



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined fifth and sixth reports submitted by Cyprus under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2018*, **

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.
** The annexes to the present report are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation.
They may also be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



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I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Cyprus continues to be committed to the effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This report addresses the Concluding Observations of the Committee (CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4) and it consists a review of the progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child across the Republic of Cyprus since the last examination by the Committee in 2012.

2. The Report was prepared by the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, with contributions from Government Ministries and Services,¹ the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, the Attorney General and non-governmental organisations.² Furthermore, written consultation and discussion were undertaken in line with other involved governmental organisations for the preparation of the current report. It closely follows the structure specified in the Treaty-specific Guidelines CRC/C/58/Rev.3.

Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par.6]

3. As noted by the Committee (paragraph 6 of its Concluding Observations on the 3rd and 4th Periodic Report of Cyprus on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child), due to the fact that 36.2% of the territory of Cyprus has been under Turkish military occupation since 1974, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus is prevented from exercising effective control over the occupied areas and thus cannot ensure application of the Convention in those areas. The Government shares the concern of the Committee that no information on children living in the areas of Cyprus under Turkish military occupation can be provided due to the inability of the legitimate authority to have access to that area.

II. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6, of the Convention)

4. The Republic of Cyprus has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 and ratified it in 1991 [the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratification) Law 1990 (L.243/1990)]. The State Party has no reservation or declarations in respect of the Convention.

5. The Republic of Cyprus signed the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2001 and ratified it on April 2006 [the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (Ratification) Law 2006 (N.6(III)/2006)]. In 2011, the Republic of Cyprus submitted its first periodic report on progress made in implementing the provisions of the Optional Protocol. The Republic of Cyprus has no reservations or declarations in respect of the Optional Protocol.

6. The Republic of Cyprus signed the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2008 and ratified it in 2010 [the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratification) (Amended) Law 2010 (N.9(III)/2010)].

¹ Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Cyprus Police, Statistical Service, Welfare Benefits Administration Service.

² Union of Cyprus Municipalities, Union of Cyprus Communities, Cyprus Antidrug Council, Youth Board of Cyprus, Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council, Cyprus Family Planning Association, Pancyprian Coordinative Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Committee for the Protection of the Rights of People with Mental Handicap, Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Violence in the Family.

7. Upon signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, a Declaration pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Protocol a Reservation were made by the Republic of Cyprus.

8. At present, the declaration made by the Republic of Cyprus [as seen in ANNEX II, par. 1] cannot be withdrawn, since it is directly related to the continuing illegal military occupation of part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, by Turkey (see also par. 242–243).

9. The Republic of Cyprus has signed the Optional Protocol on a Communication Procedure in 2012, which was ratified in 2017 [the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication Procedure (Ratification) Law of 2017 (L.13(III)/2017)]. The Republic of Cyprus has no reservations or declarations in respect of the Optional Protocol.

Legislation - [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par.10]

10. Two new draft Laws for the Welfare, Care and Protection of Children have been prepared by the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, with the involvement of all relevant bodies,³ ministries and government departments,⁴ as well as non-governmental organisations.⁵ The draft Laws, which will replace the existing Children's Law (Cap. 352, as amended) conform fully with the principles and provisions of both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights. The welfare and best interests of the child are of paramount consideration in the draft Laws. Once the new draft Laws are vetted by the Law Office of the Republic of Cyprus, they will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval and then to the House of Representatives. [For further information on the draft Laws as described in par. 10 above, please see ANNEX II, Par. 2–3].

11. The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 [L.91(I)/2014] was enacted in 2014. The Law includes provisions in line with the Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on Combating Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children, and Child Pornography, as well as with the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention).

12. The Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Law [L.87(I)/2007] has been replaced by the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law of 2014 [L.60(I)/2014]. The Law is in line with the provisions of the Council Directive 2004/81/EC of 29 April 2004⁶ and the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011.⁷ The Law has special provisions for the protection of children and particularly of unaccompanied minors.

13. The Protection of Young People at Work Law of 2001 [L.48(I)/2001], which prohibits the employment of children (any young person under the age of 15), has been amended in 2012 [L.15(I)/2012] in line with the provisions of European Directive on the Protection of Young People at Work [EU Directive 94/33/EC].

³ The Law Commissioner, the Family Courts, the Central Committee for the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

⁴ The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Department of Labour, the Social Insurance Services.

⁵ The Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council, the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, "Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center.

⁶ Council Directive 2004/81/EC of 29 April 2004 on the residence permit issued to third country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities.

⁷ Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

14. The Protection of Young Persons Regulations came into force [Regulation 78/2012], which set limitations in relation to the procedure to be followed for granting to children the right to work in cultural activities, including reference to their hours of work, types of work, submission of complaints, etc. It also provides for the appointment of a chief Inspector and Inspectors, along with given powers and authorities, as well as the appointment of a Committee that will observe more generally the implementation of the legislation.

15. The Refugees Law of 2000 has been amended several times in recent years in order to conform with international and European conventions, directives and standards ([L.9(I)/2013], [L.58(I)/2014], [L.59(I)/2014], [L.105(I)/2016], [L.106(I)/2016]). The law includes special provisions for the protection of children in the asylum procedure and more specifically for unaccompanied minors. On February 1st, 2013 the Amendment Act of the Refugee Law (N. 9(I)/2013), as published in the Official Gazette, transfers the right of unaccompanied minors for representation before the administration during the examination of their application, by appointing the Social Welfare Services as their representative.

16. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Laws of 2000 and 2004 [L.119(I)/2000 and L.212(I)/2004] was amended in 2015 and 2017. The amendments provide for the right of children, victims of violence, to psychological support, even without the consent of the parents/guardians.

17. The Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) and in General the Social Benefits (Emergency Needs and Care Needs) Law of 2014 [L.109(I)/2014] and relevant decrees were enacted in 2014, in 2015 (353/2015) and 2016 (162/2016), respectively. A new Welfare Benefits Administration Service has been set up for the management and coordination of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) and other benefits. The Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) ensures a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for persons (and families) legally residing in the Republic of Cyprus whose income and other economic resources are insufficient to meet their basic and special needs. The new law has replaced the Public Assistance Law and the low income pensioners scheme. It introduced further provisions for activation measures and new support measures of newly vulnerable groups such as the unemployed. The Decree (162/2016) incorporates the Scheme for the subsidization of care which includes the following types of care: (a) home care, (b) institutional care, (c) day care and (d) respite care. The Decree also covers the child care needs of GMI recipients. The Social Welfare Services are responsible for assessing the care needs of the GMI recipients (based on specialized evaluation tools), the service delivery and the monitoring of provided care.

18. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has prepared a new draft law concerning the children in conflict with the law. The bill covers all the procedural safeguards of the children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings. The new draft law is currently under inter-ministerial consultation.

19. The Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Laws of 2007 was amended in 2014. The amendment introduced the establishment of the Commissioner's Youth Advisory Committee, as well as the Commissioner's consultation with organized groups and specialized groups of children and non-governmental organizations.

20. In 21/03/2016 the Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography. The National Strategy sets a high priority for the development of a Children's House, which will provide all the necessary services to the child victim, under one roof based on a multidisciplinary/interagency approach. The Children's House was launched as a pilot project on September 1st, 2017.

21. The Implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2017 [L.112(I)/2017] was enacted in 2017. The law provides for the creation of a Committee and a Council responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy.

22. The Circular MoH.11.11.09(4), 2/12/2011, which is based on the General Regulations of 2000 to 2013 (The Government Medical Institutions and Services) of the Ministry of Health:

- Ensures that every child has access to high standard of healthcare services;
 - Implements special provisions in order to ensure same treatment for children of all immigrants living in Cyprus, independent of their status;
 - Ensures appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers irrespective of their residence status. Special provisions have been introduced to ensure that children as well as pregnant women who belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. irregular immigrants, Roma, etc.) have access to free healthcare.
23. A Strategy on the rights of child in health (2017–2025) was developed by the Ministry of Health and approved by the Ministerial Council in the beginning of 2017. The thematic areas of the Strategy include: Nutrition & Breast Feeding, Communicable diseases – immunizations, Non-communicable diseases, Violence and injuries strategy, Mental Health, Alcohol & drugs, tobacco, Child health and environment, Child Healthcare services (prenatal, postnatal, illness and rehabilitation, school health services), Sexual and reproductive health and rights/ Family planning.
24. A new National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family 2017–2019, has been prepared by the Advisory Committee on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family in cooperation with all the relevant Ministries/Services/other stakeholders and approved by the Council of Ministers on May 25, 2017.
25. A National Plan for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2015–2017, was prepared by the Commissioner of the Protection of the Rights of the Child.
26. A National Strategy for the Prevention of Illegal Substance Abuse and the Harmful Use of Alcohol 2013–2020, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in January 2017, is implemented by the Cyprus Anti-Drug Council in cooperation with all the relevant Ministries/Services/other stakeholders.
27. A National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons 2016–2018, was prepared by the Ministry of Interior and approved by the Council of Ministers in January 2017.
28. In November 2014, the Council of Ministers adopted the National Strategy on Social Policy for the period 2014–2020. The Strategy sets the main policy guidance for the period 2014–2020 providing a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced. It addresses the promotion of children’s welfare, the reform of the welfare system, active inclusion, long-term care and effective governance.
- Coordination – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 12]**
29. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has the overall responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of the Convention of the Right of the Child.
30. In 2012, The Council of Ministers approved the creation of a Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, consisting of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance. The Committee meets twice a year to monitor the developments made on the implementation of the Convention and on the Final Recommendations of the Committee of the Rights of the Child (Sixtieth Session 2012, CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4).
31. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has the overall responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The State Party has prepared and submitted its initial report to the Committee of the Rights of the Child in 2011.
32. The Ministry of Defense has the overall responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The State Party has prepared and submitted its initial report in 2016.

33. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has the overall responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure. For the purpose of applying the provisions of paragraph (2) of Article 8 and of Articles 11 and 13 of the Optional Protocol, the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance are designated as a contact point for receiving such complaints by the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child, and forward them to the competent Ministries/Services, for the purpose of providing the Committee written explanations, statements or provision clarification within a period of six (6) months.

34. The Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights was established in 2007. [For more information on the mission of the Commissioner, please see ANNEX II, Par. 4].

Allocation of resources – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 16]

35. At present, identifying the proportion of Government spending which is allocated to children is difficult for a number of reasons:

- Expenses related to children's rights are spread across budgets of various Ministries/Departments (for example Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Social Welfare Services, Department of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities). These expenses, therefore, are not all under one Chapter/Article of the State Budget;
- Today, the budget classification is mainly done on the basis of economic analysis (type of expenditure i.e. wages & salaries, goods & services, transfers etc.). Therefore, it is difficult to obtain information on the budget spent for the implementation of children's rights.

36. The State recognizes the importance of the budget allocation. Thus, within the framework of Public Financial Management reforms, the Ministry of Finance is in the process of transforming the budget structure. The budget will be presented in the form of Objectives and Activities and each Ministry will be able to formulate its budget so that each expenditure will be attributed to a specific Activity/Action, e.g. regarding the implementation of children's rights. Each Ministry will be able to preset Activities/Actions for children's rights separately. The implementation of the reform begun in all the Ministries since 2016. The new budget structure will yield allocation of budget for children by 2021.

37. There is no doubt, however, that the Republic of Cyprus' investment in children is substantial and wide-ranging. Despite the worldwide recession and its impact on the Republic of Cyprus' economy,⁸ levels of expenditure on children have been broadly maintained over the five years of the review period, due to the protection of some of the most important budgets for children.

38. Expenditure related to children's rights is clearly and specifically allocated to the budget of the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights.

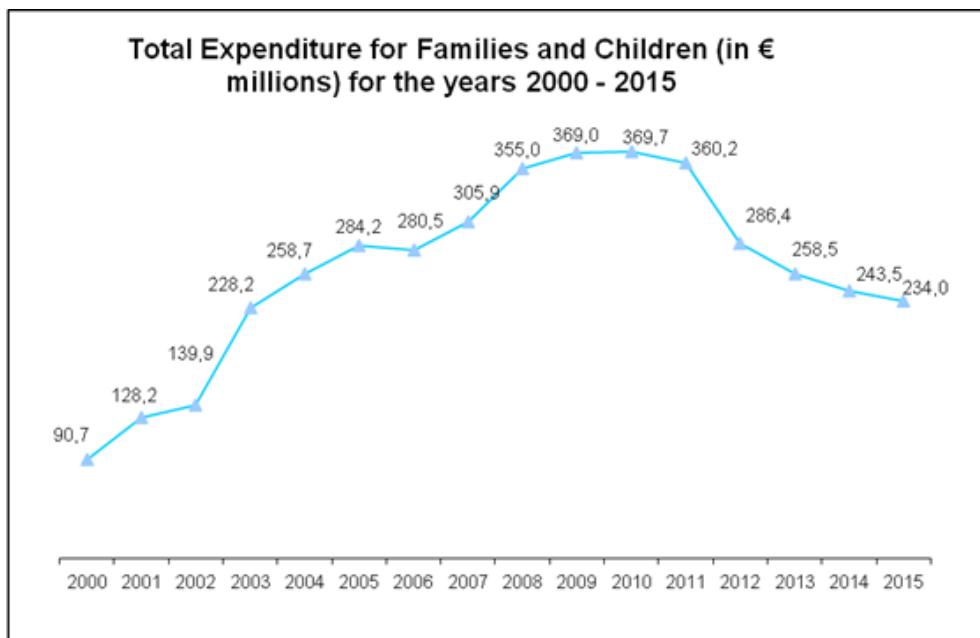
39. The Social Welfare Services, provide financial support to non-governmental organisations and local authorities for the development and implementation of programs to the communities, through the grants in aid scheme, which includes programs for children [see ANNEX I, Table 3, for the grants allocated to programmes for children].

40. The Welfare Benefits Administration Service provides specific benefits for children to families with children. More specifically the Child Benefit and the Single Parent Family Benefit is provided to families with children based on income criteria every year [see ANNEX I, Tables 1 and 2, for the benefits provided during the period 2012–2016].

41. According to the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS), Cyprus expenditures for families and children, which encompass expenditures by Government, semi-government organisations, local authorities, private companies and NGOs, amounted to €234,0 millions in 2015, representing 6,2% of social benefits and 1,3%

⁸ The Cyprus economy has emerged from a profound economic crisis and is now on a recovery path. The economy has exited the Economic Adjustment Programme since March 2016.

of GDP. It should be noted that ESSPROS does not include expenditures for education and health. The following Graph shows total expenditures in Euros (€ millions) for families and children for the period 2000–2015:



Source: The Statistical Service of Cyprus.

Independent monitoring – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 14]

42. The Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights was established in 2007, according to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law [L. 74(I)/2007].

43. In accordance with this Law, the Commissioner is responsible, *inter alia*, for supervising and monitoring the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. [For more information on the competences of the Commissioner, see ANNEX II, Par. 5].

44. Article 8 of the L.74(I)/2007, stipulates the independent status of the Commissioner who:

(a) Acts independently and is liable only to the law, to morality and his/her conscience;

(b) Is bound by confidentiality and continues to be bound by confidentiality after his/her departure from the post, for whatever reason;

(c) As a witness or expert, submits only information which relates solely to the implementation of the provisions of this Law [L.74(I)/2007].

45. The Commissioner's Office is funded from the Government budget and staffed by officers seconded from Government departments [article 12, L.74(I)/2007]. [For further information on the actions of the Office of the Commissioner, please see ANNEX II, Par. 6].

46. The Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law [L. 74(I)/2007], was amended in 2014. The amendment provides for the appointment of permanent staff to the Office of the Commissioner of the Rights of the Child, subject to the budgetary conditions.

47. In addition to the above body, whose focus is specifically on children, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) was established in 1991 with the implementation of the Commissioner for Administration Law, on the basis of which the remit of the Commissioner's responsibilities is defined and regulated, making the Commissioner the guardian of the rule of law and citizens' rights.

48. The institution of the Ombudsman constitutes the most prevalent institution of extra judicial control of the administration and protection of human rights. The main pivots of the

mission of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights are to ensure legality, to promote good governance, to combat maladministration and to protect citizens' rights and human rights in general.

49. As mentioned in par.43, the Commissioner of Children's Rights is responsible, inter alia, for supervising and monitoring the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, including the military. It should be noted that there are no military schools in Cyprus.

50. Military Service starts, as provided by the National Guard Law of 2011 to 2016, on January 1st of the year during which the citizen attains the age of 18 years. There are two enlistments per year, in January and July. Since the obligation to military service begins from January 1st of the year of which citizens attain the age of 18 years, a considerable number of conscripts do not attain the age of 18 years by the time that they are enlisted. However, as from 2018, the two annual National Guard enlistments of conscripts in January and July of every year are limited to the one in July only. As a consequence of this decision, only persons aged at least 17 ½ years and over will be enlisted for service in the National Guard. Volunteers for military service still have to be at least 17 years and above, however their numbers are negligible.

51. According to the provisions of the National Guard Law of 2011 to 2016, the Council of Ministers can, according to the decree issued concerning the call up of conscripts, allow the voluntary enlistment into the Force, of citizens of the Republic of Cyprus who have attained the age of 17 years upon the date of their enlistment, in order to fulfil their service.

Dissemination and awareness-raising – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 20]

52. The Republic of Cyprus continues to lay great emphasis on awareness raising, dissemination and training of professionals on children's rights. There is a special budget line for training in all Ministries/Services which shows government commitment to the ongoing development of human potential as a means for better service to citizens. Ministries dealing with children have incorporated CRC in their training.

53. The Commissioner on the Protection of Children's Rights also offers seminars to government officials on children's rights, as well as awareness raising activities/campaigns to children and the public in general.

54. Children's rights are disseminated through school curriculum [for more information on the reform and the new curricula, please see ANNEX II, Par. 7] and a range of activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture:

- Annual celebrations of the signing of the Convention of the Rights of the Child at schools (discussions in class, informative leaflets, etc.), on November 20th;
- Inclusion of children's rights in "Health Education" in primary schools;
- Distribution of the "Compasito: Manual on Human Rights Education for Children", which has been published by the Council of Europe and translated in Greek;
- Circular to all teachers informing them on the translated 3rd and 4th Periodic Report of Cyprus on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Report is also available to pupils;
- Regular training to all teachers concerning several aspects of the rights of the child;
- Sensitization and training for teachers from the Service of Educational Psychology on children's needs/issues. [For further information on the training activities of the Ministry of Education and Culture, please see ANNEX II, Par. 8–13].

55. Children's rights are encompassed in all training programmes organised by Social Welfare Services. These include programmes for Social Services Officers, including basic training of new recruits, refresher and specialised in-service training, as well as lectures and awareness raising activities targeting other professionals. Also a number of Social Services Officers attended seminars and trainings offered by other governmental services and organisations and also abroad. [For further information on the training activities of the Social Welfare Services for the period 2012–2016, please see ANNEX I, Table 8].

56. The Committee for the promotion of child's rights of the Ministry of Health, was established in 2013. The representation to the Committee comes from all the departments of the Ministry and other related organizations. One of the main objectives of the committee's work is to promote awareness of the child's rights in the area of health. The Committee will be replaced by the Monitoring Committee of the Strategy on the Child's Rights in health (2017–2025) which was approved by the Ministerial Council in February 2017.

57. The Cyprus Police Academy provides education/training on preventing torture and ill treatment by Police members and on human rights issues, at all levels of Police training. Specifically, such lectures aim to educate Police Officers of all ranks: at the basic Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers, at advanced courses such as the Chief Inspector Course, the Inspector Course, the Sergeant Course and the Basic and Advanced Criminal Investigation Department Courses. Specialized courses are also offered to the members of the Aliens and Immigration Unit and to the members, who work at Police Stations, based on specific needs.

58. Police training focuses on harmonizing police mentality with the new multicultural environment of the Cyprus society. To this respect, emphasis is given on building and maintaining a positive approach by Police members towards all individuals, regardless of their culture, customs, religion, sexual orientation and place of origin. [For further information on the training activities of the Police, please see ANNEX II, Par. 14–21].

59. As mentioned in par.30, above, in 2012 the Council of Ministers approved the appointment of a Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Monitoring Committee proceeded in translating the 3rd and 4th Periodic Report, as well as the List of Issues and the replies and the Final Recommendations of the Committee. The translations were sent to all the relevant Ministries and NGOs. The documents have also been made publicly available on the website of all relevant ministries.

60. The Republic of Cyprus continues to lay great emphasis on working in partnership with civil society organisations, including non-governmental organisations and children's and youth groups. It has a long tradition of cooperation with non-governmental organisations in the development and delivery of legislation, policies and programmes. Through the establishment of a variety of advisory councils, by legislation or by decisions of the Council of Ministers, the Government consults with the NGOs in a number of policy areas, such as children victims of sexual violence, disability, family violence and drug abuse.

61. There exists close cooperation among Government Ministries/Departments and NGOs working with children for safeguarding the best interest of the child. NGOs are involved in policy making through public consultation undertaken by all Ministries. The preparation of this report (5th and 6th periodic Report of Cyprus to the UN on the Convention on the Rights of the Child) was prepared after public consultation with all relevant Ministries and NGOs.⁹

62. Furthermore, through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme financial support is provided to NGOs working with children. [See ANNEX I, Table 3 for the financial support provided through the years 2012–2017].

63. The Asylum Service collaborates with non-governmental organizations and discusses with civil society organizations for issues concerning the minors.

⁹ Letters were sent to the following agencies asking for their contribution to the report: The Law Commissioner, the Family Courts, the Committee for the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Ministry of Finance, Statistical Services, Department of Labour, the Social Insurance Services, the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council, the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, "Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center. All replied in writing sending information/comments/opinions on the issues raised in the questionnaire.

64. For the period 2012–2016, the Ministry of Health provided the amount of €1.051.260, in grants to NGOs for programmes related to children.

65. The Pharmaceutical Services of the Ministry of Health provide for the secretariat support to the Drugs Council, the Competent Authority for the regulation of human medicinal products in Cyprus. The legislation and requirements for the regulation of human medicinal products is harmonized with the EU legislation. Cyprus participates at the Pediatric Committee (PDCO) of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) established under EU Regulation 1901/2006. The PDCO's main role is to assess the content of pediatric investigation plans, which determine the studies that companies must carry out in children when developing a medicine. This includes assessing applications for a full or partial waiver and for deferrals. The aim is to promote the research and development of pediatric applications for medicinal products.

66. The Pharmaceutical Services also provide secretariat support for the Medicines Price Control Committee, an advisory body to the Minister of Health which is the Competent Authority for the setting of prices for human medicinal products. The Medicines Price Control Committee directs its efforts toward the setting of affordable prices for medicinal products and proposes policies to that end. It is anticipated that the implementation of the recently enacted National Healthcare System will further promote the availability, access and affordability of pediatric medicinal products. Also see paragraphs 43 and 45, on the dissemination and awareness raising undertaken by the Commission on the Protection on the Rights of the Child.

Data collection – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 18]

67. Each Ministry/Service/Department collects disaggregated data relevant to the policy area of its competence.

68. The Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus (CYSTAT) is the competent authority responsible for the compilation and the publication of most of the official statistical data in Cyprus. CYSTAT is mainly concerned with the initiation, organisation and carrying out of various censuses, surveys and statistical enquiries of an economic, demographic, social or environmental content and the publication of the results with the intention both, of assisting the government in policy-making and planning of the activities and the statistical information of the private sector the general public.

69. CYSTAT collaborates with other international organisations, such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the International Statistical Institute (ISI), the Economic Committee for Europe (ECE), the International Labour Office (ILO), the Organisation of Foods and Agriculture (FAO) and UNESCO, as well as with Statistical Services and scientific centres of other countries. This collaboration includes frequent correspondence, supply of data and exchange of experiences, attendance in conferences and seminars, technical aid and personnel training.

70. The Ministry of Health collects data (disaggregated by year, age, gender, ethnicity etc.) concerning ages 0–17 on:

- Infant and child mortality;
- Perinatal Health Indicators, for the mother and the newborn Cyprus Public Hospitals;
- Child cancer incidences;
- Fatal and non-fatal child injuries;
- Causes of Death;
- HIV/AIDS.

Also data is collected in relation to the following:

- Data on breast feeding in the first 48 hours after birth, Perinatal Health Indicator from all public hospitals;
- Data on genetic disabilities, by gender, age 0–4 and 5–14.

Further data is collected on:

- Communicable diseases;
- Immunizations;
- Epidemiology of accidents that lead to hospitalization of children;
- Mental Health Services;
- School Health Services;
- Dental Services.

[For further information on the collection of data by the Ministry of Health, please see ANNEX II, Par. 22 – 32].

71. The Ministry of Education and Culture collects data that show the composition of the school population (by age, gender, geographical region, ethnicity as well as the child's country of origin). [For further information on the data collection of the Ministry of Education and culture, please see ANNEX II, Par. 33]. For more Statistical Data see ANNEX I.

III. Definition of the child (art. 1)

72. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratification) Law 1990 (L. 243/1990) defines the child as "... every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". According to the Cyprus Constitution, Treaties and Conventions that have been ratified by the Republic of Cyprus, have superior force to any domestic law. Furthermore, all legislation adopted in Cyprus after the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, have adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child definition of the child. Examples of such legislations are:

- The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000–2017;
- The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 [L.91(I)/2014];
- The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law of 2014 [L.60(I)/2014];
- The Parents and Children Relation Law 1990–2002;
- The Adoption Law 1995 [L. 19(I)/1995];
- The Marriage Law 2003–2017;
- The Refugees Law 2000–2016.

73. According to the Marriage Law 2003–2017, the minimum age for marriage for both boys and girls is 18 years old. Article 15 of the Law provides that in case one or both persons have not reached the age of 18, they are allowed to marry only if: (a) both partners have completed their 16th birthday, (b) the person with parental responsibility of the minor gives his/her written consent, and (c) there are good reasons to justify the act of marriage.

IV. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

74. The laws applied in Cyprus concerning children, treat all children equally no matter their ethnicity, age, status of residence, disability, etc. When dealing with a child the best interest of the child is of primary concern. Furthermore, all legislation, policies and practices concerning children adopted by the Republic of Cyprus, after the ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, take into account the general principles of the Convention. [For examples of current policies and practices, please see ANNEX II, Par. 34].

75. Information material as to the rights of children in health based on the provisions of the Convention, was published by the Ministry of Health in the end of 2014 and is being distributed to health professionals of both private and public sectors, to the public, to parents and children. The information material can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health (www.moh.gov.cy).

Non-discrimination (art.2) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 22]

76. The MOEC following a recommendation by the Anti-Discrimination Body, has drafted a Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Reporting Racist Incidents. The development and implementation of the anti-racist policy responds to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance guideline No.10 on Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in and through School Education and is also in line with various international and European conventions that Cyprus has ratified.¹⁰ For the school year 2015–2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture has set, as one of the three main goals under emphasis, the goal of “Raising awareness against racism and intolerance and promoting equality and respect, in the context of the hate speech campaign of the Council of Europe”. During the school year, 2016–2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture set a new goal about “Raising awareness against racism and intolerance and promoting equality and respect”. The Code and Guide were implemented by at least 73 schools from all levels of education, during the school year 2015–2016, whereas during 2016–2017 it was implemented by at least 41 schools.

77. In addition, the new regulations for the operation of public secondary schools clearly state that any person or public authority involved in the interpretation or implementation of the regulations is obliged to refrain from “any discrimination based on race, colour, gender, language, religion, political and other beliefs of the child or his/her parents or guardians, citizenship, national or social origin, economic situation, disability, birth, sexual orientation or any other situation”. At the same time any decision taken that affects, directly or indirectly, a child should be based primarily on the principle of the best interest of the child, whereas the inherent right of the child to life, survival and development should be respected, in any case. The regulations also state that any decision taken should take into consideration the right of the child to express his/her views and participate in the process of decision making. These principles will also be included in the revised regulations for the operation of public primary schools which are currently under review.

78. In order to support teachers in their work, the Pedagogical Institute organised conferences on related subjects [please see ANNEX II, Par.35].

79. In order to prevent violence and prohibit any form of discrimination in schools, a circular was issued in February 2015, under the coordination of the Observatory on School Violence, about recognizing, preventing and managing bullying in schools. The Task Force on School Violence (TFSV) is a multidisciplinary team of experts which provides support and guidance to schools facing emergencies of violence and youth delinquency, including incidents of racism. The team consists of teachers, school counselors and Educational Psychologists and works closely with other government departments and services, such as the Educational Psychology Service, the Career Counselling and Education Service, the Social Welfare Services, the Mental Health Services, the Pancyprian School for the Parents, the Cyprus Youth Board, parents’ associations and other NGOs. Since September 2012, the TFSV is implementing the School Mediation Programme in secondary schools which promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among pupils. Teachers and pupils become mediators by taking the training offered by the Task Force School Violence and disseminate the programme in their school. The programme includes social, communication and mediation skill development, anger management, empathy, negotiation, tolerance and compromise.

¹⁰ The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women and the European Social Charter.

80. The Republic of Cyprus has signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages of the Council of Europe. The Convention covers the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins, the three religious groups recognized as such by the Constitution of the Republic, while the Armenian language and Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) are protected under the Charter. The Ministry of Education and Culture constantly strives to meet the needs of the members of the religious groups and to ensure that their educational and cultural rights, deriving from the Framework Convention and the Charter, are being fully exercised. The Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to promoting and preserving the educational and cultural identity of the religious groups. Consequently, it has taken several measures to ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of children belonging to the religious groups [For further information on the measures taken, please see ANNEX II, Par. 36].

81. The implementation of the programme “School and Social Inclusion Actions” that started from the school year 2015–2016, aims to continue growing and improving the institution of Zones of Educational Priority. The implementation of this programme, for the programming period 2015–2020, aims to support the Cypriot population living below the poverty line or at risk of poverty and social exclusion. It also aims at ensuring social welfare and supporting financially the weaker groups of the population that are particularly affected by the economic crisis, reducing early school leaving, improving the learning outcomes and reducing school failure and delinquency. The programme’s objectives are achieved through the implementation of various measures, which include, among others, offering programmes for reinforcing learning and creativity programmes to pupils (in morning and afternoon time and during the summer months), psychosocial support for pupils by experts through the establishment of “Information and Social-emotional Support Centres” and training programmes for the staff involved. The programme operates in specific schools and/or clusters of schools (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, technical schools), that have been evaluated as high risk. Gradually, additional schools will be added in order to cover a total of 15% of the pupil population and to offer educational and social inclusion actions, to up to 80 schools.

82. All children, regardless of disability, gender or ethnic origin and irrespective of the residential status of their parents, are entitled to have access to free education and are eligible for additional educational support. Children with disabilities are accepted and not deprived of equal treatment. They attend school on an equal basis with other children and their best interest is the primary consideration of the education system. The Laws for Education and Training of Children with Special Needs 1999-2016 constitute the legislative framework which regulates all matters regarding the education of children with disabilities attending public schools. The aforementioned Laws regulate:

- The identification of children with special educational needs;
- Their assessment and the development of an individualized educational programme;
- Their placement in the most appropriate educational setting with provision of both teachers and educational resources to meet their needs; and
- The ongoing evaluation of the child’s progress.

83. In addition, the Pedagogical Institute participates or coordinates European projects, related to teacher trainings, development and use of toolkits in the area of human rights, tolerance, children integration, etc. [For further information on the participation of the Ministry of Education and Culture at relevant European projects, please see ANNEX II, Par. 37–43].

84. The Ministry of Education and Culture safeguards the right to education for all children, including the Turkish Cypriots, and ensures equal treatment and support according to their needs and particular characteristics. A number of targeted measures have been taken for the education of Turkish Cypriot children [For further information on the measures taken, please see ANNEX II, Par. 44].

85. Special provisions have been introduced in Regulations related to healthcare in order to ensure equal access to healthcare, for all children living in Cyprus irrespective of the status of their residence and/or belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, Roma people)

and to ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers irrespective of their residence status.

86. Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics of the Ministry of Health, provide free of charge preventive services to all children living in Cyprus irrespective of their status of residence, their origin or income status.

87. All immunizations included in the Vaccination Scheme of the Ministry of Health are provided free of charge to all children residing in Cyprus.

88. Starting from school year 2016–2017, the HPV vaccine was introduced in the Vaccination Scheme of the Ministry of Health and is given via School Health Services, free of charge to all the girls of A and B classes of Secondary Schools of both public and private schools.

89. The school dental services are offered via a variety of services to both public and private schools free of charge. In particular, dental treatments are offered to students in elementary schools via four dental mobile units which visit selected elementary schools which are situated in remote rural areas and in areas closed to the Green Line as well as schools in refugees' settlement areas with high prevalence of oral health problems. In addition, all the 11-year-old children are entitled to free dental care at a dentist of their choice with expenses covered by the Public Dental Services.

90. The Office for Combating Discrimination which operates under Crime Combating Department handles all issues that relate to discrimination, racism, xenophobia and it is responsible for the implementation of preventative initiatives as well as for monitoring intervention tactics to combat racial discrimination of all grounds, against vulnerable groups including, immigrant children, asylum-seeking children, and children with disabilities.

91. During 2016 Cyprus Police enhanced their efforts aiming to eliminate and combating all forms of discrimination and racism. As associated partner with other organisation, in European projects which were funded by the E.U, various seminars were realized in the area of specific subjects of police responses to racist crime including issues of good policing practices of subsequent recognition, investigation and data collection of hate and/or racially motivated crimes, including racial crimes against vulnerable groups, including children.

92. The Office registers criminal offences with a racist motive as such in a specified manner through the electronic Crime Report Registry. Furthermore, such offences are categorized on the basis of the type of motive (ethnic, religious, colour, etc.). The Office maintains a registry of all such offences, which is normally updated twice a year. Statistics on the matter are being made available upon request by researchers or national or international bodies, and in any case they are readily available on the Cyprus Police website in English and Greek (<http://www.police.gov.cy>, Statistical Data, Racial Incidents). For further information on Police seminars, please see ANNEX II, Par. 45–49.

93. The Asylum Service considers minors as vulnerable persons and therefore takes into account their specific situation as soon as the application is completed. Thus, special reception conditions, rehabilitation services, if this is necessary (health care, psychological support), and special procedural guarantees are provided during the Asylum Procedure based on an individual assessment.

Best interests of the child (art. 3) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 24]

94. The principle of the best interest of the child is enshrined in legislation, policy and practice across the Republic of Cyprus. All Services involved are required by legislation to make decisions based on the best interest of the child. A multidisciplinary approach is considered as best practice in deciding on the best interest of the child taking into consideration, among others, the opinion of the child concerned.

95. Furthermore all draft laws, concerning children, attach importance to the principle of the best interest of the child, for example the two new draft Laws for the Welfare, Care and Protection of Children, as described in par. 10.

96. Legislation is sensitive in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable children. For example, special legal provisions exist to assist and support vulnerable witnesses such as children during criminal proceedings and to facilitate the gathering and giving of evidence by such witnesses. The Law 95(I)/2001 on the protection of witnesses provides that mentally or physically handicapped children are considered as witnesses in need of protection. Therefore, they are entitled to all the provisions concerning giving evidence and /or testimony. Additionally, under the Prevention, the Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of children and Child Pornography 2014 [L. 91(I)/2014], on, all statements of children as victim or witnesses, should be video-recorded, and be taken by trained police members on video-recording statements.

97. Furthermore, the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 2000–2017, the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law 2014 and the Protection of Witnesses Law 2001 allow for special provisions for vulnerable witnesses. They testify:

- In the absence of the accused;
- Behind a special screen;
- Through closed-circuit television connection.

98. The principle of the best interests of the child was adopted and included in the new regulations for the operation of public secondary schools voted in February 2017 (please see also par. 76).

The right to life, survival and development (art. 6) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 26] – Respect for the views of the child (art. 12) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 28]

99. Road safety education is promoted as an integral component in the curriculum of the subjects of Health Education and Home Economics. The main goal is to enable pupils to acquire the necessary skills and develop traffic awareness and appropriate behaviour with the goal of decreasing the number of road accidents. [For more information on road safety education, please see ANNEX II, Par. 50–51].

100. The Youth Board's budget is covered by the Government's subsidy and is a legal entity of public law independent of the Civil Service. The Board's objectives are to promote the progress and prosperity for the young people, regardless of any background, to enhance their active participation in the social, economic and cultural development of the country and to offer various opportunities to young people for active participation in society, both in Cyprus and abroad.

101. The right of the child to be heard is respected and safeguarded, as it is clearly evident in the new regulations for the operation of public secondary schools.

102. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Pedagogical Institute collaborate with Commissioner for Children's Rights and the UNHCR Cyprus Office in a programme targeting children with refugee and/or migrant background in secondary education. For the purposes of the programme, participating schools will collaborate with all the institutions involved to create an action plan based on their specific needs in order to promote the integration of children and their families. The design and implementation of this action plan in each school will be coordinated by a group of parents, teachers and children from various backgrounds (native, refugee, migrant). This will provide children and their families with opportunities to be heard through campaigns about children's rights and facilitate their integration process. The programme will last from May 2017 until June 2018, ending with a dissemination action involving all participating schools and the general public and teachers on Children's Day (1st June 2018).

103. When the Educational Psychology Service designs intervention and preventative programmes in schools, it also takes into account children's opinions and needs and when it implements workshops with parents on sensitizing them on different children's needs emphasis is given on the aspect of enabling their children to be able to verbalize their thoughts and needs and have the self-confidence to fight for them. The action plan of the Observatory on School Violence, referring to the period 2016–2020, includes the creation

of pupil-groups representatives of children in all districts of Cyprus. The Observatory aims, through these groups, to promote children's participation and ensure their right to express their views concerning the policy of the MOEC and their schools with regards to their right to education.

104. The Mental Health Services work with children and their families in terms of assessment and therapy of their presented mental health difficulties and at the same time in terms of prevention of new or aggravated ones. When a child or adolescent is detected expressing explicitly or implicitly a suicidal wish or attempt, he/she is immediately assessed by a clinical psychologist or a child psychiatrist (on call on a 24-hour basis), and accordingly treated in collaboration with the family at the local Mental Health Centres for Children and Adolescents. In certain cases, when hospitalisation is needed, the child or adolescent is treated at the specialised Mental Health Internal Unit for Children and Adolescents located at Makarios' Children's and Adolescents General Hospital. During hospitalisation, specialised treatment to the child or adolescent and his family is given by the team of Child Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, Occupational Therapists and Mental Health Nurses, in collaboration with other medical staff when needed.

105. Furthermore, in the aim to eradicate infanticide, the Mental Health teams, work with young parents and families with severe psychiatric and/or socioeconomical difficulties, supporting their parental skills and coping strategies with newborns. A specialised European Prevention Program was undertaken in the past in collaboration with the Health Visitors, in order to detect, empower and facilitate parents in need of support from pregnancy until the first years of the child's life.

106. A five-year Strategic Plan (2016–2021) for the Prevention of Childhood Injuries and Poisonings in Cyprus was developed by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Childhood Injuries and Poisonings in 2016. The development and the implementation of the plan were done with the active involvement of all stakeholders. For each action, there is a relevant department/organization/entity defined, which is directly involved in the action's implementation. The Action Plan has been sent to all Ministries and their comments and views have been added and included in the plan.

107. The Action Plan aims to substantially reduce morbidity and mortality from unintentional injuries (road crashes, drowning and suffocation, falls, poisoning and burns and scalds) by setting realistic goals and taking advantage of the good practices of other countries. For each type of accident, the basic principles of prevention that have been repeatedly tested in many countries with a great success have been also adopted in this action plan. These principles are as follows:

- Programming and educational intervention to ensure greater safety for children;
- Enforcement /legislation;
- Environmental and product modification.

108. The implementation of the Strategic Plan will be made gradually by all Ministries. Based on the strategic plan of the Ministry of Health, the following tasks were accomplished:

- Creating new legislation for the playground safety (European standards EN 1176, EN1177);
- The development of a surveillance system for injuries which is currently being implemented in public hospitals, in order to be able to measure the success of the whole program;
- Development of policies related to the use of helmet c during cycling by children, the use of special safety car seats, the reduction of speed in roads and additional measures assuring safe access to school and playgrounds;
- Several workshops were organised for healthcare and other related professionals;
- Health education material was developed and used by teachers and school health doctors and health visitors.

109. The views of children and parents (consultation with organized groups of parents and the Commissioner's Youth Advisory Committee (par. 120) were taken into consideration during the process of developing the Strategy on the rights of children in health (2017–2025). The Strategy was approved by the Ministerial Council in the beginning of 2017 and a Monitoring Committee was established to follow up the implementation of the Strategy. Representatives of parents and children participate in the Monitoring Committee.

110. Also, in mental health clinical practice, children and adolescents are encouraged to express their views on the particular approaches to treatment they are about to engage in. Also, patient complaint boxes are available throughout the various departments allowing anyone to express their opinion on all matters. These locked complaint boxes are managed by the Mentally Ill Committee.

111. Young people are actively involved in the consultation process for drafting the new action plan for licit and illicit substance use. In 2017, organised youth groups including the Children's Parliament, the Community Youth Councils, Student Associations and other groups are encouraged to actively participate in discussions for drafting as well as participating for the implementation of actions.

112. Cyprus Police has strengthened its efforts to enhance road safety and reduce the number of injuries and deaths caused by accidents, through the implementation of numerous traffic safety and awareness raising initiatives.

113. Having in mind the priorities set within the Convention on the Rights of the Child and that adolescence is a period characterized by rapid physical, cognitive and social changes with positive changes prompted by the significant capacity of adolescents to learn rapidly, to experience new and diverse situations, to develop and use critical thinking, to familiarize with freedom, be creative and to socialize (UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 2016, Leeds University, 2015), the Cyprus Police Headquarters Traffic Department proceeded with the development and the implementation of new interventions and practices which are expected to promote children's health and minimize the number of injuries and deaths caused by accidents.

114. In particular, the results of various research studies that were conducted to investigate behaviour change and the techniques used to cause change in behaviour were analyzed, in order to discover the components that road safety interventions should include so as to increase their effectiveness and meet adolescents needs (Leeds University, 2015). Therefore, the Cyprus Police Traffic Department mapped and proceeded with the implementation of several interventions [For further information on the intervention implemented by the Police, please see ANNEX II, Par. 52].

115. The Cyprus Police in cooperation with the Mental Health Services of the Republic has proceeded to the designation of procedures followed by members of the Police for handling high-risk detainees prone to committing suicide. Additionally, an interview form for the first assessment of persons in Police custody was prepared in order to help the police officers to identify detainees, who have high risk of committing suicide. The interview form is completed by the members of the Police, immediately before the detention of a person, without undue delay. In case that the member of the Police considers that the behavior of a detainee is unusual, the procedure for immediate psychiatric examination begins, with his / her consent. If the detainee refuses to cooperate, then the procedure for compulsory treatment/hospitalization is followed. This interview form primarily aims to the prevention of suicides in detention centers.

116. In this regard, it should be noted that the Police is studying the possibility of creating a specially designed room for the detention of persons who are aggressive or suicidal, in cooperation with the Ombudsman.

117. Further to the above, it should be noted that:

- Members of the Police that handle detainees were trained on issues relating to suicide prevention by officers of the Mental Health Service;

- The above mentioned procedure and forms/documents were placed at the internal website of the Police (portal);
- A circular letter was sent to members of the Police that handle detained persons in order to be informed and follow the above procedure;
- The procedure is also included in the Police Standing Order 5/3 “Rights and Treatment of Detained Persons”.

[For further information on procedures for the prevention of suicides in places of detention, please see ANNEX II, Par. 53].

118. The Republic of Cyprus fully endorses and promotes the principle that children and young people should have the opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect their lives. This applies to all national policy making and to decisions affecting individual children.

119. The Cyprus Children’s Parliament consists of 80 members aged 12–18 years old who meet every 2 months. Once a year, in November, they meet under the chairmanship of the President of the House of Representatives, during the celebrations of the anniversary of the signing and ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

120. The Commissioner’s Youth Advisory Committee was established by the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child in February 2010 in order to be closer to children’s views on issues that concern them. The Committee consists of 30 boys and girls, 13 to 17 years old. The Committee members meet every two months and discuss issues related to children’s rights. Additionally, twice a year the group meets with the Commissioner, to share their views, experiences and opinions on issues that concern children. The mandate of the Group has a duration of one year. Moreover, the committee is a network member of the ENOC Network of Youth Advisors.

121. Concerning the legal representation of the child in court, a report is required by the Social Welfare Services. That report needs to include the child’s views and wishes. Judges usually see children in their office to directly hear their views in cases that concern them. Furthermore, the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child may legally represent a child whose interest is in conflict with that of his/her parent/guardian.

122. Furthermore, children aged 12 years and above may stand in court to present their views.

V. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, and 13–17)

Corporal punishment – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 30]

123. A children’s rights perspective is incorporated in all relevant laws of Cyprus. Treaties and Conventions that have been ratified by the Republic of Cyprus, have superior force to any domestic law. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has which has been ratified and implemented by the Republic of Cyprus, since 1991, explicitly prohibits any form of violence against children, including corporal punishment.

124. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000–2017 explicitly prohibits corporal punishment against children (0–18 years) by a parent or any other family member or any person with parental authority over children.

125. The Penal Code has many provisions which penalize actions against the person. So in the hypothetical case when a teacher hits a student he will be charged with assault or causing bodily harm or similar offences contained in the Penal Code Cap.154.

126. Clause 6 of article 54 of Children Law was repealed in June 2013, in order for all legislation to explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, including the home and to fully conform with the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

127. With regards to corporal punishment a relevant clause is also included in the Regulations of the Ministry of Education and Culture, based on the Law 99/1989 which

regulate the operation of public secondary schools. Furthermore, the Ministry has issued in September 2009 a circular addressed to all head-teachers of public schools indicating that any form of corporal punishment in schools is strictly prohibited. Head-teachers were asked to discuss the circular during a staff meeting and consider it as a high priority. Similarly, with regards to school violence and school bullying another circular was sent to schools in April 2012 outlining the main international research results and asking teachers to intensify their efforts in early detecting such problems and immediately inform the competent authorities of the Ministry.

128. Furthermore, during the period under review, the Pedagogical Institute offered several seminars to parents within the framework of promoting alternative forms of non-violent discipline, participatory forms of child rearing and education [see also ANNEX II, Par. 54].

129. The Ministry of Health has established the implementation of a mechanism through which healthcare professionals involved in the delivery of a child provide parents with the necessary documents needed to register the birth of their child and get a birth certificate, before they leave the hospital.

130. Annual monitoring programs, of preventive nature, for the protection of public health, are provided in collaboration with the relevant authorities. Specific priority and focus is given to products commonly consumed and / or used by children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. [For further information, please see ANNEX II, Par. 55].

131. Assessment of total exposure of the general population (emphasis on children and women of child-bearing age) to harmful chemicals (dietary risk assessment, human biomonitoring) is carried out by the Ministry of Health.

VI. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24, para. 3, 28, para. 2, 34, 37 (a) and 39)

- Abuse and neglect (art. 19);
- Measures to prohibit and eliminate all forms of harmful practices, including, but not limited to, female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages (art. 24, para. 3);
- Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 34);
- The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including corporal punishment (arts. 37 (a) and 28, para. 2);
- Measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims (art. 39);
- The availability of helplines for children;
- [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 36]; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 37];
- Also see par. 141–150 on corporal punishment.

132. According to the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000–2017 explicitly prohibits any form of violence against children (0-18 years) in the family.

133. All the Social Services Officers are appointed by the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance as Family Counselors (according to Article 6 of the above mentioned Law) [For information on the responsibilities of the Family Counselors, please see ANNEX II, Par. 56].

134. The Social Welfare Services provide support to the child victim and their families and take all the necessary measures for the protection of the child victim. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Services work together with other relevant services,¹¹ based on a Manual of

¹¹ Police, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Culture, Attorney General Office.

Interdepartmental Procedures, for the provision of services, support and protection to the child victim.

135. The Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office of the Cyprus Police was formed in August 2002 and operates under the Crime Combating Department, of the Police Headquarters in Nicosia. The Office handles and is in charge of all issues related to child abuse and domestic violence. To this end, the Office undertakes and supervises both preventative and combative measures.

136. The Office carefully examines the content of criminal files involving cases of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse and in accordance with the relevant testimony and additional elements attained from other sources, changes and suggestions are made for further direction and development of each case. Moreover, the Office cooperates with investigating officers as well as with Family Counselors and personnel from the Department of Social Welfare Services in order to provide the most thorough and correct handling of each case and victim.

137. All incidents reported to officers at regional police stations and district Criminal Investigation Departments are forwarded to Police Headquarters and then the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office prepares a mandatory informative report for the Attorney General. In cases where legislative issues and questions arise, legal advice is sought from the Attorney General's office. [For more information on the operation and procedures of the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office of the Cyprus Police, see ANNEX II, Par. 57–61].

138. In 2003, a specific criminal law provision on FGM was adopted. Article 233A of the Penal Code prohibits FGM, which is defined as the cutting or mutilation, in any way, of the major lip or the minor lip or the clitoris of a woman's genitalia. The consent of the victim does not affect the legal qualification of the act. Upon decision of the court, the principle of extraterritoriality may be applicable, making FGM punishable even if it is committed outside the country. The general legislative framework appears to cover cases of FGM as a form of violation of a girl's human rights or child abuse. FGM is not specified in the Child Protection Law. However, the Children's Law, Cap. 352, prohibits cruelty to children, defined in Article 54, as 'wilful assault, ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment, exposure likely to cause the child unnecessary suffering or injury to health including injury to or loss of sight, hearing, limb or organ'.

139. Victims of FGM are usually recognised through the migration process and support is provided by the relevant services (i.e. Social Welfare Services, Health Services, Mental Health Services).

140. Over the last few years a series of measures were applied in order to increase awareness among health professionals. A two-day workshop on violence, designed for different groups of health professionals was organised by the Ministry of Health, where experts from WHO facilitated discussions about female genital mutilation. Moreover, in collaboration with the Cyprus Medical Association, the Ministry of Health has organized meetings to educate doctors how to recognize and handle victims of female genital mutilation.

141. The Ministry of Health works in close collaboration with other involved partners, with the aim to introduce specific procedures and practices for a holistic, humanistic treatment of mutilation victims. Regarding maternity services and labour, specialized health professionals (a gynecologist and two midwives) offer free of charge services to victims, at Arch. Makarios III, Hospital, in Nicosia.

142. According to the Marriage Law of 2003– 2017 (L. 104(I)/2003) forced marriage is considered to be a crime, especially when involving children. A person can get married when he/she reaches the age of 18. If one or both persons have not reached the age of 18, they are allowed to marry if (a) both have completed their 16th birthday, (b) the persons with parental responsibility consent in writing to that effect, (c) there are good reasons to justify the act of marriage.

143. In July 2014 the House of Representatives enacted a new legislation to address the need for reducing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The Prevention and Combating of Sexual

Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law 2014 [L.90(I)/2014] revises the legal framework governing the prevention and combating of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography.

144. In March 2016 a three-year National Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2019) to Combat Child Sexual Abuse was approved by the Council of Ministers. The National Strategy constitutes the basic policy text and guides the actions and initiatives of the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus for the next three years.

145. One of the main priorities of the National Strategy is the development and operation of a Children's House, based on the best practices of other Children's Houses, already established in Europe. The main target of the House is to provide services to child victims of sexual abuse, based on a multidisciplinary/multiagency approach. It provides social and psychological support as well as police-investigative services as "one stop shop". The operation of the Children's House is implemented by the government through the subsidization of an NGO ("Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center). The Children's House started its pilot operation on September 1st, 2017.

146. A special unit for investigation cases of child sexual abuse, was established in December 2016. The special unit provides professional child-centered services to investigate child sexual abuse. It is composed of experienced especially trained investigators [see also ANNEX II, Par. 57–60].

147. During the period January–June 2017 the members of the Child Sexual Abuse Investigation Special Team, first line professionals and the Children's House staff participated in training programs [see also ANNEX II, Par. 60].

148. In order to reduce incidence of violence within schools, the Observatory on Violence in Schools coordinated the establishment of a policy concerning the prevention and intervention procedures for school bullying, which includes cases of homophobic incidents. For this purpose, several guidelines and a manual for teachers of all grades have been published since February 2015 and in-service training is provided to teachers. The Observatory, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Children's Rights, has established the Network Against Violence in School in 2014. The establishment of the Network aims to reinforce the effort of various social actors (governmental and NGOs), in the fight against violence in schools and the promotion of children's rights. Under this framework several actions have been implemented in order to raise awareness on the issue of violence in school and the elimination of racial discrimination in Cyprus society. In March 2015, the Observatory participated in the organisation of a Pupils' Forum against Racism and discrimination, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman).

149. During the training programmes administered to teachers and parents, Educational Psychologists always refer to the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000–2017. Educational Psychologists organise workshops concerning violence and they are given the opportunity to discuss with parents the long term harmful effects of violence on children.

150. During the period 2014–2017, circulars have been send to schools on the implementation of the Law on Child Sexual Abuse, on the procedures of the Coordinating Committee, as described in par. 151, as well as the procedures of handing cases of Child Sexual Abuse in schools and on the National Strategy. Furthermore, during this period trainings and workshops have been organized for teachers.

151. In March 2015 a "Coordinating Committee of Protection and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse" was established in the Ministry of Education and Culture. This action facilitated coordination, establishment of policies, work allocation and share of responsibilities. The focus of the Committee is on the following actions:

- To plan informative campaigns for pupils, teachers and parents;
- To support sex education in schools;
- To create a procedure for schools in case a pupil is suspected of being sexually abused or informs sexual abuse;

- To create a teachers' manual on CSA.

152. In September 2016 the Committee coordinated the development of a parents' informative leaflet that was given to schools to inform parents about Child Sexual Abuse law and procedures. The Committee developed a teachers' manual that was distributed to all schools in September 2017.

153. During the past three school years (2014–2017) prevention programmes for all ages, many of which conducted by NGOs, were implemented, sex education at school took place, pupils were informed about the helplines they can use and leaflets for different ages will be published. [For more information on the procedures and activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the issue of Child Sexual Abuse, please see ANNEX II, Par. 62–65].

154. The Ministry of Education and Culture has made considerable efforts to achieve a comprehensive and effective sex education in schools according to WHO (2010) guidelines. Sexual education in Cyprus is part of the recently reformed Health Education curriculum that promotes active citizenship with learning objectives related to critical awareness of stereotypes and social exclusion consequences. The inclusion of sex education through health education as a compulsory subject, that begins from pre-school and ends at upper secondary school, was approached as an essential element of the educational reform for the 21st century. [For more information please see ANNEX II, Par. 66].

155. Further to other national laws concerning the protection of children against any form of abuse and/or exploitation of children,¹² a new law has been enacted for the protection of victims of crimes in 2016 [The Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016 (L. 51(I)/ 2016)].

156. Cyprus Police Academy provides education/training on preventing torture and ill treatment by Police members and on human rights issues, at all levels of Police training. Specifically, such lectures aim to educate Police Officers of all ranks: at the basic Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers, at advanced courses such as the Chief Inspector Course, the Inspector Course, the Sergeant Course and the Basic and Advanced Criminal Investigation Department Courses. Specialized courses are also offered to the members of the Aliens and Immigration Unit and to the members, who work at Police Stations, based on specific needs.

157. Police training focuses on harmonizing police mentality with the new multicultural environment of the Cyprus society. To this respect, emphasis is given on building and maintaining a positive approach by Police members towards all individuals, regardless of their culture, customs, religion, sexual orientation and place of origin (see par. 64–65).

158. More activities undertaken by the Police include:

- Revision of the Police Code of Ethics;
- A Handbook on Human Rights;
- Manual on the treatment on juvenile offenders and victims;
- A folder entitled “Human Rights”, has been created on the internal website of the Police (portal);
- A folder titled «Racism & Diversity» was uploaded on the official website of the Cyprus Police;
- Informational leaflet entitled “Respect of Human Rights”.

[For more information on the activities in par.158, please see ANNEX II, Par. 67–80].

¹² 1. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 2000–2017
 2. The Preventing and Combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014
 3. The Preventing and Combating of Human Trafficking and Exploitation and the Protection of Victims Law of 2014.

159. On February 2017, the Cyprus Police signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The purpose of the Memorandum is to further improve and develop closer cooperation between the Contracting Parties for the protection and promotion of human rights.

160. The Mental Health Services, after referral by the Social Welfare Services the School or the Police, or after direct referral from the parents, provide psychological assessment and therapy to children/adolescent victims of any form of abuse or neglect. The responsible clinician assessing psychologically the child victim and its needs proceeds in the necessary referrals of the child and his/her family or guardians for specialised help. This includes referrals with specific suggestions to other specialists, including medical and paramedical staff (eg. Child neurologists, paediatricians, speech-therapists, occupational therapists, special educators etc), social workers as well as psychotherapists. Under the Mental Health Services, the Psychotherapy Centre, has a specialised therapeutic program for sexually abused children, adolescents and young adult victims. The team consists of clinical psychologists-psychotherapists and a social worker-liaison at Local Social Services Offices. The victims receive individual or group therapeutic interventions and collateral parental counselling and family therapy interventions with an aim to promote the psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims, along with their educational and school performance. Therapy is provided to children and adolescents but may continue until young adulthood when necessary.

161. Two helplines are in place by NGOs for the support of children.¹³ The Helpline for Psychological Support for Children and Adolescents (116111) and the Missing Children Helpline (116000). The Mental Health Services supervise the staff of both helplines.

162. In this aspect and in view of setting best practices in responding to children, there is an ongoing collaboration of the Ministry of Health with all other agencies running helplines for children such as the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Centers for Addiction of Adolescents, etc.

163. Data on domestic violence is collected by the Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Office and includes the following information:

- Reported Incidents of Domestic Violence by Type;
- Reported incidents of Domestic Violence by Year (2005–2015);
- Accused for Domestic Violence by Sex / Age;
- Complainants for Domestic Violence by Sex / Age.

The data is available at: [http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/49EC82226F885F18C2257F9300166ABD/\\$file/FamilyAbuse%20eng.pdf](http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/49EC82226F885F18C2257F9300166ABD/$file/FamilyAbuse%20eng.pdf).

164. The recording system is being updated on a continuous basis and reviews are conducted periodically. An official review is conducted annually, at the end of each year, before official police statistics on the issue are released. Progression and outcome of domestic violence incidents and cases are available at: [http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/C9BF7DE16FE68E5C2257CB60035CBF1/\\$file/Family%20Abuse%20Case s.pdf](http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/C9BF7DE16FE68E5C2257CB60035CBF1/$file/Family%20Abuse%20Case s.pdf). Also data on the Progression and Outcome of Child Abuse Cases is available: [http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/5C54209FAA1C6F7AC2257F9300171B93/\\$file/Kakopoihsis%20Anilikon%20Agglika.pdf](http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/5C54209FAA1C6F7AC2257F9300171B93/$file/Kakopoihsis%20Anilikon%20Agglika.pdf).

165. Police officers are informed about the legislation and the procedures to be followed in cases of domestic violence, on a routine basis, while at the same time, they are trained on the psycho-social aspects and dynamics of domestic violence. This is realized through the various training programs at the Police Academy. Members of the Office for Combating Domestic Violence, Police Headquarters, regularly attend Seminars and Workshops on the subject in the context of exchanging best practices and improving procedures in the handling of Domestic Violence cases such as:

¹³ “Hope for Children” CRC Policy Center and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family.

- “Handling minor victims of domestic violence”;
- “Investigation of criminal cases involving minors as victims”;
- “Investigation of criminal cases involving minors as sexual abuse victims”; and
- “Interviewing / Video recording statements from minor and vulnerable victims/witnesses.”

166. During the present time Cyprus Police with other partners and, associate partners, is carrying out a E.U project titled «Circle of CHANGE: Preventing and combating violence against women and girls through gender equality awareness», which is funded by the European Commission. The project, among other activities, aims to raise primary and secondary prevention of IPV/Sexual Violence (IPV/SV) and targeted information, awareness-raising and education activities in schools for adolescents between the age of 12–16 in order to combat violence against girls & women and promote gender equality in Cyprus. Additionally the project aims to develop and implement specialized training to front-line professionals from the private and public sector in order to prevent and respond better to incidents of violence against women. The duration of the project is 24 months and it is expected to end on 31/12/2018.

167. The new regulations of 2011, for the operation of public secondary schools state that any decision taken should respect the principle that a child is never subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in any case. Moreover, the regulations provide that the use of any form of violence against a child is forbidden. Educational Psychologists during the organised training that they deliver to teachers suggest new directions on how teachers’ can achieve the concentration of children in the classroom, achieve better learning results, help pupils to stay within limits and generally suggest practical and children friendly ways of making them behave in accordance with the classroom rules. All school counselors attended a compulsory 33-hour-training on gender equality. The pupil’s book “Career education”, published by the Career Counselling and Education Service in 2015, includes a unit on the topic of stereotypes in jobs and social roles.

168. A National Strategy against School Violence is in progress. The Observatory on School Violence coordinates this project which aims to establish a national alliance in order to promote a safe school environment for all children without discrimination of any kind. It is taken into consideration that every child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. [For more information on the actions undertaken by the Observatory, please see ANNEX II, Par. 81–82].

VII. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18, paras. 1 and 2, 20, 21, 25 and 27, para. 4)

- Family environment and parental guidance in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child (art. 5);
- Parents’ common responsibilities, assistance to parents and provision of childcare services (art. 18);
- Separation from parents (art. 9);
- Family reunification (art. 10);
- Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4);
- Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 32];
- Periodic review of placement (art. 25);
- Adoption (national and intercountry) (art. 21) – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 34];
- Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11);

- Measures to ensure the protection of children with incarcerated parents and children living in prison with their mothers.

169. A circular letter, dated 30/03/2016, was sent to all members of the Police, which regulates the arrest and detention of mothers with minor children, unaccompanied minors, etc. The Circular provides special provisions for alternatives to the detention of mothers with minor children, whereas the detention of unaccompanied minors on the ground of illegal entry to the Republic of Cyprus is forbidden. [For more information on the circular, please see ANNEX II, Par. 83].

170. Pre-primary education in Cyprus is compulsory for all children, aged 4 years and 8 months to 5 years and 8 months. It is also free for children who attend public kindergartens. Kindergartens are registered and approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Younger children aged 3 years to 4 years and 8 months take up vacant places in public kindergartens. Fee reduction is provided to the following categories:

- Low income families or families with four children or above;
- Children of migrants;
- Children of single parent families and orphans.

171. The Government also grants a subsidy to cover some of the expenses for community kindergartens, which operate only in cases where the public kindergarten classes available do not meet the needs of all the children aged from 3 years to 4 years and 8 months old in the community.

VIII. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18, para. 3, 23, 24, 26, 27, paras. 1–3, and 33)

- Survival and development (art. 6, para. 2);
- Health and health services, in particular primary health care (art. 24);
- Efforts to address the most prevalent health challenges, to promote the physical and mental health and well-being of children and to prevent and deal with communicable and non-communicable diseases;
- Reproductive health rights of adolescents and measures to promote a healthy lifestyle;
- Measures to protect children from substance abuse (art. 33);
- Social security and childcare services and facilities (arts. 26 and 18, para. 3);
- Standard of living and measures taken, including material assistance and support programmes with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing, to ensure children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, and to reduce poverty and inequality (art. 27, paras. 1–3);
- Children with disabilities - [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 39];
- Adolescent health - [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 41];
- Breastfeeding - [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 43].

172. The Laws for Education and Training of Children with Special Needs 1999–2016 entitle children with disabilities to “free appropriate public education” and are given the opportunity to actively participate in all school activities. In the occasion that special education and training is provided in a mainstream classroom, children participate in all school activities along with their peers. In the occasion that special education provision is provided in special units, within mainstream schools, children attend a regular classroom following the regular curriculum in specific subjects. They participate in all schools extracurricular activities, school concerts and field trips along with their classmates. Special units provide more intensive educational support to a small number of pupils in a class whilst special units are integrated and embedded into mainstream schools and operate in

spaces comfortable and accessible by disabled children. The headteachers of mainstream schools are responsible for their operation and for informing the teachers regarding children's difficulties. Children attending special schools actively participate in mainstream school activities as well. All special schools develop networks of contacts and joint activities with mainstream schools to minimize segregation.

173. Assessing children with special needs is one of the main domains of Educational Psychologists' work. Educational Psychologists accept referrals from the District Committees of Special Education in order to assess children and decide whether there are children with special needs. In the case the diagnosis is in accordance with the Law, then they provide written suggestions to the Committee and the school. Furthermore, they participate in meetings at the schools and evaluate children's overall progress, their individualized educational programme and all different ways of meeting their needs. In September 2014, a New Mechanism of Identifying Children who may have learning, psychological or behaviour problems has been established by the Educational Psychology Service, in cooperation with the other departments/services of the Ministry of Education and Culture and with other stakeholders. The Minister of Education and Culture approved this new mechanism which is now applied in all primary and secondary schools. The main philosophy is to detect possible problems early and intervene so that children do not face bigger problems as they grow up. Pupils can start or continue to receive the facilities approved by the District Committees, which help them in their everyday school life and learning process. On the other hand, school counselors apart from offering counseling to pupils and their parents, also coordinate the multidisciplinary meetings with other professionals who are involved with children with disabilities.

174. The Pedagogical Institute has also offered seminars for teacher training on Attention Deficit Disorder – Hyperactivity Disorder as well as seminars/teacher training for Christos Stelios Ioannou Foundation, for children and adults with a mental handicap, between May and June 2016.

175. Children with disabilities are eligible to equal access to healthcare services. They are entitled to all medical and health support services and benefits as all persons with disabilities.

176. Diagnosis and intervention is set from birth, especially at the public hospitals whereas a multidisciplinary team of health workers cooperate and provide services according to the child's needs. There is one referral hospital in Nicosia to which all difficult and neonatal cases are referred to/from the private and public sectors. All public hospitals are staffed with pediatric physiotherapists and speech therapists.

177. The Ministry of Health and the public hospitals organize awareness programs for parents with disabled children with the subject "Rights of families with disabled children". The rights of children with disabilities are protected by the Convention for the Rights of the Child which Cyprus has ratified.

178. The concept of a healthy lifestyle has been promoted through the revised Health Education curriculum for the teaching of the subject of Home Economics at the lower secondary level. This subject is thus taught in such a way as to put emphasis on changing children's attitudes and behaviour towards health, strengthening their ability to contribute to the creation of a healthy community and a healthy everyday lifestyle, always taking into account the physical, social and cultural environment in which children live and develop. The reproductive health rights of the adolescents are an integral part of the curriculum of Home Economics and specific attainment and adequacy targets have been developed towards this end.

179. All children in Cyprus have access to high quality health services as determined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Healthcare in Cyprus is provided by both the private and the public sectors [For more information, please see ANNEX II, Par. 84].

180. The coverage is full or partial, according to their income, ensuring that all children have access to high quality healthcare. In addition, special provisions have been introduced to ensure that children as well as pregnant women who belong to vulnerable groups (e.g.

migrants, Roma, etc.) have access to free healthcare. Also, all children have free access to the Maternal and Child Welfare Centres.

181. The Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents have been offering their diagnostic and therapeutic services to the Cypriot society since 1990. The Mental Health Services provide outpatient services in all the major cities of Cyprus in order to render services easily accessible. The services provide psychological / psychiatric evaluation as well as interventions to children and adolescents as well as their families. Parental counselling/ guidance is also offered on a regular basis as a main or adjunct intervention. In the context of the outpatient services, community visits are also offered by mental health nurses. The target of the community visits is to evaluate the family environment so as to facilitate the achievement of treatment goals. Furthermore, there is a specialist mental health liaison team in Arch. Makarios III Children Hospital in Nicosia which provides care for children and adolescents with general health problems.

182. In the effort to provide maximum quality care for children and adolescents, the services liaise with other services or professionals that are also involved with minors and their families. These services might be educational psychologists, the school, social services, community authorities, general doctors and pediatricians, services for adults, etc.

183. Additionally, in 2012, a new Mental Health Inpatient Unit for Adolescents was created by the Mental Health Services at the Makarios III Hospital, to meet the needs of Children and Adolescents with severe mental health difficulties or in crisis. [For more information on the Mental Health Inpatient Unit for Adolescents, please see ANNEX II, Par. 85]. Another specialised unit has been launched in 2012. The Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Centre (CAEDC) was created to meet the needs of children/adolescent and their families with anorexia nervosa/bulimia disorders. [For more information on the Child and Adolescents Eating Disorder Center, please see ANNEX II, Par. 86].

184. Other services provided by the Ministry of Health to children are as follows:

- School Health Services;
- School Dental Services;
- Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics.

[For more information on the above services (par. 176) provided by the Ministry of Health, please see ANNEX II, Par. 87–91].

185. Access to the Government Immunization Centers is free of charge for all children residing on the island regardless of origin or income status. This has been the case in the Republic of Cyprus for many years as immunizations are considered one of the most effective tools for prevention of serious illnesses of significant public health impact. Special emphasis is given to children from refugee families as they are more likely to need them.

186. As confirmed by immunization surveys performed every three years in the Government controlled area of the island the children population has high coverage rates for all vaccines given in the first years of life including Tetanus, Diphtheria, pertussis, polio, MMR, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenza type B. For Diseases with significant public health impact such as tuberculosis health care is offered completely free of charge to all residents of Cyprus including children.

187. The reproductive health and rights of children and adolescents is one of the main thematic issues of the Strategy on child's right in health and in the meantime the Ministry of Health has included the development of a specific Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of youth in Cyprus in its strategic priorities of 2016-2020. The Strategy is expected to be ready by the end of 2017.

188. For the purpose of protecting the rights of the children, among others, the Ministry of Health has included provisions in the relevant National Legislation on tobacco control (L. 24(I)/2017) [please see ANNEX II, Par. 92].

189. In the end of 2011, after a relevant proposal by the Ministry of Health, the Cyprus Ministerial Council approved the establishment of a “National Committee for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Cyprus”. The Committee’s work started in the

beginning of 2012 and the 9 members of the committee come from governmental and non-governmental services, health professional bodies and NGOs. The main goal of the National Committee is to promote and support breastfeeding for all mothers in Cyprus so as to establish breastfeeding as the exclusive way of nutrition for infants for the first 6 months of life. Various activities are organised by the Committee within the framework of the implementation of the National Strategy on breastfeeding, including the development of a national policy, the implementation of the “10 Steps of Baby Friendly Hospitals”, education of the community and health professionals, development of information material, etc.

190. The Health Monitoring Unit of Health collects data from all public hospitals related to breast feeding in the first 48 hours after birth, Perinatal Health Indicator. There are available data from 2007–2016.

191. A national survey study is carried out in accordance with WHO recommendations and guidelines, in order to determine the immunization Coverage and Breast Feeding status n children aged 17–24 months. Last survey was conducted on May 2015 among 417 children.

192. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2017, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the five public hospitals initiated a programme towards implementing the necessary procedures to get accredited as Baby Friendly Hospitals. Also in the private sector a private hospital is also working toward getting accredited as baby friendly hospital.

193. Children above the age of 16 do not need their parents' approval to request and be tested for HIV/AIDS. Treatment for HIV/AIDS is provided free of charge to all citizens living in Cyprus.

194. The Cyprus Anti-Drugs Council, through its monitoring department (National Monitoring Centres for Drugs and Drug Addiction), is responsible for the collection and analysis of data according to European key indicators, based on harmonized data-collection standards and tools. One of the key indicators that is being collected is drug use among the pupil population, based on ESPAD survey (carried out with the collaboration of the MOEC), which aims to assess drug, alcohol, tobacco and other addictive behaviours among 16-year-old pupils. The survey has been carried out in Cyprus since 1995 (every four years) and in 2015 the sixth series of the survey was conducted. As far as the substance abuse by the adolescents is concerned, school counselors follow the guidelines/instructions of the corresponding protocol in order to refer pupils to the appropriate therapeutic programmes. The protocol was updated in September 2016.

195. The Cyprus Anti-Drugs Council, has developed the National Strategy for encountering dependence from illicit substances and the harmful use of alcohol 2013-2017, comprises the basic policy document for substance dependence and provides guidance for the government's actions and initiatives for the next eight years. [For more information on the National Strategy, please see ANNEX II, Par. 93–99].

196. The Crime Prevention Unit has taken all the necessary measures for an effective enforcement of the law concerning the consumption and sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors. The measures taken relate to, the collection and analyze of information in the form of statistical data and also to the formal criminal reports made, against the ones who allow such offences to occur in their premises. This data mentioned above are necessary for a better monitor of the situation concerning the above law.

197. Furthermore, this data is transmitted to the National Anti-Drugs Board which in turn analyses and comes to certain conclusions in a national level. At the same time the formal criminal reports mentioned above, also act as an effective measure, in turns of prohibition since the offenders who allow the consumption and sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors are legally penalized.

IX. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

- The right to education, including vocational training and guidance (art. 28);
- The aims of education (art. 29) with reference also to the quality of education;

- Cultural rights of children belonging to indigenous and minority groups (art. 30);
- Education on human rights and civic education;
- Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities (art. 31);
- Education, including vocational training and guidance – [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 45].

198. Education in public schools is focused on the acceptance of difference, tolerance as well as the respect for other cultures so as to prepare tomorrow's citizens for living in a multicultural environment. Towards this end, the Ministry of Education and Culture gives great emphasis on ensuring equal access to education for all children living on the island, taking into account that the right to education is safeguarded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. All necessary measures are taken so that effective access to basic education for all is guaranteed. During the period under review a systematic effort has been made to increase access to education for all children and strengthen the quality of the education provided. Pre-primary education has become compulsory and free, since September 2004, for all children for one year before attending primary school. The Government covers all expenses for the introduction of this innovation, while at the same time continues to subsidize the functioning of community kindergartens.

199. The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education offers a wide range of technical and vocational education, initial training and lifelong training programmes to eligible lower secondary leavers. Formal mainstream upper secondary initial technical and vocational education programmes are offered at technical schools free of charge. They are offered in two directions, the theoretical and the practical direction. The duration of studies is three years for each direction. An alternative pathway for education, training and development for young people who drop out from the formal education system and is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market provides the New Modern Apprenticeship. The New Modern Apprenticeship embraces young people between 14 and 21 years of age at two apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). Participation is not compulsory and is free of charge. Preparatory apprenticeship does not involve employment, but constitutes an alternative form of education and training for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 who have the opportunity through this one-year programme to develop their numeracy and literacy skills, become acquainted with the world of work, explore their talents and abilities through creative arts, and participate in workshops related to technical occupations. Core apprenticeship is of three years' duration and involves both training at school and practical training in enterprises. In the first two years, apprentices follow practical training in enterprises for three days per week where they are remunerated for their work, and they receive theoretical training for two days a week at technical schools. In their third and final year they only attend school once a week and work the remaining four days. The current system of Technical and Vocational Education is based upon an instructional approach that aims to prepare school graduates to face new challenges and opportunities broadmindedly.

200. The Department of Higher Education pays for the undergraduate fees of political refugees who study at public universities in Cyprus. In addition, public universities offer supernumerary seats, beyond the procedure of Pancyprian Examinations, to upper secondary graduates who are citizens of the EU and third countries. Cypriots who are permanent citizens abroad are also entitled to supernumerary seats. The criteria are set by each university. Pupils, Cypriot or EU citizens and citizens of third countries, who attend the last grade or are upper secondary graduates or attend the English School or private schools, have the right to take part in Pancyprian Examinations. Additionally, pupils attending the last grade or are graduates of a higher secondary education school (equivalent to the upper secondary cycle), in a foreign country, are also entitled to take part in Pancyprian Examinations.

201. The Ministry of Education and Culture is committed towards preventing any form of discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion, colour, sexual orientation or national origin. [For further information on actions and activities aiming to eliminate any form of discrimination by the MOEC, please see ANNEX II, Par. 100].

202. The cultural rights of children belonging to the Armenian religious group are safeguarded through the functioning of the Nareg Armenian Schools, which are subsidized entirely by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Nareg Schools follow the same timetable as the rest of the public schools with minor modifications, so that children have the opportunity to learn the Armenian language, history and religion and the cultural heritage of the Armenian religious group is promoted through different celebrations and activities.

203. In the case of Agios Maronas Primary School, the Ministry of Education and Culture takes specific measures to facilitate access of Maronite children to the school and align the instruction with the cultural specificities of the group:

- Specific measures are taken so that the Maronite teachers are enabled to teach at the aforementioned school, for example the headteacher belongs to the Maronite religious group;
- The Maronite history and religion are taught and the cultural heritage of the Maronites is promoted through different celebrations and activities that take place;
- Optional lessons of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language are offered during afternoon hours.

204. As far as the historic private schools of Terra Santa College and St Mary's School, the MOEC subsidizes the tuition fees of Maronites and Latins so that they have the opportunity to study there. It is important to underline that since the school year 2013–2014, Terra Santa College operates as a model secondary school for the University of Cyprus.

205. Of particular interest for the preservation of the language and culture of the Maronites is the ongoing research conducted for the creation of an archive of oral tradition for CMA that is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and will contribute towards further strengthening of the teaching of CMA with the creation of suitable learning material. Some of this material that was already created was used in the past during the Summer Language Immersion Camp in Kormakitis, which takes place once a year and is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. [For further initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the protection and promotion of the cultural rights of children belonging to the religious groups please see ANNEX II, Par. 101].

206. It should also be mentioned that the Cultural Services of the MOEC support financially particular cultural activities of the religious groups and they have given the ownership of a building in the area of old Lefkosia to the Latin religious group in order to be converted into a Cultural Centre.

207. The Ministry of Education and Culture, within the framework of the educational reform, has been revising the new curricula based on attainment and adequacy targets. The philosophy of the new curricula is pupils' multifaceted development and special emphasis is given, amongst others, to the respect of human rights, the promotion of active citizenship and the sensitization against racism. Teachers are required to teach Health Education as a separate subject in primary education (years 1–6) and as part of related subjects in secondary education (years 7–9). Pupils, through the Health Education curriculum, are expected to increase their knowledge of local decision making processes and to develop civic skills that enable them to act and bring about health-promoting changes. The Health Education curriculum acts as a guide for school interventions, through a methodological framework which encourages teachers, parents and pupils to collaborate and promote social measures that facilitate healthy choices. Thus, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship are promoted. It promotes health and sustainable development by capitalising on pupils' voice and a sense of collective ownership of their context. In the subject of History the curriculum provides opportunities to discuss about human rights and other elements of civic education. This is particularly the case with the inclusion of specific attainment and adequacy targets in the curriculum related to human rights and civic education and organisations promoting the protection of human rights. This is also part of the subject of Modern Greek and Home Economics.

208. The new curricula consider the child as an individual with past, present and future. Particular emphasis is given on teaching through play as a natural way of learning. Within

the context of teachers' pedagogical autonomy, changes can be made in activities in order to enhance and better combine the experiences of children. Schools provide the opportunity to pupils to take part in various extracurricular activities such as excursions, visits to various places and clubs, in order to attain a wholesome and balanced development of their personality and, at the same time, have the chance to play and socialize with each other. Pupils also have the chance to participate in various other celebrations and activities taking place during the school year, according to their talents and inclinations, such as athletic events, poetry recital, dancing and drama performances and participating in the school choir and orchestra. Pupils with a special inclination and interest towards music and sports have the opportunity to apply for a place in one of the Music or Sports Schools operating in all the towns of Cyprus. Furthermore, the new timetable for the upper secondary school gives them the opportunity to choose the Fine Arts Direction of Study.

209. The Cultural Services' policy is that all cultural events organised or co-organised by public funds have a very low and symbolic entrance fee (minimum €5 and maximum €10). Moreover, pupils, soldiers and retired persons have free access to all cultural events organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture so that more people have access to cultural and artistic activities.

210. According to the Laws for Education and Training of Children with Special Needs 1999–2016 all children with disabilities have the right to free education in public schools. The Laws regulate the identification of children with disabilities, their assessment and placement in the educational setting with provision of teachers, care assistants, educational resources, special equipment and assistive technology as well as the development of an individualized educational programme and the ongoing evaluation of the child's progress. For the rights of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, please see answer to guideline 38(e).

211. All funding programmes and policies of the Cultural Services are open to all different collective groups and access to culture is one of the objectives set in the Cultural Services' contribution to the Ministry of Education and Culture Strategic Plan. Additionally, all cultural events, take place in venues that are accessible to all groups of people, especially those with mobility problems.

212. The majority of the Turkish Cypriot children enrolled in public education attend lessons in Agios Antonios Primary and Secondary Schools. As it has been mentioned, Turkish Cypriot teachers are employed in order to teach the Turkish language, History and Muslim religion. Moreover, bilingual teachers are employed to teach Greek as a second language and to facilitate communication between the school and the families. Since September 2013, the Adult Education Centres have been offering a course titled "History-language-culture", that is especially designed for Roma children, where their history and other elements of their cultural heritage, including their language, is taught free of charge. Turkish Cypriot children have the opportunity to receive language lessons in Turkish, during school hours, in the last grades of upper secondary school, or, in the afternoon, through the Adult Education Centres and the State Institutes for Further Education that offer free Turkish language courses to adults and children.

213. The subject of Religious Education is compulsory for all grades of education. Nevertheless, children that do not profess the Christian Orthodox religion are entitled to an exemption from the subject of Religious Education, upon approval from the MOEC. The curriculum of the subject "aims at the development of universal values as antidotes to fanaticism and intolerance". Moreover, it is stated in the curriculum that amongst the targets of Religious Education are the cultivation of respect, the promotion of peaceful coexistence amongst all people and the respect for one's right to profess any religion of his/her choice. Furthermore, certain units in the curriculum are devoted to other Christian denominations and religions, so that pupils have the chance to study the universal religious phenomenon and examine closely the pluralistic character of religious expression. Particular emphasis is given to the religious beliefs of the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins of Cyprus.

X. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d), and 38–40)

- Asylum-seeking, refugee and internally displaced children; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 47];
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 49];
- Economic exploitation; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 51];
- Helplines; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 53];
- Administration of juvenile justice; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 55];
- Child victims and witnesses of crimes; [CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4/Par. 57].

214. The Director of the Welfare Services is responsible for the asylum-seeking children. Their best interest is the primary concern for the Director. The Welfare Services ensure a standard of living suitable for their physical, mental, moral and social development. In concern to the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, the Director of the Welfare Services, acts as a guardian and a representative during the asylum process.

215. The detention of a minor asylum seeker is prohibited.

216. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order, in cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, promotes a bill, aiming at establishing structures and procedures to allow children who violate the law to be treated differently against adult offenders and to make the criminal justice system child-friendly.

217. Basic Principles of the Bill:

- (i) The child's interest is taken into account in any decision affects him directly or indirectly;
- (ii) Each authority has obligation to protect the child's private and family life, including his / her identity;
- (iii) The child is involved in making decisions concerned him;
- (iv) The child-centered treatment of the child as a violator of the law is adopted as a basic principle;
- (v) Child decriminalization programs are applied;
- (vi) The criminal prosecution of a child is a last resort and is only enforced if any other measures have been tried and failed;
- (vii) Child imprisonment is forbidden, while detention is the ultimate measure.

218. Cases where defendants are children will be heard by the Family Court, which, due to its nature, will also act as Juvenile Court. Every Juvenile Court will be constituted by one or more Family Court Judges at the discretion of the Supreme Court, who for the purposes of this Law will also be referred to as Juvenile Judges. Juvenile Judges will have specialization in dealing with children in the justice system.

219. If the Court considers that the child appears at first sight to need care that parental carers are unable to provide, it may postpone the proceedings and instruct the Director of the Social Welfare Services to convene the A Family Welfare Board and, in the meantime, order that the child be placed under the legal care of the Director of Social Welfare Services.

220. Notwithstanding any other provisions or penalties set forth in any other law relating to the commission of offenses, if the Court considers the child to be guilty of an offence, it may either simply reprimand the child and exempt it from any other measure or sentence or proceed further with the case and take one or more of the following decisions:

- (a) Conditional exemption or exemption;
- (b) Imposition of a fine and / or payment of compensation to the victim;
- (c) An order requiring the parent or guardian to pay compensation;

- (d) Parental supervision order;
- (e) Community surveillance enforcement order (includes community work only in relation to children aged 16–18, surveillance by a supervisor, day center order, etc.);
- (f) A detention order in a detention facility if they have reached the age of 16. This is the ultimate penalty.

221. Child detention is only imposed as a last resort and only if the alternative measures provided for in this bill have been tried and failed. The imprisonment is forbidden. No detention is imposed on a child for an offense committed, which is more than one-half of the provided imprisonment, i.e. the penalty provided by the law defining the offence, and if the offence imposes a life sentence, then the maximum penalty shall not exceed ten years.

222. It must be noted that according to the Law, a person under the age of 14 is not criminally responsible for any act or omission (Chapter 154, Article 14). In case of an arrest of a minor special provisions are undertaken in order to protect the minor. [For more information on the provisions of an arrest of a minor and remand, please see ANNEX II, Par. 78–79].

223. The responsible police officer ensures that interrogation is made or statement by the child is taken no later than twenty-four hours after the child's arrest and detention. Child pre-trial detention is forbidden.

224. If the Court considers that it is necessary to limit the personal freedom of a child which is in conflict with the law, it may order the restriction of a child to a child restraint as a last resort.

225. The limitation of the freedom of the child shall be as short as possible and shall not be longer than eight days, which may be renewed by an order of the Court for further periods of eight days and for a maximum period of one month, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

226. Child detention is only imposed as a last resort and only if the alternative measures provided for in this bill have been tried and failed.

227. The Mental Health Services, after referral by relevant services or the parents/guardians, provide psychological /psychiatric assessment and therapy to children/adolescent victims of any form of abuse or neglect as well as children outside their country of origin seeking refugee protection, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, internally displaced children, migrant children and children affected by migration, children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group, children in street situations, children in situations of exploitation such as economic, sexual, sale, trafficking, children in conflict with the law, child victims and witnesses of crime, children in armed conflicts etc.

228. They are received in outpatient units found almost in all districts which are child friendly. The responsible clinician (clinical psychologist/child psychiatrist) assessing the child victim and its needs proceeds in the necessary referrals of the child and his/her family or guardians for specialised help. This includes referrals with specific suggestions to other specialists, including medical and paramedical staff (e.g. Child neurologists, paediatricians, speech-therapists, occupational therapists, special educators etc.), social workers as well as psychotherapists.

229. Under the Mental Health Services, the Psychotherapy Centre, run a specialised therapeutic program for sexually abused children, adolescents and young adult victims. The team consists of clinical psychologists-psychotherapists and a social worker-liaison with the local welfare centres. The victims receive individual or group therapeutic interventions and collateral parental counselling and family therapy interventions in the aim to promote the psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims, along with their educational and schooling performance. Therapy is provided to children and adolescents but may continue until young adulthood when necessary.

230. In those cases, that adolescents are deprived of their liberty by detention or imprisonment in the Central prison of Cyprus, the Mental Health Team at the Central Prison in collaboration with the Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents,

receive and offer psychological/psychiatric support for the time of the imprisonment. They work in parallel with the social services in terms of his reintegration and for the continuation of his psychological support they proceed in liaison with the outpatient units in the community of the mental health services.

231. During sudden influxes of migrants, medical teams (Doctors, Nurses, ambulance personnel) are responsible for initial medical triage at the point of entry. The scope of the standardized triage system is to identify urgent cases that must be referred to hospitals and also to certify the absence of suspected infectious diseases that contraindicate transfer to a migrant centre. In the case of migrants arriving by sea, medical triage is sometimes conducted on board the rescue boat. Urgent cases are evacuated from the rescue boat to the nearest hospital by helicopter. At the migrant centre a small health center is established with all the necessary medical products, vaccines and technology, providing emergency health care and primary health care, including initial medical examinations. Urgent cases are transferred to the Nicosia General Hospital. Upon arrival to the migrant centre, medical examination, tests for communicable diseases (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis, Tuberculosis) and vaccinations (according to the national scheme) carry out. Cases of scabies are transferred to separate isolation rooms in the migrant centre. Suspected cases of tuberculosis are usually moved to the nearest hospital for further examinations.

232. Asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to free access and use of the public health system if he/she is living in a reception centre or; receiving welfare benefits or; capable of demonstrating a lack of sufficient resources or; belonging to a vulnerable group. Additionally, cases of children and adolescents with mental health problems are dealt with particular sensitivity and are given priority when they visit the Children and Adolescents Department of the Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health. It is also noted that interpreting services are offered to these children in order to facilitate the diagnostic and therapeutic work.

233. Finally, it is clarified that all children residing in Cyprus, including those coming from countries where there is armed conflict, have free of charge access to Child Welfare Centers (walk in centres), where they can receive preventive services such as measurement of weight and height, vision and hearing acuity tests and can receive their vaccinations according to the Immunization Scheme of the Ministry of Health.

234. Since September 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture is implementing a programme for the education of unaccompanied minors/applicants of international protection. These children are mainly enrolled in upper secondary and technical schools and attend intensive lessons of Greek as a second language, as well as common core courses and workshops (in technical schools). The programme aims to provide basic knowledge of the language of instruction to the unaccompanied minors/applicants of international protection, as well as the development of useful skills, in order to facilitate their interaction with other pupils. At the same time, other lessons are provided as well for the development of their educational level. Additionally, the MOEC has created preparatory afternoon classes in three State Institutes for Further Education, where the unaccompanied minors have the chance to attend lessons of Greek as a second language and Mathematics free of charge. They also have the opportunity to attend, free of charge, any other lesson offered at the State Institutes for Further Education.

235. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture has recently designed, developed and implemented an upgraded educational policy pertaining to Multicultural Education, aiming at the smooth integration of pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds into the educational system of Cyprus. The policy document was approved by the Minister of Education and Culture and the departments of the Ministry of Education and Culture have developed an action plan with a variety of targeted actions, through the prism of an intercultural approach, anti-racist education and the methodology of teaching Greek as a second language. The policy focuses on five priority areas: (1) learning the Greek language; (2) reception of newly arrived children with migrant background; (3) education and teachers' in-service training; (4) data collection and analysis of the needs of pupils with a migrant background; and (5) intercultural approach in the new curricula. The document also describes the current state of affairs regarding the integration of children with migrant

background in the Cyprus Educational System as well as the teaching of Greek as a second language.

236. Since the end of 2015 a telephone helpline (1410) has been established by the MOEC in cooperation with the Youth Board of Cyprus for responding to the telephone calls of mainly children and adults. Qualified personnel are trained and supervised in order to give guidance and help to those who are calling and asking for help.

237. During the last two years, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Medical and Public Health Services and the Dental Services, have established a special procedure for examining asylum seekers who declare minors in order to verify their age. More specifically individuals who are reasonably suspected of not being minors and who have been interviewed by an asylum service officer are referred to further medical and dental examinations (panoramic x-ray, clinical oral examination, x-ray of the wrist).

XI. Follow-up to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

238. The Ministry of Education and Culture, has organised and carried out multi-level actions to promote awareness of the harmful effects of Child Sexual Abuse. [For more information on the actions (par. 237), please see ANNEX II, Par. 104].

239. Children that have been victims of sale or child prostitution and or child pornography receive all the available services recorded earlier by the Mental Health services, in terms of their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration. Their needs are a priority to the clinicians who collaborate closely with other professionals, in order to meet the maximum of their needs. In specialized cases where child prostitution endangers the life and well being of the child, the mental health specialists collaborate with the social welfare officers in order to introduce the child in extremely specialized programs that are found in other countries and are thought to be for the best interest of the child.

240. The Chief of Police has appointed a Committee for the implementation of the obligations deriving from the Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law (Law 51 (I) / 2016). The Committee has prepared and distributed to all members of the Police, the following: (a) the Document with the Rights of Victims of Crime and (b) the confirmation of complaint submitted by the victim. It is worth noting that the Document of Victims of Crime is going to be translated in 6 languages (Greek, English, Turkish, Arabic, Russian and French). [For further information on the Document, described in par. 240, please see ANNEX II, Par. 80–82].

241. The Mental Health Services cooperate with international centers and organisations, for each case where physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration is evaluated as being at a particular centre the pace where the children's need will be best served.

XII. Follow-up to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

242. Measures and reforms are implemented in order to comply fully with the provisions of the Optional Protocol. The duration of the compulsory military service of conscripts has been reduced from 24 months to 14 months following two relevant Decisions of the Council of Ministers dated 25/02/2016 and 05/09/2016. The decision to reduce military service for conscripts is part of a wider new policy of the Cyprus Government and the Ministry of Defence to reorganize and reform the National Guard as well as adopt a model of a semi-professional army by gradually replacing conscription with recruiting professional soldiers. The first stage of this new policy was implemented in the autumn 2016, with the recruitment on contract of a number of semi-professional soldiers to replace conscripts that were about to be released according to the new arrangements.

243. The Minister of Defence decided that as from 2018, the two annual National Guard enlistments of conscripts in January and July of every year will be limited to the one in July only. As a consequence of this decision, only persons aged at least 17 ½ years and over will be enlisted for service in the National Guard. Volunteers for military service still have to be at least 17 years and above, however their numbers are negligible.

244. The Asylum Service considers minors as vulnerable persons and therefore will take into account their specific situation. Thus, special reception conditions (health care, psychological support, rehabilitation services) and special procedural guarantees are provided during the Asylum Procedure. In order to specify such special reception needs and to find out whether the person concerned needs special procedural guarantees, it is necessary, in any stage of the procedure, to carry out an individual assessment. The Republic of Cyprus reassure that the principle of non refoulement is fully respected.

245. Children asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to free access and use of the public health system. Cases of children and adolescents with mental health problems are dealt with particular sensitivity and are given priority by the Mental Health Services and when they visit the Children and Adolescents Department of the Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health. It is also noted that interpreting services are offered to these children in order to facilitate the diagnostic and therapeutic work.

246. During the period under review, no children have been involved in hostilities while recruited and therefore no children have been charged for war crimes.
