

**Complimentary address  
of Ambassador Aurelia Bouchez**

Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union  
to the Republic of Kazakhstan

**Round table**

**Presentations of overview and assessment of the National Action Plan 2009-2012 implementation on the Rights of Child and the Rights of Women**

**In the framework of the EU-funded project  
“Monitoring the National Human Rights Action Plan by Kazakhstan for 2009-2012 implementation progress”, implemented by Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of law (KIBHR) in partnership with MediaNet and Legal Policy Research Centre (LPRC)**

**24 January 2013, Astana**

Dear Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

It is my pleasure to welcome you here at this roundtable on behalf of the European Union. As you all aware Children’s rights are a part of universal human rights that the EU is committed to respect under international and European treaties, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols. The CRC establishes four general principles that apply to all actions affecting children: non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right of the child to survival and development (Article 6) and respect for the views of the child (Article 12).

The European Charter of Fundamental Rights contains an explicit acknowledgement of the rights of children (Article 24), including their right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being, their freedom of expression, the right for their views to be taken into consideration, and the obligation to consider the children's best interests in all actions relating to them. Let me please stress the attention on the fact that European Union is fully committed to achieving the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The majority of the MDGs are tied to the well-being and successful development of children and adolescents.

Children are placed at the centre of the EU’s external relations, development and humanitarian aid policies because of their vulnerability. This is due to their youth, their

relative inexperience and their dependence on adult care. They are especially vulnerable to the effects of family breakdown, to commercial exploitation and to trafficking.

Investing in children today means investing in the future. Young people with a good education, positive ideals, skills and a sense of social responsibility are likely to become adults with a commitment to sound social values, ready and able to make a constructive contribution to the economic and social development of their communities. Children with these positive qualities are also likely in their turn to become caring parents for their own children those on health, education, water and nutrition.

Children's rights are closely linked to the rights of their mothers and women in general. The absence of sexual and reproductive health and rights of mothers and the lack of basic social protection coverage have direct consequences for their children's health and wellbeing. In connection to women rights respect let me please remind you that on 16 April 2012 the memorandum of Understanding between the EU and UN Women has been signed. It reaffirms the partnership between the two leader organizations to support gender equality and women's empowerment around the world and ensures closer collaboration; sharing information, expertise and analysis in order to effectively advance women's rights. Cooperation will primarily focus on ensuring women's representation in decision-making in the fields of economics, politics and justice worldwide, as well as better access for women to work and social opportunities. Crucially, the partnership will see the two organizations coming together to take action on combating sexual and gender-based violence. This includes a commitment to provide more support and protection to survivors of violence and increasing access to support and services for those women affected.

For its external action, the EU has developed an extensive human rights 'toolbox'. It includes human rights guidelines, démarches and declarations, Council decisions, human rights dialogues, the inclusion of human rights and gender components in Common Security and Defense Policy missions and operations. These are complemented by activities funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and other programmes, as well as action in multilateral forums (UN, OSCE, Council of Europe).

Indeed, the specific objective of this 2 years in duration project funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights with EU contribution of 240 000 EUR

“Monitoring the National Human Rights Action Plan by Kazakhstan for 2009-2012 implementation progress” as described by the Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law, is to give impartial and independent assessment of the first in the history of Independent Kazakhstan Human Rights Action Plan implementation progress. The project is implemented through carrying out three consistent activities: monitoring, reporting and advocacy that are executed at the national and international levels in partnership with Legal Research Policy Centre and MediaNet. Let me say at this occasion how important this project is and how much we value our cooperation with the Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law as well as with the Legal Research Policy Centre and MediaNet.

So, in light of this, I believe that such a roundtable where some of the shortcomings can be addressed is very useful. Let me therefore wish you fruitful discussions and express my hope and expectation that the event will contribute to the broader activities on public control and continue joint activity aimed at monitoring of rights of child and rights of women in the country as well as international commitments of Kazakhstan.

Thank you for your attention.