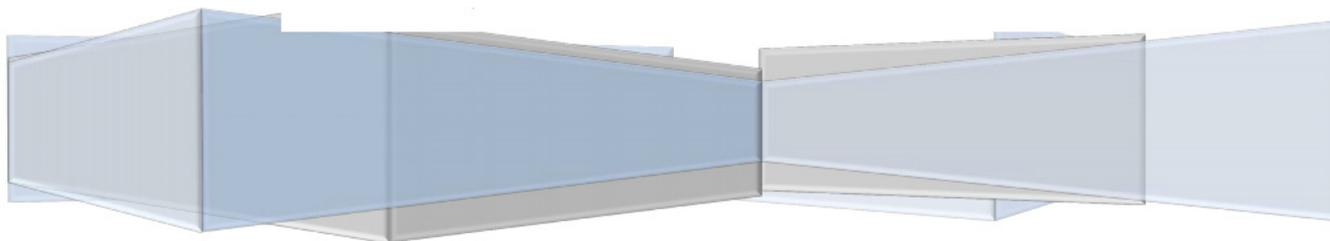




REPORT ON MONITORING MEDIA COVERAGE OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, MIGRATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Final report

September 2010 – August 2012



Chisinau 2012

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I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Object of research

This study examines how the Moldovan media tackle subjects related to domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons.

I.2 Goals of the study

The study focused on the following goals:

- To follow the frequency with which media addresses subjects related to domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons;
- To analyze the quality and objectivity of the stories on these subjects;
- To develop recommendations for eliminating gaps.

Starting with 1 September 2010, the team of the Journalistic Investigations Centre (CIJ) has monitored 12 national and regional newspapers in view of analyzing the content of the stories and the way the subjects of domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons have been addressed. Later, six other newspapers were included in the monitoring schedule. Starting with March 2012, three newspapers published in the Transnistrian region of Moldova (with population of around 450,000 people) were for the first time included in the list of newspapers monitored, and namely *Pridnestrovie* («Пруднестровье» - “The Transnistria”), *Profsoiuznye Vesti* («Профсоюзные Весту» - “The Union News”), *Pravda Pridnestrovia* («Правда Пруднестровья» - “The Transnistrian Truth”).

The analysis included all press items that referred directly or indirectly to domestic violence, trafficking in persons and regular or irregular migration – news, interviews, stories, reports, reportages, investigations, op-eds, human stories etc. The monitoring team observed how journalists respected the fundamental principles – objectivity, fairness, tolerance, separation of opinions, and fact-checking, but also provided specific recommendations for the reports on the victims of trafficking in persons and domestic violence. Based on the results of the monitoring, quarterly reports were developed, containing findings of the situation, examples of the breach of ethical standards in reporting on subjects about domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons, but also recommendations for journalists and editors.

1.3 List of publications monitored

1. ***Timpul*** (***“The Time”***) – newspaper with national coverage, in Romanian, comes out five times per week, weekly circulation – 26,800 copies;
2. ***Jurnal de Chişinău*** (***“The Chisinau Magazine”***) – newspaper with national coverage, in Romanian, comes out twice per week, circulation – 25,950 copies;
3. ***Ziarul de Gardă*** (***“The Guard Paper”***) – weekly newspaper with national coverage, in Romanian, circulation – 4,362 copies;
4. ***Adevărul*** (***“The Truth”***) – newspaper with national coverage, in Romanian, comes out five times per week, circulation – 7,700 copies;
5. ***Moldova Suverană*** (***“The Sovereign Moldova”***) – national newspaper, in Romanian, comes out four times per week, circulation – 4,200 copies;

6. ***Nezavisimaia Moldova ("The Independent Moldova")*** – newspaper with national coverage, in Russian, comes out four times per week, weekly circulation – 4,300 copies;
7. ***Panorama ("The Panorama")*** – newspaper with national coverage, in Russian, comes out three times per week, circulation – 4,200 copies;
8. ***SP ("The SP")*** – weekly with regional coverage, in Russian, comes out in Bălți, circulation – 4,000 copies;
9. ***Cuvântul ("The Word")*** – weekly with regional coverage, in Romanian, comes out in Rezina, circulation – 4,660 copies;
10. ***Cuvântul Liber ("The Free Word")*** – regional weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Leova, circulation – 3,500 copies;
11. ***Observatorul de Nord ("The Northern Observer")*** – regional weekly, in Romanian and Russian, comes out in Soroca, circulation – 7,215 copies;
12. ***Unghiul ("The Angle")*** – local weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Ungheni, circulation – 11,120 copies;
13. ***Ora locală ("The Local Time")*** – local weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Ialoveni, circulation unknown;
14. ***Glia drochiană ("The Drochia Land")*** – local weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Drochia, circulation unknown;
15. ***Gazeta de Sud ("The Southern Gazette")*** – regional weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Cimișlia, circulation unknown;
16. ***Ecoul nostrum ("Our Echo")*** – regional weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Sângerei, circulation – 2,500 copies;

17. *Est Curier* (“*The Eastern Courier*”) – regional weekly, in Romanian, comes out in Criuleni, circulation – 4,250 copies;

18. *Expresul* (“*The Express*”) – regional weekly, in Romanian, circulation – 2,800 copies;

19. *Pridnestrovie* («*Приднестровье*» - “*The Transnistria*”) – comes out in Tiraspol, circulation – 3,814 copies;

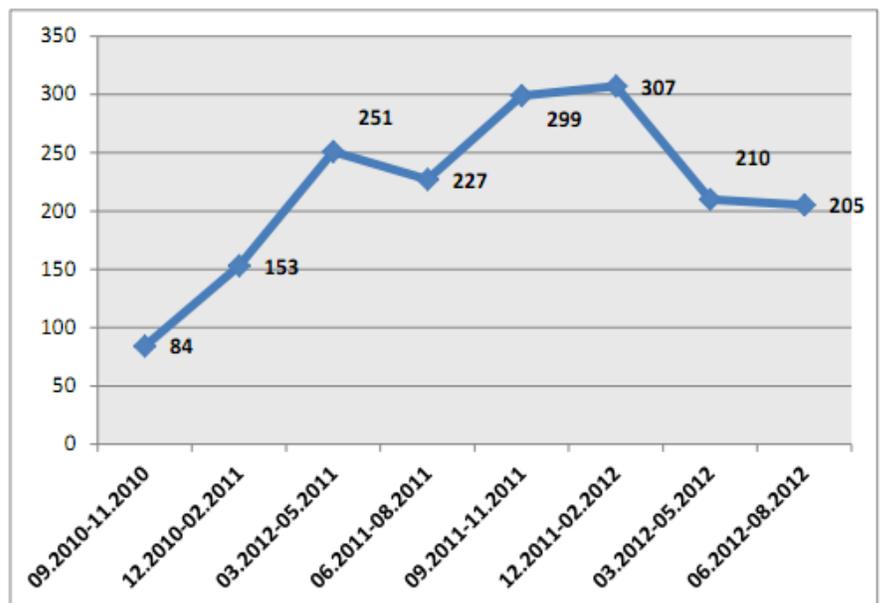
20. *Profsoiuznye Vesti* («*Профсоюзные Вести*» - “*The Union News*”) – comes out in Bender, circulation – 2,013 copies;

21. *Pravda Pridnestrovia* («*Правда Приднестровья*» - “*The Transnistrian Truth*”) – comes out in Russian and Romanian (Cyrillic script), circulation – 1,285 copies.

2 TRENDS

2.1 General trends

In the period from September 2010 - August 2012, the monitored newspapers published **1,736** items directly or indirectly related to trafficking in persons, migration and domestic violence. About 60% of the items

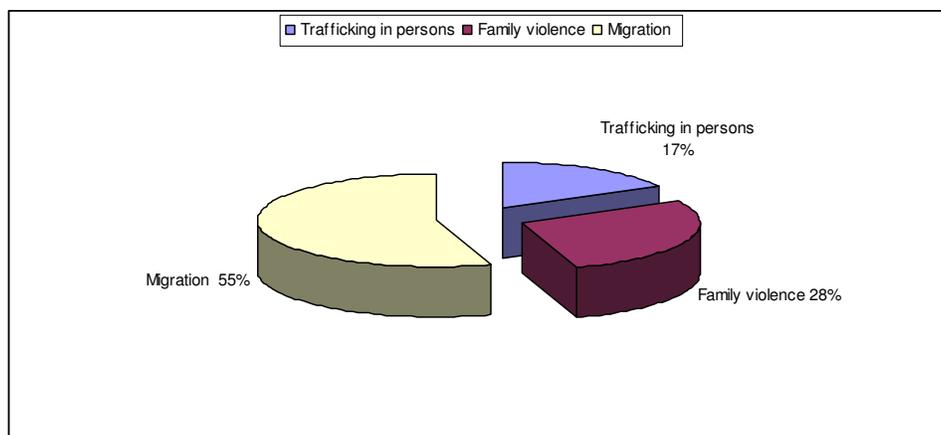


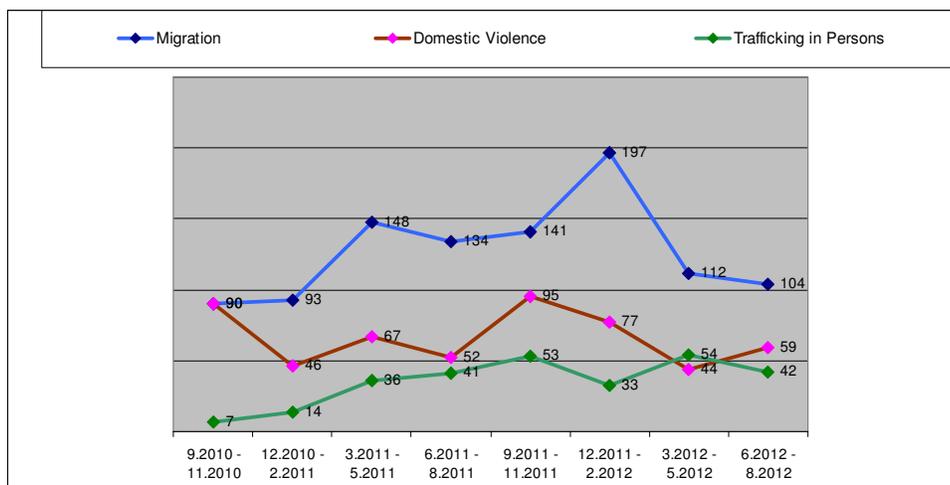
published in this period were news. Most of the items (**307**) were published in the

period from December 2011 to February 2012. The least number of items (84) was published in the first part of the monitoring (September-November 2010) after which the number of items on the subjects monitored increased. In the first year of monitoring 715 items were published and in the second year – 1,021 items.

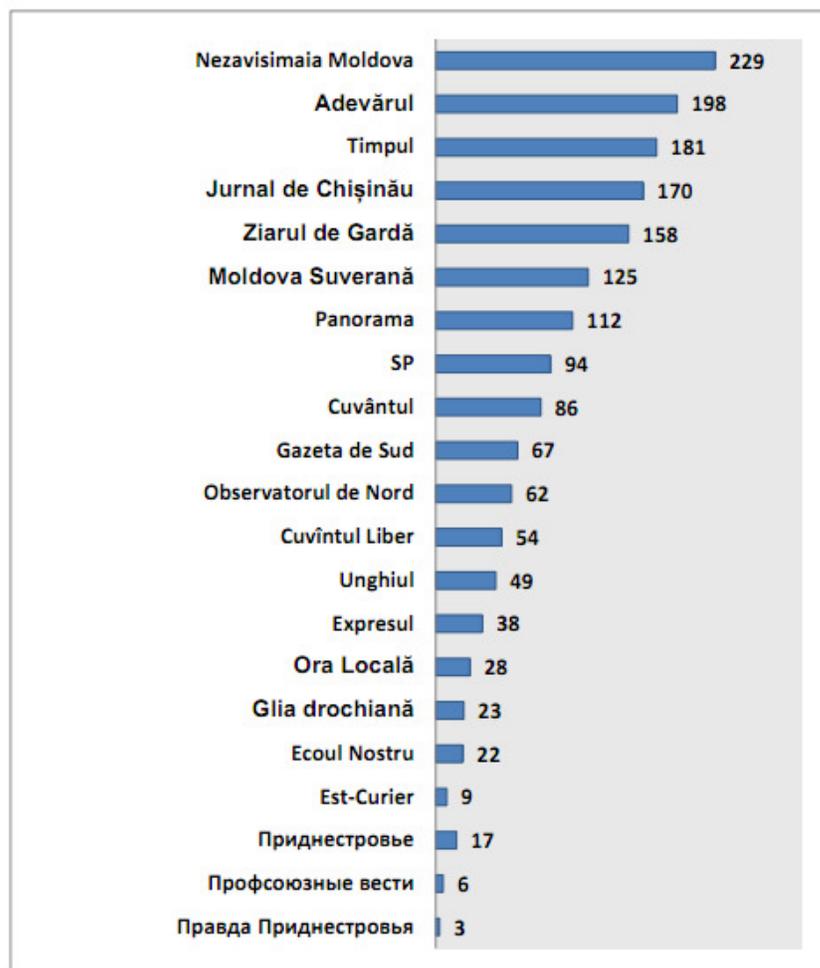
Most of the items monitored (966) referred to migration, other 480 referred to the issue of domestic violence, and 290 referred to trafficking in persons. As journalistic genres, most of the items (1071) were news. Other genres were present to smaller extent. In the two years of monitoring the newspapers published 107 investigations, half of which were signed by the CIJ reporters. Other 145 items were reports, 143 – problem items, 124 – human-touch stories, 58 – reportages, 45 – interviews, 31 op-eds, etc.

The highest number of items on trafficking in persons, domestic violence and migration were published by the newspapers *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (229), *Adevărul* (198), *Timpul* (181) and *Ziarul de Gardă* (158). Of the local newspapers, the most loyal publications to the topics monitored were *SP* (94), *Cuvântul* (86) and *Gazeta de Sud* (67).





In the case of *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, the high number of items was due to short news stories, taken over from various information portals (including international ones) that usually referred to crimes involving Moldovans working abroad, serious cases of domestic violence and cases of discovering or convicting the members of traffickers' networks. *Adevărul* had a high number of items due to the short news stories about migration, violence and trafficking in persons, taken over from press releases or from news agencies. At the same time, this publication started its own problem items on the topics monitored. *Timpul* published a high number of items especially on migration and success stories of Moldovans who work abroad.



In case of the local press, the statistics of the items published is made up of reports from various local events discussing migration, violence or trafficking in persons. These are followed by a special column dedicated to the children left behind (that was taken over by a number of newspapers), investigations signed by CIJ reporters, human-touch stories written by Lidia Bobâna or Nina Neculce, stories about various services for the victims of trafficking in persons or violence accessible at local level. A number of items about domestic violence in the local newspapers were signed by the local prosecutors.

For the most part, the voices of victims (or those of their representatives) were missing from the press items. The media presented those persons as an extremely vulnerable social bracket. At the same time, the newspapers revealed the personality of the migrant and the human stories about migrants served as sources of inspiration for a number of positive items.

2.2 Topic

TIMPUL published 181 items on the subjects of the study. Throughout the monitoring period, this newspaper demonstrated a permanent interest in the phenomenon of migration and domestic violence. Items on trafficking in persons were published less often. The approach for the most part was balanced. In a number of stories in the monitored period the newspaper described the situation of Moldovans working abroad and presented a number of success stories of those who had settled abroad and of former migrants who had chosen to return home.

JURNAL DE CHIȘINĂU published 170 items referring to the topics monitored. The newspaper started a special column dedicated to children left behind, closely following how they were doing and what problems they encountered. In case of subjects related to trafficking in persons or domestic violence, this publication

tended to exploit the sensational side. At the same time, this was one of the few newspapers that followed the evolution of a number of resounding cases and published follow up stories.

ZIARUL DE GARDĂ addressed the monitored issues in 158 items. It is among the publications that produced its own problem items and investigations on domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons. The publication for the most part presented items differently from their counterparts using information discussed during press conferences or press releases of law-enforcement bodies. The newspaper covered the issue of psychological rehabilitation of the victims of irregular migration and trafficking in persons; the trends in the development of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons; involvement of children in sexual tourism; issue of pensions for the migrants who work irregularly, etc.

ADEVĂRUL published 198 items on the topics of the monitoring. The newspaper distinguished itself through its constant interest in the topics monitored, following the daily news on migration, violence and trafficking in persons, released by news agencies, but also the releases issued by the law-enforcement bodies. At the same time, it started its own investigations on topics related to the exodus of the youth, irregular migration and trafficking in persons.

MOLDOVA SUVERANĂ published 125 items on migration, domestic violence and trafficking in persons. Interestingly, in the initial monitoring period (September 2010 – February 2012), it published very few items on the topics monitored. In the following months, most of the news stories on these subjects were written based on the releases and information disseminated during press conferences. There were few original articles, they mainly referred to the problems of Moldovan migrants affected by the crisis in Europe; the problem of the lack of social guarantees for Moldovans working abroad; the problem of investment of remittances, etc.

NEZAVISIMAIA MOLDOVA published 229 relevant items, most of which were presented in the form of short news items, taken over from information portals, including foreign ones. The newspaper gave preference to sensations and especially followed cases of murder, rape, burglary, robbery that occurred inside and outside the country (involving Moldovans working in the respective countries). Many of the news stories published in this newspaper were taken over from the international press and presented serious cases of trafficking in persons or domestic violence. There were few original items, written on the initiative of reporters or editors.

PANORAMA addressed the relevant topics in 112 items, most of which were about migration and trafficking in persons. For the most part these were subjects discussed during press conferences or taken over from the releases disseminated by the Ministry of Interior, General Prosecutor's Office or the Centre for Combating Trafficking in persons (CCTIP). The newspaper took over a number of news stories about migration published in the international press and also started its own items about the phenomena monitored.

SP reported about trafficking, migration and domestic violence in 94 items and thus was the leader of local/regional press by the number of items on these topics, published in the past two years. In addition to the short news items broadcast based on the operative briefings by the municipal police station or by the Ministry of Interior, the newspaper also wrote its own items. It is one of the few publications that followed up the subjects about which it had written before and came up with new details of how a certain problem was solved.

CUVÂNTUL published 86 items on the topics monitored – problem items, investigations, news of local or national interest. The newspaper demonstrated a constant interest in these topics, following the subjects on the agendas of news agencies and also launching its own stories. The newspaper reported on a number

of cases of trafficking in persons, domestic violence and followed the developments of criminal cases.

UNGHIUL published 49 items referring directly or indirectly to the phenomena studied. The newspaper reported on cases of violence and trafficking in persons that took place at local or national level, and also chose to write about various services provided in the Ungheni rayon for victims of violence or trafficking.

OBSERVATORUL DE NORD presented to the readers 62 items on the topics monitored. The journalists of this newspaper reported on an attempt of taking a child illegally out of the country, about a number of cases of infanticide and sexual violence against children. At the same time, the publication presented positive items, such as success stories of Moldovans working abroad.

ORA LOCALĂ throughout the monitoring period published 28 items, problem items and news stories, most of which referred to cases that had occurred in the Ialoveni rayon, but also news of national interest.

EXPRESUL published 38 items on the topics monitored. The newspaper reported about the launch of a new service that aimed at combating and preventing child violence. It also reported about several serious domestic crimes and about the increase in the number of children who commit suicide because their parents are abroad. It dedicated a number of human stories and op-eds on the issue of domestic violence and migration.

ECOUL NOSTRU inserted in its pages 22 items, especially local news items, on violence and trafficking as well as reports from various local-level events that discussed the subjects monitored.

CUVÂNTUL LIBER in two years published 54 items, including national-level items. It attracted the readers' attention to several cases of sexual and physical violence against children and the issue of observance of protection orders for victims of

domestic violence. These phenomena were addressed directly or indirectly and in several of the human-touch stories published by the newspaper.

GLIA DROCHIANĂ reported on migration, violence and trafficking in persons in 25 items. Although in the first six months of monitoring the newspaper published only one item that indirectly referred to the topics monitored, it later demonstrated a constant interest in these topics and sometimes it published one item on average per week. Each fifth item published by the newspaper was a special column dedicated to the issue of children left behind.

EST-CURIER is a publication that was included in the monitoring process at a later stage. In the past 18 months, it published 9 items, which means that migration, violence and trafficking in persons were addressed about once in two months by this newspaper.

PRIDNESTROVIE presented to the readers 17 items that are relevant to the subject of this report, and most of the news items were part of the column dedicated criminal justice issues. Thus, the newspaper wrote about the case of a two-year-old girl beaten to death by her mother; the story of a Moldovan woman who was caught in a trafficking net; the case of the owner of a land plot in the district of Slobozia suspected of serious work exploitation of a group of adults and children; the case of a man who robbed his mother who was working abroad; the case of a man killed during a fight at home, etc. Meanwhile, the newspaper published a number of news items about the visit in the region of a high-ranking European official, responsible for trafficking in persons issues.

PROFSOIUZNYE VESTI – published six items indirectly referring to domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons. One of them was an interview with a young woman who had been put in a boarding school due to domestic abuse. The newspaper in its problem items also tackled migration that increasingly

affects the Transnistrian region but also the problem of the increased number of HIV and TB contraction as a consequence of irregular migration. The readers of this newspaper could also find informative items for the victims of domestic violence.

PRAVDA PRIDNESTROVIA – published three items during the monitoring period. These were a letter from a reader referring to the issue of sexual exploitation of young women; a news item about the detention of a Russian citizen suspected of trafficking in persons; and a broad story describing one day in the life of a migrant worker.

3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN REPORTING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

3.1 Objectivity/Correctness

The subjects that are based on events that have spontaneously appeared on newsroom agendas are a challenge for any journalist. Usually, in such situations there is little information and it is hard to check it; whereas sources are hard to find. In such cases, the ethics and professional training of journalists are two factors that determine whether the subject would be well-documented or covered superficially. The monitoring shows that most of the news about violence and trafficking in persons do not live up to the requirements of a well-documented item. This is the case of the news covering public events, or those based on press releases, briefings on criminal situation by the Ministry of Interior or the information issued by the General Prosecutor's Office and territorial prosecutor's offices, police stations, CCTiP, Border Police, etc. In such cases the readers are imposed solely with the opinion of law-enforcement agencies while the reaction of the parties involved is missing. There are also situations when journalists apparently resort to a second source but they do so only superficially. Thus, the sources are not treated equally as the opinions of ones are presented in details and of the others – only formally.

The expression “could not be found”, as referring to a potential second source interviewee, is frequently used by the authors of news about trafficking in persons and domestic violence. In order for the information to be more credible, journalists should at least indicate how they tried to contact the source.

The news is the most used journalistic genre when reporting on trafficking and domestic violence, which denotes that there are few journalists and editors who have made efforts to analyze in-depth the monitored topics. Another trend is that, as a rule, the journalists do not follow the development and outcome of a legal case but write stories about the alleged traffickers or perpetrators, based on the data of the law-enforcement agents. The readers find out about resounding cases of trafficking or domestic murder only thanks to the small news items disseminated by the press services of various law-enforcement agencies.

Many times, in the case of news initiated by law-enforcement bodies, the newspapers take over and publish the same text, the only difference being the headline and picture accompanying the text.

Most of such news is based on one source and reflects one view, which does nothing but diminishes the credibility and objectivity of the press items. In many cases, reference is made to vague sources (prosecutor's office, police, other law-enforcement agents, doctors). Publishing incomplete or unverified information from several sources or quoting inconclusive sources shows a minimal effort by the authors of such items.

Reference is made to vague sources in the story "Children burnt alive, embraced" (*Jurnal de Chişinău*, 16 November 2010), which reports on two children who died after their father had set their house on fire. The only source mentioned in the story was the children's mother and the rest of the statements were made with reference to the witnesses of the incident, without giving any names. The author did not try to speak with the law-enforcement bodies that investigated the case, with the mayor or the social assistant who could have commented on the situation and prove whether other violence had taken place in that family. The statement "The man repeatedly threatened his wife to kill her because she

allegedly had a lover,” would have sounded more credibly if reference to a source had been made.

Another example from *Nezavisimaia Moldova* is the news item about two Moldovans who had allegedly killed a person in a suburb of Moscow. “Awaiting the arrival of the owner, the criminals stunned him with a shock gun, tied him up with scotch and started torturing him, demanding that he tell them where he had hidden the money. Making sure there was not much money in the house, one of the accused shot the victim. (“Two Moldovan citizens suspected of murder detained in a Moscow suburb”, 11 April 2012). Taking into account that no specific source is presented, these statements may be considered unverified information.

The monitoring team also noted news written without sources. An example of this is the story “Farm labourers on tobacco plantation”, that reports a case of labour exploitation of a group of 60 Moldovans in the city of Kherson, Ukraine (21 June 2011, *Nezavisimaia Moldova*).

An example of the situation when sources are treated differently is the story “Beaten to death in front of her children,” published by *Ziarul de Gardă* (3 February 2011). The story is about a woman killed by her husband. The author gives rather large space to arguments that come to justify the man’s act through the statements made by some relatives and villagers. The man is characterized positively. The story says that the man was the breadwinner and that the woman took care of the children. The author presents a number of opinions of some villagers in a way that justifies the actions of the husband, in such statements as: “He took her from some basement and brought her to the village, because she had nowhere to live. She smoked and drank until her death.” The local social assistant says that the killed woman consumed alcohol and swore. She also says that the man should not be deprived of his parental rights. On the other hand, the

situation of the victim is presented by just one person – the woman’s brother who said that his sister had been beaten many times by her husband and sent away from home. We note that such reports promote a tolerant attitude to the phenomenon of domestic violence.

When writing reports based on press releases by the police or prosecutor’s office, some journalists afforded to rebuild the details and circumstances of some family tragedies without confirming the information from direct sources. In the absence of evidence or court judgments, some statements made by reporters can be qualified as unverified information.

In another item called “Assassin’s wife leaves three children on the road”, 22 October 2010, *Jurnal de Chişinău*, the reporter gives the impression that he assisted at all the fights in the family. “To note that the spouses often consumed alcohol and their arguments would lead to them punching each other,” the reporter writes without quoting any source.

Jurnal de Chişinău writes “Satisfying his animal instinct he grabbed her by her throat and gripped it until she found her end. He first cut one of her breasts, then the other one; scratched her face, cut open her chest wishing to pull her heart out, but he didn’t do it” (3 December 2010, “Killed in front of her child”). This item that reports on the murder of a young woman by one of her past lovers is placed in the column “Shocking” and truly corresponds to this qualification.

Another such example can be found in *Ziarul de Gardă*, which states “In late afternoon they started arguing and then Gheorghe got angry, lost control and beat Lilia for 15 minutes, punching and kicking her on her face, head, belly and legs.” (“Beaten to death front of her children,” 3 February, 2011).

“After humiliating and beating her, the brawler took an axe and started swinging it in front of the scared woman, threatening to kill her if she wouldn’t start living

'like people'. Barely escaping from the villain's hands, the victim ran away from home," writes the item's author who got inspired from a press release issued by the Transnistrian militia. (*Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 30 December 2011).

In another case, the journalist describes, based on the words of the protagonists, a scene in a family that uses violence without being present at such a scene. Moreover, the journalist uses discriminatory language, stigmatizing the alleged attacker: "They all drink until they don't know what's going on with them. In those moments the boy turns into a beast. He screams, he wails and throws all kind of things at his mother," the journalist writes based on the victim's words, without taking into account other opinions as well. ("Convicts, and a true ghetto in an Ungheni suburb," published in *Expresul* on 2 December 2011).

The monitoring team has also noted instances of certain newspapers politicizing domestic violence subjects. Thus, *Moldova Suverană* took over a story from *Libertatea* and politicized the subject by placing it in a biased context. The story "I have been to the village of sexual awfulness," which reports about incest and sexual violence against children taking place in a community in Romania has been included in the column "Romanians, the neighbours we want to join," thus making an image transfer to the entire country.

Throughout the monitoring period, domestic murders, sexual and physical violence against children but also cases of trafficking in persons were most of the times presented from a sensationalistic point of view, with details aimed at shocking the readers. Thus, *Nezavisimaia Moldova* publishes on 27 March 2012 a news item taken over from the international press that presents a number of shocking details. "Law enforcement officers have released a 19-year old Spanish woman on whose hand a mark had been burnt in the form of a bar code. This tattoo served as a sign that the woman was the property of a gang. Next to the bar code they indicated the price at which they offered their 'product'. The young

Spanish woman was cruelly beaten; her hair and eyebrows were shaved off. The criminals kept her in a Madrid apartment, tied to a radiator.” (“The police release from pimps’ hands a prostitute with a bar code”).

Ora locală publishes a story about the conviction of a man who raped his step-daughter for several years and presents details that should not be included in a press story. (“Having the intention of satisfying his sexual desires with his step-daughter [...], taking advantage of her inability to defend herself due to her young age, he lay her on her back in one of the rooms used as a bedroom and, holding his hand over her mouth, he had sexual intercourse with her in a normal way, that is, in her vagina. After that he had repeated intercourses with the girl in a perverse way” (“Twelve years of prison,” 25 May 2012). The monitoring team thinks it is inadmissible to insert details of pornographic character in a press item.

3.2 Trafficking in persons, presented by some newspapers as a profitable and attractive business

A trend revealed throughout the monitoring was to present (indirectly) trafficking in persons as a profitable business by indicating the amounts of money traffickers make as a result of exploiting the recruited persons. Most of the times we found details about the traffickers’ profit in the news of *Nezavisimaia Moldova* but these are present, although less frequently, in the items of other publications as well.

“The girl got one thousand Euros for each victim sent abroad.” (“Work in Antalya? God forbid!”, *Nezavisimaia Moldova*”, 8 September 2011).

“The twenty-five-year-old man sold young women for 12 thousand dollars to Turkey for sexual services.” (“Verdict upheld ,” *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 12 October 2011).

“Such a ‘worker’ could make 10 thousand rubles per day.” (“Please help a legless invalid “, *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 4 November 2011).

“By sending girls to Cyprus for prostitution, she received 500 US dollars for each of her victims ,”(*Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 2 December 2011);

“For each young woman sold in sexual slavery the woman received from one to two thousand dollars,” (“Police detained a woman who had sold circa 30 Moldovan women in sexual slavery,” *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 20 January, 2011).

Details about trafficker’s profits are also found in the news item “20 years old of age, he sold girls to Turkey for prostitution,” published in *Observatorul de Nord* (9 September 2011). “For each young woman arrived in Turkey the suspect collected about 1000 Euros” – the headline of the news item.

“For a trafficked Moldovan woman, the suspect received between one and two thousand dollars” (“Woman suspected of trafficking in persons and pimping”, *Moldova Suverană*, 25 January 2012);

“Most profitable business in Moldova - PROSTITUTION” – headline of an item published in *Ziarul de Gardă* on 26 January 2012

“... [she] has been sold. For 25 thousand dollars, which at that time was equal to 7 thousand dollars.” (“ZdG Sold in Dubai for \$ 7000. In court, the allegations are directed to a dead” (*Ziarul de Gardă*, 22 December 2011).

3.4 Shocking and inaccurate headlines

The results of the monitoring showed that most of the time cases of domestic murder, sexual and physical violence against children but also the cases of trafficking in persons are presented by newspapers from the sensationalist angle. Here are a number of headlines that the press used to write about the

phenomena monitored and that aimed at shocking without leaving room for other perspectives:

“Two corpses in a locked-up apartment” (*SP*, 7 December 2011);

“[He] infected his wife with HIV and determined her to kill herself” (*SP*, 28 December 2011);

“Knife-fight on New Year’s eve” (*SP*, 4 January 2012);

“A dog’s life” (*Cuvântul Liber*, 9 December 2011);

“Perversely raped” (*Cuvântul Liber*, 10 February 2012);

“Orphan and rejected, she became invalid” (*Est Curier*, 17 February 2012);

“Beaten to death” (*Cuvântul*, 16 December 2011);

“[He] killed his mother because of a bowl of soup” (*Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 16 December 2012);

“The best paedophile is the castrated paedophile” (*Panorama*, 30 December 2011);

“[They] made Moldovan women prostitutes” (*Panorama*, 10 February 2012);

“A newborn thrown to trash” (*Jurnal de Chişinău*, 13 January 2012);

“Most profitable business in Moldova - PROSTITUTION” (*Ziarul de Gardă*, 26 January 2012);

“Santa Claus killed his family, then killed himself” (*Moldova Suverană*, 28 December 2012);

“[He] killed his wife out of fear of remaining poor” (*Moldova Suverană*, 18 January 2012).

There are also cases when newspaper headlines are inaccurate and do not suggest that the respective items refer to domestic violence, migration or trafficking in persons.

“He screwed it up after age of 13” is the headline of a news story in *Moldova Suverană* (6 July 2012) that reports about the conviction of a man who killed his father.

“Careful, Antie!!” is the title of a news story published in *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (2 December 2011) that reports about the detaining of a woman suspected of trafficking in persons.

“Filat’s last hope dies” – *Jurnal de Chişinău* (6 December 2011) – the headline misleads and does not really have to do with the subject, although the heroine, the mother left alone with a child, bears the name Filat.¹

“Delay may cost us our life” – *Glia Drochiană* (16 December 2011) – the headline does not suggest that it is about an interview with the prosecutor of Drochia about domestic violence.

“We will manage with common efforts” – nor does this headline from *Cuvântul Liber*, as of 6 January 2012, suggest that the item refers to domestic violence.

“We are ro-bb-e-robbers...” is the headline of a story from *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, published on 22 December 2012 that reports on a woman recently returned from work abroad who was robbed.

¹ Filat is the family name of the then Prime Minister, Vlad Filat. (translator’s note)

3.5 Separation of facts from opinions

Some newspapers showed less professional accuracy and certain stories make the reporter's subjective opinion visible.

This is especially found with sensitive subjects, such as violence, trafficking in persons, migration. The story "Who Creates the Image of Moldova?", published in *Nezavisimaia Moldova* on 12 October 2011, contains the author's own judgment of value: "The Moldovan passport has often inadequate impact on certain Russian citizens. They are not interested in how the name of the bearer sounds like, where he was born and what the purpose of his visit is. The simple existence of Moldovan citizenship bothers them."

We found another example in the story "'Shalun' wants to be pardoned," published on 9 October 2011 in *Jurnal de Chişinău*: "Alexandru Coval has support from all sides and thus it is not excluded that after the examination of his request that contains all the necessary components, he may be forgiven."

An example of a journalist using irony in regard to a subject related to domestic violence is the item "Scuffles between brothers and close relatives," (*Cuvântul Liber*, 27 April 2012). After listing a number of cases of domestic violence, contained in a criminal review, the journalist ironically expresses his opinion: "Well ... as in horror movies."

The item "Paedophiles with diplomatic passports" (*Jurnal de Chişinău*, 18 March 2011) contains the author's opinion: "Many times, due to poverty, we consider ourselves inferior to foreigners and we have developed a culture thereof. The philanthropist managed not only to come in the grace of families but also in those of the mayor, teacher and principal of the school that the child attended. 'The

child is so lucky,' the adults thought". The author affords to include these statements in the text without speaking with at least one person from the above list.

Another story in *Jurnal de Chişinău*, entitled "[She] strangled her child" (11 March 2011) reports on the story of a young woman who happily married and went to leave abroad after killing her child several years ago.

The author writes without making reference to a specific source that the protagonist of the story had killed her baby whom she had had at home. "In several days the baby was unburied by some dogs. The neighbours announced the police. Verunea had been discovered and she admitted her guilt. But she was not punished too harshly. She spent only several weeks in the detention centre."

This item is a model of how we should not report about cases of violence because they could serve as an example of solution for other young women who want to get rid of the burden of an unwanted child. Especially that the end of this story is an extremely happy one, the protagonist being presented as a positive person who had the luck of quickly finding a job in Italy, getting a big salary and a successful marriage.

The author of a story published in *Moldova Suverană* writes about the Moldovans gone abroad for work: "The mass exodus of these hundreds of thousands of individuals must be regarded as a runaway of the masses of panicking individuals, afraid of problems, the problems that have burst into their country, home, signifies their refusal to get involved with their minds and souls in order to bring order in their houses, being blinded and attracted by the foreign luxury and abundance that carries away their sight and mind. What chances are offered to them and what do they achieve in the West? With some exceptions, beyond the condition of a prostitute or toilet-cleaners, our women cannot get any higher"

("Moldovans gone abroad, accomplices of broken governance," 12 January 2012). Such statements are direct insults against the thousands of Moldovans working abroad.

Some journalists let themselves impose their opinions even in interviews. "What do you think, why do we lag tens of years behind the civilized world?" – this is a question from the interview "Moldova is much behind," (*Unghiul*, 20 January 2012).

There have been discovered cases when the journalist did not express his opinion in an informative item but quoted the opinion of a source, thus expressing his biased opinion: "[He] killed her out of fear of remaining poor. This fear did not stop him from leaving two minor children without a mother, the prosecutor said." ("He killed his wife out of fear of remaining poor," 17 January 2012, *Moldova Suverană*).

In regard to the same case, a journalist from *Timpul* writes in the news item "The daughter of the president of the Ocnița rayon was killed by her husband because of his mistress" makes reference to the prosecutor of Chișinău who invokes the reason for the crime: "Alexandru Miron was raised in a vulnerable family. His mother was an aggressive person and ill-treated him." Thus, the journalist presented the prosecutor's opinion as a final truth without asking the opinion of the respective party.

In the same connection we mention the story "Problems of juveniles tracked by Criuleni Probation Office" published in the newspaper *Est-Curier*. The author writes: "The decreased role of parents and teachers from education institutions in the normal development of children is emphasized everywhere," without bringing evidence and confirmation of his words.

3.6 Treatment of victims/witnesses

According to the ethical norms, the items referring to particular cases of violence and trafficking should be written in such a way as not to expose the victim and to secure his/her right to maintaining a positive image. It is important for the journalists not to disclose private data of the victims, which may lead to their identification. Disclosure of a victim's identity may cause suffering and may expose him/her to new dangers from the abuser, traffickers' network, and in some cases, from the community. Disclosure of such information is equal to an abuse, this time of the person's privacy.

In many press stories the victims can be identified due to the details presented by the journalist.

Gazeta de Sud has violated twice in the same news story the victim's right to protection of identity. The news item "Eight-year-old girl raped by her father's cousin" (11 May 2012) presents two cases of sexual abuse against underage victims. Although the author of the news item does not disclose the names of the two girls, he provides data that may easily identify them.

Thus, the first item mentions the name of the place where the rape took place – the village of Cârpești, the initials of the victim – V.P., the year of birth – 2004 – and the fact that the girl is in the first grade. This information is completed with other details: "both parents work in the village, and their family is deemed socially vulnerable." The same story reports on a case of a rape that again presents the initials of the victim and of the abuser, the girl's age and her native town.

The author of the story "Four-year-old girl dies after being raped" (*Observatorul de Nord*, 6 April 2012) partially publishes the name of the deceased girl - Cristina

B. This measure of protection seems useless as the story is accompanied by an unblurred picture of the girl's mother with another child in her arms.

Data that may lead to the identification of a young woman suspected of prostitution are revealed in the news item "Intimate announcement in *Makler*" (*Jurnal de Chişinău*, 28 April 2011). Thus, this news item based on one source says that the woman was 20 years old, born in the village of Şendreni, district of Nisporeni and had a four-year-old child.

The item "Nightmare life of sisters Gabriela and Alexandra" from *Jurnal de Chişinău* reveals the identity of two sisters who are known to have lived in abject poverty, with alcoholic parents. The author writes about the girls' mother that "the woman had a disordered lifestyle and drank alcohol in large amounts. After having booze with two guys she was cruelly beaten and subjected to sexual perversions." The text also includes details about the immoral behaviour of one of the sisters who until recently "has been seen with a female juvenile gang that partied each evening with boys of different ages." Taking into account that the author reveals the girl's identity, such details could harm her in the future.

The item "When drinking aggressors become extremely cruel" from *Cuvântul* (7 July 2011) reveals the identity of two victims domestic violence; that of the aggressors being revealed by the prosecutor who handles the case.

The news story "Resident of the Glodeni rayon raped and beat his daughter for five years" from *Nezavisimaia Moldova* provides details about the place where the tragedy occurred but also the age of the girl and the fact that her mother had worked for several years abroad (27 September 2011).

More details about the victim's identity are to be found in the story "**Caring father or monster,**" published on 1 October 2011 in *Jurnal de Chişinău* : "The

testimony of a fourteen-year-old minor have shocked the residents of the village of Balatina, the Glodeni rayon”, “The minor is the second child in the family, she lived with her two brothers”, “Nobody has known anything about the girl’s mother for five years. She had gone to Moscow where she married a foreign citizen.”

In the case of the fifteen-year-old teenager forced by her mother to prostitute herself the journalists against presented details that could harm the victim. The story “**Mother pimp**” published in *Jurnal de Chişinău* (25 October 2011) presents a number of details: “*The minor is now 15”, “The girl’s mother is Russian speaker, from the village of Poiana, district of Edineţ.*” The story’s author also says that this family lost their house in a fire a few years ago.

In addition, the author writes that “The residents of the Poiana village do not hold a good opinion about the minor’s mother, although they claim they **didn’t know that she was forcing her daughter to have sexual intercourses with men.**” In such conditions it seems that the press and the police were the ones to inform the village residents about the drama through which the teenager had gone through, in this way harming her future.

While some journalists demonstrate negligence by including in their texts details that could harm the protagonists, there are also some that exaggerate in their attempt to protect the victims, using different codifications. Thus, *Ora locală* in the story “Twelve years of prison”, published on 25 May 2012, protects the identities of the victim and of the offender in this way: “The nightmare of a young girl lasted for two years and she was mocked by no one else than her step father X. who had the intention of satisfying his sexual desires with his step daughter, the minor Y.)

3.7 Presumption of innocence

Presenting an accused of legal violations as a criminal when there is no final court ruling in place is a failure to observe the principle of the presumption of innocence. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, every person is considered innocent until an irrevocable court ruling proves otherwise. Nonetheless, some stories include personal data of the suspects that can easily lead to their identification. At the same time, in the most of the cases their reaction to the allegations is missing. Data that can lead to the identification of the suspects can be their place of origin, age, relation with the victim, profession, social status etc.

Although many items specify that a certain person is suspected of committing a crime, many times, the second sentence of the item presents the allegations as facts: it describes the acts committed, although they are just assumptions until confirmed by a court ruling.

A person presumed to have committed a sexual abuse and accused of trafficking in persons or of rape cannot be named 'trafficker'. This infringement of professional ethics is rather frequent in the analyzed stories. Although the journalists mention that certain persons are suspected of certain violations, they fail to avoid such qualifications as 'pimps', 'traffickers', 'rapers', 'paedophile', 'assassin'.

The presumption of innocence is violated in the news item "Eight-year-old girl raped by her father's cousin." Although the text says that the person has the status of a suspect, the headline is accusatory. The text contains details that can easily lead to the identification of the suspect who is said to be 'single, born in 1963, without a criminal record, does not abuse alcohol and is the cousin of the victim's father.'

Nezavisimaia Moldova also violates the principle of the presumption of innocence. The story “A Moldovan woman leads international gang”, published on 7 March, gives the full name of the woman suspected of leading a gang in Russia.

3.8 Tolerance and non-discrimination

During the monitoring period there were several registered cases of journalists exhibiting intolerance and discrimination.

Thus, an item published on 14 October 2011 in *Gazeta de Sud* for no reason mentions the ethnicity of the person: “A Roma imprisoned for many years for trafficking in persons.”

The item “Maniac father rapes his eleven-year-old daughter”, published in *Panorama* on 15 November 2011 for no reason mentions the religious affiliation of a man accused of sexually abusing his step-daughter.

Ethnic legacy is mentioned in the news story “The identity of suspects of trafficking in persons established” (*Nezavisimaia Moldova*, 13 June 2012) – “The criminals were established to be the thirty-four-year-old man from the district of Calarasi and his wife, the thirty-seven-year-old woman from the district of Nisporeni. Both of them are ethnic Roma.”

In the news item “A four-year-old girl dies after being raped,” published in *Observatorul de Nord* on 6 April, the statements made by the victim’s mother and grandfather instigate to discrimination and hatred: “Grigore G. says that it if were

for his will he would strangle Artur P with his own hands: ‘In such a case, the most right thing would be for us to take care of him with our own hands.’”

3.9 Terminology

Generally, the media used neutral terms in relation to the victims of trafficking in persons, migration or domestic violence. Exception was the story “Caring father or monster” from *Jurnal de Chişinău* (1 October 2011). The author uses expressions with negative connotations – “reprobate”.

In the story “Violence in the family,” published on 25 November, *Cuvântul Liber* uses the terms ‘poor victim’ and ‘poor woman’ for the victims of domestic violence.

Throughout the period of monitoring, there were frequent cases when the journalists confused terms or used them inappropriately. Thus, some reporters did not differentiate between ‘the victim of trafficking in persons’ and ‘prostitute’, considering them to be equivalent.

Nezavisimaia Moldova writes on 6 July 2011 “[She] dreamed of becoming a ‘wonderful babysitter’ but instead became a prostitute,” about a Ukrainian young woman who had been deceived into travelling to Moldova to be hired as a babysitter but instead was forced into prostitution.

The same *Nezavisimaia Moldova* publishes another story with the headline “To Moscow, to the fair of... prostitutes,” reporting about the detention of a gang specialized in sexual exploitation of women in Russia.

Nezavisimaia Moldova also uses the term 'prostitute' for a victim of trafficking in persons. The story that is taken over from the international press reports about the barbarian way in which traffickers treat the victims. "Among themselves the bandits were calling the prostitutes 'packages', 'suitcases' or 'bikes'". Although the story clearly reports about a trafficking victim, the term 'prostitute' appears in the headline itself – "The police release from pimps' hands a prostitute with a bar code".

Some newspapers confuse the term 'pimp' with 'trafficker'. The news story "Recruiting girls for Greece," published in *Adevărul* on 5 April 2012, uses the term 'pimps' for 'traffickers', although the story reports about a case of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation. Thus, the idea that the girls are prostitutes is induced, and not victims of trafficking in persons.

The same confusion happens in the case of the news item "Prostitution at home," published in *Adevărul* on 18 April 2012. Although the text makes it clear that the young women were forced to provide sexual services, the headline implies that they allegedly were prostitutes – "Two paramours made their victims prostitute themselves smack in their house," the newspaper writes. In this case we have an inadequate headline.

Another case when the author puts the equality sign between prostitution and trafficking in persons is in the story "PROSTITUTION: Co-owner of a Cyprian night club recruits girls from Moldova," published in *Ziarul de Gardă* on 26 April 2012. Although the text make it clear that the culprit is sentenced for trafficking in persons, the headline contains the word 'prostitution', thus equalling trafficking with prostitution, which misleads the reader.



3.10 Pictures

Stories on migration, violence and trafficking take such an unimportant space in newspapers that one in two such items lacks graphic content. i.e. is not accompanied by a picture. When pictures were used, most of the times they were symbolic, taken from the Internet, without having any captions. In many cases the journalists illustrated the stories on trafficking in persons and migration with the pictures of the experts quoted in the stories.

Most of the pictures observed the ethical standards, being symbol pictures or preserving the identities of the victims and of the defendants by blurring their faces, using black/white bands on their eyes or by illustrating only some parts of the victim's body. However, there were identified cases of journalists showing the faces of their protagonists without making it clear whether they had obtained their agreement for that or not. This was the case with the article "Four-year-old child dies after being raped" (*Observatorul de Nord*, 6 April 2012) that is accompanied by a picture that has the victim's mother in foreground.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- The number of items dedicated to domestic violence, migration and trafficking in persons has permanently increased;
- Throughout the monitoring period a constant predilection for migration-related items was observed.
- The items on trafficking in persons are the fewest in number of the categories analysed;
- Most of the items on trafficking in persons, violence and migration have been presented in the form of news;
- The highest number of news items on migration, violence and trafficking in persons are based on one source. There are also cases when it is not clear from where the reporter got his/her information as some texts do not quote any specific source;
- Some media have violated the principle of the presumption of innocence by including in their items allegations against persons whose guilt has not been yet established by court;
- Most of the news items are written based on the press releases issued by the law-enforcement agencies and are based on one source;
- Some items contain details that may lead to identifying the victims of violence, which violates their rights;
- The journalists have not used to full extent the statistics to present the scope or uniqueness of the cases of violence, trafficking or migration;

- Throughout the period of monitoring, the cases of domestic murders, sexual violence and sexual or physical abuse against children have been presented from the sensationalist angle;
- Some newspapers have directly presented trafficking in persons as a profitable and advantageous business by giving details about the fabulous profits made by the traffickers;
- Many times the headlines used by newspapers to describe cases of trafficking, migration or violence are shocking or inadequate, i.e. they do not say anything;
- Some journalists used inadequate terms for the victims of trafficking in persons and violence but also for the persons suspected of certain crimes;
- Some newspapers showed less professional accuracy as in some items the reporter's subjective opinion is visible;
- Some journalists showed intolerance and discrimination in relation to the persons suspected of a crime;
- Most of the items did not carry graphic content.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reporters and editors should show a responsible and professional attitude in tackling domestic violence and trafficking in persons in order to avoid the violation of the rights of the victims or exposing them to new risks or suffering.
- A strong recommendation is to protect the identity of the victims of domestic violence and trafficking in persons, as well as the data that may

lead to identifying them (locality, age, level of relation and other relevant details).

- The press should follow up on resonance cases of violence and trafficking and show the development of investigations or the consequences of the abuses.
- We recommend observing the basic principles of journalism, especially those referring to the mandatory presence of both sources and to the separation of facts from opinions.
- The journalists must be careful also about the terminology used when reporting on domestic violence and trafficking in persons.
- The journalists should not take any discriminatory attitudes to the victims or the perpetrators on criteria of ethnicity, level of poverty, age etc.