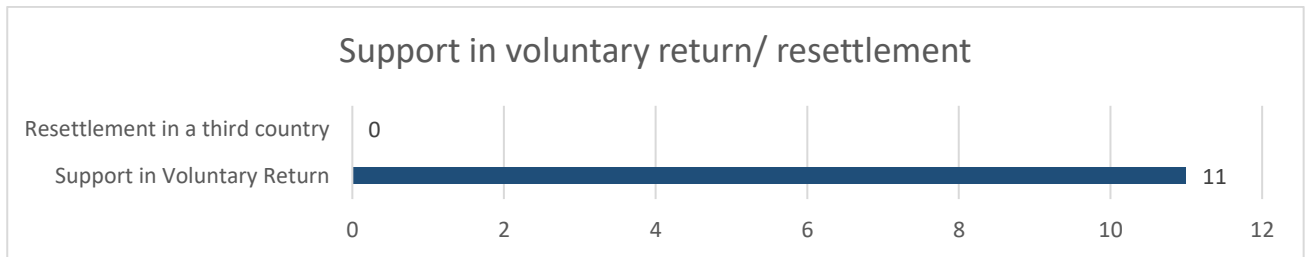
In most cases the primary services of social and psychological support were provided to the identified victims in 2019. Accommodation and legal support follow.

First Level Services Provision



Social Integration services





E. RECOGNITION PROCESS

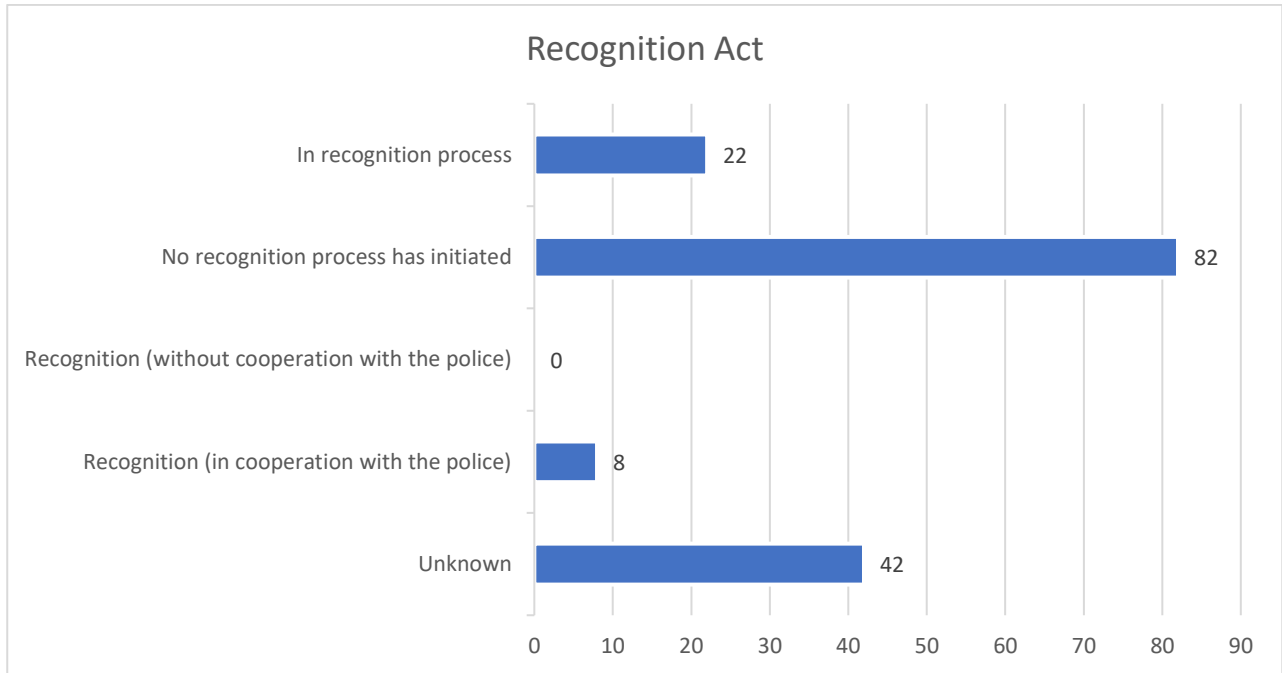
Victims' recognition

According to the Greek legislation, the recognition act of a victim, as one of trafficking in human beings, is issued by the Prosecutor. The cases that are not in recognition process concern either victims who had not yet received legal counselling, regarding the recognition process, or victims who hesitated for various reasons to be involved in such a procedure. The answer "unknown" has been chosen in several cases. That is probably an indicator that the recognition process has not started yet or the professionals had no further information on this aspect of the case.

There have been no reported cases of initiation of the recognition process without cooperation with the police.

Additionally, no case of granting reflection period to victims registered in NRM was reported.

It should be however noted, that the data presented refer only to the cases of those victims, who consented to their referral to NRM and subsequently received the support of the Referral Actor. Thus, the data about the issuance of Reflection Period Acts (which may be granted to third-country nationals, given that they are officially recognised as human trafficking victims, according to art. 49 para. 1 L. 4251/2014), should be assessed along with the data provided by Prosecutors' Offices. The same applies to data regarding Recognition Acts. Accordingly, the NRM data on residence permits to recognized victims of trafficking must be assessed along with data by the Ministry of Asylum and Migration, responsible for the issuance of such residence permits.

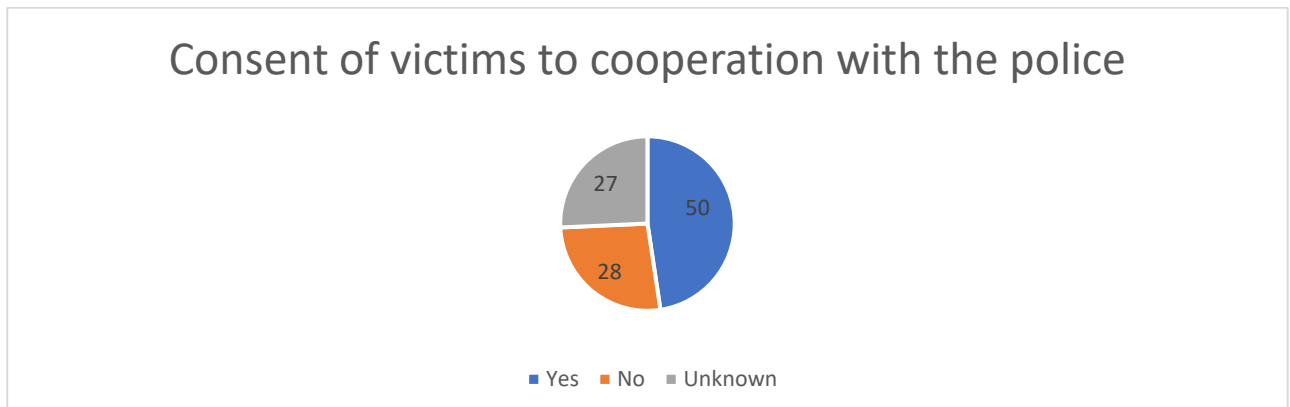


F. LEGAL PROCEDURES – VICTIM’S PARTICIPATION

Victim’s consent to cooperate with the police

The consent to cooperate with the police concerns only adult victims. According to the referrals, the refusal to cooperate with the police is usually related to the victim’s reluctance, which may be attributed to several factors.

In any case, it should be taken under consideration that the review of alternative procedures and choices for a victim is an ongoing procedure in the framework of his/her protection and several changes/modifications in their individualized action plan might take place within protection period. It is also worth-noticing, that victims tend to consent to cooperate with the police, once they feel safe, which means that the provision of protection services increases the possibilities for such a perspective.



There have been no cases of submission of an application to the Greek Authority of Compensation reported.

Despite the dynamic launch of NRM, it remains self-evident, that the crime of trafficking remains under-reported. We thus reiterate that all relevant stakeholders must be actively involved to the highest grade in NRM, in order for the respective data to be representative regarding the forms and dimensions of human trafficking, as well as in order to describe more precisely the protection framework. We hope that the increase of the number of victims, identified and referred to NRM, will allow the recording of more data, which will constitute the base for a more complex and deeper analysis, through correlations of the registered data.

Towards the achievement of these objectives, the NRM support team has been delivering a series of interagency meetings across the country as well as seminars to first – line responders (of public sector and civil society) in the Aegean islands and in the mainland during 2019, in order to promote the understanding of NRM functioning, as well as to encourage the professionals in referring cases to NRM.