



ICAR FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

ROMANIA

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"2010 has been a year of organizational challenges. Besides the three rehabilitation centres from Bucharest, Iasi and Craiova, ICAR Foundation has now outreach offices in all the regional refugee centres of the Romanian Immigration Office: Bucharest, Galati, Radauti, Somcuta Mare and Timisoara"

(Dr Camelia Doru, ICAR Foundation's Medical Director)

Introduction

ICAR Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1991 by Dr. Camelia Doru with the support of 19 honorific members.

Short history

Since its legal registration in 1992, ICAR focused on providing free medical, psychological, social and legal assistance to those who, for political reasons, experienced the harsh repression of totalitarian regimes. ICAR Foundation is the first and also the only organization in Romania that has set out and implemented such a program. The Foundation operates three rehabilitation centers in Romania, one in Bucharest (opened in 1993), one in Iasi (opened in 1995) and one in Craiova (opened in 1998). The centers started by offering a various range of rehabilitation services to victims of serious human rights abuses (such as arrest, condemnations on political, ethnical or religious ground, deportation, exploitation, extermination in concentration camps, torture, inhuman or degrading treatments) among former political prisoners and their immediate families either by in-house services or by referral to external professional networks.

From 2002 ICAR Foundation has extended its target population to refugees and asylum seekers, survivors of gross human rights violations in their country of origin. For this purpose collaboration protocols were signed with the relevant national authorities such as Romanian Immigration Office (ORI), United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), local authorities and institutions. An office in the Bucharest refugee reception and accommodation centre was opened. The staff and volunteers organize their psychosocial counseling sessions, Romanian language classes, information sessions, cultural orientation sessions and different social activities for asylum seekers and refugees living in the centre.

In 2010 ICAR Foundation has opened outreach offices in all other reception and accommodation centres of the Romanian Immigration Office throughout the country: Galati, Radauti, Timisoara and Somcuta Mare. The geographical expansion was possible due to the project "Specific social and psychological assistance for asylum seekers in Romania", ref. no. ERF/09.01/02.01, financed through the General Program "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" – European Refugee Fund.

MISSION:

To contribute to the consolidation of democracy by assisting groups of vulnerable, marginalized people, victims of gross human rights violations

Objectives

- Recognition of and gratitude to the survivors of gross human rights violations (i.e. etc.) for their standing attitude for democracy, rule of law and freedom through creation and access to comprehensive rehabilitation services.
- Promotion of victims' and their families' right to medical and psychological rehabilitation, to moral, legal and social redress, including financial compensations.
- Contribution to the life standard of primary and secondary victims of gross human rights violations among former political prisoners, refugees and asylum seekers, through provision of comprehensive rehabilitation packages (medical, psychosocial and legal).
- Support to activities of prevention of human rights violations and of awareness raising concerning their consequences.

Rehabilitation

Medical Services at ICAR Centres

The medical assistance that ICAR Foundation offers to its target groups includes both general medical services and specialized medical services: physiotherapy, kinethotherapy, psychiatry, cardiology and internal medicine, urology, and basic laboratory investigations. For medical specialties that are not offered as in-house services ICAR refers its patients to its medical network.

During 2010 the ICAR centres assisted on a regular basis over 650 patients, victims of serious human rights violations either in Romania during communist period or in their country of origin from where they ended in Romania as asylum seekers and refugees.



Medical consult at ICAR Craiova

The majority of asylum seekers and refugees seen at ICAR during 2010 were from Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Congo, Somalia and Bangladesh.

The medical staff at ICAR's rehabilitation centres registered over 6.000 consultations (general medicine, physiotherapy, psychiatry, cardiology, urology, basic laboratory investigations) and around 400 external referrals to other medical institutions.

Psychological Assistance

The clients' need for mental health assistance is first evaluated by general practitioners but any of other specialists from the centres may refer the victims to be assessed and to receive psycho-pharmacological and/or psycho-therapeutic assistance from ICAR's psychiatrists and/or the psychologists. The psychological counsellors working in the refugee accommodation and reception centres provide psychosocial support sessions and conduct screening and needs assessment of inhabitants of the centres.

Social Assistance

The social rehabilitation services include social needs assessments, social interventions, social counselling, social events, and aim at establishing a support network for the beneficiaries in order to prevent their marginalization, isolation and stigmatization. Among the activities performed during 2010: social counseling, social assistance, Romanian language classes and cultural orientation sessions for the refugees and asylum seekers living in Bucharest, Galati, Timisoara, Radauti and Somcuta Mare reception and accommodation centres; food transportation from the social canteen to beneficiaries' homes, support in home chores, errands and basic shopping etc. Also, the clients were invited and involved in different events organized by the centres throughout the year (Bucharest, Iasi and Craiova rehabilitation centre).

Legal Assistance and Court Cases

The legal team of ICAR Foundation provides a full range of services to its clients, from legal counseling sessions to legal representation in court and initiatives for improving the Romanian legal framework.

In cooperation with the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (IICCMER), the Association of Former Political Prisoners, the "Association 21 December", a number of proposals to amend the reparation law for victims of state abuses was agreed. ICAR also mobilized the above mentioned organizations and their members to put before the Ombudsman requests for the revision by the Constitutional Court of the Government decision 62/2010. The actions lead to the Decision nr 1354/2010 by which the Constitutional Court declared the Government Ordinance unconstitutional.

A team of 7 lawyers are currently implementing ICAR's litigation project with the view of testing the Romanian judicial system capacity to implement national and international legislation concerning reparation. When necessary, after exhausting the domestic remedy cases



Celebration at Association "21 December 1989"

are presented to the European Court for Human Rights (e.g. Iorga & others vs. Romania, Re. no. 26246/05). Romanian clients are also benefiting from legal counseling regarding local taxes, pension and other issues related to their civil rights.

ICAR legal representatives participated in the working group for the modification of the Asylum Law 122/2006 under the coordination of UNHCR and are offering legal assistance and counseling to refugees and asylum seekers. During the year a number of 15 asylum seekers – including three minors - have been represented in court based on contracts and three have been assisted on pro bono basis. A number of 75 legal assistance sessions were offered to 18 beneficiaries. 9 asylum seekers have been assisted and represented before other Romanian institutions, 34 received individual juridical counselling and other 62 benefited from group legal counselling sessions.

Medical Documentation of Alleged Cases of Torture and Ill-Treatment

ICAR rehabilitation centres issued 20 medical certificates (8 somatic and 12 psychiatric) documenting physical and psychological consequences of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment suffered by asylum seekers in their country of origin. The medical examinations were requested by the asylum seekers' lawyers, other NGOs or even by the Court itself in some cases. The reports issued were then used as evidence to support the asylum seekers case in court.



Dr. Camelia Doru delivering a training session for doctors, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Activities in the Refugee Reception and Accommodation Centres

ICAR opened outreach offices in all reception and accommodation centers of the Romanian Immigration Office: Bucharest, Galati, Radauti, Timisoara and Somcuta Mare. In the outreach offices the staff includes psychologists, social workers, legal counselors, volunteers, interpreters, interns and volunteers.



**Christmas festivities for asylum seekers
in Galați**

The main activities consist of social counselling, organizing educational and cultural activities (Romanian language classes, cultural orientation sessions, intercultural exchanges), organizing recreational and festive activities for asylum seekers, as well as specific psychological and social assistance for vulnerable groups of asylum seekers (unaccompanied minors, single parent families, elderly, persons with chronic illnesses, victims of torture or other forms of severe physical and psychological violence). Identification and evaluation of vulnerable people through screening and needs assessment is an activity of main concern due to the specialized assistance this group needs to receive. Integrated rehabilitation services are offered at outreach offices or at ICAR premises.

Details for the 2010 activities:

- **279 psychological counselling and psychotherapy sessions** for asylum seekers victims of torture or other forms of severe physical and psychological violence;;
- **259 psycho-social counselling sessions for 131 vulnerable persons among asylum seekers** (unaccompanied minors, single parent families, other vulnerable groups);
- **675 social counselling session** performed by ICAR's social workers for a total number of **336 asylum seekers** in Bucharest, Galați, Rădăuți, Șomcuta Mare and Timișoara;
- **625 educational and cultural orientation sessions:** cultural orientation and Romanian language classes; extracurricular educational activities for children (mathematics, geography, history, English etc.);
- **28 guided visits to cultural sites** (National Military Museum – Bucharest, National Village Museum – Bucharest, Banat Village Museum – Timisoara, National History Museum – Bucharest, Museum Complex of Natural History – Galați, Peles Castle, Bran Castle), as well as visits to other cultural sites (Putna Monastery, Sucevita Monastery, Bogdana Monastery – Radauti, Zoological Garden – Timisoara) or parks (Cismigiu Park, Herastrau Park – Bucharest, parks in Radauti, Somcuta Mare and Baia Mare, Roses Park – Timisoara);
- **231 periodic recreational activities** (artistic and documentary film projections, sports, group games, drawing, painting, computer educational games for children etc.);
- **16 festive events** to mark significant days for the Romanian or the beneficiaries' culture (International Children's Day, International Refugee Day, the end of the Ramadan, Eid al-Adha, winter holidays – Christmas and New Year) in the five refugee centres of the Romanian Immigration Office;;
- **424 asylum seekers** in Bucharest, Galați, Rădăuți, Șomcuta Mare and Timișoara participated in educational, cultural, recreational and festive activities;
- **28 computer classes** for a total number of **15 asylum seekers**.



Asylum seekers at a volleyball championship, Radauti

Advocacy

" June - A Rich Celebration Month "

1 of June - International Children's Day

In Bucharest and Radauti reception and accommodation centres (places where there are more asylum seeker children) ICAR organized special parties for kids with picnics, gifts, games and sport competitions. The International Children's Day on 1st of June was chosen at the World Conference for the Well-being of Children in Geneva, Switzerland in 1925.



Children's Day in Bucharest

20 of June - International Refugee Day

The World Refugee Day on June 20 had as its theme, "Home," in recognition of the plight of more than 40 million uprooted people around the world. Around 10 million of them are refugees of special concern to UNHCR.

ICAR celebrated this day by organizing special events both at its headquarters in Bucharest and in the outreach offices in the country. Refugees and staff of ICAR had the opportunity to meet and interact in a less formal way. Traditional music and dances from Romania and guests' countries of origin contributed to the pleasant atmosphere of the day.



Refugee Day festivities in Timisoara (up) and Radauti (down)



In Galati this event was marked by a beautiful educational and fun visit to the Museum Complex of Natural History (that included the micro-exhibition „The diversity of minerals”, the Planetarium – a film on the Solar System, the Astronomic Observatory on the terrace of the building, and the Botanical Garden part of the same complex), followed by a Romanian style picnic in the courtyard of the ORI centre.



The ICAR staff in Radauti, in collaboration with local representatives from ORI and other organizations, organized a trip to the „Ursoaica” Forest Chalet from Putna, followed by a picnic and recreational games outdoor.

On the occasion of the International Refugee Day ICAR organized in Somcuta Mare an intercultural activity in which asylum seekers and high school students from “Ioan Buteanu” High school Somcuta Mare participated. The two groups had the opportunity to interact, exchange opinions and get to know each other better during a hiking in the woods nearby.

International Refugee Day festivities in Galati

In Timisoara ORI in collaboration with its partners Young Generation, Save the Children, UNHCR and ICAR Foundation, organized for the asylum seekers and refugees a series of artistic moments consisting of traditional dance and musical representations performed by refugee children from the centre and children from the Arab school in Timisoara, a clown and refugee men from the ORI centre. Exhibits of photography, paintings, drawings, sculpture and traditional objects from the Asian region also took place. After these events, ICAR's staff organized and accompanied the asylum seekers in a visit to the Banat Village Museum.

26 of June - UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On 26 June 1987 the Convention against Torture came into force. It was an important step in the much-needed process of globalizing human rights and acknowledging that torture, and all forms of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, are absolutely and universally illegal. In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly decided to mark this historic date and designated 26 June each year as International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Every year on 26 of June ICAR organizes at its centers events through which messages of solidarity with the victims all over the world are sent publicly.

In Iasi, the rehabilitation center organized several actions during 25 and 26 of June.

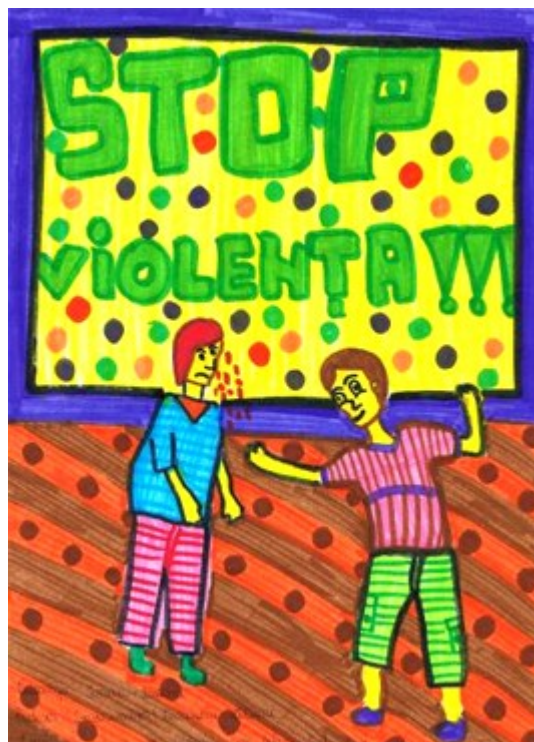
The series of events began with a press conference held at the center premises through which members of the media, the former political prisoners, the local authorities, the non-governmental sector and general public was informed about the agenda and the objectives of the campaign.



The conference “Dialog with former political prisoners” brought together the representatives of victims and academics, interested in the oral documentation of communist period: Academician Alexandru Zub, from “A.D. Xenopol” Iasi Institut of History, Professor dr. Adrian Neculau, from the faculty of Psychology of “Al.I. Cuza” Iasi University, Professor dr. Rodica Ghiuru, Medical Chief of Geriatric department of CFR Hospital Iasi, Professor Florin Gheorghita, writer and researcher.



“A world without torture” was the theme for the scholar drawings and short narrative competition that involved pupils and teacher from several schools from county of Iasi. The winners received their prizes during a special ceremony.



Children's drawings on the subject
“A world without torture”

Three documentaries were presented on this occasion: “Ghosts” by Morvary Samare, “So close to us” by Nicolae Margineanu, “Perpetrators hunter” by Mirel Bran. The Cultural House Iasi offered free acces to the public interested to see these documentaries.

The media high interest for the event was reflected in the big number of articles and clips both in written and audiovisual media that increased public awareness about the consequences of torture and other severe human rights abuses.



Children's drawings on the subject “A world without torture”

National Events

During 2010 ICAR's management and specialised staff participated in several relevant national events, among which:

- Debate „Immigration and Development” organized by Soros Foundation Romania and National School of Political and Administrative Studies - SNSPA (18 January 2010, SNSPA, Bucharest);
- Meeting of the UNHCR task force on vulnerable groups (30 March 2010, UN House, Bucharest);
- Romanian Immigration Office Conference on resettlement (10-14 May 2010, Sinaia);
- UNHCR Romania working group on statelessness (14 June 2010, UN House, Bucharest);
- “Medical and social services in Romania – pressing issues and solutions” international conference organized by Community Support Foundation Bacau (7-8 October 2010, Rin Grand Hotel, Bucharest);
- UNHCR Romania round table „Assistance for vulnerable persons in need of international protection” (28 October 2010, UN House, Bucharest);
- Annual UNHCR Conference on Refugee Integration in Romania (8 December 2010, Hotel Epoque, Bucharest);
- Romanian Immigration Office conference presenting the 2010 Annual Programs within the General Program “Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows” (13 December 2010, Minerva Hotel, Bucharest).



Burnout session, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova



ERF Community Actions project meeting, Graz, Austria

International Events

ICAR continued to play an active part in the European Network of Rehabilitation Centres for Survivors of Torture (EURONET), where Dr. Camelia Doru is co-coordinating the Assessment and Documentation Working Group and in this capacity also serves as a member of the Network's Steering Group, which held its inter-conference meeting 28-29 October hosted by the Stichting Centrum 45 in Diemen outside Amsterdam.

ICAR Foundation conducted in 2010 the first ever survey to determine the profiles of victims assisted by the centres in the EURONET as to gender, age and country of origin. Data was obtained on 10.000 victims assisted during 2009 by 37 European centres. The findings were presented by Dr. Doru in the plenary session of the annual meeting in Copenhagen. The results are also published as a report on this pilot study. It is the intention to repeat this exercise annually, hoping to increase the number of centres in the Network providing data for this report, which for the first time allows us to demonstrate the scale of the activities in the EURONET.

In the course of the year 2010 ICAR's project coordinator Iuliana Florea participated in the Seminar „Advanced Training in Migration and Human Rights” organized by Network Migration in Europe and held in Berlin.

ICAR also continued its participation in an European Refugee Fund – “Community Actions” funded collaborative project among 6 European rehabilitation centres with a view to develop European standards of documentation, assessment, training, prevention and lobbying in the work with most vulnerable refugee groups (victims of torture and human rights violations) in order to evaluate and facilitate good practice. The project is coordinated by the Xenion Centre in Berlin and a report has been published this year on the outcome of the first phase (18 months) of the project. A second phase was initiated at a meeting between the centres hosted by the Zebra centre in Graz, Austria, in July this year. In this context ICAR received a visit of a researcher from the centre in Amsterdam on November 11 to assist in detailing an inventory of all activities undertaken by ICAR in support of victims.

Dr. Camelia Doru participated as international expert contracted by the EU Delegation in Moldova in a seminar organized by Memoria Medical rehabilitation Centre. The seminar, held in Chisinau between 26 and 28 November 2010, included a training session for medical doctors on the topic “The concept of rehabilitation in Europe”. Dr. Doru delivered two lectures on the evolution of the rehabilitation services in European centres, and on burnout syndrome and the recommendations of the Antares Guide.



Refugee child

Partners

ICAR is pleased to acknowledge the fruitful partnership with various institutions and organizations, both at the national and international level.

National partners

- Romanian Immigration Office
- Romanian Association of Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR)
- Association "21 of December 1989"
- Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)
- ARCA – Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) - Romania

International partners

- European Network of Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers for Victims of Torture and Human Rights Violations
- International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
- Association for Prevention of Torture (APT)
- German Association of Centers for Refugees and Victims of Torture (BAfF)

Donors

ICAR Foundation's activity in 2010 was possible thanks to the financial support from:

International donors

- United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) – 99,418 EUR (135,940 US\$)
- Oak Foundation – 27,000 EUR

National donors

- Romanian Immigration Office (ORI) – 52,197 EUR
- National Health Insurance House (NHIH) – 33,857 EUR
- Other donors – 16,306 EUR
- Sponsorships – 1,086



Help the survivors !

**ICAR Foundation helps survivors
of gross human rights abuses and their families.
You can do it, too!**

**ICAR's bank accounts:
BRD Decebal Branch
IBAN: RO42BRDE44ISVI9070944410 (RON)
or
IBAN: RO019BRDE44ISVI9071404410 (EUR)
Swift code: BRDEROBU**



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