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July 13, 2011

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Alert: SDA resumes processing adoptions in Ukraine

On July 14, 2011, the presidential order which extends the State Department on Adoption's (SDA's) authority to process adoptions was published in Ukraine. We have been informed by the SDA that they have resumed processing adoption applications. As described in a previous alert, the SDA will have the authority to continue processing adoptions until the Ministry of Social policy is ready to take over as the new adoption authority in Ukraine. The Ministry does not yet know when they will be prepared to take over adoption processing.

The SDA also informed the embassy that the new amendment to the Family Code is now in effect. This requires orphans to be registered on the central adoption registry for one year and to be at least five years old before they are eligible for intercountry adoption. The amendment exempts children with certain special needs, relative adoptions, and sibling adoptions. Please note that the Ukrainian government is in the process of updating the definition of special needs, a process which by law should be completed by October 11, 2011.

We will continue to encourage the Ministry of Social Policy to protect adoptions where U.S. prospective adoptive parents have already been approved by the SDA to adopt a particular child. We will also be following new developments closely to understand how they will affect the families currently in process and will be posting relevant updates.