



CCME-Caritas Europa Press Release

Visit of Christian anti-trafficking network in Romania underlines need for continued assistance to victims and careful approach to return

Representatives of Christian organisations from Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy and Romania have been visiting Bucharest from 27th to 30th March in order to learn how churches and assistance organisations are active in prevention of trafficking in women and assistance to victims. The visit was the third one in a series of exchange visits between Christian organisations from all over Europe, which take place in the context of the „Christian Action and networking against Trafficking in women (CAT)“ project.

During the stay, participants learnt about the situation in Romania and also in the Republic of Moldova. They got an impression about the circumstances behind women becoming victims of trafficking. Both Romania and the Republic of Moldova are among the main countries of origin of victims of trafficking in Human beings.

The participants learnt about the efforts of the state institutions, churches and NGOs to prevent trafficking in Human Beings. Local NGOs informed the visiting group about their activities in the context of the National Action Plan against trafficking in Human Beings. One of the main activities in this context is an awareness-raising campaign in Romania. This campaign is co-sponsored by Churches and related NGOs. Churches play a key role in addressing the problem of trafficking in Human Beings especially in the countryside. Participants exchanged experiences with the local churches and NGOs how an awareness-raising campaign can be as targeted as possible. They also discussed how churches and NGOs can offer educational and socio-professional activities to avoid that women and girls become potential victims.

The visit was also an occasion to meet with representatives of NGOs from the Republic of Moldova, who are active in prevention and assistance to victims of trafficking. The visit underlined that both Romania and the Republic of Moldova need substantial support in order to address the problem of trafficking in Human Beings. This support should include both financial assistance and exchange of knowledge. Participants discussed the need for such support with representatives of the European Commission's representation in Romania.

During the visit, participants received information about the activities of the Bucharest office of the international organisation for Migration (IOM). These activities include work in awareness-raising campaigns and in return programmes for victims. Participants in this context expressed concern about the lack of continuity in the provision of assistance to victims, who are returned to Romania.

“Through our assistance work we know about a lot of victims who returned to Romania. Unfortunately, experiences so far have been very mixed. We very often find that local

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circumstances do not allow a dignified return and successful reintegration” said a representative of a Romanian NGO.

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The CAT project has been launched by the Brussels-based Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and Caritas Europa. It aims at improving the capacity of Christian organisations and their partners to combat trafficking in women by building a European network. The project receives funding from the STOP Programme of the European Commission

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