



Strasbourg, 17 May 2011

**“Combating violence against children: from isolated actions to integrated strategies”,
International conference organised in the frame of the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the
Council of Europe Committee of Ministers
in cooperation with**

the State Service for Youth and Sport of Ukraine,
the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Violence against Children and
UNICEF

Venue: Kyiv, the Ukrainian House

Dates: 24-25 May 2011

CONCEPT PAPER

Background:

Violence against children is a global phenomenon from which no state is immune. In the Council of Europe region, the full range and scale of violence against children is only now becoming visible, as is the evidence of the harm it does. Despite positive steps taken to eradicate specific forms of violence (such as corporal punishment, sexual exploitation, or bullying), it is still estimated that a large proportion of Europe’s **150 million children continues to suffer from various forms of violence**. Violence is perpetuated by State and third parties and ranges from physical and sexual abuse to emotional and psychological violence, covering all spheres of life: the home, the school, residential institutions as well as the community.

Traditionally, violence prevention efforts focused on particular issues or specific groups of vulnerable children, i.e. trafficked children, sexually exploited children, children in institutions, etc. While vertical, issue-focused projects can be effective in serving the specific cohort of children targeted, they often lead to prevention and protection gaps for other categories of children who may also be vulnerable to violence.

The **Council of Europe Policy Guidelines on Integrated National Strategies for the Protection of Children from Violence**¹ represent a European response to the recommendation of the UN Study on Violence against Children for each state to develop a

¹ Adopted in 2009 as a Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10

holistic national framework to prevent and to respond to violence against children. Acknowledging the multidimensional nature of the problem, the Guidelines promote an integrated approach capable of addressing a range of factors (political, socio-economic, legal, cultural, psychological, behavioural, etc.) that have an impact on the prevalence of violence . The Guidelines are framed by children’s rights standards, particularly existing Council of Europe standards, and serve as a navigation chart for states striving to adopt a strategic approach to violence against children, **identifying key building blocks for a violence prevention strategy**.

The Guidelines advocate for a shift from isolated actions (designed to combat specific forms of violence against children) towards the **adoption and implementation of integrated national strategies**. The Council of Europe objective is to assist member states in:

- bringing national, local and regional **legislation** in line with the international and European standards;
- developing comprehensive national strategies and government **coordinating mechanisms** to promote children’s rights and eliminate violence against children;
- enhancing the sustainability of the **institutional framework** entrusted with the protection of the rights of the child and protection of children from violence, with specific attention to the function of the Office of the Ombudsperson for children and the national observatory on the rights of the child;
- reviewing and setting up **child-friendly and family-friendly services** and mechanisms, including within the justice system, particularly those aimed at child victims and witnesses of violence;
- setting up a system for effective **collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data** on violence against children at national, regional and local levels;
- promoting the **culture of respect for the rights of the child** and zero-tolerance to all forms of violence against children, in particular amongst all categories of professionals working for and with children; and
- facilitating the **involvement of children** in the planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes to promote their rights and prevent violence.

Conference objectives:

The aim of the conference is to present good **practices in implementing integrated national strategies** to safeguard children’s rights and eliminate violence against children, with a focus on Central and Eastern European states. The conference will address a range of issues:

- strengthening the prevention of violence, the protection of children and the treatment of child victims through a **revision of national child care standards and policies**;
- providing for a **continuum of public and private child- and family-friendly services** to prevent violence against children, avoid separation of children from

their families due to violent behaviours within the family and assist child victims and witnesses of violence and their families;

- promoting **child-friendly counselling, reporting, complaint and referral systems** and mechanisms within all institutions hosting children;
- developing **comprehensive re-integration and rehabilitation programmes** for child victims, witnesses and perpetrators of violence;
- ensuring respect for the rights of child victims, witnesses and perpetrators of violence **in judicial and extra-judicial proceedings**;
- increasing member states' commitment to **accede to and effectively implement UN and Council of Europe standards on the rights of the child**, in particular the Council of Europe Conventions on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and on Cybercrime, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
- **raising awareness and promoting zero tolerance to violence** through campaigns, such as the Council of Europe campaign against corporal punishment and the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children.

Working methods:

The conference will have the duration of two days and will take the form of a plenary discussion (day one) mixed with working groups sessions (day two).

The working languages of the conference will be **English, French, Ukrainian and Russian**.

Participants:

The conference will bring together around **150 participants**, including:

Ukraine (around 100 persons):

- national authorities
- professionals working with children
- NGOs representatives
- child help lines
- media sector

Council of Europe (around 40 persons):

- Deputy Secretary General, accompanied by a member of the Private Office (2 persons)
- Council of Europe experts (10 persons)
- representatives of member states implementing successful projects in the field of violence against children (15 persons)
- Representatives of the Children's Rights Policies Division (2 persons)
- Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly (10 persons)

Office of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative on Violence against Children

UNICEF (around 10 persons):

- Director and experts of the Regional Office for CEE/CIS
- UNICEF Ukraine Representative and experts

European Union:

- Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine
- Head of the Section of Economic Cooperation, Social and Regional Development of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine

European Network of Ombudsperson for children

Around 5 Ombudsperson for children from Council of Europe member states

Venue and dates:

The conference will take place on 24 and 25 May 2011 in Kyiv, in the Ukrainian House (Khreschatyk street 2, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_House).

Reference documents:

The Council of Europe Strategy on the rights of the child for the years 2009-2011, as well as other relevant information on its standards, case law, policies, campaigns, awareness raising and training material and other resources can be found at www.coe.int/children.