

## IOM Ukraine Counter-Trafficking Programme

Ukraine is a source, transit and increasingly destination country for human trafficking. An estimated 110,000 people have been trafficked from Ukraine since 1991. Men, women, and children are trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour, begging and other purposes. An increase in internal trafficking for forced prostitution or agricultural labour has been observed in recent years. While the number of victims of trafficking (VoTs) assisted by IOM was on the decrease in 2008 and 2009, 2010 has seen a dramatic increase in identified victims, a trend which could be linked to effects of economic crises in Ukraine.

In 2004 Ukraine ratified the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, as well as the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention (the Palermo Protocol)*, whereby it accepted a common definition of human trafficking and committed itself to comprehensive effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

### Situation in Ukraine – Main challenges

- No formal National Referral Mechanism is in place and no budget has in the past been allocated to VoT reintegration. VoTs do not have full access to the state social system, direct victim assistance is fully relying upon a network of IOM and specialized NGOs and depending on international funding.
- Tier 2 placement in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report 2010 for:
  - § insufficient efforts to curb government officials' complicity in trafficking;
  - § soft verdicts for traffickers, no jail time;
  - § inadequate protection for victims and witnesses in trial;
  - § no legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims to their countries

### What IOM does in Ukraine in the sphere of counter trafficking

- IOM encourages a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to human trafficking, counter-trafficking activities have three integrated components: Protection and Reintegration, Criminalization and Prosecution, and Prevention and Advocacy.
- IOM coordinates prevention and awareness raising activities with a network of NGOs and works closely with other international organizations and the Ukrainian Government (MoI, MoFYS).
- IOM cooperates with law enforcement in capacity building on investigation and prosecution of trafficking related crimes, on networking with countries of transit and destination, resource management, provision of equipment, development of witness protection system and other.
- From 2000 until December 2010 IOM provided reintegration assistance more than 7,300 VoTs. Each VoT participates in the development of an individual reintegration plan, including financial and legal support, medical and psychological support counselling, family assistance, vocational trainings and other. IOM operates a Medical Rehabilitation Centre providing free of charge comprehensive medical care to VoTs.

### Recommendations

- The commitment to combating human trafficking is part of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan on Visa Liberalization as well as the US-Ukraine Strategic Agenda and must remain high on political agenda.
- The Government should adopt a comprehensive legal provision governing all aspects of human trafficking, institutionalizing the national referral mechanism, formalizing the status of victims and ensuring a humane and confidential approach to victim assistance.
- While the new State Programme Against Human Trafficking for 2011-2016 does assign a role to State social services in VoT assistance, the Programme needs to be supported by sufficient budget allocations ensuring its implementation. The capacity of state social service to work with VoTs needs to be further built.
- International law enforcement cooperation with countries of destination should remain a priority for the MoI.
- The Government needs to establish a transparent system of civil society involvement in the provision of social services to victims of trafficking.
- Bearing in mind that Ukraine is increasingly becoming a country of destination it is important to ensure that both Ukrainian and foreign citizens are able to access the necessary assistance services.
- Special attention of donor community should be dedicated to monitor the transfer of the victim assistance system to the Government. All principles of high quality confidential and personalized care currently in place must be preserved over the handover process.