**Combating trafficking and sexual exploitation of children in the Republic of Belarus**

In the Republic of Belarus effectiveness of combating sexual violence against minors in all its forms, including sexual exploitation related to human trafficking and other crimes is assured by joint efforts of all relevant stakeholders: state agencies and organizations, national and international public associations and international organizations.

National mechanisms for the protection and rehabilitation of children victims of sexual crimes are operational in Belarus.

If a child is abused sexually under sexual exploitation, he or she unconditionally considered as a victim of human trafficking or related offences in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Belarus «On combating trafficking in human beings».

The Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Belarus No. 485 of June 11, 2015 provides the procedure of identification of victims of human trafficking, which is applicable to children as well.

In the course of identification (when filling out the questionnaire), the competent authorities find out what kinds of assistance a child need and determine the entity that will provide the appropriate assistance. If it deems necessary a child and his/her legal representative are accompanied to these entities for protection and rehabilitation (reintegration) measures. This procedure does not depend on the child's criminal procedural status, whether he or she is a victim in a criminal case or not.

The Law of the Republic of Belarus «On combating trafficking in human beings» provides that social protection and rehabilitation of victims of crimes under this Law is free of charge and includes temporary accommodation; legal, medical and psychological assistance; family reunion or placement of minors in other families (boarding schools); assistance in finding employment; and other assistance as determined by local authorities.

The organization of these measures in relation to minors is the responsibility of the government entities.

Other stakeholders which provide assistance in the rehabilitation (reintegration) of underage victims of this category are specialized nongovernmental associations, i.a. the Belarusian Red Cross Society and its regional branches, the «Business Women's Club» NGO (operator of a psychological help hotline).

Belarus cooperates actively in this field with the country offices of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Organization for Migration in the Republic of Belarus.

In the first 10 months of 2022 the law enforcement authorities identified 109 minors victims of human trafficking, 67 of whom were sent for rehabilitation under the provisions of the Regulation No. 485.

94 children involved in the production of child pornography were also identified.

The General department for drug control and combating human trafficking of the Criminal police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus carries out its duties on combating human trafficking and related crimes (trafficking, pornography dissemination, crimes against sexual integrity or sexual freedom of minors) with the special attention to the crimes against children.