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"Human Rights Alert" Internet-based investigative journalism for promoting Human Rights

The Association of On-line Press Editors and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly launches in Romania a multimedia investigative reporting page, an innovative initiative for promoting human rights. It combines investigative journalism with Information and Communication Technologies through the Internet.

The website www.anchete.ro hosts the "Human Rights Alert" section that aims at bringing to public attention particular cases of individuals and groups whose basic rights are threatened or affected. Journalistic investigations posted so far deal with, among others, human trafficking, corruption in accessing EU funds, illegal child adoptions, or fraud in obtaining a seat in Parliament on behalf of a national minority.

The novelty of this project is the journalists' approach. For each case investigated they try to find the best ways that the victims can use to protect themselves, be it legal procedures or appeal to NGOs dealing with such matters, or individual actions taken to prevent the abuses. Building on experience from specific cases, a tutorial guide on "what to do when one's fundamental rights are violated" will also be made available on the website.

The investigations are the result of the team-work of experienced journalists. Not only they are making use of all journalistic and Internet tools, but they present their materials in a variety of forms: written, audio and video.

The project launch took place on 27 June 2004 at the UN House, with the participation of Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Dan Dionisie, Head of UNDP Governance Section, Mr. Ioan Margarit, Editor, Association of On-line Press Editors, and Mr. Lucian Popescu, Project Coordinator, Association of On-line Press Editors. At the launch, the audience watched a live Internet broadcast of a talk-show from www.tvweb.ro. "Human Rights Alert" was illustrated with an investigation on trafficking in human-beings, a criminal phenomenon that severely infringes on the most fundamental human rights and human dignity of its victims.

Together with its many partners, UNDP has been working successfully over the past three years for strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies and NGOs to prevent and combat human trafficking, and for enhancing regional cooperation in South-Eastern Europe in anti-trafficking investigations.

"Human Rights Alert" is part of an initiative developed by UNDP Romania in cooperation with the Geneva-based Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the Department for Inter-ethnic Relations of the Romanian Government and the National Council for Combating Discrimination, with view to supporting civil society projects for promoting human rights. The level of interest raised by this initiative among Romanian NGOs went beyond expectations, with more than 125 applications received for 6 grants offered.



"Promoting and ensuring the respect for human rights is not a task that international organizations or even governments can achieve by themselves. The role of civil society and of the media is crucial in raising awareness about people's rights, and alerting the public and relevant authorities when human rights are violated. The UN sees civil society as a key ally in advocacy and monitoring of human rights, and is continuously expanding its partnership with non-governmental entities", said Ms. Jung.

For more information please contact UNDP Romania's Governance Section at governance@undp.ro



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