

## Who we are

**The anti-trafficking and safe migration hotline** was launched by International Centre "La Strada Moldova" on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2001. From the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2003, the service is free of charge on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and three calls can be received simultaneously by our hotline consultants who have extensive experience in the field. At the beginning of 2015 we have launched an informational platform **migratiesigura.md**, as a continuous effort of "La Strada" to promote a safe migration for our citizens.

## Our mission

Our mission is to help victims of trafficking of human beings (THB) get better access to protection and rehabilitation services; to provide the anti-trafficking community and the society in general with informational support and useful tools to prevent and combat THB.

## Who can reach out to us

- Any citizen, from anywhere in the country, interested in additional information about safe migration or working abroad;
- Migrants in difficulty;
- Relatives or friends of presumed victims of THB;
- Victims of THB;
- Presumed victims of THB;
- Representatives of professional groups (social workers, teachers, doctors, mass media, representatives of law enforcement agencies, NGOs, international organizations etc.) looking to get information about the human trafficking phenomenon or to request informational support

## Our services

- Informational support regarding safe migration
- Assistance in cases of THB
- Training in establishing and managing telephone counselling services in the field of safe migration and combating THB

## Contacts

Tel.: 0 800 77777 – national calls

+ 373 22 23 33 09 - international calls

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E-mail: [hotline@lastrada.md](mailto:hotline@lastrada.md)

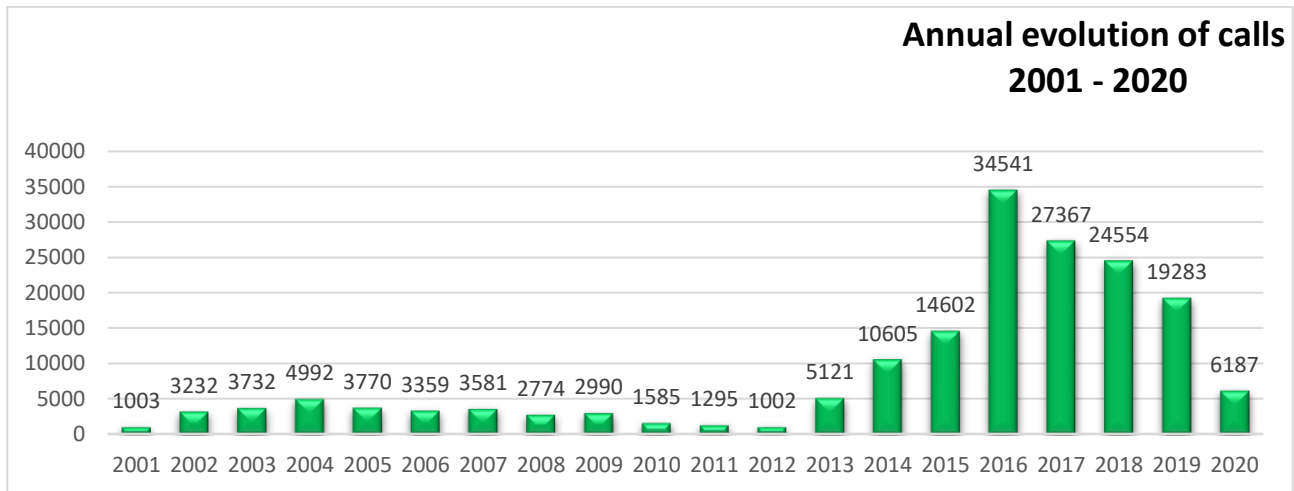
Skype: Consultant080077777

Web: [migratiesigura.md](http://migratiesigura.md)

Working hours: **every day, between 8.00 and 20.00.**

**All calls are anonymous and confidential.**

## Dynamic of calls in the last 19 years



In 19 years of activity, since the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2001 till the 31<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, the hotline counsellors have received **a total of 175,575 calls**, **152,730** of which were prevention calls, **7393** were **SOS calls** regarding cases of THB, missing persons, or migrants in difficulty, **3893** were **requests for information or collaboration**, while **11559 calls** were for **other reasons** (requests for social assistance, other than in cases of THB).

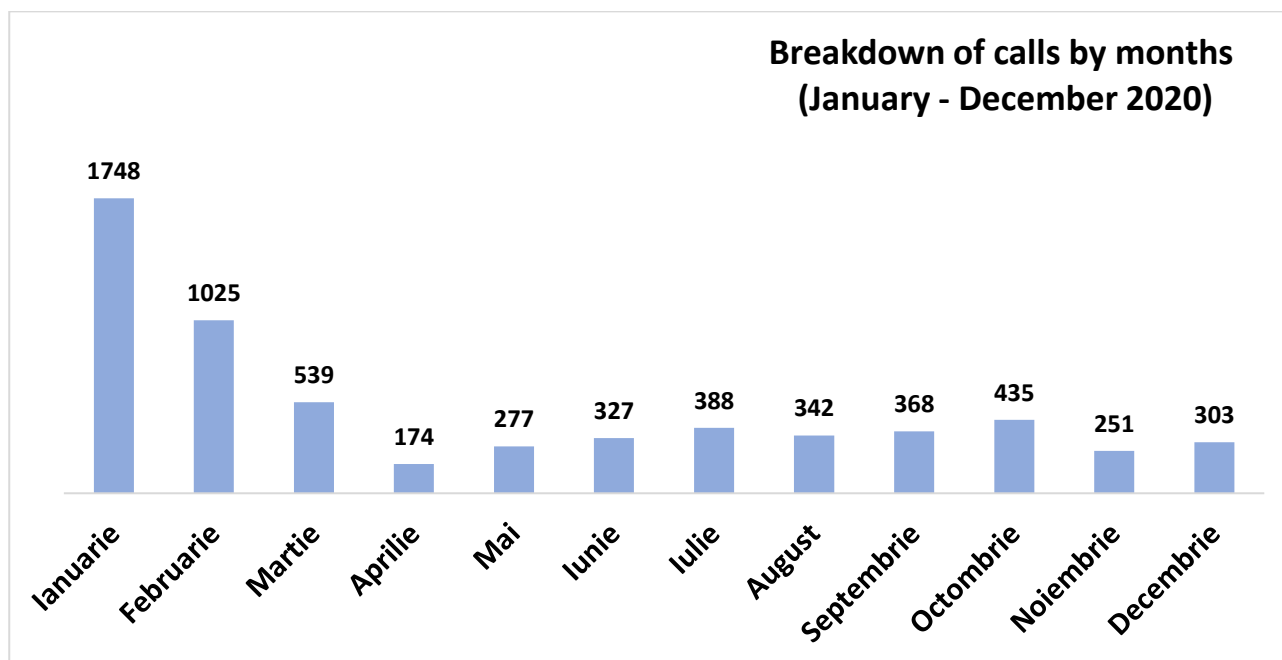
Around 54% of the total number of calls come from rural communities. This is due to the fact that there are less employment opportunities in rural areas than in the capital or in cities.

In the last 5 years at least, the percentage of men calling us is much higher than the percentage of women (75% of calls come from men). This distribution is due to the bilateral agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the State of Israel regarding temporary employment of Moldovan workers in the construction sector in the State of Israel.

During the last five years, in the Republic of Moldova there is a clear specific form of trafficking in human beings outlined – labour exploitation of citizens, with an increase in the number of male victims. The Hotline statistical data shows **worrying trends regarding the level of information and vigilance** of the Moldovan citizens looking for employment abroad.

There is an erroneous conviction among more and more of our citizens that once the visa regime for the Republic of Moldova was liberalized, legal employment in EU states would be possible based solely on the biometric passport.

## 2020: data, figures and trends



During 2020, the hotline counsellors have received **49 SOS calls referring to 124 people**. We registered **4 presumed cases of THB (84 people)**, **2 cases of disappearance**/subsequently THB, **9 cases of exploitation through labour (10 people)** and **21 reports from citizens about THB and related activities**. Two of the cases of THB registered by the hotline counsellors relate to 81 Moldovan citizens exploited through labour in Poland. Another case refers to a man involved in illicit activities in Russia (he was forced to distribute drugs). The fourth case of THB regarded facilitating assistance and accommodation to 2 women-victims of sexual exploitation in France.

The COVID-19 crisis affected the global economy and it has taken its toll on the Republic of Moldova as well, a country with medium and low incomes, where a significant part of the population earns their living by working abroad. The pandemic has abruptly cut the sources of income for these families, as well as any security for the future.

The coronavirus pandemic that we are facing in this period has multiple economic and social effects. The restrictive measures imposed by the authorities of all countries, in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, affected the demand and supply in the labour market. The year 2020 will certainly see a decrease in the migration phenomenon of the Moldovan citizens, because restrictive measures regarding travel and economic activity have been imposed in the majority of destination countries that Moldovans emigrate to.

Starting in the second half of May, when some travel restrictions have been lifted, the requests surged from Moldovan citizens looking to travel abroad for work in order to get some short-term income. At this stage, people were accepting any work offers, even very suspicious ones, either due to a lack of knowledge or because of their extremely complicated financial situation. Intermediary companies have taken advantage of the vulnerability of the citizens, making false promises regarding employment, directly facilitating exploitation through labour.

During 2020, following a [new stage of the national information campaign](#) promoting a safe migration for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and preventing trafficking in human beings, implemented by the International Centre “La Strada” in the period September – October 2020, the hotline consultants gathered information from dialogues with the callers and those reaching out through the [migratiesigura.md](#) platform. They identified risks associated with such work offers, and concerning trends showing that exploitation through labour could grow among Moldovan citizens who accept suspicious and risky offers because they were doing what they could to survive.

Here are some of the conclusions and trends of concern derived from the qualitative analysis of the hotline calls:

- **The active, able-bodied population migrates in high proportion.** Over 60% are people aged between 27 and 40 years old. Every fourth citizen looking for employment abroad is aged over 41, and young people (18-26) represent 16% of Moldovan migrants. Until 4-5 years ago, the tendency to migrate for work was specifically observed in rural areas, but in the reference period, the number of people based in Chisinau or other cities who have the intention to work abroad has increased. This trend speaks about the general worsening state of all economic fields in the Republic of Moldova.
- **Information technologies have an increasingly important role in the recruitment and exploitation of people.** According to hotline data, 86% of callers looking for employment abroad have found job offers through the Internet.
- **Private employment agencies play an important role as facilitators for the citizens looking for a job abroad (88%).** Many agencies work illegally/without license, which represents a high risk for the migrant workers who may be exposed to THB and exploitation.
- The big majority (**79%**) of people calling the hotline intend to leave to work abroad without having signed a contract.
- **In order to get to the country of destination during the pandemic, the citizens of the RM have paid huge amounts of money to the transport companies that also offered them the necessary documents for travel.** Once at destination, the migrants were forced to work more hours per day in difficult conditions just to make some money, even though the agreement in Moldova was not this. The risk of exploitation in this situation is enormous. Multiple cases have been reported when salaries weren't paid in full, when the migrant worker was offered a different job in the country of destination to the one promised or when citizens work extra hours with no additional pay.
- **Over 66% of people who called the hotline have said that they intend to leave for work abroad using their Moldovan passport (biometric).** Only 40% have been informed about the work visa requirement, while 16% have been briefly told that they would not need a visa since they're going to work for only 3 months, and “they don't give out visas for such a short period”.
- **Every fourth caller** told us that they were requested to have dual citizenship, Romanian or Bulgarian citizenship in particular, **in order to have access to the European labour market.**
- **There has been registered an increase in the number of advertisements offering employment of foreign citizens in the Republic of Moldova.**

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized people's problems and shortcomings. Which is why, despite the pandemic and the closed borders, many Moldovans looked for ways, often illegal or semi-legal, to go abroad. People have taken risks without understanding their gravity and have sometimes gotten themselves into situations that are borderline exploitation.

In order to ease the access to information regarding travel conditions during the pandemic, there was a new column added on the informational platform migratiesigura.md, which gives suggestions and recommendations in accessible articles on various topics of high interest.

Month	Unique visits	Total visits	Online consultation			
			Total	Safe Migration	SOS	Other topics
January	2704	2838	75	72	2	1
February	2015	2148	27	26	0	1
March	1218	1302	14	14	0	0
April	1831	1887	17	15	0	2
May	2280	2379	8	7	0	1
June	1359	1474	11	10	0	1
July	1134	1232	24	23	0	1
August	1535	1630	13	11	0	2
September	1216	1276	7	6	0	1
October	2291	2358	21	20	0	1
November	1807	1884	10	9	0	1
December	2115	2258	9	7	0	2
<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>21505</b>	<b>22666</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>

*Statistical data of the platform migratiesigura.md*