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For immediate release

President of Ukraine launches the Year of Tourism in Ukraine at UITT

The President of Ukraine, Victor Yushenko, officially launched Ukraine's 'Year of Tourism' on 26 March, the opening day of the UITT (Ukraine International Travel and Tourism) exhibition. The official announcement was made from the Ministry for Culture and Tourism's stand. The President explained the motivation behind the launch: "We want to show a new Ukraine; a Ukraine with enormous cultural heritage and travel potential. Over the last 2-3 years, the growth in visits to our country by foreign tourists has been 25% annually, which shows great prospects for our travel industry".

One hour after the announcement, the President took part in UITT's official opening ceremony, which was attended by Mr Ravil Safulin, Head of Parliament Sub-Committee on Family, Youth Policy, Sports and Tourism, Mr Anatoliy Pakhlia, Head of State Service for Tourism and Resorts and Mr Eugene Samartsev, Head of the VSGO Council for Tourism and Resorts.

Mr. Safulin discussed the prospects for developing the tourism industry in Ukraine and emphasised the importance of trade shows. He confirmed that Ukraine's government will be working closely with ministries and institutions to prepare for a successful EURO 2012 football tournament.

UITT's International Event Director, Maria Badakh, explains the importance of the President's announcement at UITT: "We are honoured to have been the chosen venue for the President's announcement about the launch of Ukraine's Year of Tourism. The Ukraine tourism market is growing substantially and the increase in new destinations at this year's UITT is evidence that this development is being recognised worldwide. We hope that this year's promotions will attract even more visitors to Ukraine and at the same time boost outbound trips from Ukraine. And as a result, we look forward to welcoming more new destinations to UITT next year!"

UITT took place on 26-28 March at the International Exhibition Center, Kiev, Ukraine. The event attracted a record number of exhibitors and visitors, with 892 companies occupying 14,215 m² floor space and more than 13,000 visits. The next event will take place in the same venue on 25-27 March 2009.

Ends.

Notes to editors:

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