YOUNG MOTHERHOOD

“The children motivate us to fight: to get a better job, to build a house, to create better conditions.”

Cristina, 21

Preparations for this year’s Regional Monitoring Report, *Young People in Changing Societies*, included Focus Group discussions and individual interviews on the subject of young motherhood in *Romania* and *Ukraine*. Participants included young unmarried mothers, their parents and those working to provide services for them. Many of these participants are featured in the “Voices of Youth” panels in the Report, particularly in *Chapter One*, which examines the changes in family formation over the last decade. *Chapter Four*, focusing on employment issues, includes the voices of young women attempting to balance work and the family responsibilities. By including their views, the Report expands on last year’s Report, *Women in Transition*.

The Report finds that teen births have fallen across the region since 1989, but the general fall in birth rates for those under the age of 20 hides some worrying trends. In Russia, for example, girls aged 16 and under gave birth to 2,600 more children in 1998 than in 1989, an increase of 20 per cent. Girls aged 17 or under also gave birth to more children in Belarus, Ukraine and all the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. And births to unwed mothers increased in 20 of 24 countries. Births outside marriage accounted for three of every four teenage births in Slovenia and Estonia in 1998 and for 43 per cent of teenage births across the region as a whole in 1998.

Click here for *discussion guidelines on young motherhood*. 