

**Amsterdam, June 2022**

**Letter in support of Dr. Kateryna Levchenko, candidate for Ukraine for the Committee of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).**

La Strada International would like to express its strong support for the candidacy of Dr. Kateryna Levchenko for the Committee of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

La Strada International is a European NGO Platform against trafficking in human beings, that works from a human rights perspective in support of trafficked persons. The platform aims to prevent human trafficking and to protect and realise trafficked persons' rights by providing access to adequate assistance and support and by information and knowledge exchange, capacity building and cooperation. Via monitoring and advocacy La Strada International further works on ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of European Anti-Trafficking policies and regulations. La Strada International represents 30 anti-trafficking organisations in 24 European countries.

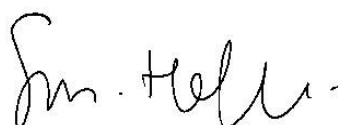
For many years, Ms. Kateryna Levchenko has been dedicated to raise awareness and obtain political attention and governmental commitment for the crimes of trafficking of persons, sexual violence and exploitation of children and gender based violence, both within Ukraine and at a broader European and global level. As founder and President of the NGO La Strada Ukraine (1997 – 2018) as well as board member of La Strada International (2004 – 2006; 2014 – 2018) she has been advocating for more accountability by governments and legislative and policy change to ensure access to justice for trafficked persons and others whose rights have been violated.

As a representative of various national and international governmental bodies, including member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (2006-2007); member of the Council of Europe Expert Group on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2013 – 2018) and GRETA gender focal point, she critically monitored international policies and actions, but also concretely contributed to the development of policies and recommendations promoting gender equality, human rights and women rights issues, while advising national and international state actors. She has been successfully lobbying for national and international legislative and policy change to protect the rights of victims of trafficking, and to prevent exploitation and (gender based) violence and abuse and contributed to numerous researches and publications on these issues.

Moreover, she has served as an elected member of the Ukrainian national Parliament, advised ministers and served on the Presidential Commission on Pardon. In 2021 Dr. Kateryna Levchenko became vice-chair of the CoE Gender Equality Commission of which she has been a member since 2016.

For over 25 years now, she has been a close partner of La Strada International and other civil society actors. She engaged civil society – like other relevant stakeholders - in her work and included their input in her recommendations. The protective measures, La Strada International and our members have been advocating for, like the need for unconditional support to victims of trafficking and gender based violence, adequate basic, medical and legal support, witness protection and access to remedies including compensation and access to residence, have been issues she has stood out for. Her endless commitment and engagement, excellent knowledge and expertise in the field of human and women rights, will be without any doubts, a great value for the CEDAW committee. Her critical voice, her openness for cooperation and her competence in the field covered by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, make her a perfect candidate for the CEDAW committee.

This is why we would like to strongly recommend her as candidate for the upcoming elections.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Hoff", written in a cursive style.

Yours sincerely,  
Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator