**Recommendations by VATRA to GRETA for Albania**

Vatra participated in the round table, organized by the GRETA Secretariat in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, to discuss the follow-up to the recommendations of the GRETA report, published in December 2020 for Albania. During the meeting, Vatra was on one of the panels to talk about access to justice for victims of trafficking, but we also gave our input and recommendations during the discussions. The main recommendations that we have given during this round table were:

1. The justice institutions, specifically the prosecutor's office and the district courts, should give priority to the cases of denunciation of the victims of trafficking in order not to prolong the investigation and trial procedures for several years.
2. The prosecutors and judges should implement the victims center approach (both for minors and adults) during the process of investigation and trial process.
3. Albanian authorities should make efforts to facilitate and guarantee access to compensation for victims of human trafficking, both from perpetrators and by the State. It is necessary to create e mechanism to facilitate the compensation of victims of human trafficking. In Albania only in two cases compensation was awarded by the court, but until now the victims did not receive their financial compensation.
4. With the change in the law of the Code of Criminal Procedure, where the competence to deal with human trafficking has passed to district prosecutors and courts, training is needed for judicial police officers, prosecutors and judges related to Albanian and international anti-trafficking legislation. It is also necessary to improve the infrastructure in the district courts, such as equipping them with audio-visual tools to question the victims as witnesses.
5. Just as before 2017, where in the prosecution of serious crimes there were two specialized prosecutors for human trafficking cases, the same thing should be done in the district prosecutor's offices, to designate special prosecutors for the investigation of human trafficking cases.
6. During the last years, the highest number of cases of victims / potential victims of trafficking have been identified by 9 mobile units, set up and supported by the organizations of the National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters in the framework of projects implemented with the support of international donors. Based on this, it is necessary for the Albanian government to financially support these mobile units in order to sustain the identification work of victims of human trafficking including identification of potential trafficking cases among migrants.
7. The Albanian Government should increase attention to detecting victims of trafficking amongst asylum seekers and migrants, including persons placed in immigration detention centres. In this context, training on the identification of victims of trafficking should be provided to border and migration police officers, customs officers, asylum officials, and staff of reception centers and immigration detention centers, including medical staff;
8. Drafting and approval of a special law for the protection of victims of trafficking is necessary. This recommendation has been taken into consideration by the Albanian authorities and has been placed in the national action plan 2021-2023, but should now be given priority to be implemented.
9. The Albanian government financially supports the shelters of the National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters for the salaries of part of the staff of the shelters and for the food of the accommodated victims. In fact, the salaries of specialists who work in shelters that operate 24/7 are very low (net monthly salary 375 EUR) considering the difficulties they face during every day work, and they are not paid for night shifts, Saturdays and Sundays or official national holidays during which specialists are obliged to work in shelter. For this reason, it is recommended that the Albanian government, specifically the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, take this concern into consideration in order for the shelter staff to feel motivated for the work they do. Besides that the Albanian government should increase the financial support for shelters  to create the sustainability of rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of trafficking
10. It is necessary that local authorities responsible to implement the Standard Operation Procedures for Protection of victims of human trafficking in order to be more involved on identification and referral of victims/potential victims of human trafficking. Only 20 % of the cases of 2021 were identified by local authorities, the other part were identified by mobile units in 9 districts (5 of them are established and managed  by Vatra) .
11. The Albanian government should improve sustainable opportunities for social and economical of victims of human trafficking.
12. It is needed to draft and approve a new specific  law for the protection of victims of human trafficking. This has been placed also to the antitrafficking action plan 2021-2023 (the drafting of this specific law) after Vatra’s advocacy work. This law will regulate the process of identification, referral and  effective protection of  victims of human trafficking.