



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Consideration of reports of States parties

### Replies of Greece to the list of issues in relation to its combined fourth to sixth periodic reports\*, \*\*

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## **Part one**

### **Reply to the questions raised in the list of issues of the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece (CRC/C/GRC/Q/4-6)**

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 1**

1. Law 4491/2017 established an inter-ministerial body, the National Mechanism for the Elaboration, Monitoring and Evaluation of Action Plans on the Rights of the Child, attached to the General Secretariat for Justice and Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice, composed of representatives of different Ministries, the General Secretariat for Coordination of Governmental Work, the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, the Greek Ombudsman (without the right to vote), the Institute of Child Health and, since the adoption of Law 4786/2021, UNICEF's Country Office in Greece. The said Mechanism is chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice. Article 10 of this Law describes the responsibilities of the Mechanism as follows: a) to elaborate National Action Plans on the Rights of the Child, taking into account decisions and recommendations by national and international Institutions for the protection of Human Rights and the Rights of the Child and define relevant indicators; b) to consult with civil society during the elaboration of Action Plans and ensure the participation of children; c) to promote and disseminate these Action Plans; d) to monitor their implementation through the elaboration of interim reports based on updated data, which will be made public; e) to evaluate the implementation of these Action Plans; such evaluation reports shall be submitted to the Ombudsman; and f) to prepare future Action Plans.

2. The Action Plans for the Rights of the Child shall be signed by all competent Ministers.

3. The main priority areas of the first National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child are the outcome of consultations between competent Authorities, civil society and the suggestions submitted to the National Mechanism by the Youth Parliament.

4. The methodology suggested was based on the UN «Guidance on National Plans on Business and Human Rights», while suggestions on the financial resources towards child budgeting were examined by the General Accounting Office.

5. The first Action Plan was adopted in June 2021. The following high priority axes have been identified: combating child poverty and its effects, building a child-friendly justice system, protecting children in the context of migration and refugee flows, ensuring children's right to health and education, protection of the family and children in the community – deinstitutionalization, elimination of existing discrimination – promotion of rights (with a focus on LGBTIQ+ persons), horizontal action for children with disabilities and promotion of the Rights of the Child at the international level, strengthening child protection in audiovisual contents etc.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 2**

6. Customary/traditional marriages during childhood/adolescence constitute a practice within the cultural context of the Roma community. According to the Civil Code (Articles 1350–1351), the legal age for marriage is 18 years. Underage marriages are not allowed, except by decision of the competent Court, after having heard the minors and the persons exercising their custody, and only for a serious reason. Therefore, the institutional framework is a deterrent to child, early and forced marriage.

7. Law 4511/2018 provides that Greek Muslims, members of the Muslim Minority in Thrace, have the option between civil law (implemented by civil Courts) and Islamic law in matters of family and/or inheritance law (implemented by the Muftis). Family law issues of members of the Muslim Minority in Thrace are regulated by ordinary civil law provisions and only exceptionally may fall under the jurisdiction of the Muftis, under the condition that both parties agree to submit their case to the latter. Judgments of the Muftis are not enforceable unless they are declared so by local civil Courts, which examine, in particular, whether the provisions applied violate the Greek Constitution, especially Article 4 (2)

(gender equality), as well as the European Convention on Human Rights. This new law was explicitly welcomed by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, in its judgment in the case of *Molla Sali v. Greece* delivered on 19 December 2018. Furthermore, Presidential Decree 52/2019 aligned the conditions for the conclusion of a marriage before the Mufti with the general provisions of the Greek Civil Code.

8. The housing benefit is a social assistance scheme, implemented since March 2019, aiming at supporting low income households who live in rented primary residences.

9. The programme is centrally financed and organized, while entitlement is based on specific eligibility criteria. The amount of the benefit is a proportion of the average household's estimated rent expenses, within the programme's overall annual budget.

10. Beginning at school year 2020-21, school registration of minor children residing in beneficiary households is a precondition for the submission of a benefit application, in order to mitigate school drop-out.

11. The number of approved applications concerning minors was 131,462 (30 April 2020) corresponding to 220,480 household members. 14,069 applications were submitted by single-parent families, while 58 applications concerned unprotected children.

12. Article 159 of Law 4483/2017 aims at facilitating the housing assistance provided to Roma. In order to ensure decent living conditions, temporary relocation of special social groups living in makeshift or irregular accommodation is permitted to appropriate organized spaces made available exclusively for this purpose by the State, local governments, legal entities under public law or spaces granted by individuals. A joint ministerial decision is issued for each such relocation. In addition, a 2018 joint ministerial decision defined the procedure for the implementation of this law. Within this legislative framework, housing assistance is planned and implemented in cooperation with local authorities.

13. Long-term residence requirements for third-country nationals applying for benefits serve the purpose of proving the lifelong relationship the beneficiaries have with the country. The relevant regulation does not apply to third-country nationals subject to a special protection regime, such as refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, or those who have obtained a residence permit for humanitarian reasons.

14. Law 4531/2018 ratified the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention). It introduced the obligation to criminalize conducts such as forced marriage, a crime that is often committed against children, by amending Article 323A (5) (g) of the Penal Code (PC), regarding Trafficking in Human Beings. The relevant penalties have been recently amended by Law 4855/2021 amending the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

15. A National Registry for Minors has been established by Law 4538/2018, in which every child living in an Institution run by public, private or non-profit entities and every child about to be adopted or placed in foster family is registered. The operation of the Registry started in September 2019. Until May 2020, 1,520 children have been registered. This Law (as amended by Law 4604/2019) also stipulates that a Personal Plan for Family Rehabilitation shall be elaborated by the relevant Social Service, for each child living in an Institution.

16. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in cooperation with relevant Ministries, plans to create a new national programme for children not covered by the current programme "Harmonization of Professional and Family Life" which provides places available in pre-school care and creative employment structures. Public resources of around 30 million Euro will be allocated to this new programme. The child-rights approach will be implemented through actions that will be taken in the framework of the Child Guarantee Initiative.

### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 3**

17. According to Articles 20, 32, 39, 48, 59, 60 and 75 of Law 4636/2019 (as amended), the best interests of the child constitute a primary consideration throughout reception and asylum procedures and in all decisions that affect minors.

18. By definition, children and unaccompanied minors (UAMs) belong to the vulnerable groups of applicants of International Protection and enjoy special guarantees in asylum procedures.

19. Regarding the Best Interest Assessment tool, the Greek Asylum Service has developed, in co-operation with UNHCR, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and other relevant actors, a Best Interest Assessment Form (BIA) along with a checklist to facilitate the BIA procedure in the context of the Dublin Regulation for family reunification of unaccompanied children that seek International Protection in Greece and have relatives residing in another EU member state. This procedure has been implemented since August 2018.

20. The BIA Form allows the collection and assessment of information required according to the criteria set forth in the Dublin Regulation (for example on the presence of family members and their residence status in other EU member states, their actual relationship with the child and their capacity to undertake the child's care). For this purpose, interviews are carried out with all relevant actors, including the child himself/herself. The Dublin Unit then evaluates the information provided and if it is deemed that it is in the best interests of the child to be (re)united with a family member/relative who is legally present in another EU member state, it requests that EU member state to accept the transfer. Child protection actors involved in the process report as a challenge the fact that, following the BIA and the transfer request by the Dublin Unit, should the transfer of the child be denied, the respective decision does not clarify how the best interest of the child was taken into consideration. The effectiveness of this tool also depends on the collaboration of representatives or legal guardians of all stakeholders involved in minors' care and of children themselves.

21. Moreover, after the reform of the guardianship system, a BIA template will be mainstreamed in cooperation with UNHCR and EASO, under the coordination of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of UAMs. Only professionals trained and accredited by UNHCR and EASO will be conducting Best Interest Assessments. Information included in the BIA is principally based on children's views.

22. Children's views are mandatory with respect to Dublin Regulation (EU) 604/2013. In addition, Law 4636/2019, as amended by Law 4686/2020, further stipulates that the opinion of the children is taken into consideration according to the level of maturity and his/her age.

23. Article 61 of the same Law (4636/2019) provides that children may be detained only as a last resort, when no other alternatives or less restrictive measures can be applied, taking into consideration the best interest of the child. In all cases, detention is limited to 25 days. UAMs are detained only under special circumstances and never in prisons. Children are detained separately from adults and measures for recreational and educational activities must be provided during detention. Children must be promptly transferred to appropriate facilities and, since early 2020, these provisions are rigorously adhered to. In case of rejection of an appeal filed by an UAM, detention cannot take place.

24. Under the same Law, asylum applications of UAMs are examined through accelerated procedures only in the following specific cases:

- (a) UAMs arriving from a safe third country;
- (b) UAMs having made a subsequent application, but without new substantial elements;
- (c) UAMs considered dangerous for public security and safety.

25. On the same grounds, applications of UAMs can be examined through the border procedure, including also in cases where a third country can be considered safe for the specific UAM, or the UAM has tried to mislead the Authorities by providing false identity documents. The Law clearly states that the best interest of the child should always be assessed.

26. Furthermore, Article 75 (7) of this Law stipulates that applications of UAMs under the age of 15, including victims of trafficking, are always examined through the regular asylum procedure.

27. It is further elaborated that this Law (4636/2019), transposing EU Directives on the Common European Asylum System, contains specific provisions for victims of human trafficking, including minors, such as:

(a) The obligation of Authorities to immediately inform the National Referral Mechanism of Identification and Referral of Victims (NRM) in the event they identify victim(s) of trafficking;

(b) When applying the provisions on refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, the specific situation of vulnerable persons such as victims of trafficking is taken into account;

(c) During the reception and identification procedures, victims of trafficking, being a vulnerable group, are provided with specialized care and protection, as well as with special reception conditions;

(d) Where appropriate, competent Authorities shall ensure that minors who are victims of exploitation have access to rehabilitation services, appropriate psychological care and specialized treatment, if necessary. Minors are assured of an adequate standard of living for their physical, mental, intellectual, moral and social development. The assessment of the best interest of the child shall take into account, in particular, opportunities for family reunification, the quality of life and the social development of the minor, security and protection issues, in particular where there is a risk that the minor may become a victim of trafficking.

28. Moreover, at Reception and Identification Centres, special procedures for women and children have been developed by the NRM. The Office of National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (ONR) promotes relevant capacity building projects. A series of training programmes on Trafficking in Human Beings indicators and victim protection Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have taken place, involving a wide range of beneficiaries from law enforcement Authorities to Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) throughout Greece.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 4**

29. In accordance with Article 62 of Law 4554/2018, when a woman near childbirth in labor shows up without having any identification documents, the registration information form is filled out based on her own declaration, while an ID bracelet is placed on the mother at that moment and on the newborn immediately after birth. The Hospital Administration is responsible for informing the mother about her obligation to present any existing document which could be generally considered as acceptable proof of her identity. Immediately after childbirth, when completing the document for the declaration of birth, a second form is attached, which includes again the name and surname of the mother as declared by her, the place and date of birth and the gender of the newborn. Also, footprints or palmprints of the newborn are taken. It is to be noted that, starting from January 1st, 2020, a birth allowance of 2,000 Euro for every child born in Greece has been established by Law.

30. According to Law 3284/2004, as amended and in force, children who are born in Greek territory shall acquire Greek citizenship in case they would otherwise become stateless. Regarding progress in the transliteration of non-Greek names in identity documents, the Greek Asylum Service is in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to provide effective procedures for the proper verification of name provision.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 5**

31. The Hellenic Police Cyber Crime Division operates a Unit of Minors' Internet Protection and Digital Investigation, responsible, inter alia, for investigating cases of cyber bullying, as well as for fighting crimes committed against minors through the internet and other electronic or digital means. These cases are assigned to specialized officers, supported by a Unit psychologist.

32. Bullying does not fulfil the constitutive element of an established and individual offence; however, it often occurs as a complex and rather complicated phenomenon

consisting of acts which may fall under the constitutive element of other offences (insult, threat, personal injury, libel, defamation etc.).

33. Every year, before school opening, the Hellenic Police Headquarters issues a relative Order with guidelines aiming at the implementation of a strong set of actions, programmes and activities, by properly utilising the most competent personnel. Multiple Orders are occasionally given to Hellenic Police operational services, aiming at implementing “mild policing” actions, based on dialogue and effective cooperation with school units, and thus building a relationship of trust. The ultimate goal of the Police is to ensure pupils’ safety and to motivate the school community to jointly address this form of delinquency.

34. Regarding school violence and bullying, according to Articles 11 and 17 of Law 4823/2021, schools are supported by: (a) Education Counselors who, in collaboration with Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support, arrange for the implementation of compensatory programmes to tackle phenomena such as school bullying and (b) Interdisciplinary Support Committees, in the schools where such Committees operate.

35. In addition, each year, throughout the country, teachers, in collaboration with their pupils, organize school activities on issues such as preventing and addressing violence, interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution, diversity, etc. Issues of children’s healthy psychosocial development are also addressed in the newly introduced Skills Workshops at all educational levels. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has also declared March 6th as the national day against school violence and bullying. On this day, general and special schools implement various programmes on the subject.

36. Presidential Decree 18/2018 established “Unit C” as the Department of the Directorate for Special Education responsible for the protection of the rights of students with disabilities. The Unit, inter alia, receives complaints from parents of students with disabilities or from students themselves. In such cases, it may request the opening of an official investigation by competent local Directorates of Education, which may result in disciplinary action.

37. The main structures established by Law 4823/2021 to provide support for all pupils, including those with disabilities, on various issues and facilitate inclusion are:

(a) Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support, which explore and evaluate pupils’ educational and psycho-social needs, plan and implement individualised or group psycho-social interventions for pupils, teachers and parents;

(b) Special education schools which are being converted into Support Centres in mainstream education School Networks;

(c) Interdisciplinary Support Committees which are operating at mainstream school level;

(d) Psychologists and social workers active in schools.

38. Law 4807/2021 upgraded the initiative on “Skill Labs” from pilot programme to a permanent fixture of the educational programme. The Labs comprise various thematic units, with particular stress on human rights issues in a cross-cutting way. The project draws upon an array of social and human rights contents and skills to be taught at all education levels, thereby promoting and implementing the UN SDGs, in particular Goal 4: “Inclusive and Quality Education.” The programme is based on four Thematic Pillars (well-being, environment, human rights/social empathy and creativity). Teachers, pupils and the school community are to monitor progress through the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. More than 75,000 educators have either enrolled or completed the Skills Labs module teacher training. This initiative has been awarded the Global Education Award by the Global Education Network Europe (GENE).

39. The Institute of Education Policy is planning to include the development of soft skills in teachers’ training programmes which are dealing with bullying and ways to tackle it. In addition, in the context of a project entitled “A new beginning in Vocational School – Supporting Vocational Schools”, which is co-founded by Greece and the EU, a new Institution called “Adviser Teacher” has been established to support students in need and improve school atmosphere. An active link at the website of the Ministry of Education and

Religious Affairs, which provides educational information material around relative actions, is also available.

40. Within the Hellenic Police, a Unit for Combating Domestic Violence has been established and 72 Domestic Violence Agencies along with 5 Operational Offices have been created throughout the country. Complaint mechanisms and support services for children aim at substantially and effectively preventing and combating domestic violence offences, collecting, processing and recording statistics on domestic violence cases and victims, periodically training police personnel and developing strong cooperation with competent governmental bodies and organizations, local government, as well as other social organizations.

41. The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality supports all efforts that promote the principle of equality in education. In past years, it has proceeded to broadening co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the Institute of Educational Policy and the educational community. It has undertaken clear and concrete initiatives to sensitize teachers on gender equality issues to prevent gender-based violence from an early stage of child development, by teaching respect between genders. Indicatively, it has signed relevant cooperation agreements, conducted competitions and organized school visits. In addition, special provisions have been put in place under Law 4604/2019 at all levels of schooling, aiming at the elimination of gender stereotypes and the advancement of healthy attitudes.

42. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs operates a “Unified Call Centre”, which allows, inter alia, employees to file complaints (anonymous or signed) about violations of their labour rights. This process is completed either through the telephone line 1555 or online through the website [sepe.gov.gr](http://sepe.gov.gr). Complaints may be lodged not only by the victims themselves, but also by individuals who suspect cases of minors’ exploitation. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Labour Inspectorate (S.E.P.E.) carries out an immediate inspection, imposing administrative and criminal sanctions in case of violation of children’s rights. In severe cases of child labour exploitation, S.E.P.E. informs the Hellenic Police.

43. Since the official launch of the National Referral Mechanism, on January 1st 2019, detailed information on the characteristics of registered victims of trafficking have been gathered by stakeholders that come into contact with trafficking victims. They submit a specific referral form on a wider range of issues such as residence status of the victim, educational level, civil status, labour status, means of recruitment, relation to the recruiter, means of control etc. Such gathering of data in a centralized and systematic manner constitutes a significant improvement in data collection for this category of children-victims of violence.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 6**

44. In 2017, a ministerial decision on the “Deinstitutionalization Programme for Persons with Disabilities” was issued for the transfer of persons with disabilities accommodated at the relevant branches of the Attica and Western Greece Social Care Centres to a safe and supportive facility or family-type facility or their return to their families with parallel support being provided by this programme.

45. According to Article 2 of the same ministerial decision, deinstitutionalization and prevention include the development of accommodation facilities for persons with disabilities, the development of a pilot programme for professional fostering, the development of a short-term infrastructure facility for persons with disabilities, the creation of a mobile unit for the provision of support services to families with persons with disabilities, the development of centres for creative activities and the creation of day-care centres for persons with disabilities.

46. Day-care and community services are provided by the Child Protection Departments of the 12 Regional Social Welfare Centres set up under Law 4109/2013.

47. The Social Welfare Centres, which are responsible for the protection and care of children with disabilities, provide for their rehabilitation and other services through in- house or open-source programmes.

48. Legislation defines the rules and requirements for the establishment of Centres for Creative Activities for Children and Youth with disabilities. The Centres are distributed in all regions of Greece and constitute the main policy tool towards the independence of children with all types of disabilities.

49. Regarding children under 6 years of age, rules define the framework for the establishment and operation of integrated care nurseries, which offer services fitting the needs of these children and, where appropriate, specialized staff is employed.

50. Moreover, private non-profit entities and the Public Social Welfare Centre of Attica, via the “Open Day-Care Centres”, have established programmes providing specialized services for children with disabilities 0–6 years of age, under the principles of the Early Childhood Intervention. The administration body of each of these Centres, supported by a Scientific Committee, is responsible for safeguarding respect for beneficiaries’ dignity. The competent Departments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs request the health and welfare services’ inspection body to investigate the living and care conditions in these Institutions.

51. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has also elaborated a National Deinstitutionalization Strategy and Action Plan, with the support of the European Commission and consultations with the disability movement. The aim of this Strategy is to develop an institutional and financial framework for services that meet the individualized needs of children.

52. There are nine Financial Assistance Schemes for persons with disabilities who are not eligible for financial support under the Greek Social Security Fund. Law 4611/2019 stipulates that the relevant allowances do not constitute taxable income.

53. A fostering allowance (300 to 900 Euro) is provided by the Social Welfare Centre of Attica, in order to cover the financial needs of the children, taking into account their health status.

54. All children living in Institutions are registered under the new Information System for Adoption and Foster Care, provided by Law 4538/2028 adopted in April 2019.

55. Since its inception, the Lechaina Centre for people with disabilities has operated on the basis of a medical model and focused on providing care to beneficiaries, rather than developing their skills and socialization. In recent years, certain efforts are being made towards a more inclusive approach.

56. The Lechaina Centre accommodates only a small number of children (one boy and one girl), as well as adults with intellectual disabilities. The deinstitutionalization of Lechaina is already underway. In 2019, a project team was recruited for the planning of the deinstitutionalization programme. In November 2019 an operational deinstitutionalization plan was submitted, which covered a three-year period (2019–2021) and provided for the creation of four Supported Living Facilities and two “Help at Home” mobile units with specialized staff, to help people relocating to live with their families. Two Day Centres and Creative Activities Centres are expected to begin operating within 2021.

57. Many initiatives have been taken to promote the implementation of Laws 3699/2008, 4368/2016 and 4547/2018, such as:

- (a) The legislative empowerment of educational support services with an inclusive focus;
- (b) The significant increase in recruitment of special-needs teachers and special support staff in general education, in addition to the recruitment of 4,500 permanent staff;
- (c) The systematic collection of statistics concerning pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs who attend mainstream schools;
- (d) The provision of teachers’ training options with an emphasis on differentiated teaching;
- (e) The development of accessible digital material that can be used by pupils with disabilities in mainstream settings.



58. Article 3 of Law 4316/2014 defines actions for the promotion of breastfeeding. In recent years, a number of joint ministerial decisions, circulars, information and educational material have been issued with the aim of increasing breastfeeding rates and improving the nutrition diet offered to infants and toddlers in public and private nurseries and kindergartens.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 7**

59. The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Planning and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs continues its collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in providing information on sexual education to secondary school students either at the Counseling Centre for Women in Athens or at schools. In 2018-2019, 30 seminars were implemented in 15 schools attended by 1,850 students. Special provisions have been put in place at all education levels aiming at the elimination of gender stereotypes and the advancement of healthy attitudes.

60. The Office of National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, in collaboration with the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, is organizing trainings of school teachers on the “Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture” of the Council of Europe, including sexual and reproductive health education.

61. All children, including refugee and migrant children, are required to submit an Individual Student Health Card to the school unit approximately every 3 years. This ensures that children are medically examined and follow all vaccination protocols. Additionally, Law 4368/2016 established the right of free access to the public health system for the provision of nursing and medical care to minors, regardless of their status.

62. Measures have been taken to improve access to quality education for all children with regard, in particular, to school infrastructure and transportation. Particularly for students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is currently implementing the Strategic Plan for Equal Access of Students with disabilities to Education, which has been an extension of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It comprises 13 operational objectives, with a clear implementation deadline, in key areas of inclusive policy and practice such as accessibility, early childhood education etc.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 8**

63. Through a programme called “First Hug”, introduced in 2016 by the Social Welfare Centre of the Attica Region, babies abandoned in hospitals were placed in foster families without being institutionalized, until legal issues were solved. Moreover, Prosecutors try to place abandoned babies in foster families rather than in Institutions.

64. Under legislation adopted in 2019, all Social Units of public hospitals are connected to the new Information System for Adoption and Foster Care provided by Law 4538/2018, in order to register abandoned babies and place them in foster care immediately.

65. Acknowledging the importance of establishing a special state body for designing and coordinating all actions regarding protection of unaccompanied minors, in February 2020, Presidential Decree 18/2020 established the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

66. The Ministry of Citizen Protection has extended the duration of the Cooperation Protocol signed with the Greek Organization against Drugs until 2025. Multiple actions are to be implemented aiming, inter alia, at assisting and supporting minor and young offenders users of narcotic drugs and training Police Officers on how best to approach addicts.

67. In cooperation with the “Eliza” organization against child abuse, a Guidelines Protocol for identifying and managing cases of child abuse was drawn up and disseminated. Furthermore, a Cooperation Protocol on children at risk and missing children has been concluded with the NGO “Smile of the Child”.

68. Another working group has been established aiming at the comprehensive approach, review and identification of causes of juvenile delinquency.

69. At each Police Station, a Police Officer has been appointed as Contact Point – Liaison with the schools of their district. School principals have been made aware of the importance to immediately notify Police services in case they detect any offence being committed within the broader area of schools and school complexes.

70. A Memorandum of Cooperation has been signed in 2017 between the Ministry of Citizen Protection and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, focusing on training issues.

71. When Police services become aware of incidents pertaining to the abuse, exploitation or neglect of a minor, they promptly inform the competent Prosecutorial Authorities to ensure the protection of minor victims.

72. Pupils of 1st and 2nd grade of Upper High School have the option to participate in the Youth Parliament, provided they have developed activities of social interest in their schools and wider community. The groups of pupils are selected by a combination of criteria and drawing of lots, while the participation of schools in remote areas of the country, special schools, inter-cultural schools as well as schools representing different parts of the country is ensured.

73. Students enjoy the right to express their opinion, in particular through their participation in the school communities in Secondary Education. All students, members of the school community, enjoy the right to fully participate in all general assemblies.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 9**

74. Law 4538/2018 aims at coordinating the Institutions for foster care and adoptions by establishing the National Foster Care and Adoption Council. It also aims at speeding up procedures, collecting national data, updating and enriching regulations concerning National Registers (of children in institutional care, foster care, adoption) and providing for sanctions in cases of failure to send data to the competent Authority for registry maintenance, namely the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA).

75. In order to improve and to speed up the process of fosterages, this Law established a National Registry of Prospective Foster Parents and a National Registry of Minors.

76. Since April 2019, all people living in Greece, who wish to become foster parents or to adopt, must apply online through the Information System of Fosterages and Adoptions. The procedure is conducted electronically, except from the home-study report. For the very first time, couples of same sex that have signed a civil partnership are allowed to become foster parents.

77. From mid 2020 onwards, all adoptions or fostering families take place through the new Information System nationwide.

78. Law 4808/2021 transposed EU Directive 2019/1158 introducing paternity leave, parental leave, as well as payment of the working father when using this leave. The Directive recognizes the right of both parents to jointly exercise caring responsibilities. (On relevant measures implemented during the pandemic with regard to civil servants with family obligations, as well as on leaves of absence provided for in the Code of Civil Servants for the protection of children, see Annex 2).

79. The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality has included in the New National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021–2025 actions to enhance women’s participation in the labour market and increase the attractiveness of entrepreneurship.

80. At the same time, Law 4604/2019 on the promotion of substantive gender equality includes actions that focus on combating gender inequalities in the workforce of enterprises. For the first time ‘Equality Plans’ will be drawn up and integrated interventions will be developed by public and private companies. In addition, the above-mentioned General Secretariat has established the “Equality Label” as a reward and certification for implementing equal treatment and equal opportunities policies.

81. A key element in achieving these goals is to enhance the digital skills and confidence of women and girls in professions traditionally regarded as “male dominant”, such as Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) businesses.

82. Law 4800/2021 revised family law to enhance protection of minors within the family environment.

83. The right of the child to be heard is enshrined in Article 1511 (3) of the Civil Code (with regard to decisions on parental responsibility) and 612 (1) of the Code of Civil Procedure (conflict between parents regarding their common parenting).

84. Pursuant to Article 11 (2) (return of the child to his/her habitual residence) of Regulation Brussels IIa (2201/2003), which supplements Article 13 (2) of the 1980 Hague Convention, when there is a case of wrongful removal or retention, the child shall be given the chance to be heard, unless this appears inappropriate due to his/her age or degree of maturity. Also, Regulation 1111/2019 provides that the child shall be granted by the Court the opportunity to express his/her views in accordance with national laws and procedures. The hearing of the child may be done by using alternative means such as videoconference, when necessary. Article 25 of this Regulation foresees the possibility of mediation or other means of alternative dispute resolution, unless this is contrary to the best interest of the child. Furthermore, Law 4640/2019 provides for mediation in cases of family disputes over parental responsibility.

85. Articles 1532 and 1533 of the Civil Code provide for the removal of parental responsibility in cases of improper exercise of such responsibility (such as incidents of neglect, abandonment, domestic violence etc.), where there is an immediate danger for the physical or mental health of the child, as well as for the best solution for the child’s protection (such as temporary assignment of parental responsibility to an Institution or competent social services etc.).

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 10**

86. The Code of Immigration and Social Inclusion (Law 4251/2014), as in force, provides for the granting of residence permits for humanitarian reasons (Article 19A) in certain cases, including: children victims of domestic violence and their primary care giver; third-country nationals who have been employed, either on particularly abusive terms of work or as minors; victims of trafficking; minors whose custody has been assigned by a decision of a domestic or foreign Court recognized by the Greek Authorities, to families of Greeks or families of third-country nationals with legal residence in the country or for which adoption proceedings are pending before Greek Authorities; minors housed in non-profit organizations’ shelters or in closed care facilities operating under the supervision of relevant Ministries.

87. In the context of family reunification, a third-country national legally residing in Greece for a period of two years is entitled to apply, at his/her request, for entry and residence in the country of his family members.

88. Under the housing scheme “ESTIA” in city centres, family unity and best interest of the child are ensured. Mechanisms for the prevention and response to conflicts and incidents of violence, including psychological, sexual, gender and domestic violence, are foreseen and ensured.

89. Minors are required to join primary and secondary education units in the public education system, while their registration is facilitated in case of difficulties in the submission of the required supporting documents.

90. To ensure child-appropriate reception capacity for unaccompanied minors:

(a) With the support of IOM, the European Commission, EU member states and Greek NGOs, the long-term accommodation capacity has been increased reaching 2,216 long-term accommodation places (small-scale capacity shelters, and apartments for the supported independent living of teenagers);

(b) During 2020, almost 2,000 minors were transferred from border points to the mainland as well as from police stations and precarious living conditions to appropriate facilities;

(c) The duration of UAMs' stay in RICs has been minimized, while safe areas for them are in place;

(d) A major tracing exercise, with the support of UNHCR and Greek NGOs, took place in 2020 for children who were referred as homeless;

(e) The measure of protective custody of unaccompanied minors lacking accommodation or documentation was abolished by Law 4760/2020 (Article 43) and a mechanism was established for tracing, identification and referral of homeless minors to emergency accommodation (Article 44). With the support of UNHCR, IOM, the European Commission, EU member states and Greek NGOs, since April 2020 an emergency response mechanism is operational 24/7 and 200 accommodation places will be deployed to this end;

(f) The Greek government, supported by the EU and UN agencies, is implementing a voluntary relocation scheme for unaccompanied minors and minors with severe medical conditions from Greece to other EU member states; in this framework 1,063 UAMs have been relocated to 13 EU member states and 243 minors with severe medical conditions, together with their family members (total 1,035), have been relocated to Germany. Voluntary relocation for families is also implemented.

91. Immigration detention for UAMs may take place primarily on only two occasions: (a) by law, upon arrival in RICs for a maximum of 25 days for identification purposes and until their transfer to appropriate facilities; (b) until a third-country national or stateless person is identified as such. Efforts are being made to improve identification procedures conducted by the Police, by developing guidelines, specialized training and ensuring interpretation services.

92. The guardianship system for UAMs has been framed by Law 4554/2018 which introduces concepts of best interest assessment and determination as official procedures, and stipulates the general tasks of a guardian; yet some amendments are needed to make the system fully operational and adaptable to specific needs. Preparation aiming at a more flexible and effective guardianship is already underway at legal and operational levels, envisaged to be completed by mid-2022. Currently, guardianship tasks are carried out by NGOs' professionals or by regional Social Services, after authorization by the Public Prosecutor. The responsibility for guardianship has been transferred, in 2021, to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

93. Building on the Registry for UAMs and Accommodation Centres established in 2018, a national database for their protection is planned to be developed.

94. Advocacy is being promoted with a view to facilitate, when necessary, family reunification to other EU member states. Dedicated efforts are being made to manage backlog of cases involving reunification of refugees located in Greece with family members from their country of origin. Since 2018, family reunification of refugee UAMs has been facilitated.

95. A vulnerability assessment is conducted upon arrival at Reception and Identification Centres (RICs), which includes indicators on all protection matters. Accommodation, psychosocial and legal support as well as healthcare are provided to minors at all stages. In all accommodation facilities for minors, the staff necessarily includes a multidisciplinary team. This is a prerequisite for organizations operating accommodation facilities in order to be funded by national or EU funding programmes. Trainings on child protection are coordinated together with UN agencies. Awareness raising workshops regarding prevention of child abuse and quality standards for services will be further mainstreamed; clear referral pathways and a code of conduct for professionals working with minors will be developed and made operational in accommodation facilities, subject to a system of monitoring.

96. Reports of violence or cases of death of minors in any type of accommodation facility are very rigorously investigated by the Police and Public Prosecutors.

97. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has established Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education in school districts where refugee Accommodation Centres and RICs exist, both at public primary and secondary schools. Their curriculum includes courses on the Greek language, mathematics, foreign languages, computer science, physical

education, and art classes. Early childhood education is provided within the Accommodation Centres in specialized facilities.

98. Refugee children living in residence programmes within urban settings (rented flats, hotels, hostels) have been attending regular morning classes in local schools, with the support of Reception Annexes classes.

99. Law 4636/2019 further facilitated refugee children involvement into educational structures by stipulating (Article 51) that their integration into the education system occurs within three months of the formal identification of the minor refugee's identity. There is also provision for informal educational services, which can be administered within hosting facilities, but do not substitute formal education services.

100. Regarding protection and support in case of exploitation and abuse of minors, the following should be mentioned:

101. Pursuant to Law 4478/2017, victims of crime are properly assisted, supported and protected in order to participate in criminal proceedings.

102. According to Article 68 of the above-mentioned law, an individual assessment of the victim is conducted to identify any specific protection needs. The individual assessment takes into account the age of the victim as well as any history of past victimization.

103. The same Law foresees the establishment of Special Offices in five big cities for the protection of minor victims, which are called "Houses of the Child". Two structures are soon expected to become fully operational. The "Houses of the Child" will be in charge of conducting individual assessments and evaluation of the perceptual ability and mental condition of minor victims, and will provide general support services and assistance to all competent Authorities for the proper child-friendly examination of the victim during criminal proceedings, applying an interdisciplinary approach. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with other competent Ministries, is responsible for training relevant professionals. Furthermore, Article 227 of the Code for Criminal Procedure provides that children who are victims or witnesses of crimes against their personal or sexual freedom, trafficking etc. are examined under a special process during criminal proceedings at Child Advocacy Centres. Moreover, it provides that the examination of the victim is conducted in cooperation with a specialized psychologist or psychiatrist and stipulates that the testimony of the child is always audio-visually recorded, so that the child doesn't have to testify again in the ensuing proceedings. In 2019, a relevant Special Protocol was developed.

104. In addition, Law 4855/2021 amending the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure enhanced protection of minors who are victims of crimes.

105. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, human rights-related material with an emphasis on the Rights of the Child have been included at all education levels. Also, the Ministry of Justice has taken initiatives in collaboration with the National School of Judges for the inclusion of interdisciplinary seminars on child-friendly justice.

106. Furthermore, the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for the conduct of hearings without the presence of the public.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 11**

107. Roma are considered a vulnerable social group within the general population. The National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion 2011–2020 and Action Plan 2017–2021 focus on four pillars: housing, health, employment and education (dealing with school drop-out, special reference to Roma girls etc.). The new National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion 2021–2030 is currently being elaborated by the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

108. Coordinated efforts are being made by all stakeholders, including by municipalities, to find housing assistance solutions, as well as by the Ministry of Education, regarding Roma children inclusion and stay in the educational process.

109. In this framework, measures for the school year 2019–2020 focused on the reduction of early school drop-out of students from vulnerable social groups and on the improvement of learning outcomes, mainly in literacy but also in arithmetic literacy, so that children could be able to complete their studies.

110. School Headmasters provide support to Roma children residing in that school area and work towards their enrollment and attendance. Roma children can attend both pre-school and primary schools regardless of being registered in the municipal registries, while enrollment may not be hampered because of lack of a permanent residence certificate, as any document proving the home address of the pupil is accepted.

111. Supportive social measures, such as the Guaranteed Minimum Income, the financial assistance/allowance granted to families for children or “school meals” aim at encouraging and promoting school attendance of pupils belonging to vulnerable social groups, including Roma.

112. Roma children have access to medical care, especially through the services of the Community Centres/Roma Branches and the social services of municipalities. A vaccination action plan, in cooperation with Roma organizations, is being implemented.

113. Regarding legislative measures to tackle discrimination and violence against Roma, the following should be mentioned:

114. Law 4285/2014 punishes, inter alia, public incitement to acts or activities which may result in discrimination, hatred or violence against individuals or groups of individuals defined by reference to race, color, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, in a manner which endangers public order or threatens life, liberty or the physical integrity of the abovementioned individuals or groups.

115. According to Article 82A of the Penal Code, the commission of any offence on racist grounds constitutes an aggravating circumstance leading to the imposition of more severe penalties.

116. The National Council against Racism and Intolerance, an inter-ministerial body with the participation of independent organizations and civil society actors, adopted, in December 2020, the first National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance covering the period 2020–2023.

117. Recording and data collection about racist crimes is carried out through the joint update (by the Hellenic Police and the Ministry of Justice) of a centralized annual scoreboard, illustrating the criminal course of cases with a suspected racist motive. A number of initiatives have been taken to further improve data collection, as well as education and training on human rights of members of the Judiciary, public servants and local government employees.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 12**

118. Under the applicable domestic legislation, detention of minor offenders may be imposed only for aggravated offences, while reformatory or therapeutic measures are applied for small-scale crime. More specifically, an offence committed by a minor from 12–15 years of age shall not be criminally prosecuted; the Court may only impose reformatory or therapeutic measures.

119. A minor who committed an offence and has reached the fifteenth year of age shall be subject to reformatory or therapeutic measures, unless confinement in a special detention facility for minors is deemed required. Such confinement shall be imposed only in case the offence in question, if committed by an adult, would be charged as a felony, entailing the exercise of violence or committed against a person’s life or physical integrity.

120. The relevant judgment shall include a special and thorough reasoning setting out the reasons why the reformatory or therapeutic measures are not sufficient in this particular case, taking into account the special conditions of the crime committed and the minor’s personality. Such judgment shall also determine the exact duration of the confinement which may range from 6 months to 5 years (2 to 8 years if the offence is punishable by life sentence when committed by adults). Confinement at an Institution may be replaced with confinement at

home and the latter by community service. Article 129 sets out the conditions of release from confinement to a special youth detention Institution, after the completion of half of the minor's sentence, while Article 129A, as amended by Law 4855/2021, provides for the minor's release under the condition of confinement at home with electronic-remote supervision.

121. Article 122 of the Penal Code defines various reformatory measures which may be implemented such as: the minor's reprimand, the assignment of the minor's care to his/ her parents or guardians, to a foster family, to protective organizations or to minors' Institutions or caregivers, the expression of an apology and the out-of-Court settlement of the consequences of the minor's offence, the compensation of the victim, the attendance of social and psychological programmes, the study at professional schools or other education or training, the attendance of special programmes, the provision of community service, the placement of the minor at a special and appropriate facility.

122. Pursuant to the Internal Operational Regulation of each special youth detention Institution and the relevant Articles of the Penal Code, minors in criminal proceedings and convicted minors benefit from special protection measures for their best interest.

123. Moreover, EU Directive 2016/800 on the procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings was transposed into domestic legislation by Law 4689/2020. On the "Houses of the Child" Institution, please see above under Question 10.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 13**

124. In the context of providing specialized support to victims of violence, abuse and exploitation, a model of intervention will be established for unaccompanied minors who were formerly child soldiers, based on the minors' best interest, involving a holistic therapeutic care of trauma.

125. The provisions of the Statute of the International Criminal Court have been incorporated into domestic legislation through the ratification of Law 3948/2011. The said Law, inter alia, has regulated both the protection of minors and the prevention of their participation in war operations and armed conflicts. In particular, the recruitment of children who have not yet reached 15 years of age, their participation in armed forces or groups, their coercion to be actively engaged in hostilities, with regard to an international or non-international, armed conflict, constitutes a crime of war against individuals and is punishable by a sentence of no less than ten years, according to Article 9 of Law 3948/2011.

126. The recruitment of minors for the purpose of being used in armed operations is criminalized under Article 323A (4) of the Penal Code and is punishable by imprisonment of up to ten years and a pecuniary penalty.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 14**

127. Articles 323A (Trafficking in Human Beings) and 351 (sexual exploitation) have been consolidated in one provision, whereas the content of "exploitation" is described with greater clarity and has been broadened to also include the subjection of the victim to servitude and slavery, as well as the unlawful financial gain from the victim's criminal activity. Moreover, trafficking is included in the list of crimes committed abroad which are always punishable according to Greek Laws, while the new Article 348D establishes the universal jurisdiction of Greece in cases of crimes of child sexual abuse committed abroad by a Greek national.

## **Part two**

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 15 (a)**

##### *New laws and regulations*

128. Major developments regarding asylum procedures are the entry into force of Laws 4636/2019, 4686/2020 and 4825/2021.

129. Article 43 of Law 4760/2020 abolished the measure of protective custody for unaccompanied minors, while Article 44 mandates the Special Secretariat of Unaccompanied Minors to manage emergency accommodation of homeless and unregistered unaccompanied minors.

130. Joint ministerial decision 9889/2020 on age assessment provides clear coordination and procedures for initiating, conducting and concluding age assessment.

131. Article 19 of Law 4825/2021 foresees that UAMs whose asylum application has been rejected continue to hold valid social security numbers and free access to the national health system.

132. Law 4604/2019, introduced upon the initiative of the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality aims at implementing a gender mainstreaming approach and eliminating gender inequalities in the public and private sphere. The notions of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are introduced for the first time into a legislative text. Special provisions have been put in place at all education levels for the elimination of gender stereotypes.

133. Law 4659/2020 provides for the establishment of a birth allowance of 2,000 Euro for every child born in Greece.

134. Under the new Article 323A of the Penal Code, the establishment of the Trafficking in Human Beings offence against a minor is disconnected from the victim's "consent" or from the use of coercive or deceptive means by the perpetrator to obtain such "consent".

135. Article 323A (7) of the Penal Code criminalizes inciting minors into begging with a view to exploiting their revenue, while Article 323A (4) PC punishes the recruitment of minors for the purpose of enlisting them in armed operations.

136. Article 62 of Law 4554/2018 concerns undocumented mothers and their newborns in maternity hospitals, more specifically providing for access to civil registration for the mothers and their children.

137. Law 4478/2017 incorporated Directive 2012/29/EU in the national legal system, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (including hate crimes) and substantially strengthened the relevant legislative framework.

138. Law 4538/2018 governing adoptions foresees a centralized electronic register for all children awaiting adoption, as well as for all prospective parents who have been screened for suitability by the competent state Social Services and who have successfully completed a parenting-training programme. This Law aims at considerably reducing the time needed to place a child with adoptive parents, while, at the same time, it makes the process more transparent, preventing minors' trafficking or facilitating the identification of such cases. Greece's first integrated online platform for adoption and fostering is already operational.

139. Law 4675/2020 has been adopted on "Prevention, protection and promotion of health, development of public health services and other provisions." In addition, according to a ministerial decision dated December 29th 2020, the improvement of eating habits and the elimination of all forms of malnutrition, especially of vulnerable groups, such as infants, children, adolescents, pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly has been defined as an axis of intervention.

140. Law 4365/2016 ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Prohibitions contained in Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty, restrict the sale or transfer of weapons by or through Greece to States which have the intention to use them for the commission of war crimes, such as the recruitment of child soldiers.

141. Law 4554/2018 provides for designated guardians for unaccompanied minors. The training of guardians includes practical tools to protect children from victimization due to trafficking.

142. Ministerial decision 7320/10.6.2019 further regulates the operation of the "Houses of the Child", while a Special Protocol regarding the examination of minor victims as witnesses in the criminal proceedings was developed.



143. Laws 4619/2019 (new Penal Code), 4620/2019 (new Code of Criminal Procedure) and 4855/2021 (amending the above mentioned Codes).

144. Regulation (EU) 2019/1111 on jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility and on international child abduction.

145. Law 4640/2019 provisions regarding the “Houses of the Child”.

146. Law 4689/2020 transposed into Greek legislation Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children suspect or accused in criminal proceedings.

### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 15 (b)**

#### *New institutions (and their mandates) or institutional reforms*

147. In February 2020, the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was established under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum by Presidential Degree 18/2020. It is the competent national Authority for the protection of UAMs designated to coordinate and supervise all actions taken by other competent Authorities, agencies or organizations who deal with issues pertaining to the protection and care of UAMs.

148. A programme entitled “No child alone” has been launched under the auspices of the Prime Minister, aiming at supporting and protecting unaccompanied minors among refugees and migrants living in Greece;

149. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed this year between the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and UNICEF Greece, following the launch of the UNICEF Country Office in Greece.

150. The National Action Plan on combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2019–2023), drafted by the Office of the National Rapporteur (to be fully implemented through EU funding) covers a broad range of policy-making projects including measures to reduce vulnerabilities, trainings and awareness-raising campaigns, assistance to and reintegration of victims with special emphasis on the most vulnerable among them i.e. minors, etc.

151. The National Referral Mechanism on the identification and referral of victims of trafficking was officially launched on January 1st, 2019. Since then the NRM team has been organizing capacity building and training courses for first-line professionals working on identification of victims, taking into account patterns such as the disproportionate targeting of women and girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 15 (c)**

#### *Recently introduced policies, programmes, action plans and their scope and financing*

152. The Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors has developed a five-year (2021–2025) National Strategy for the Protection of UAMs, comprising four strategic pillars of action:

(a) Ensuring protection and treatment suitable for minors’ needs and their best interest;

(b) Identifying and implementing durable solutions such as family tracing, family reunification, relocation and social integration for UAMs residing in Greece;

(c) Ensuring effective protection from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse;

(d) Improving data collection on UAMs and on accommodation facilities.

153. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has funded municipalities and their legal entities in order to establish new departments for children and infant day care nurseries.

154. Policies and programmes concerning children’s health:

- (a) The National Programme for the Promotion of Physical Exercise and Healthy Eating;
- (b) The National Programme for the Reduction of Harmful Alcohol Consumption;
- (c) The National Vaccination Programme which targets, in particular, minors and adults, populations in transit and populations at risk;
- (d) The extension of the National Programme for Preventive Neonatal Screening.

155. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has received technical support from the European Commission in the context of the project “Promoting inclusive education: addressing challenges in legislation, educational policy and practice”.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 15 (d)**

##### *Recent ratifications of human rights instruments*

156. As already mentioned, in 2018 Greece ratified the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention against domestic violence.

157. With regard to juvenile delinquency, the Hellenic Police takes all necessary preventive and suppressive steps. These steps include:

158. Implementing targeted actions for minors, in order to protect them against narcotic drugs, to deter their participation in criminal groups and protect them from victimization.

159. Supervising areas frequented by minors.

160. Conducting frequent visits to schools.

161. Rapidly detecting and checking out-of-school persons who suspiciously move close to school units and deterring them from approaching pupils/students.

162. Promptly responding and providing any possible support whenever requested by school principals;

163. Enforcing applicable legislation if ascertained that a person exercising the custody or being in charge of minors’ protection neglects to deter them from committing offences.

164. In addition, Hellenic Police Headquarters have placed the prevention of cyber crime as a top priority, by drawing-up programmes on awareness-raising and also by implementing innovating actions for informing on / fighting against cyber crime (videoconferences with school units, TV spots on cyber-bullying and “sextorsion”, use of social media platforms etc.).

165. Five additional Specialized Services called “Offices for the Protection of Minors” were established, in October 2021, to combat abuse of minors.

## **Part three**

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 16**

166. The total budget of the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty is 3,2 billion Euro, of which about 900 million is allocated to child benefits, 123 million to child birth allowance, 44 million to school meals, about 600 million to persons with disabilities, 3,5 million to the implementation of camp programmes and 1,5 million for financial support to fostering.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 17**

167. The network of facilities of the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Planning and Gender Equality does not provide services to girls under 18 years old. In 2019, 5% of the total number of women who called the Helpline for support (143 women) was under the age of 24. During the period 2014–2019, the total number of young women who addressed themselves to Counseling Centres and Shelters was 1,938.

168. The data reflected in Annex 1, Table 1 show that, during 2017–2019, there has been a significant increase in the issued work-books for minors employed, in particular, seasonally in branches such as tourism and food service. However, in 2020 there has been a significant decrease, mainly due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of restrictive measures (for example closure of businesses). In any case, the Labour Inspectorate (S.E.P.E.) carries out intensive inspections focusing particularly on sectors that employ a large part of the workforce, especially during summer months, imposing the high sanctions provided in cases of illegal employment of minors.

169. The Hellenic Police has established twelve Groups for combating Trafficking in Human Beings and two Departments in Attica and Thessaloniki. The officers serving at the above services have received specialized training on how to approach potential victims and to investigate cases of trafficking. For relevant data, see Annex 1, Table 2. Furthermore, protection of minors is one of the main goals of the “Strategy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection against Trafficking in Human Beings 2021–2025”.

170. With regard to decisions on asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors, in 2017, 1,671 decisions were issued, among which, 187 granting refugee status and subsidiary protection (27.4%), while 495 were negative decisions (72.6%). In 2018, among 1,828 decisions, 346 granted refugee status and subsidiary protection (38.1%), while 562 were negative (61.9%). In 2019, 514 decisions granted refugee status and subsidiary protection (47.6%), while 565 decisions were negative (52.4%). It should be noted that minors, whose asylum application have been rejected, enjoy the same level of protection and services (accommodation, education, healthcare, activities). *See further data in Annex 1, Table 3.*

171. On the accommodation of unaccompanied minors *see Annex 1, Table 4.*

172. On the relocation of unaccompanied minors, *see Annex 1, Table 5.*

173. Forced begging of minors is the second most prevalent form of Trafficking in Human Beings in Greece. In 2020, 44% of the referred victims (74 out of a total of 167) were children, among which 66 from EU member states (mainly Roma children), 3 were UAMs and 2 under unidentified status. Almost all of the children were exploited for forced begging.

174. On school attendance of pupils with disabilities, *see Annex 3.*

175. Child poverty amounted to 22,7% in 2018, reduced by 1,8 % since 2017. In comparison to 2013 (28,8%), when the highest percentage of the decade was recorded, there has been a reduction by 6,1%.

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 18**

176. Children living in social welfare Institutions and registered under the National Registry of Minors approximated 1,520 in May 2020.

177. Institutions: there are 58 non public, non profitable Institutions (houses for children), under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

178. On children who have acquired Greek citizenship, *see Annex 1, Table 6.*

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 19**

179. *See Annex 3.*

#### **Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 20**

180. *See Annex 1, Table 7* and additional information on juvenile delinquency.

181. Pursuant to Articles 7 and 113 of the Code of Criminal Procedure there are three Juvenile Courts: the single-member juvenile Court, which decides on cases of misdemeanors; the three-member juvenile Court, which decides on cases of felony and the juvenile Appeals Court. For relevant data provided by the Public Prosecutor Office’s for Minors in Athens and the Juvenile Attending Service in Athens, *see Annexes 4A & 4B.*

**Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 21**

182. Every objective of the National Strategy for the Protection of UAMs is linked to the most relevant UN SDGs. Data collection constitutes one pillar of action, while a child rights-based approach is a cross-cutting issue and a specific objective to meet.

183. The Ministry of Justice will expand, nationwide, the Integrated System of Civil and Criminal Justice Case Management, while the National Recovery and Resilience Plan includes an ambitious agenda for improving the efficiency of the justice system, through reforms, investments and digitalization.

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