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Mission

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

Introduction

ICAR Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1992 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 communist regime. ICAR Foundation is the first and also the only organization in Romania that has set out and implemented such a program. The Foundation initiated 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 center in Iasi became independent in 2000 and the one in Craiova in 2005. The rehabilitation services are offered 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).

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 counselling 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.

To date ICAR Foundation develops its activities at its own premises in Bucharest and in the outreach offices in the refugee reception and accommodation centre of the General Inspectorate for Immigration as long as financially is possible.



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.





10th of May, Royal Garden Party



10th of May, The Romanian Monarchy Day,
Elisabeta Palace, Bucharest



10th of May, Royal Garden Party

Socializing

with

former political prisoners

Activities

organised by

ICAR foundation for refugees



Refugee children



Recreational activities



Interacting with refugees

Services/Programs

Medical

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, pain therapy (acupuncture) and basic laboratory investigations. For medical specialties that are not offered as in-house services ICAR refers its patients to its medical local network.



Medical consultations

During 2012 at ICAR cabinets were assisted on a regular basis around 500 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.

Most asylum seekers and refugees assisted by ICAR in 2012 were from Iran, Afghanistan, Siria, Turkey and Pakistan

Over 3.000 consultations were provided during the year both at ICAR cabinets and through referrals to its external health network.

External Services

For elderly victims visits at domicile are taking place, especially when their mobility is reduced. Contacts with family members or other care givers are important for providing guidance and support in their daily work, follow-up on treatment, adjustments, and referrals. The aim is to improve the care – with direct impact on clients' health status – and also to maintain alive the external network, easy to alert in case of crisis or emergency. There are also home visits for terminal patients that are very important for the family members in need of professional and moral support.

The senior club

The old age of victims of communist regime is bringing biological deterioration that through prevention programs can be identified and slowed down. The meetings organized at ICAR premises for the elderly victims with traumatic past are providing the necessary information regarding some degree of cognitive impairment. Together with the family members

alternatives for future support are discussed. Nursing homes in Romania are extremely expensive and normal families have to have in place the strategy to follow when the process of cognitive decline is starting.

Psychological

The clients' need for mental health assistance may be detected 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 provided psychosocial support sessions and conduct screening and needs assessment of inhabitants to the victims of torture among both nationals and migrants.



Social

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 in 2012: social counseling, social assistance, Romanian language classes and cultural orientation sessions for the refugees and asylum seekers living in Bucharest and Giurgiu. The former political prisoners were invited and involved in different events organized throughout the year.

Strategic litigation

ICAR is implementing litigation activities with the view of testing the Romanian judicial system capacity to implement national and international legislation concerning reparation. Cases with litigation potential are identified, documentation is gathered and a final selection for court registration is made. After exhausting the domestic remedy relevant cases are prepared and submitted to the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR).



Medical certification

In 2012 ICAR issued medical certificates (somatic and psychiatric/psychological) 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.

For a limited number of cases ICAR staff in the outreach offices have selected and scheduled appointments for asylum seekers who traveled to Bucharest to undergo the medical examination and obtain the certificates.

National Events

Throughout 2012 ICAR management and specialized staff participated in several relevant national events:

- Training session on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities prepared and delivered by Centre for Legal Resources for civil society organizations (10-11 February, 2012)
- Closing conference for 2009 Annual Programme organized by the General Inspectorate for Immigration (16 February 2012, Bucharest)

ICAR was one of the few organizations at the conference distinguished for their activity in the service of asylum seekers and the successful implementation of the ERF funded project under 2009 Annual Programme, and rewarded with an honorary plaque.

- Consultation meetings with the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration regarding the drafting of the 2013 Annual Programmes for the European Refugee Fund, European Integration Fund and European Return Fund (on 26 September and 25 October 2012, Bucharest)

ICAR and UNHCR Romania proposed the creation of a separate action for medical and psychological assistance for asylum seekers; although agreed as necessary, the proposal was not included because of lack of available funds.

- National conference “Intercultural Romania” organized by the Intercultural Institute Timisoara and ADIS Association (15-16 June 2012, Bucharest)
- Launching the media campaign “This is my story. Or ours?” within the transnational project AMITIE – Awareness on Migration, Development and Human Rights through local partnerships (30 October 2012)
- UNHCR Round table on reception conditions for asylum seekers in Romania (19 December 2012)

ICAR foundation as the focal point for Romania in the European project MAIEUTICS organized the:

- **National Training Session “Early Identification of Victims of Torture”**, Bucharest, 20-21 September 2012

The objective of the national training session was to present the results of the trans-European project MAIEUTICS to stakeholders, and especially to introduce the interdisciplinary working methodology developed and tested through the project: a legal-health common approach in the work with the victims of torture. Also, the session aimed to discuss and agree upon a set of minimum standards with regard to the identification of victims of torture during the asylum procedure in Romania.

The training was based on a multidisciplinary approach of torture and of victims of torture and consisted of four training modules:

1. Medical approach of torture and victims of torture
2. Psychological approach of torture and victims of torture
3. Legal approach of torture and victims of torture
4. Accurate communication/ role of interpreters during the asylum procedure



**National Training Session
“Early Identification of Victims of Torture”**

During the national training session with the stakeholders the participants agreed on a set of MINIMUM STANDARDS to be applied in each of the (five) phases of the asylum procedure and GOOD PRACTICES to be considered for the future in Romania.

International Activity

The Xth Annual Conference of the European Network of Rehabilitation Centres (EURONET)

“Documentation of Torture: Providing Evidence towards Justice”

Organised by Memoria center in Chisinau the conference focussed on the mechanisms strengthening the medical and psychological examination and documentation of the effects of torture and other forms of ill-treatment to contribute to judicial processes in ensuring justice. The event was organized with the support of the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the “Strengthening the forensic examination of torture and other ill-treatment in Moldova” project, financed by the European Union and co-funded and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme

The conference was attended by almost 150 participants from a range of agencies and government departments, including 25 international experts and 7 forensic experts from the Transnistrian region



A session on “How to secure professional documentation of torture and appropriate professional assistance to victims of torture” followed with presentations from international experts from the European Network and other agencies. These included:

1. Psychological Documentation of torture and Psychological Reports: Ms Elise BITTEN BINDER, Xenion and BAFF, Berlin, and Chair of the European Network
2. Procedures and written instruments for early identification of vulnerable persons: Dr Lorenzo MOSCA, CIR, Italy
3. Documentation of torture for asylum seekers: 20 years of experience in Switzerland: Dr Laurent SUBILIA, Geneva
4. The role of medical documentation of torture from a legal perspective: Lutz OETTE, REDRESS, UK
5. Overview of medical certification of torture at European centers based on a questionnaire: Dr Camelia DORU, ICAR Foundation, Romania

The final session on “Documentation of torture – providing evidence for justice: How to use the accumulated expertise at rehabilitation centres more effectively” followed. This session took place in workshops. Constructive ideas for the future of the documentation of torture were then presented to the conference in plenary.

MAIEUTICS project

ICAR was partner in a transnational project “MAIEUTICS” (July 2011- Dec 2012) coordinated by the Italian Council for Refugees (CIR). The partner countries were Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Romania and United Kingdom through non-governmental organizations that work in the asylum field. The project was financed by the European Refugee Fund – Community Actions.

The project aimed to elaborate a common interdisciplinary (legal, psychological/ health) working methodology that would secure the recognition as victims of torture for asylum seekers and an appropriate form of protection. The methodology would serve as an operational instrument for professionals that work both in the legal and psychological/ medical fields.

The main activities consisted of: analyzing the current instruments/ working methods (through interviews with state/ NGO asylum professionals as well as with victims), testing the new methodology during their current assistance to victims, organizing workshops in each participating country for professionals who work in the asylum field, elaborating and distributing a guide for implementing the methodology.



In 2012 two important events were organized within the framework of the project:

Research meeting - Rome 3-5 July 2012

CIR has drafted a paper gathering inputs and recommendations of partners regarding the common interdisciplinary approaches. Based on this paper principles and minimum standards were discussed and shared during the research meeting by partners and the members of the Scientific Committee to be tested in the following months and to become the basis for a common interdisciplinary working methodology (CIWM)

Sent by all partners, on the basis of the outcomes of the interviews carried out with stakeholders and the victims of torture and violence by all partners, the country reports and the answers to the questions related to the five phases of the asylum procedures in the 5 countries concerned.

This paper gathered principles and minimum standards discussed and shared during the research meeting by partners and the members of the Scientific Committee that will be tested in the following months and that will be the basis for the CIWM

European conference - Rome 13-14 December 2012

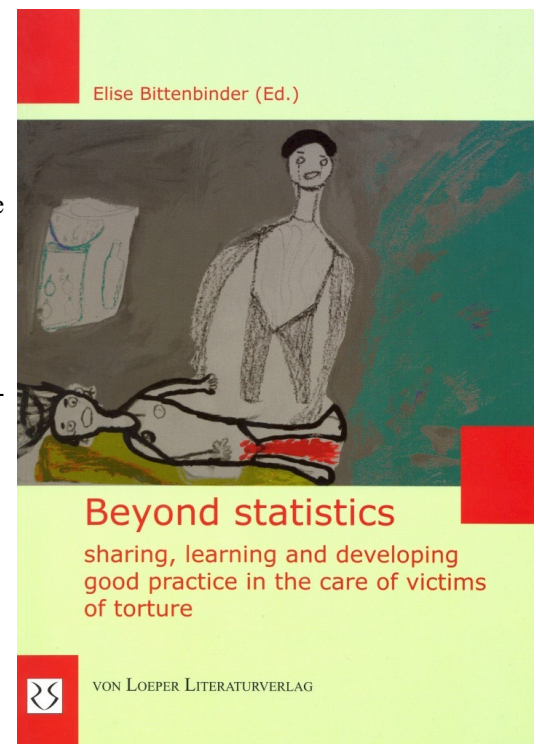
A 2 days workshop at European level was organised in Rome during which the Handbook was launched and disseminated to all partners in the 5 countries and to Representatives of the European Institutions, EASO, IRCT, the UN Voluntary Fund, ECRE, UNHCR, National public institutions, professional organizations attending the event.

Publications

“Beyond statistics: Sharing, learning and developing good practice in the care of victims of torture” is the result of the research project "Developing 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” a partnership work between six European centers led by XENION, Berlin:

- Equator (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
- ICAR Foundation: Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (Bucharest, Romania)
- Primo Levi Association: Treatment and Support for Victims of Torture and Political Violence (Paris, France)
- XENION: Psychosocial assistance for the politically persecuted (Berlin, Germany)
- ZEBRA: Intercultural Centre for Counselling and Therapy (Graz, Austria)
- Unit for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (URVT), Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute (CNTI) (Lefkosia, Cyprus)

The project aimed at developing a common approach for working with victims of torture in a European context. An overarching objective of the project was to combine and draw on the array of expertise of the practitioners in the field by using a participatory research evaluation model. It was intended that such an approach would allow the participants to share their expertise, while using a qualitative research approach to collect and document the data in the form of an Inventory of Working and Treatment Methods and a Framework for Quality Assessment, both of which would take into account the different contexts in which services were provided.



You can find **Beyond statistics** at:
<http://www.icarfoundation.ro/publications/>

HANDBOOK – on interdisciplinary working methodology (legal –psychological) to guarantee the recognition of the proper international protection status to victims of torture and violence. Funded by European Refugee Fund Community Actions (HOME/2010/ERFX/CA/1697) was a partnership project between centers in Italy, Greece, Romania, United Kingdom and the Netherlands conducted by the Italian Council for Refugees in Rome.

The Manual is addressed to all operators in Europe who are concerned with protection of possible torture victims among asylum seekers.

It is addressed to those who institutionally are involved in the procedures for determining the status of refugees and of beneficiaries of subsidiary or humanitarian protection; to operators in public health services; to broader grounds and other police authorities; to operators at reception centres for protection seekers and refugees; to judges who have to decide on appeals against negative asylum decisions; to operators of non-governmental organisations, to lawyers, psychologists, doctors and paramedical services.

The Manual aims at improving the overall situation torture survivors and victims of extreme violence are confronted with, to better assist in their rehabilitation and re-gaining of self-confidence.

The Manual is based on the existing literature in the subject, on the experiences made by the organisations who have implemented the project, and, not the least, in the findings of the project activities in five countries

The manual is proposing an interdisciplinary approach, a close cooperation between professionals who often are not actually interlinked in providing key services. In particular, a methodology of cooperation between lawyers and other legal operators in the one hand, and psychologists and medical doctors on the other, is developed and recommended.



International News

The UN Joint Statement, 26 of June (Day in Support of Victims of Torture)

It was issued by the **United Nations Committee against Torture**, the **Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture**, the **Special Rapporteur on torture** and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the Board of Trustees of the **UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture** and is acknowledging that:

“Every year, hundreds of rehabilitation centres, small and large, supported by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, provide *indispensable humanitarian, medical and legal assistance to thousands of victims of torture and their family members*”, and it continues: “In urging States to establish and support rehabilitation centres or facilities where victims of torture can receive treatment, the General Assembly stipulated recently that States should also ensure the safety of their staff and patients.

Breaking News from UN regarding the general comment no 3 on: STATE OBLIGATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ART. 14 OF CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

“Each State party is required to “ensure in its legal system that the victim of an act of torture obtains redress and has an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation, including the means for as full rehabilitation as possible.” The comprehensive reparative concept therefore entails restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition and refers to the full scope of measures required to redress violations under the Convention.

Art. 15. “States parties shall ensure that effective rehabilitation services and programmes are established in the State, taking into account a victim’s culture, personality, history and background and are accessible to all victims without discrimination and regardless of a victim’s identity or status within a marginalized or vulnerable group, as illustrated in paragraph 32, including asylum seekers and refugees. States parties’ legislation should establish concrete mechanisms and programmes for providing rehabilitation to victims of torture or ill-treatment. Torture victims should be provided access to rehabilitation programmes as soon as possible following an assessment by qualified independent medical professionals. Access to rehabilitation programmes should not depend on the victim pursuing judicial remedies. **The obligation in article 14 to provide for the means for as full rehabilitation as possible can be fulfilled through the direct provision of rehabilitative services by the State, or through the funding of private medical, legal and other facilities, including those administered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs)..”**

The rehabilitation chapter has other important articles, clear and well defined
(See: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/comments.htm>;))



Partners

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

National partners:

- Rehabilitation center in Craiova
- Romanian Association of Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR)
- The *Institute* for the *Investigation* of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the *Romanian Exile*
- Association “21 of December 1989”
- Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) – Romania

International partners:

- Italian Council for Refugees (CIR – Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati)
- European Network of Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers for Victims of Torture and Human Rights Violations
- International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
- DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture
- Association for Prevention of Torture (APT)

Donors

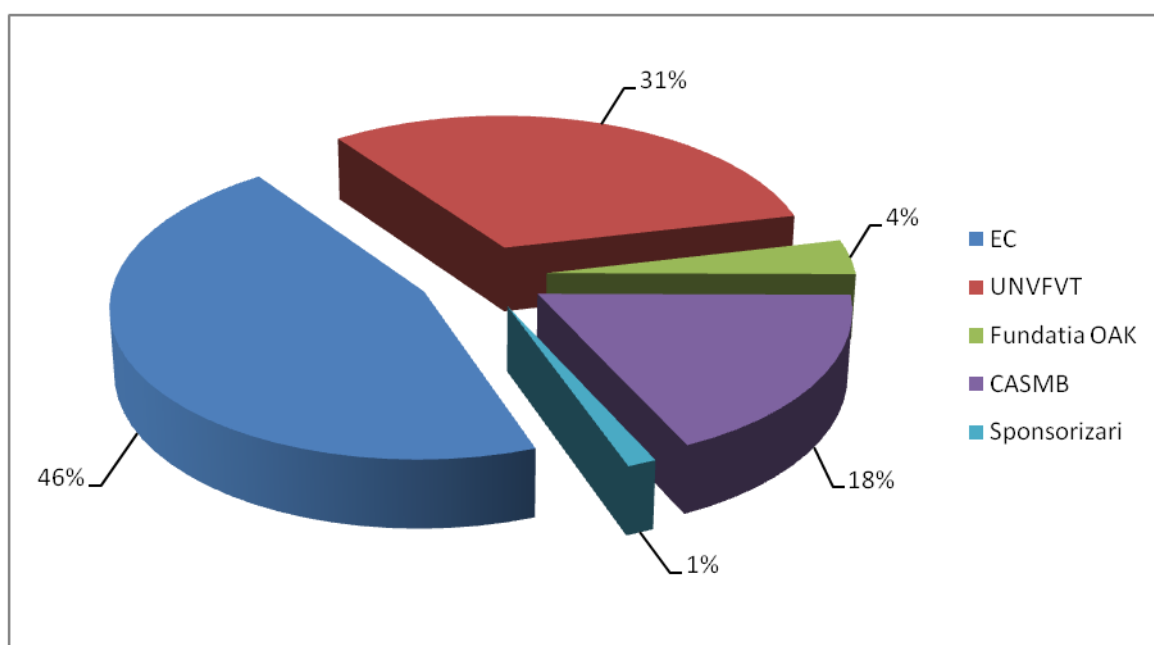
ICAR Foundation's activity in 2012 was possible thanks to the financial support from national as well as international donors:

National donors:

- National Health Insurance House (NHIH) - 211.538 Lei
- Sponsorships - 16.300 Lei

International donors:

- European Commission (EC) - 122.377 €
- United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) - 112.240 \$
- Oak Foundation - 10.000 €





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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