



THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society

November 2014





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FOREWORD

Over the past decade, evidence has emerged worldwide suggesting that the sexual exploitation of children is becoming more pervasive and increasingly complex. Unprecedented developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) along with the erosion of social norms and sexual mores met with global trends that transcend national contours like poverty and the major growth in travel and tourism, all put an increasing number of children at risk of becoming victims to the various manifestations of sexual exploitation.

The sense of outrage and relentless efforts spearheaded over the years by ECPAT member organisations in collaboration with other stakeholders have undoubtedly led to progress on many fronts. Through its civil society network active in almost 80 countries and longstanding partnerships with a myriad of child protection agencies, ECPAT seeks to revitalise actions to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children in every region of the world.

The Strategic Framework that the ECPAT International Assembly sets forth every three years for the organisation is intended to guide in the achievement of this goal. The review and planning process that defines this Framework is meant to identify strategies and interventions needed to address the evolving and multi-faceted forms of child sexual exploitation. This Regional Overview on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was compiled as part of the process to determine the Framework for 2015-2018.

In addition to mapping and examining the key socio-economic factors impacting the protection of children and the emerging trends related to child sexual exploitation in CIS, the Overview assesses the status of actions taken against this crime within individual countries in the region. It also proposes recommendations for strengthening child protection systems and responds to the prevention, protection and recovery needs of child victims and vulnerable children. The document was validated during the ECPAT Regional Consultation in Sofia, Bulgaria (25- 27 May, 2014), which led to the identification of regional priorities and strategies for enhancing political will and actions in CIS.

The development and validation of the Overview was facilitated by Katlijn Declercq and Maia Rusakova, Regional Representatives to the ECPAT International Board of Trustees, ECPAT member organizations, officials of regional mechanisms and entities and child rights experts. We are indebted for their generous technical inputs, collaboration and commitment in fighting the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The year 2014 marks the 25th the anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. ECPAT presents this Overview with a reminder to all duty bearers of child rights in CIS that according to the Convention every child – regardless of background, ethnic origin, gender or location– has the right to live free from sexual exploitation. Protecting children from this intolerable crime is everyone's responsibility and can only be realized with the commitment and support from all key stakeholders and sectors.



Dorothy Rozga
Executive Director
ECPAT International

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Significant review, consultation and planning went into the development of this Regional Overview that merits recognition and appreciation.

The Overview draws on the ECPAT's Country Monitoring Reports on CSEC in each member country in the region and relied on the substantive inputs from ECPAT member groups, partner organisations, child rights experts and the Secretariat staff.

We would like to especially acknowledge the contribution of the following individuals and organisations:

Maia Rusakova, Regional Representative to the ECPAT International Board of Trustees; and Katlijn Declercq, Vice Chair to the ECPAT Board of Trustees, for their leadership and technical support.

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ACRONYMS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoE	Council of Europe
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Children
CYP	Child And Youth Participation
EGCC	Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk
EICYAC	ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee
ICMEC	International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
INHOPE	International Association of Internet Hotlines
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISPs	Internet service providers
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organisations
NPA(s)	National Plan(s) of Action
OPSC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
YPP	Youth Partnership Project (ECPAT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a loose association of nine states formed after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. The resulting political, economic and social upheaval led to progress in some areas, such as poverty reduction. But not all children benefit equally: rural-urban disparities have resulted in the marginalisation of – and often discrimination against – some groups of children, such as Roma and other ethnic minorities, left-behind children of migrant workers and the internally displaced. Combined with consumerism, the rapid expansion of cyber-technology, increased tourism and migration and persistent gender discrimination, these inequalities create a favourable environment for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the region.

Throughout the region poverty leads parents to push their children to earn money; criminals take advantage by recruiting and exploiting children in the sex trade. Offenders run minimal risk of punishment due to widespread lack of awareness of CSEC and easily corrupted officials. Other push factors for CSEC include sexualisation of children in the media, pervasive child abuse in homes and low levels of education. HIV infection rates are rising rapidly in the CIS, especially among young people.

Despite increasing concern over CSEC, governments in CIS countries have generally made only limited efforts to address this serious violation of children's rights. Civil society groups such as ECPAT often fill the void, taking responsibility for prevention and protection efforts. In this context, a "Regional Consultation on Action to Stop the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in CIS & Eastern Europe" was held in Sofia, Bulgaria on 25-27 May, 2014, bringing together child rights experts, representatives of regional organisations, young people and leaders of ECPAT member organisations.

Participants formulated and agreed upon the list of priority actions to advance child protection from sexual exploitation in Eastern Europe and CIS countries elaborated in this Overview.

Specific Manifestations

Prostitution of children: Across the region, adolescent girls engage in, or are forced into, prostitution as a result of various factors, mainly poverty. Street children, Roma children and child migrants are at particular risk. Official statistics are lacking, but studies in individual countries suggest that this form of sexual exploitation affects a worrying number of girls (as well as some boys), and is often linked to child trafficking. Young girls are recruited from the countryside and transported to capitals or other large cities for sexual exploitation in locations such as bars, saunas, private apartments and discos.

Child Trafficking: Child trafficking for sexual purposes is the most widespread manifestation of CSEC in the region. All CIS countries are sending, transit and destination countries for trafficking in women and children for prostitution. In some countries research indicates a trend towards younger and younger children becoming victims of sex trafficking, including girls as young as 13 and 14. Children whose parents migrate in search of work and those living on the streets are at especially high risk.

Sexual Exploitation via ICTs: Organised criminal networks, individuals and families use children in the production of abuse materials for immediate financial gain. Modelling and photo studios, private apartments and summer houses, hotels, saunas and schools have become venues. Methods used

to entice or force children into this illegal practice include: blackmail, grooming (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), coercion by family members, targeting mentally disabled children and offering money or other goods.

Child sex tourism: Information about cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by tourists in the CIS region is very limited. The phenomenon has only recently emerged and is not considered as a concern in most CIS countries, except those with popular resort areas.

Addressing CSEC

No CIS country has adopted a specific National Plan of Action (NPA) for addressing CSEC. Some broader strategies for child protection include CSEC prevention, while others do not. Most countries do, however, have legislation on human trafficking, which in some cases includes specific provisions for child victims. During the last ten years most coordination efforts relevant to combating CSEC in CIS countries have revolved around human trafficking; other manifestations were largely ignored.

Several institutions have been established to promote children's rights and protect them from violations, including CSEC; however CIS countries generally do not have a specific body responsible for coordinating activities on child sexual abuse and exploitation. Despite some good examples of collaboration between governmental authorities and NGOs, including ECPAT, in policy implementation monitoring and reporting of CSEC cases, coordination to prevent and combat this specific violation of children's rights is generally weak.

Regional organisations play an active role in initiating and coordinating actions against CSEC. The CIS developed two anti-trafficking agreements to coordinate strategy and institute a range of

comprehensive measures to counteract human trafficking. The Council of Europe (involving only six CIS countries) promotes several child-friendly strategies (for justice, etc.), while the Council of Baltic Sea States supports and implements cooperative efforts focused on children at risk, including those vulnerable or affected by sexual exploitation. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe has hosted important regional events on human trafficking.

Way Forward: A critical issue in the CIS region is the general lack of focus on CSEC-related issues other than trafficking. ECPAT could play an important role by undertaking research on several under-researched topics, along with public education and advocacy around these issues. In addition,

- CIS governments should urgently step up judicial, law enforcement and victim-oriented cooperation activities to address all forms of CSEC;
- Accelerated efforts are needed to protect children left behind due to migration,
- Governments and civil society should raise awareness about the link between CSEC and HIV,
- National legislation in CIS countries needs to be revised to reflect international standards on protecting children within judicial systems and providing services for child victims,
- Governments should establish specialised units to investigate the illegal use of cyber-technology, and oblige Internet firms to block distribution and sale of child abuse images,
- Advocacy and capacity building is required to improve support services available for child victims of all forms of CSEC,
- Youth groups active in combating CSEC require support to sustain activities and enable them, especially young victims, to participate in debates and policymaking on CSEC-related issues.



INTRODUCTION

Over the last 25 years, countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have undergone dramatic changes that have tremendously impacted the situation of children. Economically, the transition from socialist planned economies to the free-market led to steady economic growth, which in turn has contributed to a substantial reduction in extreme poverty rates. Whilst bringing about some improvements in child well-being, however, this growth has not benefitted children as much as the rest of the population and has made inequalities more visible, resulting in an increasingly stark contrast between those benefiting from the transition and those left behind. Disparities persist between rural and urban areas, resulting in marginalisation of – and often discrimination against – some groups of the child population, such as Roma and other ethnic minorities, children of migrant workers (especially those left behind) and internally displaced people. Combined with consumerism, the rapid expansion of cyber technology, increases in tourism and migration, persistent gender discrimination and other social, political and cultural factors, these inequalities have contributed to the creation of a favourable environment for commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) to flourish in the region.

Despite increasing concern over CSEC, governments in CIS countries have generally not prioritised the well-being of children and families, and thus have spearheaded only limited efforts to address this serious violation of children's rights. Civil society organisations such as ECPAT are increasingly filling some of the gaps in child protection from sexual exploitation, including by raising awareness of the issue and developing prevention programmes and support services for victims. However, various persistent and emerging obstacles are evident across nations in the region and must be mitigated if progress is to be made toward ECPAT's goals.

As part of the process for strengthening its global and regional response to CSEC, the ECPAT Secretariat solicited regional CSEC overviews to analyse the current situation, gaps and challenges in addressing CSEC and to identify the actions required to accelerate progress in each region. Each regional overview was validated and finalised at regional consultations with ECPAT members. The present overview focuses only on CIS countries.¹

The overview was prepared with the aim of supporting the setting of priorities and development of strategies and concrete plans for achieving the ambitious goal of ending CSEC in CIS countries. Along with an in-depth literature review and preliminary consultation with member groups in CIS, the preparation of this overview involved a wide consultative process with network members, culminating in the “Regional Consultation on Action to Stop the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in CIS & Eastern Europe”, that took place in Sofia on 25 - 27 May, 2014. Jointly convened by Ms. Maia Rusakova, Regional Representative to the ECPAT International Board of Trustees, the host organisation, Neglected Children Foundation in Bulgaria, and the ECPAT International Secretariat, the Consultation brought together child rights experts, representatives of regional mechanisms, youth representatives and leaders of ECPAT member organisations from Eastern Europe and CIS. In addition, to provide an opportunity to validate and finalise the CSEC overviews, the consultation allowed participants to formulate and agree upon a list of priority areas for action for advancing child protection from sexual exploitation in Eastern Europe and CIS countries.

Capturing observations, contributions and feedback from experts and participants in the Regional Consultation and incorporating information, inputs and recommendations provided by member groups,

the present overview maps and examines the key factors impacting on the protection of children and the continuing manifestations and emerging trends related to CSEC, mainly in CIS countries. It also assesses the status of action against this violation and outlines main challenges and recommended actions for enhancing ECPAT's programmes in this

sub-region. In this connection, it is important to note that although this overview focuses on CIS, the proposed list of priorities and strategies to effect change have a wider geographic scope, covering also countries in Eastern Europe. This document should be read in conjunction with, or as an annex to, the Overview of CSEC in Europe.



SECTION 1. CONTEXT AND INTERSECTING VULNERABILITIES

Socio-economic context

After the final collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991, 12 of the 15 Soviet Republics agreed to become members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Comprised of nine members (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), plus two states that take part in some activities (Turkmenistan and Ukraine),² the CIS is a loose association of states in no way comparable to a federation, confederation or supranational

union such as the European Union. Nonetheless, the CIS aims to be more than a purely symbolic organisation, and nominally possesses coordinating powers in the realm of trade, finance, legislation and security. It has also promoted cooperation on cross-border crime prevention.³

The political situation in CIS countries remains fragile. Various degrees of authoritarian rule can be observed in the former Soviet Union. Living standard differentials in the post-communist world are striking. Kazakhstan, for example, is four times better off than Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Population and Economic Development 2012 ⁴

Country	Population, mln	GN PPP per capita, USD	% of population leaving < 2\$/day (2009)	Percent Urban	Languages
Armenia	3,3	5 660	12	64	Armenian, non-official languages are Yezidi and Russian
Azerbaijan	9,3	9 270	8	53	Azeri, Russian and Turkish are widely spoken
Belarus	9,5	13 590	< 2	76	Russian, Belarusian
Georgia*	4,5	4 990	32	53	Georgian, English, Russian
Kazakhstan	16,8	10 770	< 2	74	Kazakh, Russian
Kyrgyzstan	5,7	2 070	29	73	Kyrgyz, Russian
Moldova	4,1	3 360	12	42	Romanian, Russian as a language of interethnic communication
Russia	143, 3	19 240	< 2	74	Russian
Ukraine*	45,5	6 620	< 2	69	Ukrainian, Russian
Uzbekistan	29,8	3 110	77	71	Uzbek, Russian
Tajikistan	7,1	2 140	51	26	Tajik (Persian), Russian recognised
Turkmenistan*	5,2	7 490	50	47	Turkmen, inter-ethnic Russian and Uzbek

*Georgia is no longer a CIS member state. Similarly, Ukraine and Turkmenistan participate in some activities but are not official members.

Agriculture, which is widespread in CIS, is no longer an important source of wealth in modern societies. Rural productivity is generally very low, and the export performance of most CIS countries (excluding Russia and Ukraine) is extremely modest. In the poorer CIS countries low wages are a serious problem, providing strong incentives to emigrate. In Moldova, the poorest European CIS country, it is estimated that workers' remittances exceed 25% of GDP: about one-quarter of the annual output comes from Moldovans working abroad and sending part of their earnings home. On a smaller scale, the situation is similar in Armenia and Tajikistan.⁵

It is no secret that in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, a massive "brain drain" took place: many scientists and other highly skilled people left the region. Several impoverished CIS countries continue to face the challenge of human capital flight. The local state educates its citizens, but graduates leave the country in the hope of better earnings. Neighbouring CIS countries may benefit from this movement of skilled individuals, facilitated by widespread familiarity with the Russian language. The overall population of CIS is about 284 million; as a sizeable market it offers many business opportunities. However, the market is fragmented, and opportunities and risks in the region differ from country to country.⁶

CIS countries do not appear to have experienced any improvement in their Human Development Index in recent years. In fact, these former socialist republics used to have high levels of education and healthcare, but these indicators have undergone changes for the worse. According to the latest Human Development report, six CIS countries have high HDI (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine), while the others now have only a medium HDI; Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan rank lowest among CIS countries.⁷

Main pull and push factors contributing to CSEC in CIS

A complex matrix of combined and interrelated factors makes children vulnerable and shapes the forces and circumstances that allow them to be commercially sexually exploited. These factors are grounded in the political and socio-economic context in which children live. In CIS, as in other regions, several structural factors underpin violations of children's rights, influencing their extent and nature.

Lack of awareness, impunity and corruption

In most CIS countries large numbers of families suffer from financial problems and often push their children to earn money in all possible ways; criminals take advantage of this situation by recruiting and exploiting children in the sex trade. Pimps, traffickers and child pornography producers make huge profits from these criminal enterprises,⁸ running only a limited risk of being caught and receiving harsh punishment. Also, there is a general lack of awareness of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the region, including among legislators; more often than not, CSEC is not viewed as a serious crime. Sometimes even judges fail to see CSEC as a grave offence, with the result that perpetrators receive only probation rather than a prison sentence. Regrettably, corruption of law enforcement is a common problem in the CIS region, as reflected in cases in which representatives of militia and judges were found to have received bribes to avoid investigation and punishment of offenders.

Transparency International found that Belarus, Central Asian countries, Russia and Ukraine rank among the worst countries in its recent survey of perceived global corruption.⁹

Domestic violence

Violence at home is a relatively widespread phenomenon in all CIS countries. Many children, especially girls, are abused at home. Although legislation is in place in all countries to prevent such occurrences, it is not effective. Furthermore, assistance and other services for victims of violence are inadequate; children who are subject to such abuse must endure it with almost no means of escape. They therefore often suffer in silence.¹⁰

Sexualisation of children in the media, consumerism and social tolerance

The media play a major role in the development of cultural orientations, world views and beliefs. Mass-media and advertising agencies promote images of naked bodies, sexualised behaviours, aggression and violence.

With the advent of mass media, including television, and more recently video and computer games, children and teenagers are being exposed to increasingly higher doses of aggressive images.

In many countries there is an average of five to ten aggressive acts per hour on television. Violence among youth is also on the rise.¹¹ The media constantly portrays sexual activity, leading many children and adolescents to believe that everyone around them is sexually active,¹² influencing their sexual behaviour and contributing to shaping their attitude toward all forms of sexual activity, including sexual exploitation. For example, several paintings by a local artist were displayed at Andriyivskiy Uzviv, a popular tourist spot in Kyiv, Ukraine. The paintings depict a girl dressed as a Soviet Pioneer – the youth wing of the Communist Party (thus under age 14) –

with her dress hiked up, exposing underwear and spread legs.¹³

Advertising and consumerism also have an impact on children's behaviour as testified by the increasing number of children who provide sexual services to earn easy money or obtain modern goods or gadgets they cannot otherwise afford. Children lack the critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to make informed decisions and are thus vulnerable to manipulation that could harm them.¹⁴ Families are often indifferent about the source of their children's goods and cash. Also, social institutions responsible for child protection (law enforcement agencies, schools, health and social services) frequently have a tolerant attitude towards CSEC and its perpetrators.

HIV/AIDS

The CIS and Eastern Europe region is seeing one of the steepest growths in the spread of HIV and AIDS worldwide. Increases of up to 700 % in HIV infection rates have been found in some parts of the Russian Federation since 2006. In Central Asia and in the Caucasus much of the significant growth in the epidemic registered in recent years remains under-reported. The pandemic is fuelled by risky behaviour – mainly drug use and unsafe sex – particularly among marginalised groups such as intravenous drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men and populations on the move. Increasingly, infection is spreading from these groups through their partners to more young people. Children and youth, including those living on the streets, constitute a group at particularly high risk. Currently, one-third of new HIV infections in the region are among the 15-to-24 age group, and more than 80 % of people living with HIV in the region are under 30 years of age. While they are the most vulnerable, young people are the least likely to know the risks or how to avoid them, have access

to needed services or be adequately protected by policies and laws.¹⁵

Women now account for some 40 % of new HIV infections (compared to just 24 % a decade ago), and the total number of HIV-positive pregnancies has doubled during the past five years. Since 2006, new reports have emerged of children contracting HIV in health settings due to unsafe injection practices, poor management of blood products and outdated clinical practices. As a result, 'outbreaks' of HIV infection among children have been confirmed in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.¹⁶ In the Republic of Kazakhstan official statistics published on 31 January, 2014 reported about 22,100 cases of HIV infection. The proportion of people living with HIV is 91.3 per 100,000 people, of which nine are children under 14 years. The largest number of cases of HIV infection among children is observed in South Kazakhstan, where HIV affects 23.7 of every 100,000 children.¹⁷ The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ukraine is one of the fastest growing in the world. Experts estimated in August 2010 that 1.3 percent of the adult population of Ukraine was infected with HIV, the highest rate in all of Europe. Between 1987 and late 2012, 27,800 Ukrainians died from AIDS. In 2012, tests revealed 57 new cases of HIV-positive Ukrainians each day and 11 daily AIDS-related deaths (of a population of roughly 45 million at the time).¹⁸

Children involved in prostitution and trafficking are at high risk of HIV infection, particularly since they have little or no power to negotiate safe sex.

In Ukraine only 14% of street children have knowledge about how HIV is transmitted, while 45% of minors who engage in prostitution and 62% of underage boys who sell sex to men are informed in this regard.¹⁹ Among Ukrainian female sex workers 10% are infected by HIV.²⁰ In Russia, according to 2011 research in eight regions, knowledge about HIV transmission was found to be quite high – 75% of street children gave correct answers. But at the

same time 72.6 % said they were sexually active, 22% had more than six partners during the year and 57% used condoms irregularly. The average percentage of street children who sold sex in exchange for money was 6.3%, but among girls this figure was higher – 10%, and in some cities reached 21%.²¹ These figures show that despite knowledge, street children and those who sell sex are in danger of HIV infection. It is also important to note that drug users have a high rate of HIV infection and, conversely, those engaged in commercial sex have high levels of drug addiction. Finally, another dangerous trend has appeared recently: the spread of HIV has increased the demand for sex with young children, who are regarded as safer sex partners. This in turn has contributed to the expansion of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of minors.²²

Low levels of education

Despite ongoing reforms, the CIS region's under-resourced education systems are struggling to improve equity, quality and governance. Children and adolescents face many barriers to school participation and learning. Disparities in access persist for the hardest-to-reach groups; policies and programmes for minority groups have shown little impact. Children with disabilities are almost entirely excluded from education. Dropout rates are rising in many countries and, in some countries, primary school enrolment rates are declining. The cost for families to educate their children has increased, which exacerbates existing barriers to access, especially in light of the ongoing global financial crisis.

In addition, school quality is declining; major concerns include: low levels of learning achievement, inadequate teacher preparation systems, outdated teaching methodologies, over-centralised school governance and crumbling school infrastructure. Ability tracking and segregation of children to special schools persist. Youth unemployment often

double and triple national unemployment rates, partly because young people leave school without the skills needed to participate in today's knowledge economy.²³

UNICEF provides recent data on the size of the child population, school enrolment and the number of orphans in countries of the region:²⁴

Country	Population under 18 years old, thousand	Primary School enrolment , %	Orphan Children (social orphans + real orphans)
Armenia	819	94	4,900 ²⁵
Azerbaijan	3100	97	20, 000 ²⁶
Belarus	1,779	98	25,000 ²⁷
Kazakhstan	4,727	99	36,777 ²⁸
Kyrgyzstan	1,954	91	11,000 ²⁹
Moldova	746	88	15,376 ³⁰
Russia	25,976	94	643,000 ³¹
Ukraine	8,023	89	94, 383 ³²
Uzbekistan	9, 940	90	20, 410 ³³
Tajikistan	3,052	98	11,000
Turkmenistan	1,785	99	no data

Poorly educated and marginalised sectors of society produce a steady source of children who can be easily coerced or enticed into the sex trade. Lack of education prevents children and youth from acquiring adequate knowledge or skills for productive employment. In the absence of adequate job opportunities, many end up engaging in commercial sex as the only option available. In Ukraine, a survey conducted in 2012 shows that only 52% of sex workers had completed secondary school, 20% had basic education and 4% had only completed primary school.³⁴ Likewise, in Moldova a study on child sex trafficking found that 25% of victims never completed primary school.³⁵

Children without parental care

Children without parental care are also particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. In CIS, the number of cases of children deprived of their right to live in a family environment is very

high compared to other parts of Europe. Belarus raises more than 25,000 boys and girls in children's institutions of various types; true orphans make up a small fraction of the total number. Alcohol abuse among parents is a common reason for children's institutionalisation.³⁶

Most orphans in Russia have a living mother or father who has abused, neglected or abandoned them. The government removes the parent's rights, and the child is placed in an orphanage. Once assigned to such an institution, children end up in a vicious cycle. They 'graduate' at age 15 or 16 without a family, support systems, or guidance; many of them turn to drugs and alcohol and have children who may also become orphans. Orphans who live in what are called 'baby houses' are often automatically diagnosed as "oligophrenic," or mentally retarded. Many bright children are unfortunately labelled as "oligophrenic" simply because they are poor or have been abandoned by their parents.³⁷

In Ukraine many orphaned children have experienced abuse and violence from parents who were drug addicts or alcoholics. Orphans typically grow up in large state-run homes, which may house over 200 children. Many children run away from these homes, preferring to live on the street. As in Russia, children usually graduate from institutions between 15 and 16 years old and are turned out, unprepared for life outside the home; about 10% commit suicide before their 18th birthday, 60% of the girls end up in prostitution and 70% of the boys enter a life of crime. Many of them die young due to violence or end up in prison.³⁸

In Moldova many parents can find a job only outside of the country and they leave children without the emotional support they need. 20% of Moldavian children live without care of one or both parents due to migration or family breakdown.

Children who grow up in residential institutions are 10 times more likely to be trafficked than other children.³⁹

The situation in Central Asian countries is equally concerning. In Kazakhstan there are 209 care organisations for socially orphaned children; the government has put strong efforts into de-institutionalisation: currently 21,585 children are under guardianship, 2,267 in foster care and only 12,925 in boarding schools.⁴⁰ Many street children are refugees, particularly from Tajikistan, and are among the groups most vulnerable to CSEC. In addition to facing language barriers, refugee children are often denied their right to education as they cannot enroll in school without registering a place of residence, which they usually do not have. The inability to attend school is another factor making many refugee children in Kazakhstan more vulnerable to fall victims to CSE.⁴¹

Some 11,000 social orphans live in 117 child houses or shelters in Kyrgyzstan, but only 6% do not have at least one parent.⁴² Many children also live and work on the street, among them some 80% are involved

in criminal activity.⁴³ In Uzbekistan, nearly 17,000 children live in the 88 boarding schools present across the country.⁴⁴

Gender discrimination and early marriage

Increased gender inequality has become one of the major characteristics of the post-Soviet period in CIS. Unfair distribution of resources, patriarchal norms and values, reduced employment opportunities for women, closure of kindergartens, child-care facilities and social support institutions and worsening of medical services are contributing to this process.

In CIS countries, according to State constitutions, men and women have equal rights. However in practice discrimination against women and girls exists everywhere, though it is more serious and evident in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) due to poverty and the persistence of harmful traditions such as early marriage and polygamy. Polygamy is prohibited under the Criminal Code of all these countries, but the practice is said to be increasing. Demographic imbalances resulting from civil wars, male out-migration and the deterioration in women's material conditions are among the key reasons for the rise in polygamous relationships. Second and third wives, however, are not recognised by the law and neither they nor their children have legal protections. Also, more and more couples are not registering their marriages, partly because of the cost of doing so, leaving many married women vulnerable in terms of exercising their rights in the event of divorce or widowhood.⁴⁵

The Family Code in all countries sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women, but legal reforms have not stopped women from being forced into early marriages. Because couples cannot register a marriage if one party is under 18 years of age, many simply have a local religious leader perform the wedding ceremony. Early marriage deprives young women of education, poses a threat

to their health and leaves them vulnerable to abuse and sexual exploitation, limiting their future work prospects.⁴⁶

20% of girls in Tajikistan drop out without completing a full course of basic education (through grade 9). Girls, particularly those from poor families, are at a disadvantage in completing basic education. Whilst primary schools (grades 1-4) have very high enrolment rates and achieved gender parity, teenage girls form the largest share of out-of-school children in the country. The direct and opportunity costs of girls' education, alongside traditional gender stereotyping, are amongst the main reasons for girls not attending school.⁴⁷ Marriage is extremely important in Tajik society, particularly for women's status in the community, and a shortage of men has contributed to worsening the situation as many Tajiks of working age have gone abroad in search of work.⁴⁸

Total number of women marrying for the first time, 2010	Age of bride (years)	
	Under 15	15-19
Kazakhstan 160,494	unknown	1,373 (0,86 %)
Kyrgyzstan 48,136	unknown	9,197 (19.1%)
Uzbekistan 179,247	unknown	40,599 (22,6%)
Tajikistan 424,996*	unknown	56,914 (13,9 %)

Total female population aged 15-to-19.⁴⁹

In Azerbaijan (Caucasus), more than 10% of girls are married before the age of 18, having begun marital preparations at a very young age. Such early marriages have grave consequences on the health of young girls as they do not understand the implications of marriage and are not physically prepared for childbirth.⁵⁰

Roma children

Roma communities in the region are excluded from economic, social and political life. Compared to non-Roma citizens, Roma are more likely to live in poverty, have a higher risk of unemployment, fewer years of schooling, live without access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity, and live in substandard, overcrowded homes. Roma are also more likely to suffer from chronic illness, have less access to health services and they live in poorer conditions compared to non-Roma living in the same area.

The number of Roma is unknown in many CIS countries and, when counted and available, it is generally under-estimated. In the Republic of Moldova (not including the Transnistrian region), estimates range between 12,000 and 27,000, with children (0-18 years) representing one-third of the total. Early marriage is particularly common among the Roma population. Roma children are frequently raised by a single parent or by grandparents (or even a single grandparent) because one or both of their parents work outside Moldova. In such circumstances, Roma children start working as early as 9-10 years old, and they usually leave school. Primary education covers less than 70% of Roma children and secondary education less than 50%.⁵¹

While in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan the Roma community consists of about 20,000 people,⁵² the number of Roma living in Ukraine is estimated to be as large as 400,000. Daily, they face problems of limited access to healthcare and education, unemployment, deplorable living conditions and exclusion. Children speaking only the Romani language cannot access quality education; teaching in the Romani language is delivered only at some Sunday schools. About 20% of Roma mothers in Ukraine are under 16 years of age.⁵³



SECTION 2. CSEC MANIFESTATIONS AND EMERGING TRENDS IN CIS

Several studies on sexual exploitation of children in five CIS countries (Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) were conducted by ECPAT in 2004-2005. Although it was not possible to provide statistics on CSEC nor to ascertain the true scale of the problem, the result of interviews with specialists and questioning of different target groups showed that CSEC manifestations such as child sex trafficking and prostitution of children exist in these countries, and cases of child pornography and child sex tourism had begun to emerge. ECPAT's second edition of country monitoring reports on CSEC in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Moldova and Ukraine, released in 2012-2013, confirm that while all forms of CSEC are now entrenched in the region, child pornography is increasingly widespread, demanding urgent measures and solutions.

Prostitution of children

Across the region, adolescent girls engage in or are forced into prostitution as a result of various factors, one of the most compelling of which is poverty. Street children, Roma children and children with a migrant background are at particular risk of being exploited in prostitution, as they often lack any kind of identification documents. Official statistics and estimates of the number of children exploited through prostitution in the region are lacking, but enough evidence is available to suggest that this form of sexual exploitation affects a worrisome number of girls (and, to a more limited extent, boys) and is often linked to child trafficking. Many of the children exploited in the commercial sex trade are indeed victims of domestic trafficking. Young girls in particular are recruited from the countryside and transported to the capitals or big cities for sexual exploitation in locations such as bars, saunas, private apartments and discos.

In Georgia, no reliable statistics exist on child prostitution, but the Centre for Intercultural and Social Research and the Independent Advisory Board of the Georgian Parliament conducted research in 2002, which showed that this form of child sexual exploitation is widespread in the country and involves both girls and boys.⁵⁴

In Kyrgyzstan, 20% of sex workers in the capital city, Bishkek, are reportedly underage. The majority of children involved in prostitution are between 11 and 16 years old and include both boys and girls. Children involved in prostitution are found on the streets and in market areas, saunas or hotels. Various organisations reported a demand for virgins in the country, and that pimps often provide habitual "clients" with very young children.⁵⁵

According to Moldova's criminal statistics, a total of 458 cases of persons engaged in prostitution were registered between 2005 and 2007, of which 178 involved minors (16-17 years old). CCF Moldova, the ECPAT member group in the country, has reported cases of 14-to-17-year-old boys who provided sex services to car owners in city parks. Some were runaways living and/or working on the streets, while others lived in families with insufficient parental care.⁵⁶

In recent years the problem of prostitution of boys in Ukraine has increased significantly. While the number of boys providing sexual services in exchange for money was a rare phenomenon in 2002, it is now becoming a common reality.⁵⁷ It is now estimated that some 4,000 boys aged 10-to-19 years are involved in the sex trade in Ukraine, while the number of girls under 15 is believed to total 1,600. Among older teenage girls, the estimate runs as high as 15,000.⁵⁸

In Moscow, Russia, of the estimated 80,000 to 130,000 sex trade victims, between 20 to 25 percent are underage.⁵⁹ According to experts and the media, the number of boys found in the sex market has increased in recent years, with services often offered and marketed through the Internet.⁶⁰ At least 8,000

children in Tajikistan live and work on the streets, where they are vulnerable to violence and coercion into the sex trade, drug trafficking or other crimes.⁶¹ In Armenia, there are more than 3,000 sex workers, some of whom are girls pushed into prostitution by their families to support the household. A growing number of young girls in Turkmenistan have turned to prostitution to obtain food, clothing and consumer goods such as cell phones or cosmetics. It is common to see schoolgirls selling their services to men both in urban areas and cotton-producing regions. Some parents have even set up “brothels” in their homes offering sex services provided by their own daughters.⁶²

According to ECPAT’s 2006 “Situation Analysis of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uzbekistan”, the number of sex workers in Tashkent (capital) was about 2,000. But this figure was based on police statistics. In total, based on some estimates, at least 50,000 persons are involved in the sex-industry in Uzbekistan. Recent media coverage of prostitution in Uzbekistan said that in recent years this phenomenon has achieved unprecedented scale, and the prices for sex services have now become exceptionally low and affordable to all segments of the population.⁶³

Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes

Child trafficking for sexual purposes is one of the most widespread manifestations of CSEC in the region. All CIS countries have been identified as sending, transit and destination countries for trafficking in women and children for prostitution. Victims are mainly trafficked to: Israel, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Lebanon, Poland, Germany and other European countries. Central Asian countries are a source for trafficking to China, South Korea, Syria, and Thailand.⁶⁴

According to UNICEF, around 3,000 Belarusian citizens have become victims of human trafficking

since 2000 and more than 400 of them were children who were exposed to sexual exploitation. The official number of children trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation registered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs was 103 in 2008; 22 in 2011, 45 (33 for pornography) in 2012, and 11 (7 for pornography) during the first six months of 2013.⁶⁵

In Kazakhstan, findings indicate a trend towards younger and younger children becoming victims of sex trafficking; girls as young as 13 and 14 years are being targeted, and incidents involving the trafficking of 11-year-old children for sex have also been uncovered. Statistics provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs illustrate that 21 cases of trafficking in minors were registered in 2009, dropping to 17 in 2010 and increasing again to 25 in 2011.⁶⁶

According to the 2011 U.S. State Department “Trafficking in Persons Report”, over 60,000 Kyrgyz citizens are victims of trafficking. In 2008 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported that at least 4,000 Kyrgyz women are sold annually, 10 % of whom are girls under the age of 18.⁶⁷

Trafficking in children is the main manifestation of commercial sexual exploitation in Moldova. Analysis of data on children’s age at the moment of recruitment shows that children are usually trafficked between the ages of 14 and 17; about 80% are girls. Over half (52%) of child-victims come from rural areas, 30% were residents of small towns and 18% lived in the capital or its suburbs. Most minors noted that in the period prior to recruitment they suffered from various types of domestic violence: physical and psychological (78%), psychological (13%), sexual violence in the family (5%). Statistics of La Strada Moldova (the local ECPAT affiliate) and the IOM show that from 62-69% of trafficked children were used in sexual exploitation.⁶⁸ The number of registered victims of trafficking in person in Moldova rose to 135 in 2010, of which 35 were children. However, experts say the real number of victims is quite higher.⁶⁹ Because many parents of Moldavian children work outside of the country,

their children are less protected and thus more attractive to traffickers.

In Ukraine the number of children whose parents are living and working abroad is also high. When both parents live abroad, children are often left in the custody of elderly relatives, increasing the likelihood of their becoming victims of trafficking. Many children and youth are trafficked internally, from rural districts to major cities like Kyiv and Odessa. Traffickers advertise job opportunities through local journals, wall posters and magazines; vulnerable children and their families often do not check the reliability of the information source. Sometimes children and youth get in touch with traffickers and pimps through the Internet.⁷⁰ According to IOM data, from January 2000 through March 2013, 9,326 victims of trafficking received assistance through IOM's Mission in Ukraine, of whom 587 were minors at the time they were victimised.⁷¹

Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine are also transit and destination countries for child trafficking. Ukraine is crossed by three major trafficking routes. The so called 'Eastern Route' goes from Poland to Western Europe and is used as a corridor to transport victims from Russia, Ukraine, Romania and Baltic countries. The 'Balkan Route' goes through southeast Europe, while another route passes through Bulgaria to end in Greece. Ukrainian women and girls are also trafficked to Turkey overland or by sea on boats sailing from Odessa.⁷² Women and girls from Africa, including Ghana and Nigeria, as well as from Central Asia, are subjected to forced prostitution in Russia, while children from Russia, Ukraine and Moldova are forced into prostitution and begging in Moscow and St. Petersburg.⁷³ According to research conducted by the NGO Stellit, children between 13 and 26 are especially vulnerable to trafficking and the number of cases of exploited girls and boys is equal.⁷⁴ Ukraine is also a destination country for children trafficked for sexual purposes, especially from neighbouring countries. Particularly during the summer season, children from the CIS region (including Moldova and Russia) are trafficked to Crimea and the Azov seacoast for

prostitution. In this sense, child sex trafficking to Ukraine continues to be strongly connected to the demand for sex with children from both Ukrainian and foreign tourists.⁷⁵

Girls are transported to Kazakhstan for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as from border regions of the Russian Federation.⁷⁶

Kyrgyzstan is known to be a transit point for victims of prostitution from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey. Children are also trafficked as a result of debt bondage; cases have been reported of children trafficked to China to repay their family's debts to Chinese businessmen. Internal trafficking from rural to urban areas for the purpose of sexual exploitation is also common. Particularly worrisome is the fact that parents have been reported to be directly involved in selling their children to pimps or forcing them to leave home due to extreme poverty.⁷⁷

Child Pornography/Child Abuse Images and Sexual exploitation of children through ICTs

A "Regional Overview on Child Sexual Abuse Images through the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine" conducted in 2008 by ECPAT International found that organised criminal networks, single persons or families are using children in the production of abuse materials for immediate financial profit. In addition to identifying a range of locations where child abuse images were produced (modelling or photo studios, private spaces such as apartments and summer houses -dachas, hotels, saunas and schools), the research unveiled different methods used to entice or force children into this illegal practice.⁷⁸ Methods included: blackmail,

grooming (solicitation of children for sexual purposes), taking pictures of sexual activities between children at schools, the use of coercion by family members to engage children in sexual abuse, the use of mentally disabled children and offering money or other goods to children in exchange for sexual services.

Several surveys by ECPAT groups in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine confirmed that very frequently, children post personal photos on social network websites (30% in Moldova, 46% in Belarus, 57% in Kyrgyzstan and in 73% in Ukraine),⁷⁹ ignoring the risk that such photos will be used to sexually exploit or blackmail them. Also, research showed that children visit pornographic websites with very differing intensity, between 4% and 50%, depending on their location.

In Moldova, eight out of ten children interviewed reported adding unknown persons to their personal profile on social networks. One-third of children reported sending personal pictures to persons whom they only met online. Indecent proposals were received by 13.4 % of the 12 year-old children and 29.3 % of the 16-year-olds. Meeting offline with persons met online was most prevalent among 12-year old children (68% living in rural areas).⁸⁰

Although knowledge of child pornography in Moldova has improved in recent years, this issue remains largely unaddressed; only a few cases have been identified, the majority of which relate to the production and distribution of child abuse images. The conclusions of several recent investigations show an increase in the involvement of foreign citizens travelling to Moldova to produce child pornography. Limited information is available to children or adults on the potential dangers children may inadvertently face through the use of the Internet, including grooming, exposure to unwanted and harmful materials and self-victimisation through “sexting”. Some Moldovan girls have posted and shared sexual images of themselves or portrayed themselves in a sexualised way on dating websites.⁸¹

Moldova is a State Party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). Accordingly, it has incorporated into national law a definition of child pornography and all the conducts prohibited by the OPSC.⁸² Also, Moldova has ratified the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention (the Budapest Convention) and the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention). Moldova has criminalised the mere possession of child pornography; however, it has not harmonised its laws with international obligations such as: knowingly accessing or viewing child pornography and grooming (required by the Lanzarote Convention) and virtual child pornography (required by the Budapest Convention). In addition, according to best international practices, Moldova should establish the obligation of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to report cases of child pornography to the police.

In Belarus, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 36 cases of production of child pornography in 2011 (27 online), 40 cases in 2012 (34 online), and 20 cases in eight months during 2013 (15 online). Also, there have been cases of Belarus-based web pages processing payments for child pornography.⁸³

Belarus acceded to the OPSC in 2002. However, national law is not in compliance with the Optional Protocol. In particular, Belarus has neither prohibited nor defined child pornography, and it has not criminalised all conducts related to child pornography, as required by articles 1, 2 and 3 of the OPSC.⁸⁴

Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe and has not ratified either the Budapest or Lanzarote Conventions. Thus Belarus legislation does not incorporate best international practices to protect children online, such as the criminalisation of grooming, knowingly accessing/viewing child pornography, virtual child pornography and the obligation of ISPs to report cases of child sexual abuse.

Georgia does not make available information on the production, storage and distribution of child abuse material. However, in recent years the State has taken some effective steps to combat this crime. In 2012, the Central Criminal Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs formed a Department to combat cybercrime, mainly through prevention and detection of illegal acts in the cyber space.⁸⁵

Georgia became a State Party to the OPSC in 2005. However, its Criminal Code neither defines nor criminalises child pornography conducts as required under its international obligations. Article 255 of the Criminal Code only punishes the production, distribution and promotion of images of pornographic character.

Recently, Georgia ratified the Budapest and Lanzarote Conventions (in 2012 and 2014, respectively) and efforts in the framework of the Council of Europe have been made to harmonise national law with international standards on cybercrime, resulting in the elaboration of draft legislation.⁸⁶ However, at the time of this writing no domestic laws incorporate best international standards to fight the sexual exploitation of children online.

According to the Ombudsman for children's rights, Russia has become the second-largest producer of child pornography online, after the United States.⁸⁷ According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, child pornography websites have increased 12-fold during the last four years. Over 550 child pornography offences were registered in Russia in 2012, prompting the Ministry of Internal Affairs to launch a large-scale operation, "Weed", to combat child pornography online, in cooperation with police in over 50 countries. Also in 2012, the lower house of the Russian parliament passed a bill authorising a blacklist of Internet sites allegedly containing child pornography, drug-related material, extremist material, and other illegal content. More than 90 websites registered in Russia were closed in 2013 for containing child pornographic material.⁸⁸

Russia has not ratified the OPSC and its domestic system is not in compliance with international standards. Russia has neither prohibited nor defined child pornography, and it has not criminalised a number of conducts spelled out by the OPSC, in particular, offering, selling and distributing child pornography.⁸⁹

In 2013, Russia ratified the Lanzarote Convention. However, as yet Russia does not fully comply with its international obligations under this Convention, not having criminalised grooming or knowingly viewing/accessing child pornography. Despite being a member of the Council of Europe, Russia has not ratified the Cybercrime Convention and its domestic system does not recognise best international practices against child sexual abuse online, such as virtual child pornography and the obligation of ISPs to report cases of child pornography.

Ukraine is mainly a producer of child pornographic material, although evidence of distribution and possession of child abuse materials exist as well. The government handles a large number of pornography cases each year: 1,007 alleged crimes were investigated in 2009 (with 772 cases solved), and 1,075 in 2010 (with 765 cases solved). Cases of child pornography numbered 16 in 2009, 10 in 2010, 3 in 2011 and 9 in 2012.⁹⁰

Ukraine is a State Party to the OPSC and has defined child pornography in full compliance with this treaty. However, Ukraine does not fully comply with all OPSC obligations. In particular, it has not prohibited certain conducts on child pornography such as producing, importing and exporting child pornography, which are only criminalised when tied with distribution.

Although Ukraine has ratified the Budapest and the Lanzarote Conventions, not all the international standards of these conventions have been incorporated into domestic law. Ukraine should harmonise its national law with best practices against child sexual abuse online, for instance, prohibiting the mere possession of child pornography and

establishing the obligation of ISPs to report cases of child pornography to the police.

According to the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, no child pornography is produced locally. However, images can be easily accessed from foreign sources.⁹¹

Although Kazakhstan ratified the OPSC in 2001, it has neither defined nor prohibited child pornography yet, nor has criminalised all conducts defined in the Protocol, in particular, offering, selling, possessing and disseminating child pornography. Therefore, Kazakhstan is not in compliance with its international obligations. Kazakhstan has not ratified the Lanzarote and Budapest Conventions, and its domestic system does not recognise best international practice against child sexual abuse online, in particular: the punishment of mere possession, virtual child pornography, grooming and the obligation of ISPs to report cases to the police.

Sexual exploitation of children in tourism

Information about cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by tourists in the CIS region, or by its citizens travelling abroad, is very limited. The phenomenon has just emerged in recent years and is not considered an issue of concern in most CIS countries.

In Moldova, only very few officially recognised incidents of sexual crimes against children committed by foreigners were noted in the period 2004-2009 (11 children were involved as victims and witnesses in court sessions regarding foreigners); most of the victims were boys.⁹² In 2012, NGOs noted an increase in the commercial sexual exploitation of Moldovan children by foreign tourists, combined with the alarming trend of Internet use as a tool for recruitment and exploitation. The alleged child sex tourists were from Australia, Denmark, Israel, Italy,

Germany, Norway, Sweden, Thailand and the United States.⁹³

St. Petersburg and the northwest region of Russia report a high incidence of sex tourism, which is widely advertised on the Internet and aimed at people from neighbouring Scandinavian countries.⁹⁴ Men from Western Europe and the United States travel to Western Russia, specifically St. Petersburg, for the purpose of engaging in sex with children.⁹⁵ Russia is also becoming a sending country for child sex tourism, as Russian citizens have been arrested abroad for sexually exploiting children in recent years (e.g., in Cambodia and Thailand).

Child sex tourism in Ukraine is especially prominent during the summer season in the Black Sea region, mostly in Odessa and Crimea, where children from other CIS countries, like Moldova and Russia, are trafficked and exploited to meet the demand of sex tourists, both Ukrainians and foreigners.⁹⁶ To assess the child sex tourism situation in Ukraine, La Strada-Ukraine, with financial support from UniCredit Foundation, initiated a study in 2010 aimed at understanding the phenomenon of child sex tourism in the country, schemes used by the offenders to reach children and their motivation to come to Ukraine for approaching children. The study showed that the main source of information for sex tourists are websites of sex tourist agencies that specifically cater to foreign clients. In addition, online sex tourism forums exist to get more “personalised” advice from more experienced sex tourists and expatriates, to get answers to specific questions or referrals for services. The existence of such services contributes greatly to exploiters’ preference for Ukraine.⁹⁷

In Georgia, addressing child sex tourism and trafficking in brides via the Internet remains particularly challenging,⁹⁸ although travel agencies, marriage agencies (prevention of “bride trafficking”), hotel and restaurant chains, transport companies and other entities play a key role in preventing child sex tourism.

Child Marriage and its linkages with CSEC

Early marriage threatens a child's human rights, including their right to education, good health and freedom of expression. In many cases, once married, an underage person can lose the status of a 'child' and the legal protection attached. Many girls who are forced to marry early also suffer from prolonged domestic violence and maltreatment by their adult spouses or their spouse's families. Furthermore, early marriage is often linked to wife abandonment, divorce and separation, plunging young girls into extreme poverty and increasing the risk that they will be forced to enter the commercial sex trade in order to survive.⁹⁹

Early marriage appears to be widespread in Central Asian countries and Caucasus, among Roma and refugee communities.

In Kyrgyzstan, 0.3% of girls between the age of 15 and 19 report having married before the age of 15. However, this data probably does not reflect the scale of the problem because the number of traditional (unregistered) Muslim marriages is increasing, and the number of brides and their respective ages remain unreported. Additionally, the practices of bride kidnapping, bride payment, polygamy and arranged marriages are thought to be increasing. According to 2006 data, about 12.2% of women in the Kyrgyz Republic married before the age of 18. This occurred more often in rural than urban areas (14.2% vs. 9.7%, respectively). National and regional experts interviewed in Kyrgyzstan believe that child marriage occurs within all ethnic groups and throughout the country. Nevertheless, many respondents also stated that child marriage is more widespread among certain ethnic groups, including Uzbeks, Dungans, Turks and Tajiks. There is evidence that child marriage is also widespread among Central Asian Lyuli people (related to Roma).¹⁰⁰

While 15,000 minors were kidnapped and forced to marry each year in Kyrgyzstan, in Kazakhstan there are an estimated 3,000 underage brides.¹⁰¹ Although forced marriage or bride kidnapping of underage girls is a crime punishable by law, the families and victims usually prefer not to contact the police for help and therefore offenders are rarely brought to justice. According to information provided by the Ombudsman on Human Rights of the Republic of Kazakhstan, no complaints were received from people affected by forced marriage. Likewise, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, nobody has been punished for “bride kidnapping” in the last two years. Most of these legal cases involve intimidation of the girls by the offenders and social stigmatisation, especially when the case becomes public.¹⁰²

In Tajikistan, the underlying reasons for early marriage are interconnected. Secondary sources identify widespread poverty as the main push factor: poorer families view girls as economic burdens, child marriage relieves families of the need to provide food and physical space for their daughters. High levels of male labour migration to Russia and Kazakhstan contribute to worsening the situation by leaving a disproportionate number of women living in the country, making parents more willing to give their daughter away to the first man who asks to marry her or as a second or the third wife, out of fear that she will be left unmarried. It is important to highlight that social and religious factors may play a more important role than economic factors.¹⁰³

In Uzbekistan the initial decision on child marriage is usually made by parents, who both insist on marriage and search for suitable candidates. Traditionally, one of the most important tasks of parents in Uzbekistan is to put in place family arrangements for their children, particularly girls: the sooner this “parental duty” is fulfilled, the better for the household. Another reason for early marriage is the desire to preserve the innocence of the girl “for the husband” and thus, marry her off “before she is spoiled”. In Uzbekistan loss of virginity before marriage is considered as a disgrace

for the entire family, so Uzbeks try to marry off their daughters as soon as possible.¹⁰⁴

Arranged child marriages are also common in Turkmenistan, as they ensure good relations between the two families. The father receives a dowry in cash, camels or sheep. Once married, young girls belong entirely to their new family and are expected to become pregnant within the first year of marriage.¹⁰⁵

Early marriage is a serious problem in Georgia, where a conflict exists between laws and traditions. Members of traditional communities categorically oppose any interference in their customs. The report of the Ombudsman of Georgia said that in the 2011-2012 academic year in the district of Marneuli, 314 girls withdrew from school because they were married, two of whom were just 12 years old. According to statistics from Georgia's Ministry of Education and Science, 7,400 girls stopped attending school at the age of 13-15 years during the 2011-2012 academic year, although the data do not explain the motives.¹⁰⁶



SECTION 3. ADDRESSING CSEC IN THE CIS REGION: PROGRESS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES

All CIS countries have acknowledged the existence of certain forms of CSEC and the importance of counteracting this serious violation of children's rights. At the country level, many specialised programmes and interventions have been developed, especially on trafficking prevention, with efforts to reach different target groups. Many governments are still working on legal reforms and harmonisation of domestic laws with international legal standards, but only limited efforts have been undertaken to ensure that sexually exploited children can fully enjoy their right to recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration.

NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION

National Plans of Action (NPAs) are the first tangible indication of a country's commitment to ending the sexual exploitation of children. By adopting the Stockholm Agenda for Action, governments have committed to developing NPAs to address commercial sexual exploitation of children. NPAs are multidisciplinary documents intended to provide a working plan to augment action against commercial sexual exploitation of children at all levels of society. More specifically NPAs: ensure that all aspects of child exploitation and abuse are addressed through concrete strategies, programmes and activities; outline specific actions a country will take and who will be responsible for them; establish a timeframe and provide indicators monitor progress; and provide information on the allocation of resources and estimate costs.¹⁰⁷

None of the countries in the CIS region has adopted a specific NPA to address CSEC, although some attempts in this direction have been made in recent years. In Russia, for example, upon request from the government, the Ombudsman for Children's Rights began to develop a NPA against CSEC in 2009, involving children and youth in policy development.¹⁰⁸ However, the plan does not appear

to have been further discussed or approved. Moreover, the National Children's Strategy for 2012–2017, focused on protecting children in difficult life situations, does not include specific provisions to prevent and combat CSEC.¹⁰⁹ The same is true for Armenia's "National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child for 2013–2016"¹¹⁰ and Georgia's "Child Welfare Action Plan" for 2012–2015.

Nevertheless, a number of governments have engaged to include some measures against CSEC in national plans dealing with general child protection issues and children's rights. The "National Plan of Action for Children to Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for 2010–2016" approved in 2009 by the Government of Ukraine is one such example. In Belarus, the "National Action Plan on Enhancing the Status of Children and Protection of Children's Rights for the years 2012–2016" contains a chapter on 'Protection of children from violence, trafficking in human beings, and all forms of exploitation', although information on implementation is scarce.¹¹¹ In Moldova, the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Family developed a "National Strategy on child and family protection for 2013–2020", which integrates measures on prevention of violence against children, neglect and exploitation.¹¹²

While only some countries have adopted plans or policies against the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking and CSEC (Kazakhstan,¹¹³ Moldova,¹¹⁴ Tajikistan¹¹⁵ and Uzbekistan,¹¹⁶) all CIS governments in the region except Russia and Turkmenistan have a current national plan for combatting trafficking in human beings. In some cases, the anti-trafficking policy details specific provisions against trafficking in children. For example, Armenia's "Fourth National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons for 2013–2015", approved in February 2013, includes a separate chapter on the prevention of child trafficking.¹¹⁷ In Kazakhstan, the "National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2012–2014)" prioritises the development of standards for shelter assistance for

trafficking victims and the provision of services to vulnerable population groups, including children.¹¹⁸

On 13 February, 2013, taking into account the recommendations of international human rights organisations, Georgia adopted a National Action Plan for 2013-2014 to combat human trafficking, consisting of three basic principles: prevention of trafficking, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and effective prosecution of traffickers. In 2006, a State Fund was created for the protection, care and rehabilitation of trafficking victims.¹¹⁹

Areas of concern:

- Existing NPAs do not tackle all manifestations of CSEC (especially those that have emerged or sharply increased in recent years, such as sexual exploitation of children through ICTs) as most government policies focused on combating and preventing human and child trafficking.
- In countries with no anti-trafficking NPA (Russia and Turkmenistan), children who are vulnerable to or victims of trafficking for sexual purposes are not benefiting from special measures in the areas of prevention, protection and rehabilitation.
- The implementation of current NPAs is hindered by:
 - Lack of technical, human and financial resources.
 - Absence of mechanisms to assess and evaluate the progress achieved.
 - Weak political commitment and understanding of the issues (such as trafficking).
 - Limited involvement by civil society organisations in developing and implementing NPAs and insufficient collaboration among all actors involved.

Recommendations

Governments:

- Each country must develop a national plan of action or a multi-faceted strategy that could be included into a related NPA, to address emerging forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The NPA (or special chapter) should describe objectives to be achieved, measures foreseen, a timetable, budget and allocated funding sources, organisations responsible for the execution of the plan, indicators and monitoring/evaluation. It is also important to secure sources for monitoring/evaluation of implementation. In Eastern European countries, the NPA should be focused particularly on the production and distribution of child abuse images, child prostitution and child sex tourism. In Central Asian countries attention should focus on child trafficking and early marriages.

NGOs:

- Lobby in favour of development of an NPA or special chapter, in accordance with the above-mentioned recommendation

Donors:

- Allocate funds for working groups (at least four meetings), which should include governmental institutions, international and local NGOs and stakeholders.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Coordination and cooperation are crucial for an efficient and effective fight against CSEC. In accordance with the Stockholm Declaration, close interaction and cooperation between government and non-government sectors is necessary to effectively plan, implement and evaluate measures to combat CSEC. At the regional and international level, effective cooperation is required between countries and both regional and international organisations, to ensure that a concerted and coordinated approach is taken to eliminate CSEC.

Coordination and cooperation at national and local level

During the last ten years most coordination efforts relevant to combating CSEC in CIS countries have revolved around human trafficking. A number of coordinating bodies that involve both government and non-governmental agencies were established at national and local levels to prevent trafficking. Cooperation to ensure the referral of trafficking victims for services has also been informally or formally established in many countries. For example, Belarus' anti-trafficking programme involves 15 national ministries and government agencies coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Persons. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has a department which deals with trafficking and cooperates with NGOs¹²⁰ although only a few NGOs are active in Belarus. Uzbekistan established the Interdepartmental Commission on Counteracting Human Trafficking (involving 9 ministers), which holds meetings each quarter; however, no NGO is part of this Commission.¹²¹

A number of institutions have been established to promote children's rights and protect them from violations of these rights, including CSEC. In some

countries, more than one coordinating mechanism deals with children's issues. For example, in Kazakhstan there is a National Coordination Council on Child Labour, an NGO Council that works with the Committee on the Protection of Children in the Ministry of Education and Science and an Interagency Commission on Minors.¹²² In Kyrgyzstan the Commission on Children's Affairs is the main governmental agency for child protection, and is also mandated to coordinate activities conducted by government agencies within the framework of implementation of the OPSC.¹²³ Similar institutions and arrangements exist in other countries. In August 2011, the President of Ukraine created a new post, the Commissioner (Ombudsman) on Children Rights, to serve under the President of Ukraine. The Office of the Ombudsman helps in protecting all child rights, and has often been crucial in cases of severe violations of children's rights. Similar bodies can be found in Russia and Moldova. Despite the proliferation of these mechanisms, regrettably there is still no special agency in CIS for coordinating efforts on CSEC.

All countries in the region have networks of institutional bodies engaged on a daily basis in supporting children and their families at both the national and local level. Referral mechanisms, reporting and decision-making processes are widely distributed at different levels of government and professional expertise, and are often cross-cutting in the delivery of multiple services. However, it is difficult to monitor the result of the work undertaken and the concrete cases, due to the absence of central coordinating governmental bodies.

Governmental institutions do not trust NGOs that monitor cases of abused children and rarely accept their help and recommendations. A typical example comes from Azerbaijan, where the official mandate of each entity is not systematically available, due to the difficulty of tracing certified information sources (regulations, professional guidelines, mission statements), which are often non-existent. However, each role is described in relation to its

relevance to child protection. Similarly, the profile and the number of professionals involved in each unit are mentioned only in some cases. Monitoring the quality of professional performances (regular appraisals, evaluations) and services (complaint mechanisms, regular inspections, self-assessment exercises) is nearly unmentioned, since it does not seem to be a relevant component of the working style of the Azerbaijani State apparatus. The control units distributed throughout the system have supervisory and auditing, rather than quality assessment, functions. The few monitoring initiatives are carried out by non-governmental organisations.¹²⁴

Although the importance of establishing comprehensive child protection systems has been increasingly acknowledged by the international community, very limited information about good examples of protection and referral systems in CIS is available, though some efforts have been initiated. The first international conference, “Development of child protection systems: National and international experience”, was held in Minsk, Belarus, in April 2010. The conference was organised by the NGO ‘Ponimanie’ (Understanding) in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Office of the President of the Republic of Belarus. More than 160 representatives from state administration, educational institutions, health care, law enforcement offices and mass media, as well as international experts, took part in the event. Participants conducted a situational analysis in the sphere of child abuse. As a result of the conference, participants decided to: create effective systems of early child abuse prevention; include into schools’ curricula a special course on prevention of child abuse; introduce child-friendly investigation rooms; create a unified state statistical database on child abuse; create conditions for increasing the number of public associations working in the field of child protection; and create effective mechanisms for enabling NGOs to work on preventing child abuse, identifying cases of child abuse and for the rehabilitation of abused children.¹²⁵

Several examples of joint activities promoted by governmental and non-governmental institutions can be cited, especially on trafficking issues.

For example, in 2012 the Government of Azerbaijan organised anti-trafficking seminars for representatives of government ministries, municipal governments, NGOs, teachers and college students throughout the country, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs trained representatives from 15 travel companies on the identification of trafficking victims.¹²⁶ In Russia the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the lead law enforcement agency in most trafficking cases, conducted regular training designed to guide its officers in handling trafficking cases. According to government officials, the general prosecutor’s office, the investigative committee, the Russian Academy for Justice, the Russian Academy of Advocacy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Advanced Training Institutes and the Federal Security Service provided periodic training as well.¹²⁷

Russia also offers a promising example of cooperation involving many actors, including NGOs. Local cooperation is successfully achieved by the Russian Commission on Minor’s Affairs and Protection of their Rights, which engages a broad range of stakeholders. The establishment of an interagency coordinating committee to address human trafficking by the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Russian Safe Internet League are examples of coordinated efforts to tackle manifestations of CSEC at a national level, both of which include NGO involvement.¹²⁸

Many national-level activities have been organised by NGOs to support partnerships and coordination between government agencies and NGOs in combating sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT members in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine organised several activities on CSEC prevention to raise awareness, collaborate with and educate government and business representatives. Examples include:

On 28 March 2013, the NGO “Children - not for Abuse” (ECPAT Affiliate group in Belarus) together with the Dzerzhinsk social services agency facilitated a roundtable on “The role of Family in Prevention of Violence against Children”. The event was organised within the framework of the regional prevention awareness campaign “Happy Childhood”. Representatives of educational and social protection institutions in Minsk participated. Participants developed recommendations and proposed to work with organisations with rich experience in this area, such as the Catholic Church.¹²⁹

On 20 March 2012 La Strada Moldova, with support from the EU, private companies and ECPAT International, organised an International Conference with the theme “Promoting child-friendly tourism and ICT industries in Moldova”. The goal was to encourage Moldova’s business community to join in CSEC prevention efforts. Among the speakers were the Adviser to the Prime-Minister of Moldova, the President of the National Association of Tourism Agencies, the Executive Director of the Moldavian Association of Private ICT Companies, representatives from ECPAT International, tourist companies, La Strada Ukraine and a representative from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova. Many speakers lauded ECPAT’s work in promoting Codes of Conduct for the IT and tourism sectors.¹³⁰

On October 14, 2011 the Center for Public Opinion Research and Forecast ‘El-Pikir’, ECPAT’s affiliate group in Kyrgyzstan, with support from ECPAT International, carried out a roundtable discussion on Child Pornography and other risks on the Internet. The event was held to determine the way forward for improving coordination among the various stakeholders, such as the Kyrgyz’ players

online, various government agencies and other organisations dealing with illegal content on the Internet. At the roundtable, around 45 actors participated actively and among them there were representatives from: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, Department of Children’s Rights of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Agency on Communications, General Prosecutor’s Office and the National Center for Maternal and Child Welfare of the Ministry of Health. Contributors from the following IT operators were also present: Kyrgyztelecom, AK Phone (brand of Fonex); Association of Lawyers, public organisations, and youth.¹³¹

Areas of concern:

- Despite some good examples of collaboration between governmental authorities and NGOs in the implementation of policies and monitoring and reporting of CSEC cases, coordination to prevent and combat this specific violation of children’s rights remains generally weak.
- Most CIS countries have promoted coordinating efforts against human trafficking, but other forms of CSEC have been generally neglected.
- The absence of a specific body in CIS countries responsible for coordinating activities on CSEC or child sexual abuse.
- The absence of national referral mechanisms that are able to reach children vulnerable or subjected to CSE as well as an urgent need for training on CSEC issues for government professionals working with abused children, as this topic is not covered in educational curricula or professional preparation.
- Only a few countries have established Ombudsman for Children, who can play a key role in promoting children’s rights and safeguarding children subjected to various types of violations, including victims of CSEC.

- The role and expertise of NGOs dealing with child protection issues, especially CSEC, is not sufficiently valued, given that their contribution is essential for ensuring an adequate response to the problem.

Recommendations

Governments:

- More cooperation is needed between state institutions and non-governmental organisations working on CSEC; NGOs have international experience, good knowledge of CSEC issues and are capable of delivering high quality seminars, training, lectures etc. valuable to all stakeholders;
- Develop a clear concept and data collection procedure, and identify a body responsible for centralised data-gathering on CSEC victims/crimes;
- Establish an office of Ombudsman for Children to help in protecting children from CSE, as one of the children's rights issues to be addressed.

Private sector:

- Private sector support for activities intended to end CSEC is required, both in terms of funding for civil society groups combatting CSEC and active involvement in joint activities, especially in the areas of tourism and ICTs.

NGOs:

- Raise social awareness of your role in combatting CSEC issues (education, hotlines, street activities, clinics, consultants and other forms of social prevention, protection or rehabilitation);
- Lobby in favour of an Ombudsman for Children and work in cooperation with this office;
- Promote a strong national referral system for reaching vulnerable children and victims of CSE in which professionals from NGOs will be involved.

Regional coordination, initiatives and forums

Numerous mechanisms and initiatives have contributed to enhancing cooperation among countries in the region and internationally on CSEC issues, especially in relation to human/child trafficking.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has taken a coordinated approach towards the fight against human trafficking and designed a number of functional measures. First, specific legal instruments regulating transnational activities to combat this crime were adopted, particularly the "Agreement on Co-operation regarding return of minors to the countries of their permanent residence", approved on 7 October 2002 in Chisinau, and the "Agreement on co-operation on the fight against human trafficking and trafficking for the removal of organs and tissues", signed 25 November 2005 in Moscow.

The essential purpose of these agreements is to elaborate a coordinated strategy and a range of comprehensive legal, socio-economic, informational and other measures aimed at counteracting human trafficking, eliminating the root causes of this crime, protecting victims and providing opportunities for rehabilitation.

Building on the provisions of these agreements, two further documents were drafted and subsequently enforced: an Agreement on co-operation between prosecutors of the CIS and a second Agreement on co-operation between the Ministers of Interior of the CIS to combat human trafficking with the aim, *inter alia*, of increasing the prosecution of persons responsible for human trafficking.¹³²

CIS authorities have coordinated and determined the principles, tasks, main directions, formats and mechanisms for cooperation in this area of joint action. To implement activities at the practical level, statutory bodies and specialised authorities of the CIS have been established, such as the Council of Border Troops Commanders, the Coordinating Council of the

Prosecutors General, the Council of the Ministers of Interior, the Council of the heads of security and special services, the Council of the heads of migration services, and the Bureau for the coordination of activities to combat organised crimes and other dangerous crimes in the territory of CIS member states. Responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of these bodies was placed with the “Coordination Conference”, held when deemed necessary.¹³³

To turn the conceptual framework into practical actions, medium-term programmes covering periods of three years are being adopted. Moreover, the new programme of co-operation on the fight against trafficking in persons 2011-2013 adopted by the Council of Heads of States in December 2010 is also now being implemented. The Programme envisages activities aimed at the development of a legal foundation for cooperation and harmonisation of national laws. It also provides a common platform for conducting joint operations and preventive activities and special operations, as well as outlining informational, scientific, technical and financial support measures to further co-operation on counteracting human trafficking.

Implementation of this Programme allows for close, comprehensive collaboration among relevant authorities of CIS member states, to make joint activities to combat human trafficking more effectively.

In 2011, as part of programme implementation, these authorities continued the practice of conducting special activities known as “Channel”, “Transfer”, “Brothel”, “Transit”, “Plot” and others. Law enforcement authorities designed and carried out 9 one-time complex operational and preventive activities in the territories of CIS member states. These activities resulted in the elimination of 10 illegal migration channels as well as identifying and shutting down 26 criminal activities associated with trafficking in human beings. These experiences are being closely analysed at the meetings of CIS

authorities participating in the cooperation on the fight against human trafficking.¹³⁴

The CIS Executive Committee prepared a report to the Council of Heads of States on the implementation of the Programme of co-operation on the fight against trafficking in persons 2011-2013. It is also worth mentioning that, given the importance of strengthening personnel capacities, CIS countries are actively co-operating in the areas of staff development, re-training of personnel and advancing professional competencies. An international training centre, hosted by Belarus’ Academy of the Ministry of Interior, serves as the core organisation focusing on training and advancing professional competencies in the sphere of migration and human trafficking. This centre was established in co-operation with the IOM, providing an example of successful co-operation between the CIS and international organisations. In 2011, 45 law enforcement officers from the CIS member states were trained at the centre.

The **Council of Europe (CoE)** also plays an important role in promoting and monitoring children’s rights in CIS countries. However, only six CIS countries are CoE member states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine). The CoE promotes interesting programmes such as “Building a Europe for and with children”, which was launched in 2006 in response to a mandate resulting from the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 2005). The strategy and programme for 2012 -2015 focuses on four strategic objectives:

1. Promoting child-friendly services and systems;
2. Eliminating all forms of violence against children;
3. Guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations;
4. Promoting child participation.¹³⁵

*In 2010 the Council of Europe adopted “Guidelines on child-friendly justice”, aimed at improving children’s access to and treatment by justice systems. Intended for use by professionals working in criminal, civil or administrative justice systems, the Guidelines address themes such as the family, mistrust of authority and the need for respect, and the importance of listening to children and young people.*¹³⁶

Using these instruments, government institutions of CoE member states, in collaboration with NGOs, are working to develop child-friendly services – such as setting up child-friendly spaces for interviews (Ukraine, Moldova), enhancing child and youth participation (Russia, Ukraine) and eliminating all forms of violence through the implementation of different projects (in all countries).

Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine are members of the “Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk” (EGCC), established by the **Council of Baltic Sea States**. The EGCC is comprised of senior officials from the ministries responsible for children’s issues in the member countries of the Council of Baltic Sea States and the European Commission. It identifies, supports and implements cooperative efforts focused on children at risk, including those vulnerable or affected by sexual exploitation, among countries and organisations in the region.¹³⁷ In the context of the EGCC’s Plan of Action on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children, CIS countries that participate in this initiative have provided a contact point as part of the referral mechanism for child victims of trafficking.¹³⁸ Upcoming activities of the Council of Baltic Sea States include planned expert meetings in support of the “PROTECT children on the move” project, which seeks to identify child rights standards and key agencies responsible for protecting children exposed to exploitation and trafficking in cross-border situations. The expected outcomes of this project include a report and an online tool on relevant laws, policies and procedures.¹³⁹

All CIS countries are part of the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE) and have therefore actively participated in OSCE-sponsored events and activities to prevent and combat human trafficking. One large-scale event that saw participation by all CIS countries took place in Astana, Kazakhstan, in November 2010 as part of an OSCE Conference, with a side event entitled “Prevention of child trafficking: Good practices and challenges in protecting the rights of vulnerable children”. Another example was the high-level conference “Strengthening the OSCE Response to Trafficking in Human Beings”, which took place in Kyiv, Ukraine, in June 2013. Both events provided an opportunity for ECPAT International to offer presentations on trafficking in children and other forms of CSEC.¹⁴⁰

With support from UN agencies and regional institutions such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, CIS countries actively participate in regional and international forums, conferences and initiatives to address human and child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children online and abuse against children. Belarus, for example, together with 19 countries across all regions, initiated the emergence of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.¹⁴¹ The Ministries of the Interior of CIS countries also cooperate internationally to identify and safely return victims of trafficking and prosecute traffickers. Many countries signed bilateral cooperation agreements on combating human trafficking or legal assistance on civil and criminal matters. For instance, the Government of Belarus reported partnerships with several governments on trafficking cases, including: the Czech Republic, Israel, Germany, Poland and Turkey. Law enforcement officials reported jointly investigating several transnational trafficking-related cases with counterparts from Estonia, Germany, Israel, Poland, Russia and Turkey.¹⁴² Also, Uzbekistan shared data with several foreign law enforcement agencies to assist in criminal cases against suspected traffickers.¹⁴³

Georgia is not a member of the CIS but has signed bilateral international agreements on the fight against organised crime with 20 countries in the field of police cooperation. These agreements provide cooperation between the parties and also in the fight against human trafficking.¹⁴⁴

CIS governments have established fruitful partnerships with UN agencies and international NGOs. In Belarus, government activities to protect children's rights have been carried out in collaboration with international organisations, including UNICEF, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organisation and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Belarus also received assistance from Hope Express, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Christian Children's Fund.¹⁴⁵ Other countries also have numerous partnerships with international NGOs, donors and UN agencies.

While international collaboration to address CSEC as a whole remains limited, some initial efforts at regional and international cooperation to address child pornography deserve mention. For example, the United States and Russia joined forces in 2011 to discuss a cooperative strategy to counteract the rapid spread of child pornography. Russian Hotlines are also part of the international network of hotlines, INHOPE and INSAFE.¹⁴⁶ Cooperation against child pornography and child trafficking has also been fostered among law enforcement agencies, leading to a number of successful international police operations. For example, Ukraine's Cyber Crime Unit has enhanced its ability to combat child trafficking and the dissemination of exploitative materials over the Internet, partially through expanding collaborative efforts with the UK's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre and IOM Ukraine's Counter Trafficking Programme. This collaboration was instrumental in securing the conviction and life imprisonment, of a British paedophile who had trafficked two 11-year old Ukrainian girls to produce child pornography. IOM provides significant technical assistance to Ukrainian

law enforcement units working on issues related to trafficking. Cooperation also played a role in support services; the Ukrainian Cyber Crime Unit referred the child victims and their parents to IOM for medical, psychosocial and social services.¹⁴⁷ Since 2008, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus has participated in an international operation against child pornography called Carousel-2, initiated by police in Brazil.¹⁴⁸

Regional seminar on child sexual exploitation of children through ICTs

In December 2010, the Regional Seminar "Protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse through Internet," organised by the Council of Europe and the European Union, took place in Kyiv, Ukraine. About 40 law enforcement participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine took part. Many specialists from different organisations were invited as speakers, including Microsoft, ICMEC, ECPAT, Interpol, National Police of Italy, eContent@Safer Internet of the European Commission, and eNACSO. During this event the head of the Cybercrime Unit, Director-General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe, made an announcement regarding the upcoming CoE project "Eastern Partnership – Cooperation against Cybercrime (Cyber@EAP)", which was to be implemented from 2011 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The goal was to strengthen the capacities of criminal justice authorities of Eastern Partnership countries to cooperate effectively against cybercrime, in line with European and international instruments and practices.¹⁴⁹

Other initiatives promoting regional cooperation

INGOs and local NGOs also organised several events to foster regional cooperation, for example:

In 2010, ECPAT International organised “KYIV Call for accelerated action in the Baltic and CIS Regions to protect children from sexual exploitation through the use of ICTs”, with participation by governments, NGOs and private business representatives from six countries (Belarus, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine).¹⁵⁰

In 2008, La Strada-Ukraine organised an international seminar entitled “Cooperation of border police services and NGOs from Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.” Representatives of border police services, as well as militia from the above-mentioned countries, NGOs and INGOs working in the field of prevention of trafficking in people in the countries participating in the event.¹⁵¹

Areas of concern:

- Protection of children from sexual exploitation has not been prioritised by existing regional mechanisms for exchange and coordination, especially by the CIS, and most joint programmes and cooperation between countries in the region, and with other international organisations or governments, have focused on trafficking in human beings, without recognising the situation of child victims and their right to special protection;
- Regional and international judicial, police and victim-oriented cooperation activities with other states on CSEC crimes remain very limited, especially to counteract sexual exploitation

of children through ICTs and by travelling sex offenders. In this framework, cooperation with key international and regional law enforcement agencies (such as Interpol, Europol and needs to be urgently strengthened VGT), particularly to prevent and deter child abuse images.

- More financial, technical and other assistance is needed through existing multilateral, regional, bilateral and other programmes for addressing the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

Recommendations

Governments:

- Urgently establish and improve regional and international judicial, police and victim-oriented cooperation activities with other States in order to better counteract emerging forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly the production and dissemination of child abuse materials and child sex trafficking;
- Improve and expand communication and cooperation with international and regional law enforcement agencies;
- Participate in international programmes on the issue of CSEC.

NGOs:

- Continue to foster international cooperation through multilateral, regional and bilateral events, especially with neighbouring countries, with a view to improving prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for all CSEC-related offences;
- Help to promote ties and cooperation between law enforcement agencies in different countries during regional or international events.

PREVENTION

Effective prevention of CSEC requires multi-faceted strategies and policies that simultaneously address different elements of the problem. These strategies should target both vulnerable children and those who engage in sexual activities with children, while also addressing the root causes of CSEC, such as poverty and lack of education. Long-term prevention strategies include improving the status of children who are most vulnerable to CSEC by implementing policies to reduce poverty and social inequality and improving access to education, health and social services. Effective short- to medium-term strategies include awareness-raising campaigns and education and training initiatives for the general public, vulnerable groups and government officials. The resources, expertise and influence of the private sector, particularly the tourism and IT industries, should also be engaged in prevention measures, in particular in awareness-raising activities. Furthermore, information, education and outreach programmes should be directed at those engaging in the commercial sexual exploitation of children (e.g. users of children forced into prostitution) to promote changes in social norms and behaviour and reduce the demand for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Awareness raising, education and training

As in other regions of the world, CIS countries have organised several awareness-raising campaigns and other activities aimed at preventing trafficking in human beings. IOM, OSCE, UNICEF and other international and national organisations have conducted numerous anti-trafficking initiatives, but these efforts have not focused on the special needs

and rights of children and on reducing other forms of CSEC.

ECPAT members in the region (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) have actively engaged in raising awareness on the various interlinked manifestations of CSEC, reaching out to different target groups. Most of these activities received financial support from ECPAT International and its donors. During the last ten years, these countries have been involved in several sensitisation projects including: 'Youth Partnership Project' (2009-2013) and 'Safe Internet for Children', and micro-projects such as 'Educational seminars for specialists of Kyiv Social Services for families, children and youth', 'Child-Safe organisations', 'Reform of Child Protection in Ukraine: European Choice – Round table in the Parliament of Ukraine', the collection of signatures on a petition against child sex trafficking and presenting to the governments and others. In Kazakhstan, every year in June and November, all relevant state and public organisations hold information campaigns on children's rights, child labour and exploitation that include the topic of CSEC.¹⁵²

*Several capacity building and awareness-raising activities have focused on preventing sexual abuse and exploitation of children online. To protect children from unsafe Internet use ECPAT International, with support from The Body Shop, carried out a project during 2011-2013 entitled "Certification of Schools for Safe Internet in CIS" in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine educating about 19,000 children, 1,943 teachers, and 11,434 parents.*¹⁵³

Unfortunately the number of beneficiaries from this activity is limited compared to the population in these countries. In 2008, ECPAT provided training in online safety for children to the staff of Microsoft Ukraine; and trained staff together with volunteers of the All-Ukrainian network against CSEC carried out hundreds of trainings in schools targeting children and parents. Also, in 2008 the "Coalition

for child safety online”, which includes the All-Ukrainian network against CSEC and is supported by Microsoft Ukraine, developed a special website called “Onlandia” (<http://www.onlandia.org.ua/ukr>) designed to raise awareness among children and young people about online safety. The website contains material for children, parents and teachers, such as interactive scenarios, short tests and prepared lesson plans through which children can learn the basics of safe Internet use.

According to Georgia’s National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, valid for 2013-2014, the subject of children’s rights, human trafficking, and the risks and factors that contribute to this violation, has been integrated into the school curriculum on “civic education” for tenth-grade students.¹⁵⁴ CCF Moldova, the lead organisation of the Network of National Organisations fighting against Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT affiliate group in the country), conducted the “Child in the Web” campaign, which involved the production and distribution of materials, namely a TV spot and poster, based on a campaign created by Poland’s Nobody’s Children Foundation. It also conducted trainings to raise awareness of professionals and public actors (such as mayors, social workers, school principals and police) about issues such as child protection, children at risk, CSEC and its consequences, child safety on the Internet and the use of new technologies. La Strada Moldova has also been active in raising public awareness of child pornography in the country. In 2010, a training seminar on children’s risk of victimisation through the Internet was delivered to La Strada’s volunteers. Subsequently, 64 seminars on online child safety were held at different summer camps, involving over 1,600 children. As part of International Children’s Day festivities in 2011, La Strada’s trained volunteers administered a quiz entitled “Stay safe while navigating the web” to children and their parents. In Russia, with support from ECPAT International and the Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in St. Petersburg, the NGO Stellit has undertaken a number of awareness-raising activities on risks connected with Internet use. These include several sessions involving lectures, interactive games and

discussions with 500 children and youth and a seminar on Internet safety targeting more than 100 adolescents.

Some awareness-raising initiatives and training to prevent sexual exploitation by travelling sex offenders, especially during large-scale sporting events, were also conducted, particularly at the initiative of ECPAT member organisations. Although to date no Ukrainian travel or tourism company has signed the Code of Conduct for Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, in November 2009 La Strada-Ukraine conducted training for government ministries on the “Implementation of the Code for Tourism and Hotel Infrastructure” in Ukraine. The training focused on the prevention of child sex-tourism and was carried out by trainers from ECPAT International, ECPAT Germany and “Stellit” ECPAT Russia, who shared their experience on Code of Conduct implementation and counteracting child sex tourism. La Strada Moldova raised awareness of child sex tourism through a social advertising spot based on real cases of sexual exploitation of children by foreign citizens collected by the organisation since 2005.

A commendable example of a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign is the “Don’t Lose!” campaign initiated by NCF in Poland (ECPAT member organisation in the country) and the Child Well-being Fund and La Strada in Ukraine, in cooperation with government institutions, to prevent the sexual exploitation of children during EURO 2012.

As part of this campaign, posters, brochures and leaflets were created to inform football fans, tourists and other travellers about Poland’s and Ukraine’s CSEC-related laws. This material was published in Polish, English, Russian and Ukrainian and widely disseminated throughout the two countries, with the assistance of private sector partners (including hotels, airports, etc.).

In some CIS countries, initial attempts were made to include education on CSEC-related issues in school curricula. In Moldova, for example, several elements of the human trafficking phenomena are presented, with specific cases of children and women illustrated and discussed in this framework.¹⁵⁵ In 2009-2010, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, with assistance from the Council of Europe and European Union, prepared a set of recommendations on lessons for prevention of trafficking in people to be used in secondary schools. The Ministry also pledged to make this material obligatory in all school curricula. However, it appears that these lessons remain optional for students.

Hotlines/helplines and other mechanisms for reporting child pornography

Since November 2009, La Strada-Ukraine has run an Internet hotline specifically dedicated to reporting child pornography (www.Internetbezpeka.org.ua). Messages are checked weekly by a La Strada-Ukraine expert. The line is anonymous, unless a user requests to be contacted given the information is provided. Reports are forwarded to the Internet service providers responsible for hosting the material and to the appropriate Ministry of Interior Department for further investigation and prosecution.¹⁵⁶

On 21 December 2012, La Strada Moldova launched the website www.siguronline.md for children and parents. Its purpose is to inform children about secure Internet surfing and enlighten parents on how to protect their children while they are using the Internet. The website also features an alert button allowing individuals to report child sexual abuse in virtual space.¹⁵⁷

Russia has two hotlines/helplines, “Friendly Runet” (www.friendlyrunet.ru) and Safernet (www.safernet.ru) (Safe Internet Centre), for reporting cases of sexual violence against children online and providing assistance in internet-related queries

about safety and violence; both are part of the International network of hotlines INHOPE.

Codes of conduct to prevent the sexual exploitation of children

Russia is the only country where the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism has been officially adopted by the tourism industry, namely by the ACCOR Russia hotel chain. In an effort to support the Code implementation the NGO Stellit conducts regular trainings for the staff of ACCOR hotels in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow. In Russia, leading mobile operators (MTC, Megafone and Beeline) and IT structures have launched several projects on Internet safety.¹⁵⁸

Between 2008 and 2012 the largest mobile operators (Kyivstar and MTC) and Microsoft Ukraine organised and supported programs on Safe Internet for Children. These mobile phone companies also signed the Code of Conduct for IT providers designed by La Strada Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs with support from ECPAT. The All-Ukrainian network works on involving new IT and mobile providers in signing the Code and promoting joint activities.¹⁵⁹

Vulnerability reduction

A number of initiatives have been launched with the aim of reducing the likelihood of children’s involvement in commercial sexual exploitation or preventing exposure to further exploitation. These include, *inter alia*:

- *Victim empowerment programmes*, including life skills and vocational training, targeting children vulnerable to or victims of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking. For example, in

Russia, World Vision helps build general life skills and specific job skills among this target population. The group has paired up with NGOs to offer skills training, psychosocial counselling and speech therapy for children, in order to increase their options and protect them from the dangers of CSE;

- *Interventions to improve access to education for at-risk children* and reduce their school drop-out. For example, in Moldova, the government reported that in order to prevent skipping school, meditation classes for the junior grades with the assistance of qualified teachers are held in the national schools; material and financial support is also provided to orphaned students and those under the tutorship/guardianship of the vocational schools, high and university educational institutions and boarding schools;¹⁶⁰
- *Social support schemes for vulnerable families and their children.* For example, in Ukraine, the government provides social support for families with children in difficult life circumstances who need outside help. Specialists from the centres of social services for family, children and youth render a variety of social services to these families.

Areas of concern:

- Central Asian countries still lack programmes/activities to prevent early marriage and child pornography;
- Although child sex tourism is an issue of increasing concern in Ukraine and Moldova, the tourism industry in these two countries has not yet adopted the Code of Conduct, nor has it actively contributed to preventing and responding to this phenomenon;
- Codes of conduct for IT providers, social networking sites, mobile phone companies and other providers of online services are still absent in most CIS countries; likewise, the financial

sector has not been engaged in blocking transactions related to the purchase of child pornography, nor attempts have been made to establish systems to block or delete child abuse images;

- Lack of activities and campaigns to prevent/reduce demand for sex with children;
- No mechanisms are in place to identify and monitor children at risk of becoming CSEC victims. In particular, there is a lack of programmes specifically targeting Roma children, children living in poverty, children affected by migration, children living in care institutions and those who run away from such institutions;
- Social support schemes for vulnerable children and their families remain insufficient to support the vast need in the CIS region, especially for orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- Training, education and awareness-raising activities have focused mainly on the prevention of trafficking and child prostitution, while other CSEC manifestations have not been prioritised. Furthermore, these activities are generally conducted on an ad hoc basis and their impact has not been assessed;
- Research on new forms of CSEC is yet to be conducted, especially in Central Asian countries.

Recommendations

Governments:

- Special services and institutions should facilitate the identification of potential child victims of trafficking in Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan and other countries where there is a high prevalence of children left behind by migrating parents, to ensure effective and comprehensive risk assessment and prevention of CSEC.

Governments and NGOs:

- Due to the high level of HIV in many CIS countries, it is essential to support all national programmes on prevention and include the topic of CSEC in risk behaviour projects;
- Pay special attention to Roma children, especially in Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as to groups of children most vulnerable to all types of violence, as they are particularly exposed to prostitution and early marriage;
- Educate children about how to resist sexual harassment and intimidation, including online, and train teachers and school psychologists on how to prevent these situations; identify potential victims and provide assistance if necessary. In this framework, include online safety in school curricula, particularly in the classes related to computer skills;
- Encourage Internet service providers and social network managers to promote a Code of Ethical Conduct in cyberspace.

NGOs:

- Raise awareness about child sex tourism in the region and the dangers of this new phenomenon, to counteract tolerance and attract mass media attention to this issue.
- Specialised capacity building should be delivered by NGO specialists to social workers, psychologists, child psychiatrists, teachers and other actors responsible for prevention, care and rehabilitation of child survivors of sexual exploitation.

Donors:

- Support awareness-raising campaigns in different manifestations of CSEC with an emphasis on new forms such as child sex tourism and sexual exploitation of children online.

- Support capacity-building activities provided by NGO professionals to relevant social-sector personnel.

THE LEGAL CONTEXT**a) Ratification of regional and international legal instruments**

CIS countries have made consistent efforts to adopt international and regional legal instruments relevant for combating CSEC. As of 25 November 2013, all CIS countries had ratified or completed accession to: a) the Convention on the Rights of the Child; b) ILO Convention No. 182; c) the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC); d) the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol).

None of the CIS countries, however, has ratified the recently adopted Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communication Procedures (OP3CRC).

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Moldova and Ukraine are members of the Council of Europe and have therefore also taken steps toward adopting CoE legal instruments addressing CSEC. Specifically: Moldova, Russia and Ukraine ratified the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; while Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have only signed it. Russia and Ukraine have not yet adopted the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; Russia and Georgia still need to ratify the CoE Convention on Cybercrime. On 26 November 2013, Belarus acceded to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, becoming the first non-member to do so.

b) Compliance with international legal standards

Child prostitution

OPSC Article 2 (b) defines child prostitution as:

“the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration”.

Although eight CIS countries¹⁶¹ have legislation that specifically addresses child prostitution, none of them provide a definition of child prostitution consistent with Article 2 of the OPSC.

The OPSC requires all State Parties to ensure that their legislation criminalises the offering, obtaining, procuring or providing of a child for child prostitution, or attempts at the same. (Article 3.1(c)). However, none of the eight CIS countries prohibit all of these acts.

Prostitution is illegal in all CIS countries, and the provisions that relate to child prostitution often form a subsection of the country’s Criminal Code for adults, so that where offences involve minors this is referred to as an aggravating factor and leads to a stronger penalty.

The concern is that the prostitution of children is only addressed in the context of general criminal law, and not recognised also as a child protection issue. Legislation should clearly define children exploited through prostitution as victims in need of support services.

Only in Belarus children and young people are explicitly exempted from punishment for prostitution-related crimes.

Child Pornography / Child Sexual Abuse Materials

Child pornography is defined in Article 2(c) of the OPSC as:

“any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes”.

Seven CIS countries¹⁶² have legislation specific to child pornography. However, only two (Moldova and Ukraine) provide a definition of child pornography consistent with the OPSC. Both laws cover virtual child pornography (representations of child pornography through media such as computer-generated images, cartoons, art, and sculpture).

Only Moldova criminalises the mere possession of child pornography, and none of the CIS countries have legal provisions prohibiting intentional access of child pornography through the use of information and communication technologies or online solicitation of children for sexual purposes. For many countries, this could be a question of outdated legislation that needs updating in light of changing technology.

The OPSC (Articles 3.1 & 3.2) requires each State Party to ensure that the following activities, or attempt at these activities, are fully covered under its criminal or penal law:

Producing, distributing, disseminating, importing, exporting, offering, selling, or possessing child pornography for the purpose of:

- a) Sexual exploitation of the child*
- b) Transfer of organs of the child for profit*
- c) Engagement of the child in forced labour*

Only four CIS countries¹⁶³ prohibit all of the acts spelled out in the OPSC.

Child Trafficking

All CIS countries have separate legislation specific to child trafficking. However, only four¹⁶⁴ have legal provisions addressing child trafficking that are consistent with the Trafficking Protocol. Additionally, while all CIS countries have laws defining child trafficking, legislation in Belarus and Uzbekistan does not expressly mention that “consent” by the child victim of trafficking should not be considered as a mitigating factor. In five countries¹⁶⁵ child trafficking is defined as involving means such as force, deception, violence or coercion, implying that these means are a prerequisite to fulfilling the definition of trafficking. Specifying the means used does not comply with the Protocol, which requires that definitions explicitly state that child trafficking encompasses *any means used*.

Extraterritorial legislation

Laws governing extraterritorial prosecution of CSEC offences are in place in ten CIS countries.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that double criminality should not be a prerequisite for conviction under extraterritorial legislation, even though this requirement is not set out in the OPSC. Double criminality means that the offence must be prohibited in both the perpetrator’s home country and in the jurisdiction where the offence took place. In countries where the Criminal or Penal code has a prerequisite for double criminality, an offender can travel to another country with a less child-friendly legal framework to engage in child sex tourism – without facing any consequences – relying on the defence that the child sexual exploitation that would be a crime in his/her own country is not illegal in the jurisdiction where it took place.

Only Armenian and Kazakh legislation require double criminality (the offence must be prohibited under both the law of the offender’s home country, and in the jurisdiction where the crime took place). No CIS countries make prosecution conditional upon

the filing of a complaint by the victim or on a formal request of the State of which the victim is a national.

Child Sex Tourism

Only Kazakhstan has a law prohibiting sexual exploitation in tourism (Law on Tourist Activity in Kazakhstan).

c) Child protection units and training for law enforcement

Most law enforcement agencies in CIS focus their investigative efforts on cases of child trafficking, as they are more aware of and knowledgeable about this field. According to the 2013 “Trafficking in Persons Report” by the U.S. Department of State, as well as reports by IOM, ECPAT International and other NGOs, CIS governments are undertaking specialised training in victim identification and protection for members of law enforcement, courts and the prosecutor general’s office through the anti-trafficking training centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹⁶⁶ Courses are focused on anti-trafficking law enforcement techniques and victim assistance, and were developed in partnership with IOM, other international organisations and NGOs. The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children has provided training for law enforcers on ‘Investigation of Computer Crimes against Children’ in several CIS countries.¹⁶⁷

Belarus, Russia and Ukraine have experience in investigating cases of child pornography and have established Departments of Cybercrime with specially trained experts. The Ministry of Interior of Moldova created a special division, which as of September 2012 deals only with Internet-related offences and will increase its staff to include 40 trained police officers.

Identifying victims demands a comprehensive approach and response. All practitioners who come into contact with children and young people in their everyday work need to be able

to recognise children who have been trafficked or are victims of other forms of CSEC, and should be competent to support and protect these children from harm.

Agencies working with children who may be victims should work together to safeguard and promote their welfare, providing the same standard of care available to other children in the country. To avoid harm and violation of children's rights both as victims and witnesses when investigating cases of CSEC and interviewing victims, CoE Convention No. 201 calls for specially equipped rooms and specialists trained in child-friendly interviewing. In 2011-2012, La Strada Ukraine, together with the Ministry of Interior, established four specially equipped "green rooms" for questioning children suffering from violence and exploitation in three Ukrainian cities. The methodological recommendations on equipment and use of such rooms to the criminal police in cases involving children were developed, published and distributed among scientists and field workers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine; trainings for specialists were conducted by ECPAT specialists.¹⁶⁸ In Moldova, a child-friendly interview room was set up by the NGO AMICUL Centre, which has also conducted training for staff taking part in hearings involving child victims or witnesses in criminal matters (police officers, public prosecutors, judges). Plans are in place to create seven more such rooms. Child-friendly interview rooms were also established across Belarus, and training for specialists in child psychology and interview techniques is undertaken.¹⁶⁹

Areas of concern:

- CIS countries have not yet ratified all regional and international legal instruments relevant for combating CSEC;
- Legislation in most CIS countries is not fully in line with international and regional legal standards, as several legal loopholes remain to be closed;
- There is an alarming lack of child-friendly rooms in most CIS countries;
- Central Asian countries have not yet established special investigation departments to counteract child pornography;
- Despite several initiatives to build capacity among law enforcers, there have been reports that child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation are often interviewed multiple times by police officers who have not received specialised training to conduct interviews with such child victims. Furthermore, it has been reported that the child victims may also have to confront the offenders, both at the investigative stage and during court proceedings.¹⁷⁰

Recommendations

Governments:

- Check and align the national legislation with international standards;
- Increase investigation, prosecution and conviction of all CSEC-related offences, pay special attention in all investigated cases to children and adolescents up to 18 years old and ensure that they receive special protection, support and rehabilitation;
- Take the necessary legislative steps to require Internet service providers, mobile phone companies, search engines and other relevant actors to report, block or remove child pornography websites and child sexual abuse images;
- Educate all relevant law enforcement bodies (including the prosecutors and judiciary), focusing on child-friendly and child-sensitive approaches during the legal process and victim identification, protection and assistance;
- Establish special investigation departments to counteract child pornography in countries which still don't have cyber-crime departments where specialists work on combating child pornography;

- Specialised capacity building should also be delivered to social workers, psychologists, child psychiatrists, teachers and other actors that are responsible for prevention, care and rehabilitation of child survivors of sexual exploitation;
- Establish specially equipped child-friendly rooms for conducting hearings of children (victims and witnesses) all over the national territories.

NGOs, donors:

- Promote better legislation for children through a variety of activities (flash mobs, gathering signatures, petitions, etc.).
- Analyse/monitor the current situation with regard to implementation of existing legislation and submit reports to government agencies.
- Help in establishing specially equipped child-friendly rooms (green rooms) for conducting hearings involving children (victims and witnesses).
- Support for education of specialists who will provide interviews in child-friendly rooms.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Child sexual exploitation has far-reaching emotional and physical implications that can permanently affect both the development and wellbeing of a child. This highlights the need for support services that help with the recovery

and reintegration of child survivors of CSEC. Recovery and reintegration strategies should contain both immediate and long-term policies for child-specific support that enhances child protection and wellbeing. Immediate support services can include medical and psychological care and the provision of adequate shelter and legal assistance. Long-term assistance for child victims could include return to the family or community when possible, reintegration into the education system and concrete plans for social and economic rehabilitation.

Support services for child victims of sexual violence or trafficking are provided by governments (in socio-rehabilitation centres) or NGOs (in shelters), which have the capacity to offer holistic assistance – including medical, psychological and legal support. Regrettably the CIS region lacks state-funded/administered recovery programmes that specifically focus on CSEC victims, and shelters for their rehabilitation are lacking nearly everywhere. General provisions do, however, exist to support individuals who have been trafficked, although in most cases they are not tailored to meet the special support needs of children.

ECPAT specialists provided several trainings for specialists working in child detention or rehabilitation centres in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, focusing particularly on identifying children who could be victims of CSE and rehabilitation of such children. Unfortunately the number of trainings was limited and many specialists (especially from law enforcements) subsequently transferred to other posts.

Support services

One existing service for sexually exploited and sexually abused girls is the St. Petersburg social rehabilitation centre 'Malookhtinskii Dom' (House of Diligence), for girls aged 12-to-18. The Centre hosts up to 51 girls for full-time residence; over the past three years about 250 girls have received support, and they generally remain for one year. During this time social-legal problems are resolved, help in career and life planning is provided and girls can attend a course in medical and psychological-pedagogical rehabilitation. Each girl receives care and treatment according to her individual needs.¹⁷¹

Another good practice example of such services was the social-rehabilitation centre “Sofia,” established in 2008 in Odessa, Ukraine, by the NGO ‘Love, Faith, Hope,’ a member of the All-Ukrainian Network against CSEC. The centre hosted up to 12 girls and was one of the first examples in Ukraine of a shelter specifically for CSEC victims. To obtain assistance from NGOs, victims were required to apply to the NGO members of the All-Ukrainian Network against CSEC or state institutions with requests to help and provide evidence of their status as victims. But the process was cumbersome, limiting access. Unfortunately, due to a lack of financial support, the centre was forced to close in January 2011.¹⁷²

Usually CSEC victims are placed in a temporary child shelter and then sent to a boarding school (state residential institution). But the institutional care provided does not meet children’s social and psychological needs, and they are often unable to fully secure their livelihoods outside the institution to fulfil their potential as individuals.¹⁷³ Indeed, there are no special programmes for the social reintegration of such children. Moreover, children who were involved in prostitution can escape and take others with them with the promise of earning “easy money”.¹⁷⁴

A process of de-institutionalisation and transformation of residential care institutions is currently taking place in CIS, particularly through promoting alternative models of care such as foster families, family homes, adoption and return of children to their biological families. But children who have suffered from commercial sexual exploitation have very limited chances of being returned to their families.¹⁷⁵ The process of de-institutionalisation is very slow, given that boarding schools usually house from 100 to 400 children (the average in Ukraine is 250 children) of different ages. To establish family homes, educate potential parents and form a foster family is a lengthy process requiring financial and human resources.

Helplines and hotlines for children

Several CIS countries are members of Child Helpline International and have special hotlines/helplines for children, as can be seen in the chart below.¹⁷⁶

Country	Name of a service organisation	Telephone number
Armenia	Armenian Child Protection Hotline	0-800-61 111
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Children Helpline	0-88 480 22 80, 0-50 680 22 80
Belarus	Ponimanie	8-801 100 16 11
Georgia	The Public Health Foundation of Georgia Child Helpline	116 111
Kazakhstan	National Helpline for Children and Youth	150
Russia	Russian Association of Child Helplines	22
Ukraine	La Strada Ukraine	0-800 500 335, 386 from mobile

Many countries also have hotlines for trafficking prevention where children can call for advice and help.¹⁷⁷

Areas of concern:

- The special needs of child victims of prostitution and pornography are not taken into consideration, as shown by the lack of specialised training for social workers, caregivers, psychologists and other professionals responsible for CSEC victims' assistance;
- Lack of programmes for the reintegration of victims of CSEC into social life, education, returning to safe environment after participation in rehabilitation programmes;
- Absence of long-term rehabilitation centres specifically for CSEC victims (except for Saint-Petersburg); existing state-run shelters are inadequate and do not meet international standards;
- Hotlines or helplines for children have not been established in all CIS countries and existing ones are generally not specialised to meet the special support needs of CSEC survivors. Furthermore, only Kazakhstan and Russia have simple hotlines for children that cover the whole country;
- In several CIS countries, CSEC survivors are stigmatised and socially marginalised and can be held responsible for a crime, tried and placed in detention.

Recommendations

Governments:

- Support the de-institutionalisation process in CIS countries as a step forward for better care of abandoned and orphaned children, since children in state institutions are potential victims of CSEC;

- Develop and ensure the application of specific indicators to identify child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, and ensure that multidisciplinary teams, local police officers, social workers and other relevant actors adopt a more proactive approach to victims' identification and increase their outreach;
- Establish rehabilitation centres for children – victims of CSEC and other forms of sexual violence (at least one or two in each country) to meet their special and long-term rehabilitation needs, and develop rehabilitation services and programmes that cater to the special needs of such children;
- Provide specialised training for those who will work in rehabilitation centres (teachers, social workers, social pedagogues);
- Support existing help/hotlines and establish this service in countries where it is absent. Ensure that current hotlines have shorter and easy-to-remember phone numbers.

NGOs:

- Develop a manual for identification of victims of CSEC (using ECPAT's materials, including materials of member groups);
- Educate specialists who will work in victim identification and in rehabilitation centres;
- Continue existing work of help/hotlines, establish hotline/helpline (if one does not exist in your country) specifically for sexual abuse and exploitation of children;
- Establish or connect existing multidisciplinary referral system for cases of CSEC and sexual abuse.

Donors and private sector:

- Support establishment of rehabilitation centres for child victims of CSEC and sexual violence;
- Support education of specialists who can identify and/or rehabilitate child victims;
- Phone and mobile companies should provide short and easy-to-remember phone numbers for hotlines.

CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The concept of child and youth participation is based on Article 12 of the CRC, which states that *“children have the right to give their opinions to adults making decisions on their behalf and children shall, in particular, be provided with the opportunity to be heard”* in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting them. This includes the right for those views to be given due weight, according to the child’s age and maturity. The right of the child to participate constitutes one of the four general principles underpinning all other rights contained in the Convention, alongside the rights to life and development, non-discrimination and the primary consideration of the child’s best interests.

Participation by children and youth aims not only to ensure their right to express opinions, but also to prepare and educate young people in decision-making processes. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, participation is a right of all children; it should be voluntary and ensured by the state.

Children’s right to participate in social life is only partially reflected in National Action Plans. Such a fragmentary approach does not allow full implementation of Article 12. In practice,

children’s participation is often limited to student governments and occasional involvement into civil society groups. Few efforts are made to empower children to participate in governance or policymaking at the local or national level. There is little understanding in the region of the importance of ensuring meaningful child participation in the life of society.

The National Action Plan of Ukraine, for example, does not include any provisions aimed at supporting and developing children’s organisations. None of the public bodies charged with enforcing child rights or child protection include representation by a person under the age of 18.¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, youth representation at the regional level has increased over the years. In 2012 the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States decided to establish a Youth Inter-Parliamentary Assembly to engage young parliamentarians and leaders of youth movements in efforts to promote cross-country cooperation.¹⁷⁹ However, the agenda and process for nominating delegates have yet to be clarified.

The region offers some examples of youth involvement in policy-making activities: the Youth Public Chamber of Russia brings together leaders of the youth wings of political parties, young leaders of large non-governmental organisations, young journalists, young businessmen, artists and sportsmen. It is a very broadly conceived youth organisation, but does not specifically address CSEC issues. Former President Medvedev invited youth to take an active part in the policy dialogue.

In Ukraine the positive impact of meaningful child participation in the community can be seen in cities where UNICEF’s “Child-Friendly Cities” initiative operates. Children are involved in the local authority of Vinnitsia city and community in decision-making

regarding the development of the city. The Children's Ombudsman of Vinnitsia is a public representative of the rights of children in the local government and community - wherever advocacy and protection of the rights of children are needed.

In May 2014, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education, together with UNICEF, organised a forum for cities "friendly to children" where children and young people participate in decision-making processes that affect their interests. The "Child Friendly City" initiative differs from other social programs because children and youth participate in decision-making.¹⁸⁰

ECPAT International has also worked to ensure meaningful involvement by children and youth in different projects and activities. Between 2009 and 2013, ECPAT implemented the Youth Partnership Project (YPP) in several countries of the world, including Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. The YPP is an innovative initiative to empower children and youth and give them the opportunity to raise their voice against CSEC in safe platforms.

YPP members lead advocacy projects, peer-to-peer counselling, awareness-raising and victims' support efforts. YPP Children and Youth in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine promoted advocacy and lobbying efforts for better legislation against online child sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child sex tourism. Moldavian youth worked with the Moldavian Ombudsman on Children's Rights and with mass-media on prevention of CSEC. Project activities were implemented by children and youth in schools, shelters, colleges, social rehabilitation centres and the Kyiv transit-detention centre for children. The events included lectures, trainings and conferences on CSEC prevention, trafficking in children, safe use of ICT, prevention of child labour and other forms of exploitation, prevention of xenophobia and racism, leadership skills development and similar topics. Youth trainers and consultants supported their

peers throughout the project, greatly enhancing children's understanding of CSEC and related issues. In addition, victims of CSEC received needed support.

YPP activists from Moldova and Ukraine succeeded in representing children and youth in the governance structures of ECPAT International. During the 5th ECPAT International Assembly (2011), the Youth Motivator from YPP-Ukraine was elected as the Youth Representative to ECPAT Board of Trustees. Additionally, the YPP Youth Motivator from Moldova was elected to ECPAT International's Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC) as representative for Eastern Europe and CIS countries. In this capacity, she represented ECPAT at the high-level conference "Growing with Children's Rights" on the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015 (Dubrovnik, Croatia, March 27-28 2014). A presentation on YPP as a model of meaningful participation was prepared and presented to participants during the session 'Child participation: generating change'.¹⁸¹ The EICYAC Representative for Eastern Europe and CIS was invited to participate in a meeting of the Council of Europe contact parliamentarians (Strasbourg, France, 25 June 2014) and addressed the group on the topic 'Child and Youth Participation as an Effective Tool in Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Children: Experience of ECPAT International Youth'.

As part of the ECPAT and Body Shop global campaign, YPP participants in Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine and other youth groups in Kazakhstan (NGO Youth Power) and Russia (youth group of NGO Stellit) collected about 50,000 signatures for the "STOP Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People" campaign and distributed booklets on the issue of child sex trafficking and child sex tourism. The booklet on child sex tourism produced by youth in Ukraine was the first informational material addressing the problem. YPP participants organised summer street activities

to distribute the booklets and performed flash mobs and street theatre. In Ukraine, YPP youth also produced a child-friendly manual on CSEC issues, while in Kyrgyzstan youth conducted researches and presented a study entitled “Children’s behaviour on the Internet and online risks of sexual exploitation in Kyrgyzstan”.

On January 31, 2012, the last day of the ECPAT YPP programme, representatives of ECPAT YPP-Ukraine team visited the Ukrainian Ombudsman on Child Rights and presented a petition calling for support and development of child and youth participation (CYP) against CSEC using the YPP experience and lessons learnt. During the meeting, the YPP team shared information on the Global YPP, countries involved, experience of Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, main achievements during three years in Ukraine and short-term future plans, including publication of the Manual on CYP against CSEC in Ukraine. The Ombudsman promised to support the development of CYP and proposed to include this issue into the work-plan of the civil consultative council that was created within the Child Ombudsman Office. The information and petition were published on the official Web page of the President of Ukraine.¹⁸²

Youth groups within ECPAT partner organisations are very active and implement a variety of projects. In Kazakhstan the group ‘Youth Power’ launched a series of training sessions in January 2013 targeting children living in children’s homes and boarding schools. The project ‘Don’t Be at Risk’, supported by the Botha Public Fund, includes many activities to be implemented by Youth Power members, such as training for students in orphanages, boarding schools and special education institutions, training for offenders in juvenile prisons and psychological support for children, both group and individual counselling.¹⁸³ On 11 October 2012, another youth group from El-Pikir Centre in Kyrgyzstan celebrated the International Day of Girls at the Museum of Fine

Arts with a photo exhibition on the theme ‘Early marriage: minuses without pluses.’ The exhibition was dedicated to the issue of early marriage and tells personal stories of women and girls experiencing its often tragic consequences.¹⁸⁴

The Russian NGO Stellit, in cooperation with the governmental organisation ‘House of Studying Youth’ launched a youth volunteer movement called ‘You know the right way? Have it your own way...’ in Saint Petersburg. Volunteers work actively with youth and children on CSEC prevention, especially trafficking and online child abuse prevention. Since the movement’s inception, some 132 boys and 68 girls between the ages of 16-22 years old were involved in programme activities such as street art and games, station games, theatrical performances (e.g. on homeless youth in St. Petersburg) and celebration of holidays, photo exhibits and creative studio art. The youth also had opportunities to produce publications addressing issues such as online exploitation, youth participation, and protection of youth from various forms of CSEC. Volunteers also attended youth exchange programmes and regional conferences.

In Ukraine, the youth organisation ‘School of Equal Opportunities’ (a member group of the All-Ukrainian network against CSEC) not only performs interactive socially conscious theatre for different target groups, but also educates young journalists through interviews on topics relevant to CSEC.¹⁸⁵ Youth volunteers from the Ukrainian movement ‘Faith. Hope. Love’ carried out educational campaigns about the risks of human trafficking, and volunteers handed out information materials, including comic books based on real stories of human trafficking. The mobile theatre studio ‘Contact – Stay a Star’ has a mobile cinema in a specially designed bus where they show films on topics related to child sexual exploitation and trafficking.¹⁸⁶

Areas of concern:

- Not all CIS countries involve children and youth in the design, monitoring and implementation of policies that affect their lives;
- The potential, energy and creativity of children and youth are not sufficiently valued, despite the fact that young people are best placed to conduct successful work against CSEC, especially in the area of prevention;
- Lack of sustained support for child/youth participation activities against CSEC in the CIS region.

Recommendations**Governments:**

- Ensure the participation of children and young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies against CSEC;
- Create an expert working group aimed at studying forms of child participation in the life of society and strategies for ensuring implementation of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child;
- Develop guidelines for participation by children's organisations and student government leaders in advisory bodies of state institutions, and child and youth non-governmental organisations at the local authority level;
- Involve representatives of children's NGOs in advisory bodies of state institutions related to the development and implementation of child rights and protection policies;
- Allocate adequate funding for child and youth participation initiatives.

NGOs:

- Develop models of meaningful involvement by children and young people – especially CSEC survivors and those at risk – in development, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects;
- Advocate for children's involvement in decision-making processes that affect them at the community, municipal and national levels;
- Support young people's initiatives against CSEC and assist in finding resources for implementation;
- Provide young people with capacity building on development projects by using ECPAT International's Guide "YPP Micro Projects.";
- Provide young people with capacity building for using creative media for lobbying, prevention and awareness-raising, using ECPAT guides: "Six steps to video production", "Six steps to improve your photography", and the manual on youth-led advocacy: "Youth Power";
- Support young people to use social networks for promoting children's rights, especially protection from sexual violence and exploitation;
- Organise youth group exchanges for sharing experience in good practices and modern forms of awareness-raising.



SECTION 4. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

As the analysis above clearly shows, the CIS region is affected by all manifestations of CSEC: child sex trafficking, prostitution of children, sexual exploitation of children in tourism, child pornography and early marriage. Children most vulnerable to this violation include abandoned, street and Roma children who require special attention through national programmes and projects. Legislation in most countries protects children from sexual exploitation, but implementation of legislation and investigation and support for victims remain problematic everywhere. Rehabilitation systems are practically non-existent, given the lack of special centres for CSEC victims and specialists capable of working effectively with these children.

Although data and statistics on this specific violation of children's rights are limited, available studies and indicators suggest that at least for some forms of CSEC (such as prostitution of children, child pornography and child marriage in Central Asia and among Roma children) the situation may be worsening despite the efforts deployed by governments, civil society, international NGOs, UN agencies, international aid agencies and others.

This overview of commercial sexual exploitation of children in CIS illustrates a situation meriting serious concern and requiring urgent response. It is important to channel adequate, concerted efforts at the regional and national levels to bridge remaining gaps in the different areas of prevention, policy and legal framework, coordination and cooperation, recovery and child and youth participation. The list of recommendations outlined above clearly shows numerous opportunities for ECPAT groups and the Secretariat to accelerate progress and enhance the organisation's impact, profile and visibility in the region. The wide consultative process with network members and child rights experts that the ECPAT International Secretariat has facilitated, including the regional consultation, facilitated identification of several potential strategies and programmatic areas where ECPAT should focus in the next three years to advance child protection from sexual exploitation in Eastern Europe and CIS.

Potential Areas of Focus for ECPAT in CIS countries:

1) ECPAT International is recognised as the only international NGO network dedicated specifically to the fight against CSEC, and over the years has acquired a good reputation among government and international agencies, businesses and the NGO sector. ECPAT should use this opportunity to try to link and coordinate efforts promoted by all these sectors and further enhance its leading role against CSEC in the region. ECPAT member organisations could engage in lobbying for better cooperation, which can be achieved, *inter alia*, by organising national/cross-country events such as conferences, round-tables and workshops with the involvement of different institutions.

2) Knowledge remains limited regarding how children are being sexually abused and exploited through the Internet and new ICTs, the risks they face in their online interactions, what makes them particularly vulnerable and the best strategies to reduce their exposure and increase protection. ECPAT has already conducted research on this issue in other regions using a participatory approach involving children. Building on this experience, efforts should be made to increase understanding of sexual exploitation of children online in CIS countries.

3) ECPAT International and its members have produced many educational materials and guides that could be used worldwide by different target groups.

4) Child marriage is not well researched, in part because it is not widely understood to present a problem. In addition, official statistics about child marriage, particularly in relation to girls under 17 years of age, do not exist. Specialised research has not been carried out on child marriage at the national level, including on its links with CSEC. ECPAT International experts, including specialists from regional groups, could carry out research on this phenomenon and how to prevent it.

5) Roma children are an excluded group that suffer from many types of violence. They should

be reached through leaders from the Roma communities themselves and NGOs working with this population. Special projects should be developed and implemented building on experience of several ECPAT groups.

6) Countries in the region do not have an adequate system for rehabilitation, reintegration and social support during and after the process of recovery. There are almost no specialists trained to work with victims of CSEC. This issue has been discussed with many governmental institutions and NGOs. ECPAT's specialists can educate law enforcement, social workers and other caregivers on how to identify child victims and can also provide quality rehabilitation services and methodologies to be used in this work.

7) Child and youth participation is a key component of ECPAT's programmes against CSEC. It is essential to continue to support youth groups actively and successfully working in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. It is also important to re-establish a youth group in Belarus and sustain

the YPP teams established in 2009-2012, as they run the risk of disappearing without support for their activities. The experience of Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine can be used as models of successful youth-led lobbying at a high level. Small grants for youth are also a good practice, allowing young people to develop their creative and innovative ideas and activities as volunteers in CSEC prevention. This practice should be sustained, in conjunction with related training on how to prepare a project proposal and how to ensure implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The table below summarises the different strategies and activities that the ECPAT network might consider developing over the next three years in CIS countries, in collaboration with traditional and new partners and support from various donors. Note that along with existing groups in the region (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine), Azerbaijan has also been consulted and included in the regional programme as a potential future member of ECPAT.

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
I. Adoption/ Implementation and monitoring of National Plans of Action against CSEC or other relevant NPAs	1) Advocacy for the development and implementation, including through the allocation of resources, of a specific NPA on CSEC or for the inclusion of a special chapter on CSEC in other National Plans on Children Rights or Violence against children. These NPAs should promote the implementation of measures envisioned in the Rio Declaration and Call to Action and should be in line with other international standards and principles.	All CIS	Government, NGOs, UNICEF	UNICEF
	2) Monitoring of state policies relevant for addressing CSEC (e.g. NPAs), including by examining their status of implementation in the alternative reports on the OPSC and CRC, CEDAW shadow reports, questionnaire for GRETA, etc. that ECPAT groups will prepare.	Ukraine	Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GRETA, Council of Europe, Gender Strategy Platform, UNICEF	UNICEF

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
	3) Preparation of a manual on monitoring the implementation of NPAs, the UN CRC and the Rio Declaration and Call to Action		Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Dutch Kingdom, Helsinki Group on Human Rights	
II. Expanding the knowledge base on CSEC, increasing awareness and building capacities of different target groups through a multi-sectoral approach	1) Initiating research on reliable data on the situation of CSEC in the Russian Federation and using the results for advocacy purposes.	Russia		European Commission
	2) Undertaking research on the situation of Roma children to determine the degree of their vulnerability to CSEC, their profile, forms of CSEC they are subjected or vulnerable to, their needs in terms of prevention and recovery/ rehabilitation. Based on the results, the following activities will be conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Advocacy with government agencies; b) Education of mediators and Roma youth as peer educators; c) Provision of social support to Roma children, including by establishing a referral system for them; d) Work with mass-media on problems faced by Roma children and linkages with CSEC. 3) Conducting research on child pornography and sexual exploitation of children online. Based on the research findings, the following activities would be conducted to promote safer Internet use by children and youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public awareness-raising campaigns in mass media; 	Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Czech Republic Just added after the Consultation	International Roma Centre, Partner – Roma Association “Chirikli”	European Union, Open Society Institute
		Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Estonia, Albania and Azerbaijan.	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs	Mobile and IT providers, Microsoft

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Developing training materials and conducting related training and educational activities for children, teachers, parents on safe behaviour and risks on the Internet, involving, where possible, the YPP team; c) Sustaining or expanding the project on “Certification of Schools on Safe Internet” to countries not yet involved in this initiative. 4) Raising awareness of government agencies and public opinion about CSEC through inter-sectoral collaboration. This will involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Carrying out a set of educational activities for children in residential institutions and detention centres; b) Development and implementation of educational programs for children of all ages in educational institutions; c) Carrying out trainings on CSEC among law enforcers, social workers, teachers and other actors responsible for child protection; d) Preparation of awareness-raising activities on CSEC, with dissemination of information and educational products (printed materials, videos, cartoons for prevention from CSEC) and organisation of interactive games, flash mobs, festivals, dramas, debates, etc.; e) Showing exhibition “Lightning! Children, beware!” developed by Regional NGO “Stellit” in Russia, and its translation and adaptation to other countries (campaign against CSEC). Focus attention on boys in prostitution, child pornography and CST. 	All CIS	Ministry of Education, UNICEF, NGOs, Ministry of Social Services, National Committee on Women’s and Family Issue, OSCE, CIDDC in Moldova (Children Rights Information Centre), NGO “Soprotivlenie” (“Resistance”) in Russia	UNICEF, USAID

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
	<p>5) Conducting prevention programs about early marriage for girls in schools and raising awareness of the issue, targeting communities and society in general. This would include:</p> <p>a) Developing trainings and information materials for early marriage prevention;</p> <p>b) Organising awareness-raising campaigns among populations, with dissemination of printed materials;</p> <p>c) Organising photo exhibits on the issue of child marriage and its impact (photos available in Kyrgyzstan).</p>	Central Asian countries	UNFPA in Central Asia, UNICEF, women entrepreneurs, businesswomen	UNFPA, UNICEF,
	<p>6) Raising funds from foundations, private companies and individuals for supporting the implementation of the projects “Enabling non-state actors in the Russian regions to be effective in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children” and “Development of the Youth Volunteer Movement “You know the way? Do it your own way...”</p>	Russia	Delegation of the European Union to Russia, Reach for Change Foundation, SIDA, private business	Delegation of the European Union to Russia, Reach for Change Foundation, SIDA, private business
	<p>7) Strengthening the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, based on the good example of the “Don’t look away” campaign currently being implemented in 16 European countries (see Overview of CSEC in Europe). This may involve:</p> <p>a) information campaigns to raise public awareness (of tourists and travellers in particular);</p>	All CIS countries, especially those affected by this manifestation of CSEC	Ministry/ Departments of Tourism or other relevant ministries, tourism industry, local authorities, police.	EU, private sector

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
	3) Creation of a special room for interviewing child victims or witnesses and ensure the interrogation is conducted by a specialist. 4) Establishing a programme for the exchange of experience and best practices and models for rehabilitation. 5) Developing and piloting of an online resource for Russian-speaking specialists working on combating CSEC. 6) Supporting the work of the Hotline for children on child abuse prevention and internet hotline for child pornography cases.	Ukraine and Russia (with support from the Secretariat) Azerbaijan and other CIS countries Azerbaijan Ukraine	World Childhood Foundation OCSE Azerbaijan OCSE Azerbaijan, UNICEF Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, Ministry of Internal Affairs	OCSE OCSE, UNICEF OCSE, UNICEF UNICEF
<i>IV. Increasing ECPAT's visibility in each country and strengthening the CIS network, including by highlighting the international scope of ECPAT and its leading role in combating CSEC</i>	1) Implementation of this strategy will involve: a) Development of joint projects; b) Promotion of the ECPAT network through Facebook; c) Presentation of ECPAT International at different events and use of the ECPAT logo by network members. 2) Building capacities of network members, developing of fundraising strategies: a) Project proposals together with Eastern European countries; b) Work with social responsible businesses; c) Create own sources by different actions or social projects (use the practice of Stellit).	Belarus All CIS	Department "K" of the Ministry of the interior, Minsk City Child mental hospital, Department of Education of Minsky region, Centre of social service Eastern + Western European countries	UNICEF Businesses, European Union, Embassies

ECPAT Strategy	Subjects / Activities	Countries involved	Potential partners additional to ECPAT	Potential donors
V. Promoting greater and more meaningful participation of children and young people in actions against CSEC at national, regional and global levels	<p>The development of child/youth participation activities aimed at CSEC prevention would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishing groups of children who monitor the realisation of children's rights; b) Taking part in seminars and trainings where young people can share their best practices and get information on what is being done by young people in other countries; c) Meetings with youth councils and other youth organisations to present problems and activities against CSEC and create joint initiatives; d) Information campaigns using popular social networks (e.g. Twitter and Facebook); e) Development of a dance on Internet safety issue to be showed in different Russian cities and other countries on the same day (online flash mob); f) Other awareness-raising activities (e.g., postcards with painting and quotes from child victims and survivors, table game on CSEC, mobile applications, etc.). 	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine	UNICEF, Ombudsman on Children Rights	UNICEF

ENDNOTES

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