***Ljubljana, April 2015***

**Questionnaire of the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on assistance and rehabilitation programmes for child victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation – response by SLOVENIA**

1. **Provide information on the legal, policy, institutional and budgetary framework developed by your country to establish assistance and rehabilitation programmes for victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation.**

To address violence, victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, Slovenia built a systematic framework to respond to violence against children, which is integrated into national planning processes. A national strategy / plan of action on violence against children has realistic and time bound targets, coordinated by Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities with the capacity to involve multiple sectors into implementation of the strategy and other strategic documents. A framework ensures that child protection issues are integral to the national policy and development agenda. The practice shows that violence against children can only be addressed through the systematic and effective engagement of all relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations as well. The most important strategic document which involves all relevant bodies in Slovenia is the Programme for Children and Youth 2013 -2016.

1. **Based on your experience, what elements are necessary for a comprehensive and rights-based care and recovery system of child victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation?**

Based on our national experience it is very important for a comprehensive and rights-based care and recovery system of child victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation to include the main steps such as:

* development of national child-centred, integrated strategy on violence against children;
* development of procedures to identify victims of all kind of abuse including trafficking that are adapted to children as well as others;
* clear definition of the roles, tasks and responsibilities of all relevant departments and institutions dealing with prevention and child protection in the field of violence and different types of abuse;
* allocation of budget for implementation;
* draw up special preventive measures, taking into account the vulnerability of children, and special measures to reduce the demand for child victims;
* identification of a high-level entity with the authority, influence and capacity to oversee the design and implementation of the national agenda.

To accelerate the development of child maltreatment prevention policy, and to increase investment in prevention programming, information about the estimate of the economic returns of these investments to society is needed. This is why the assessments of programmes or intervention costs should include all financial and economic costs associated with the programme. In addition to the programmes for children the state needs to provide support and mutual aid groups for parents. Slovenia is in process of re-evaluation of existing programmes with the basic aim to provide a successful care and recovery system of child victims of all kinds of abuse.

1. **Provide examples of good practices and successful initiatives of assistance and rehabilitation programmes which facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation.**

Since 2006 Slovenia has a national telephone number for school children who experience violence called “Telefon Petra Klepca” (080 1552). It is a blue anonymous number opened 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with trained counsellors that in confidence provide support and advice. In 2006, 2009, 2012 a public campaign was carried out to promote this blue number for school children. The campaign was very good accepted among children and now we can say it is well known among them.

In addition there are several SOS help-lines for women and children victims of violence as well as abuse of any kind, and safe houses managed by NGOs and co-financed by the state. In almost ten years Slovenia has developed a well-known network of ten crisis centres for youth around the country and one crisis centre for children from 0 to 6 years old. All expenses of the network are covered by the national budget.

Since 2008 special emphasis is paid to training a wide range of professionals and staff in relevant sectors, including education, justice, police and social welfare, as well as awareness-raising of the general public.

Efforts are being made to strengthen existing recovery and social reintegration services thought better coordination of existing services and modernizing methods, such as:

* The Rules of Procedures for Dealing with Domestic Violence in the field of Police, Social Welfare and Education and Health;
* Expert guidelines for the work of centres for social work;
* Professional principles for working with adult victims and perpetrators of domestic violence;
* the Regulations on the organization and operation of centres for social work, inter-institutional teams and regional bodies in dealing with domestic violence;
* Explanations and professional guidelines for operation crisis centres and services in the context of the regional service coordination and assistance to victims.

There are also examples of good practices with regard of prevention of child abuse and protection of children on internet, such as the national awareness node/centres on the safe use of internet and new technologies for children, parents and teachers *SAFE.SI*, the hotline website *Spletno oko* to anonymously report online illegal content, such as child sexual abuse images or hate speech and the Helpline TOM Telefon (Telephone for Children and Youth) – an online chat room on topics of safe use of internet and mobile devices.

The reason for the establishment of the programmes was the fact that young people and children are today amongst the largest user groups of online and mobile technologies in Europe, also in Slovenia[[1]](#footnote-1). To empower and protect them, it is therefore necessary to develop a proper strategy to fulfil their needs. Risks on the Internet are higher every day; however the awareness of children and parents legs behind.

All the programmes are united under the Safer Internet Centre Slovenia (SIC), the national project promoting and ensuring a better internet for children. SIC is coordinated by the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Ljubljana in partnership with the Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia (Zavod MISSS), the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (ZPMS) and the Academic and Research Network of Slovenia (ARNES). It is financed by the European Commission - General Directorate Connect and the Ministry of education, science and sport of the Republic of Slovenia.

SAFE.SI was established in 2005 and became the central national reference point regarding Internet safety issues. In close co–operation with national stakeholders SAFE.SI develops information material, organises events, such as Safer Internet Day, and educational sessions such as workshops for parents, children and teachers, maintains a fully informative web page at www.safe.si and works closely with all Slovenian projects in the area of safer Internet usage.

In 2009, awareness–raising activities were improved by adding a helpline component to provide counselling (via telephone and email) for children and adolescents who have come across various issues on the Internet. In March 2012, the new partner NGO Zavod MISSS (Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia) joined the awareness project with a special focus on youth.

The hotline website Spletno oko was established in September 2006, and started receiving reports in March 2007, when the cooperation with Police and all the necessary technology was set in place. Since its foundation the hotline website has received more than 12,000 reports, of which 1,437 have been referred to the police.

In March 2012, the SIC joined forces with a new helpline for children. Instead of running a separate helpline solely for internet-related issues, the centre invited an already established general helpline, TOM Telefon, to join the project. Children can call a toll-free number or submit an online form if they come across inappropriate or offensive internet content or behaviour.

1. **Describe the challenges that your country has identifies in the establishment and management of assistance and rehabilitation programmes for child victims of sale and exploitation, including sexual exploitation.**

At the current period we are dealing with several complex issues:

* The process of diversity of assistance and rehabilitation programmes for child victims of violence and other types of abuse, including sexual exploitation. We strive to achieve effective protecting programmes of dignity, security and privacy of children with the main goal to protect the best interest of the child (as stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child).
* Providing a secure future for all children, combating the effects of social exclusion, extreme poverty and other marginalizing factors (such as drug addiction, self-harm behavior etc.).
* To establish safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible mechanisms for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children, including sexual exploitation.
1. **How do you ensure that the views and needs of children are duly taken into account in the design and provision of care and recovery services?**

Children are involved in the procedures of their protection as active actors in the process. Professional service always takes into account the child's needs and wishes, in the context of possible solutions. Children have also the opportunity to have their own advocates (advocates of the voice of the child). Child protection is ensured in procedures and measures themselves and in professional services. The first and second are provided with the legislation (the Convention on the Rights of the Child), the third is provided with the appropriate professional staff and expertise knowledge. Care for children and recovery services depend on the child's age, damage, the need for specific assistance, his/her desires and other circumstances.

1. **How do you ensure access of child victims to support services?**

Social work centres (SWC) are responsible for providing protection and assistance to abused children. These tasks are also carried out by NGOs and health services. SWCs provide social services and assistance measures (they place children in residential care institutions - which are in school area). SWCs are for urgent matters available 24 hours a day. This ensures the accessibility and responsiveness.

One of the existing support services for child victims are crisis centres for youth and children (CCY). They represents a systemic solution with short-term placement (up to three weeks with the possibility of prolongation) for children up to 18 years of age, while the social centre actively seeks the best solution for a child, such as an optional foster family for the child’s permanent placement.

CCYs provide service 24 hours a day and are intended for all children and adolescents up to 18 years of age, who find themselves in acute distress and therefore need to be urgently removed from the environment in which they live. Apart from offering accommodation CCYs provide daily care, information interviews, counselling and learning assistance, organize thematic workshops and volunteer work, take care of public information and participate in the supervision teams. The tasks of a CCY are to prepare measures for adolescent’s reintegration with his/her family and cooperation with the competent social work centres, state authorities and organizations responsible for dealing with minors.

1. **How do you ensure the adoption of a gender perspective in the establishment and management of the assistance and rehabilitation programmes? Do the programmes provide gender-specific measures for the care and recovery of boys and girls?**

Regarding the gender perspective in the establishment and management of the assistance and rehabilitation programmes we provide gender-specific measures for care and recovery for boys and girls. We provide specific programmes for girls and boys and also some programmes just for boys and just for girls.

1. **Provide information on prevention programmes developed by your country with the specific focus on children at risk or in vulnerable situations?**

Regarding the question on prevention programmes developed by our country with a specific focus on children at risk or in vulnerable situation (e.g. children working and/or living on the street, children placed in institutions, unaccompanied migration children) we have some special programmes for children at risk; 18 day-care centres with prevention programmes, 1 telephone programme and 2 prevention programmes.

In Slovenia we have five large residential care facilities for children and adolescents with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities. They are established as public social welfare institutions and are financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. These institutions provide three types of programmes for children and adolescents: educational training, social care and health care programme. Residential care can be provided as 24-hours care or day care for children and adolescents who need help only few hours a day.

1. Children’s use of the Internet in Slovenia is particularly high. The EU Kids Online survey3 shows that 95% (EU: 93%) of children aged 9–16 in Slovenia use the Internet, 73% (EU: 60%) of them every day or almost every day.

While the average age of children across Europe upon their first use of the Internet is 9 years, in Slovenia it is 8. Slovenian children spend 99 minutes (EU: 88 min) per day online and 74% (EU: 59%) of them have profiles.

The EU Kids online survey findings that almost 57% (EU: 49%) of Slovenian children have Internet access in their own bedroom is quite worrying. Parent mediation is also quite low. Only 27% (EU: 50%) of children in Slovenia say their parents monitor their Internet use. When parents were asked the same question, 42% (EU: 64%) said they monitor their children's use of the Internet. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)