



## PRESS RELEASE

### EU and CoE stress the needs to improve protection of women and children's rights in Ukraine

**16 March** 2011, Kyiv – National and international experts summarized the achievements for the last 2,5 years and provided detailed recommendations for the future how to improve and reform laws and regulations in particular on the issues of **sexual exploitation** and sexual abuse of children on the Internet, **family violence**, **trafficking in human beings** and victim assistance and protection. Conclusions and recommendations are the working results of the joint Council of Europe/European Union Project on strengthening and protecting women and children's rights in Ukraine (TRES) implemented since 2008.

"Support for democracy, good governance and the rule of law stay at the very core of European Union's foreign policy. Together with other international organizations, and in particular with Council of Europe, the EU supports programmes and projects, which protect women and children's rights, projects which combat child trafficking, underage prostitution and violence against children", - stated **Mr. Jose Roman Leon Lora** First Counsellor, Head of section for Economic Cooperation, regional social development, EU Delegation to Ukraine during the closing conference of the joint Council of Europe/European Union Project on strengthening and protecting women and children's rights in Ukraine (TRES).

"I'd like to emphasize necessity to continue further activities in raising awareness of public officials, courts, representatives of legal enforcement bodies and society, in general, on standards in women's and children's rights protection sphere. The TRES achievements must be also taken into account, while implementing further international and national projects in this sphere, which will allow to *ensure succession, coherence and consistency of core activities in the sphere of women and children's rights strengthening and protection in Ukraine*", - noted **Mr Ivan Koedjиков**, Head of Department of Information Society and Action against Crime, Directorate of Co-operation, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe.

Methodic guidelines developed by the TRES projects will include practical advice for children, including information on employment and education abroad, marriage with foreigners, safe behavior on the web, in particular. Some schools have already included this topic into their curricula and held a set of lessons dedicated to human trafficking prevention.

"We should consider the fact that fighting sexual exploitation of children should include preventive activities directed against serious violations of children's rights, active measures to identify the crimes as such, investigations and real punishment for the perpetrators, as well as all-round help for victims of sexual exploitation and violence", – said **Mr. Ake Peterson**, Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for the Coordination of Cooperation Programs with Ukraine.

Sexual exploitation of children, cyber crimes are new forms of violence against children emerging on the web. With further development of new technologies in Ukraine, the problem of child sexual abuse via Internet (so called "grooming") is getting more and more of actual value. However, the issue of "grooming" itself is not criminalized in Ukrainian Law. Moreover, Ukraine has no actual mechanism to identify the "groomers". Specialized software blocking access to specific websites ("cyber-nannies"), which should have been installed at all schools and other educational establishments, are working only at several of them.

Lack of an Internet-hotline system in Ukraine for those children who suffered from sexual abuse or exploitation, as well as lack of Ukrainian membership in any international support network for children-victims of sexual violence is noted as one of the major problems for Ukraine by various experts.

"In order to prevent children being trafficked, first of all, we would recommend that the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports of Ukraine included the guidelines drafted within the TRES project into a unique educational module – *a lesson of human trafficking prevention* – into necessary



educational materials for Ukrainian schools and the lesson as such would be included into school curricula, as well as provided necessary educational activities for Ukrainian teachers”, - notes **Mrs. Danuta Wisniewska-Cazals**, Head of the Judicial Co-operation, Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Unit, Department of Information Society and Action against Crime, Directorate of Co-operation, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe.

As for the legal system of Ukraine, experts define the following trends for changes in the sphere of women’s and children’s rights protection: prevention of violence against women and children; raising criminal responsibility for the acts of violence against women and children; support to post-traumatic aid and compensation for losses caused by the acts of violence against women and children. In order to improve the practice of reviewing cases related to violence against women and children, develop general standards for women’s and children’s legal protection, high judicial authorities of Ukraine (Superior Specialized Court of Ukraine for Criminal and Civil Cases, the Supreme Court of Ukraine) should draft a unified technique and generalize the practice of the courts related to violence against children and women, as well as to draft guidelines on its improvement, which would encourage supremacy of law and basic human rights in Ukraine.

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