



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
OSCE Mission to Moldova

**SUMMARY OF THE TECHNICAL CO-ORDINATION MEETING (TCM)
10 March 2010**

Site: OSCE Mission to Moldova
Date: 10 March 2010
Chairs: Eugenia Benigni, Anti-Trafficking and Gender Officer, OSCE Mission to Moldova
Viorica Dumbraveanu, Head of the Family and Child Protection Department, Ministry
of Labour, Social Protection and Family

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family reported approval by the Government of the Draft Law amending the legislation in accordance with the Law on domestic violence (Law #45), of the Framework Regulations for the centres for victims of domestic violence, and of the new composition of the Governmental Commission for Gender Equality. Seven Moldovan children were repatriated in February, and bilateral meetings between representatives of Moldovan Government and representatives of official structures from Transnistrian region were resumed.

The OSCE announced the launching of “The Gender Monitor” (e-newsletter on gender issues) and the postponement of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on women’s participation to political and public life. Valentina Bodrug-Lungu (gender expert) offered a short presentation on the history of the International Women’s Day and on the situation of women in Moldova. The Swiss Foundation “Terre des Homme” presented the findings of the Survey on unaccompanied Moldovan children identified in Odessa (Ukraine). The Family Crisis Centre “SOTIS” (from Balti) presented the results after one year of activity.

Participants discussed the importance of estimating the costs for protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of domestic violence, as well as the obstacles for the practical application of the Law #45.

MAIN DISCUSSION ITEMS

The summary minutes of the 10 February 2010 TCM were adopted.

1. Activity of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and other state institutions

MLSPF (Viorica Dumbraveanu) reported the following:

- The Draft Law amending the current legislation to provide an implementing mechanism for the Law #45 was approved by the Government and is now to be discussed by relevant Parliamentary Commissions. The draft law is expected to be adopted by the Parliament within a month.

- The Government approved the Framework Regulations for the services provided within the centres for victims of domestic violence.
- Training and capacity building activities for multidisciplinary teams are ongoing.
- The nominal composition of the Governmental Commission for Gender Equality was modified and approved by the Government.
- The 2010-2011 Anti-Trafficking National Action Plan is still pending endorsement by relevant ministries.
- Five unaccompanied Moldovan children identified in Russian Federation and two children identified in Ukraine were repatriated in February. The ministry is now evaluating the cases of other 18 children identified in Russian Federation, eight in Ukraine, and one in Belgium. MLSPF, IOM Mission and Ukrainian NGO “Way Home” (Odessa) agreed on actions to speed up the referral of identified unaccompanied children to relevant authorities.
- Meetings of bilateral expert-groups (representatives of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and representatives of the official structures from Transnistrian region) have been resumed. These meetings take place in the OSCE office in Tiraspol. Next meeting will take place on 23 March and will be focussed on issues related to social protection, human trafficking, repatriation of unaccompanied children identified abroad, etc. Participants will discuss how to ensure the implementation in Transnistrian region of the international treaties ratified by Moldova. Also, the Regulation on the functioning of the bilateral expert-groups is expected to be adopted.

Ion Oboroceanu (Causeni Law Centre) asked why the gender focal points within local and central public authorities are not yet functional. He expressed the opinion that the National Referral System (NRS) is implemented inefficiently at regional level and it should be extended faster.

Dumbraveanu answered that the NRS extension and all related training activities are scheduled in accordance with the NRS Strategy and the Action plan. Gender focal points were appointed in all central authorities (except for one ministry). At regional level, due to economic reasons, it was not possible to appoint specialists who would exclusively deal with gender issues, thus the role of gender focal points was delegated to the specialists dealing with family and child protection within the District Sections for Social Assistance and Family Protection.

Martin Wyss, Head of the Mission to Moldova of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) pointed out that the phenomenon of human trafficking and the type of victims have changed over the last ten years, the number of victims and the gravity of exploitation have decreased. Initially the NRS was launched as a response to human trafficking, however now it serves to identify, assist and protect different categories of vulnerable people.

2. OSCE and other announcements/interventions

The OSCE Mission (Eugenia Benigni) made the following announcements:

- The OSCE launched the “The Gender Monitor” – an electronic newsletter that offers an overview of the gender-related issues and information on relevant activities in the region. The newsletter can be found on www.osce.org/gender.
- On the occasion 8 March, the OSCE issued a press-release calling for increased participation of women in politics and public life.
- The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the participation of women in politics and public life, initially scheduled for 11-12 March, has been postponed. The new date is to be announced soon.

Ion Oboroceanu reported that, with the support of the OSCE Mission, the regional TCM in Basarabeasca was held on 23 February, and two seminars were organized at the National Institute of Justice on 1-2 March.

Benigni stated that more efforts are needed to facilitate communication and exchange of information and experience between multidisciplinary teams in different districts. In this respect, for the first time, at the regional TCM in Basarabeasca a member of the multidisciplinary team from another district (Cimislia) was invited to speak and share experience.

3. Presentation on the International Women's Day (8 March) – history of the day and the situation of women in Moldova

Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, gender expert and director of the NGO “Gender-Centre”, offered historical data about the fight for women’s civil rights and explained that 8 March is celebrated as the International Women’s Day for almost 100 years. The idea was launched in 1910 at an International Women’s Conference in Copenhagen. Great progress has been achieved and today women in many countries enjoy all civil rights. However there are still many problems that need to be addressed: according to UN, over 500,000 women die annually because of reproductive health issues; 70% of victims of domestic violence are women; etc.

Bodrug-Lungu informed about several international and national events on the occasion of the International Women’s Day in 2010:

- 1-12 March (New York) – the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women focussed on the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +15). It was suggested to make a short presentation on the results of this session at one of the next TCMs.
- 8 March (Copenhagen) – Women’s International Day Conference.
- 5 March – Women’s NGO Forum, Political Club 50/50, and Gender-Centre held a press conference to raise public awareness about the fact that the International Women’s Day is often politicized, commercialized, or reduced to offering flowers to women, while the main idea behind this day – promoting women’s rights – is forgotten.

4. Focal Issue Presentation on Survey on Moldovan Children in Odessa offered by Terre des Hommes

The Swiss Foundation „Terre des Homme” (Antonina Comerzan) presented the results of the Survey on unaccompanied Moldovan Children identified in Odessa (Ukraine), carried out in April-September 2009 in collaboration with the NGO „Way Home” («Дорога к дому»).

The survey aimed at providing a clearer picture of the profile and situation of unaccompanied Moldovan children in Odessa.

Main findings and conclusions:

- A total number of 426 unaccompanied / street children and youngsters were identified, 96 of them from Moldova (including Transnistrian region). Out of 96, 57 were children under 18.
- The total number of street children in Odessa increases 5-6 times during the summer time.
- Out of 57 identified Moldovan children:

- 71% were boys, 21% – girls, average age – 14;
 - 19 roma children (living together with their parents, who use them for begging and stealing);
 - 21 children from Transnistrian region (17 of them went back home voluntarily at least once, however subsequently they returned to Odessa);
 - 18 were from families with many children, 6 orphans, and 13 – educated by a single parent;
 - 44 were living in the street, being exposed to permanent risk of abuse and exploitation;
 - 29 children had clear signs of physical abuse;
 - 96% had inadequate level of education.
- To survive, children have to practice begging, stealing, occasional or permanent work. Daily income constitutes 50-100 UAH – used mostly to buy alcohol, glue, and candies, food being at the end of the list. Most children were wearing dirty cloths, inappropriate for the season.
 - Main causes for children’s migration: difficult relations in the family, domestic violence, difficult economic situation.
 - Odessa is attractive for these children because crossing the border to Ukraine is easy (15 children admitted crossing the border illegally), there are accessible ways to earn money (demand for cheap labour force, stealing), the climate is good and there are lots of entertainment opportunities.
 - Interviewed children indicated places where the border can be crossed illegally (this is a risk factor for human trafficking and illegal migration in general).
 - Most children had no identity documents, which limits their access to medical services, makes it difficult to establish their identity and, eventually, delays the process of their repatriation and reintegration into family.

Children identified during the survey were not victims of trafficking. Reintegrating these children into their families is very difficult, as some of them have no family, and some prefer living in the streets of Odessa rather than return home. Following the Survey, some children were repatriated, some of them are still in Odessa, some returned home by themselves, and some disappeared.

The results of the Survey were presented to relevant Ukrainian authorities during a round table in October 2009 in Odessa.

Ion Oboroceanu commented that, according to the results of the Survey, only very few of the identified children graduated from school, while the Ministry of Education reports that there are almost no drop outs in the schools of Moldova. He asked whether Terre des Homme referred any of the identified cases to law-enforcement agencies in order to prosecute those responsible.

Comerzan answered that local social protection and education authorities are very prompt in assisting repatriated children in the process of their reintegration into family and school. Viorica Dumbraveanu (MLSPF) explained that the MLSPF is involved in all repatriation missions, and all cases are referred to law-enforcement agencies for investigations.

5. Side presentation on one year of activities offered by Centre SOTIS (Balti)

Olga Dotin informed that Family Crisis Centre “SOTIS” is a sub-division of Balti Section for Social Assistance and Family Protection. It is entirely financed by local authorities. Total budget for 2009 constituted 368,100 MDL (largest budget lines: utilities, meals for beneficiaries in temporary placement, and staff salaries). Budget planned for 2010 – 526,900 MDL.

The Centre assists families in crisis situation, promotes family values, and offers protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services to victims of domestic violence: temporary placement; psychological, social, legal and medical services; counselling via telephone; referral to other services. Psychological and legal consultations are the most demanded services. “SOTIS” team has three social assistants, two psychologists, one half-time lawyer, and one medical assistant on the team.

Beneficiaries of the Centre are women aged 18-60 from Balti, who are victims of domestic violence (mostly young women with children). However, men and victims from other regions are also assisted. Victims or potential victims come to “SOTIS” by themselves, or are referred by local authorities, governmental and non-governmental service providers. If a victim from a district outside Balti needs placement at “SOTIS”, this is done based on an official request from the Section of Social Assistance and Family Protection from the respective district.

The Centre started its activity in February 2009 and in one-year period assisted 147 beneficiaries (mostly adults): 94 with temporary placement (30 days – up to 3-6 months) and 53 without placement. The Centre was designed to accommodate up to 19 people at the same time, however sometimes the number of beneficiaries who need temporary placement exceeds the capacity of the Centre. After the active assistance period, the cases are monitored for 3-6 months (telephone calls, visits, consultations).

To inform the general public about domestic violence, the specialists from “SOTIS” participate in TV and Radio programmes, the psychologists periodically publish articles in local newspaper. 31 seminars for 210 beneficiaries and 23 training sessions for “SOTIS” team were organized during one year.

Main problems faced by “SOTIS”: often beneficiaries have no identity documents; the Centre lacks night-shift personnel and a psycho-pedagogue to work with children; staff salaries are inadequate; the court-yard of the Centre needs to be arranged, including creation of a play ground for children. To address these issues the Centre develops partnerships with governmental and non-governmental structures working in the social field, and makes efforts to raise external funds in order to develop multidisciplinary programmes and ensure services of high quality.

6. Final discussions, conclusions, recommendations

Valentina Bodrug-Lungu asked if „SOTIS” tried to calculate the average monthly cost for one beneficiary, as this information would be useful for the development of other similar services. Dotin explained that there are minimum standards approved by the Ministry of Finance and the MLSPF (ex.: meals – about 29 MDL/person/day, medical assistance – about 30 MDL/person/day)

Viorel Gorceag, Director of Chisinau Centre for Assistance and Protection, stated that in order to estimate the costs per victim, it is necessary to clearly define what categories of costs should be included, as victims' needs vary a lot. Eugenia Benigni stated that the costs of services provided to victims are a very convincing argument in favour of prevention. There are studies (available online) made by individual countries and by the Council of Europe about how to calculate these costs and what categories to include.

Oboroceanu declared that it is the aggressor who should be isolated, and not the victim. He asked whether the lawyer from “SOTIS” tried to obtain the application of the protection order in any of the assisted cases. Dotin answered that “SOTIS” tries to keep the families together in order to avoid

separation and situations when children are abandoned or left with only one parent. In this respect, counselling is done with both, the victim and with the aggressor. No protection orders were initiated.

Bodrug-Lungu commented that it is necessary to make the difference between family conflicts, when counselling can help to keep the family together, and domestic violence, when it is inappropriate to work with the victim and the aggressor together. Viorica Cretu, Coordinator of the project “Protection and empowerment of victims of human trafficking and domestic violence” added that reconciliation is not always the best solution. The aggressors should be held responsible for their actions. However, along with punitive measures, social and psychological assistance should be provided to aggressors, in order to help them learn to control their emotions and prevent violent behaviour in the future.

Participants also discussed the ways to promote the application of protection orders. Oboroceanu suggested the professionals from different districts to contact their colleagues in Anenii Noi (where the first three protection orders in Moldova were issued) in order to learn from their experience. Bodrug-Lungu stated that clear instructions are needed for specialists in different areas. Cretu suggested that, until such instructions are developed, the experience from Anenii Noi could be summarized in written form and shared, as a good practice, with professionals in other regions.

Oxana Lipcanu, of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), mentioned that the experience from Anenii Noi is already being shared with judges, prosecutors and lawyers during specialized training sessions. However, some of these professionals still do not know about the existence of the Law #45. Benigni suggested that information on the centres providing assistance to victims and aggressors should be included in these training activities.

Approved by TCM:

Date

Eugenia Benigni, Chair