



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Sixtieth session

29 May – 15 June 2012

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 8, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Concluding observations: Greece

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Greece (CRC/C/OPAC/GRC/1) at its 1711th and 1712th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1711 and 1712), held on 6 and 7 June 2012, and adopted, at its 1725th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1725), held on 15 June 2012, the following concluding observations.

I. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol (CRC/C/OPAC/GRC/1) and the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/OPAC/GRC/Q/Add.1), and appreciates the positive dialogue with the multisectoral State party delegation.

3. The Committee reminds the State party that the present concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its concluding observations adopted on the combined second and third periodic report of Greece under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/GRC/CO/2-3) and on the initial report under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/GRC/CO/1).

II. General observations

Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the declaration made at the time of ratification by the State party that the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment in the Greek Armed Forces is permitted by national law is 18 years.

5. The Committee welcomes the ratification or accession by the State party to the following international mechanisms:

(a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2008;

(b) The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, on 11 January 2011;

(c) The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, on 15 May 2002; and

(d) International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, on 6 November 2001.

III. General measures of implementation

Dissemination and awareness-raising

6. While noting that dissemination and awareness-raising campaigns are principally carried out by non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, the Committee is concerned that the State party is not making sufficient efforts to disseminate the Optional Protocol among all relevant professional groups. In addition, the Committee is concerned that the State party does not organize human rights training specifically on the provisions of the Optional Protocol.

7. In the light of article 6, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol are widely disseminated to the general public and among children. The Committee further recommends that appropriate human rights training, especially on the provisions of the Optional Protocol, be offered to all relevant professional groups, in particular the Armed Forces and members of

international peacekeeping forces, law enforcement and immigration officers, and social workers.

Data

8. The Committee is concerned at the insufficient information on systematic data collection on aspects relating to children involved in armed conflict, and offences under the Optional Protocol, including official statistics of asylum-seeking and refugee children. In this regard, the Committee is concerned at the lack of data on unaccompanied asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children who may have been involved or used in armed conflicts abroad.

9. The Committee recommends that the State party systematically collect data on all asylum-seeking and refugee children to ensure that data is available regarding such children who may have been involved or used in armed conflict.

IV. Prevention

Peace education

10. The Committee is concerned that there are no programmes to systematically incorporate peace education into school curricula. With reference to its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake efforts to include peace education in school curricula, with special reference to crimes covered by the Optional Protocol.

11. The Committee recommends that the State take effective measures to include peace education in school curricula and to encourage a culture of peace and tolerance within schools. It also encourages the State party to include human rights and peace education in the training of teachers.

V. Prohibition and related matters

Criminal legislation and regulations in force

12. The Committee welcomes that the State party's legislation does not, in any case, allow recruitment of persons under the age of 18 years into the Greek Armed Forces. The Committee, however, notes with concern that the State party's legislation does not provide for:

(a) An explicit criminalization of recruitment of children under 18 years in the State Armed Forces, armed groups and security companies; and

(b) A definition of direct participation in hostilities.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party include in its Criminal Code an explicit criminalization of recruitment of children under 18 years to the State Armed Forces, armed groups and security companies, as well as a definition of direct participation in hostilities.

VI. Protection, recovery and reintegration

Measures adopted to protect the rights of child victims

14. The Committee regrets the lack of information on measures taken to provide assistance to children who may have been recruited or used in armed conflicts abroad, and on measures taken for their physical and psychological recovery and social integration.

15. The Committee encourages the State party to take measures to carefully assess the situation of these children and reinforce their physical and psychological recovery and social integration. Such measures should include reinforcement of the legal advisory services available for them and the provision of immediate, culturally responsive, child-sensitive and multidisciplinary assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and their social integration in accordance with the Optional Protocol.

VII. International assistance and cooperation

16. The Committee recommends that the State party continue and strengthen its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and that it explore increased cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations entities in the implementation of the Optional Protocol.

Arms export

17. The Committee regrets the absence of information on national legislation which prohibits the sale of arms when the final destination is a country where children are known to be, or may potentially be, recruited or used in armed conflicts and/or hostilities.

18. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the explicit prohibition in its national legislation of export of arms, especially of small arms and light weapons, to countries where children are known to be, or may potentially be, recruited or used in armed conflicts and/or in hostilities.

VIII. Follow-up and dissemination

19. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure the full implementation of the present recommendations by, inter alia, transmitting them to all relevant actors in the State party, including the Ministry of National Defence, the Enlistment Directorate of the General National Defence Staff, the Enlistment Directorate of the General Staffs of the Branches (Army - Air Force-Navy) and the Enlistment Administrations and Enlistment Offices, for appropriate consideration and further action.

20. The Committee recommends that the initial report and written replies submitted by the State party and the related concluding observations adopted by the Committee be made widely available to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Optional Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.

IX. Next report

21. In accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with article 44 of the Convention.