

Beware of exploitation and human trafficking!

In the context of the war in Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of people are currently on the move. Several Caritas on the border with Ukraine have noticed signs that criminal groups are organising on both sides of the border and the risk of human trafficking and smuggling is high. Many people are offering assistance at the Ukrainian border and in other host countries, including accommodation in private spaces and transport to other regions and even other countries. At the border and in the other host countries, there is growing concern about safeguarding and protection issues. This document for Caritas staff and volunteers working with refugees at the border or in reception areas serves to give some tips on how to remain vigilant.

The reception of people fleeing from conflicts translates into human solidarity and food or material aid to meet the primary needs of these populations: food, water, health care, shelter, transportation, communication... But humanitarian aid and our emergency actions must also take into account the risks of exploitation and human trafficking

How to recognise human traffickers?

- **Victims:** vulnerable people: especially unaccompanied women and children (but sometimes men too), and minorities
- **Traffickers:** they offer for example accommodation away from official checkpoints, transport, or possibly some other form of support for which the victim must accompany them. Traffickers are generally not easy to spot, whether in civil society or in institutions. But it is important to ensure a minimum of safe recruitment practices to prevent traffickers from infiltrating your organisation as volunteers.

Do you have any suspicions? What to do and how to prevent?

- **Educate your staff and volunteers** about the need to keep an eye out for people who behave suspiciously.
- Ensure some **safe recruitment practices**, both for volunteers and new staff. Do not hire everyone who comes forward with good intentions: **check identity**, conduct an **interview** before any recruitment where you inform applicants that your Caritas has safeguarding procedures and a complaints mechanism. Present the **Code of Conduct** and have any volunteer or staff sign it. These trainings do not have to be long and you can do them in groups with several new recruits. If possible, call one or more previous employers before recruiting for sensitive positions. Your national Caritas safeguarding focal point will be able to give you more information.
- If available, display posters in Ukrainian and other relevant languages about the risk of human trafficking and safe and verified routes to transport and accommodation.
- If you have doubts about a person's behaviour, inform the authorities. Approach the potential victim and suggest safer and verified routes to access offered help.

Contact numbers

- If you are a victim of human trafficking or wish to report a crime related to human trafficking, you can use one of the **national helplines** below. You can always remain anonymous. You can find the human trafficking hotlines in each country here:
https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/national-hotlines_en
- [Copy/paste info on the country of the Caritas in question]

More information on human trafficking

To learn more about the issue of exploitation and trafficking: Caritas Europa coordinates the global anti-trafficking network. <https://www.coatnet.org/>

The vulnerability of migrants can lead them, for their survival or that of their families, to different forms of :

- Sexual exploitation (abduction of women for sexual exploitation abroad)
- Forced or arranged, coerced/early marriages for protection
- Prostitution or "survival sex" forced to have sex for economic reasons
- Coercion to commit crimes (blackmail)
- Forced begging
- Domestic slavery



- Economic exploitation (due to vulnerability, due to administrative barriers to accessing legal work)

One should also beware of fake recruitment agencies, and be aware that the internet facilitates recruitment.

In Europe, 1 in 4 victims of trafficking is a child! The situation of children is particularly worrying (sometimes with their families, often unaccompanied minors or those who find themselves isolated)

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