



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### List of issues in relation to the combined third to sixth periodic reports of North Macedonia\*

1. The State party is requested to submit in writing additional, updated information (10,700 words maximum), if possible before 15 February 2022. The Committee may take up all aspects of children's rights set out in the Convention during the dialogue with the State party.

#### Part I

2. Please provide an update to the Committee on the measures taken or envisaged to:
  - (a) Ensure the protection of children's rights in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic;
  - (b) Effectively implement children rights legislation and adopt a new action plan for children;
  - (c) Increase budget allocations for sectors affecting children, such as education, health and social protection, in particular targeting children in disadvantaged situations, such as children with disabilities, children living in poverty and Roma children;
  - (d) Strengthen the State party's data collection system to cover all areas of the Convention and disaggregate data.
3. Please inform the Committee on the measures taken or envisaged to:
  - (a) Establish a national mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention and provide an update to the Committee on the functioning of the national commission on the rights of the child and the national intersectoral coordinating body for the protection of children and the prevention of abuse, violence and neglect;
  - (b) Strengthen the activities, the complaint mechanism and resources of the Ombudsman's Office concerning children's rights.
4. Please explain the measures taken or envisaged to:
  - (a) Amend the Law on Family in order to remove all exceptions that allow marriage for those under 18 years of age, and raise awareness of the harmful consequences of child marriage, in particular among the Roma population;
  - (b) Implement the Law on the prevention of and the protection of persons against discrimination, 2020, and combat stereotypes and social norms that perpetuate discrimination against children, in particular Roma children, children with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, in exercising their rights and with regard to their access to various services;

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\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 11 February 2021.



(c) Explicitly define the best interests of the child in national legislation and develop procedures and criteria to ensure that the best interests of the child are properly assessed in administrative and judicial proceedings;

(d) Expand mechanisms for the participation of children in decision-making in all matters that affect them and address norms, harmful beliefs and attitudes that discourage their active participation in society;

(e) Implement the Law on unregistered persons in the birth registry, 2020.

5. Please describe the steps taken or envisaged to:

(a) Adopt a new national action plan for preventing and addressing the abuse and neglect of children and implement the strategy for the prevention and protection of children from violence, 2020–2025;

(b) Eradicate corporal punishment in all settings, promote non-violent discipline methods and provide training on relevant protocols and national guidelines to professionals working with children;

(c) Address the root causes of violence against children, including domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, such as traditional attitudes and gender norms;

(d) Prevent bullying, in particular in schools, cyberbullying and the exploitation of children in the digital environment;

(e) Ensure child-friendly confidential complaint mechanisms, the dissemination of information on access to counselling and redress, child-friendly justice procedures and access to legal aid;

(f) Ensure a child-friendly and multi-agency response to all forms of child abuse, with the aim of avoiding secondary victimization, and provide appropriate therapy for children who are victims.

6. Please provide an update to the Committee on the measures taken or envisaged to:

(a) Strengthen family support services, in particular for single parents, and prevent child abandonment and the separation of families;

(b) Ensure that children separated from their families are placed in family-based care;

(c) Ensure that children under 3 years of age are not placed in small group homes;

(d) Increase support for foster families and informal kinship care;

(e) Strengthen the monitoring mechanism for children placed in small group homes and foster families.

7. Please provide an update to the Committee on the measures taken or envisaged to:

(a) Provide adequate resources for the State-wide application of the new assessment model based on a human-rights based approach to disability;

(b) Implement the national deinstitutionalization strategy, 2018–2027, in particular to facilitate the transition of children with disabilities from institutional settings to family-like settings and to strengthen the non-institutional protection network;

(c) Provide adequate resources for the implementation of the Law on Primary Education, in particular to ensure the complete inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream education system;

(d) Ensure that children with disabilities have access to health and rehabilitation services and reasonable accommodation in all spheres of life.

8. Please inform the Committee on the measures taken or envisaged to:

(a) Address the root causes of the increasing perinatal mortality rate and mortality rates among infants and children under 5 years of age;

(b) Reduce out-of-pocket payments and ensure access to high-quality health care for children in vulnerable situations;

(c) Increase vaccination coverage among children;

(d) Develop a comprehensive, child-centred nutrition programme, also covering school meals, to tackle childhood obesity;

(e) Ensure access to age-appropriate reproductive health services and education, including free and safe abortion and post-abortion services, free access to contraceptives and information on family planning, in particular in Roma communities;

(f) Accelerate the adoption and implementation of the programme for the treatment and rehabilitation of children who use drugs.

9. Please provide information on the measures taken to address child poverty and to strengthen social protection measures, in particular among children and families belonging to ethnic minority groups.

10. Please describe the measures taken or envisaged to:

(a) Address the root causes of the low quality of learning outcomes, including by strengthening the capacity of teachers;

(b) Address the disparities in access to education, including early childhood education, in enrolment, in completion rates and in performance, between children from different socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds, in particular Roma children;

(c) Change the ministry responsible for kindergarten education to the Ministry of Education;

(d) End the segregation of students on ethnic grounds in the formation of classes.

11. Please provide information on the measures taken or envisaged to:

(a) Abolish the placement of unaccompanied children in reception centres;

(b) Remove barriers that hinder Roma children from acquiring access to social services and address the lower level of availability and quality of education in their language;

(c) Address the root causes of children in street situations;

(d) Address child labour, in particular begging, especially among children among the poorest quintile of the population.

12. Please provide information on the steps taken or envisaged to:

(a) Provide free legal aid for all children who are facing criminal charges and children who are victims;

(b) Train police officers, judges and prosecutors on child justice and procedures, especially on alternative measures and restorative justice;

(c) Regularly monitor the conditions in the educational correctional home in Tetovo, in particular with regard to the reported overuse of sedative therapy administered to children placed there, immediately suspend the use of solitary confinement and physical force against children by the security staff and provide rehabilitation and psychosocial support to the children;

(d) Provide regular education;

(e) Promote mediation in order to avoid trials.

13. Please inform the Committee about the following:

(a) Measures taken to implement the recommendations made in the context of the concluding observations of the Committee on the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/MKD/CO/1), including on the efforts to fully incorporate the provisions of the Optional Protocol into national legislation and to ensure that children who are victims of

offences under the Optional Protocol receive adequate rehabilitation and reintegration support;

(b) Collaboration with foreign countries on tracing the perpetrators of such violence against children and bringing them to justice.

14. Please inform the Committee about the measures taken to implement the recommendations made in the context of the concluding observations of the Committee on the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/MKD/CO/1), including on efforts to establish a mechanism for the early identification of children, including asylum-seeking and refugee children, who may have been involved in armed conflict abroad, and to provide physical and psychological recovery and social integration services for such children.

## **Part II**

15. The Committee invites the State party to provide a brief update (no more than three pages) on the information presented in its report with regard to the following:

- (a) New bills or laws, and their respective regulations;
- (b) New institutions and their mandates or institutional reforms;
- (c) Recently introduced policies, programmes and action plans and their scope and financing;
- (d) Recent ratifications of human rights instruments.

## **Part III**

### **Data, statistics and other information**

16. Please provide consolidated information for the past three years on the budget lines regarding children and the social sectors, indicating the percentage of each budget line in terms of the total national budget and the gross national product. Please also provide information on the geographical allocation of those resources.

17. Please provide updated statistical data, disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, ethnic origin, national origin, geographical location and socioeconomic status, for the past three years, on the following:

- (a) Children who are victims of neglect, ill-treatment, violence and abuse, including sexual violence, and the number of complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators of such offences;
- (b) Deaths due to violence, abuse, neglect, substance abuse and suicide;
- (c) Children living in poverty;
- (d) Children suffering from drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse;
- (e) Children belonging to minority groups;
- (f) Children in street situations;
- (g) Children who are begging;
- (h) Children working in the formal and informal economies;
- (i) Children taught in national minority languages.

18. Please provide data disaggregated by age, sex, socioeconomic background, ethnic origin and geographical location, regarding the situation of children deprived of a family environment, for the past three years, on the number of children who are or who have been:

- (a) Separated from their parents;
- (b) Placed in residential care institutions, in particular small group homes;

(c) Placed in foster care and in kinship care.

19. Please provide data disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, ethnic origin and geographical location, for the past three years, on the number of children with disabilities who are or who have been:

(a) Living with their families;

(b) Living in residential care institutions, in particular small group homes, and in foster and kinship care;

(c) Attending regular schools;

(d) Attending special classes or schools;

(e) Receiving vocational or tertiary education;

(f) Out of school.

20. Please provide updated statistical data, disaggregated by age, sex, type of offence, ethnic origin, national origin, geographical location and socioeconomic status, for the past three years, on children in conflict with the law who have been:

(a) Investigated;

(b) Arrested;

(c) Referred to diversion programmes;

(d) In pretrial detention;

(e) Serving a sentence in detention and the length of the sentence.

21. Please provide information on how a child rights-based approach is integrated into the planning, implementation and monitoring of measures for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including with regard to the participation of children and data collection, and how those measures promote the realization of children's rights under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.

22. Please provide the Committee with an update of any data in the report that may have become outdated by more recent data collected or other new developments.

23. In addition, the State party may list areas affecting children that it considers to be of priority with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

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