



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Consideration of reports of States parties

## Replies of Albania to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports\*

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



## Part I

### Reply to paragraph 2 (a) of the list of issues in relation to the combined fifth and sixth reports of Albania (CRC/C/ALB/Q/5-6)

1. Following the declared state of natural disaster, between March and June 2020, the Government of Albania (GoA) took all the necessary public health measures in line with WHO guidelines to slow the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on travel as well as closure of public meeting places. Decision of Councils of Ministers (DCM) No. 243, 24 March 2020 was instrumental in setting up the entire institutional and service infrastructure to manage the pandemic.
2. Various measures to provide psycho-social support for children online and in distance became available, including (a.) online psychological service of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) for children and adults, who needed support during the pandemic situation (Green line 0884040); (b.) free-of-charge National Child Counselling Line (ALO 116 111); (c.) Online counseling platform ([www.nukjevetem.al](http://www.nukjevetem.al)) providing advice via messages, or individual therapy through the chat service; (d.) School's psychosociologists were available for online counseling for school-aged children. They were also providing reliable information on COVID-19 prevention.
3. More than 1,900 health professionals in 370 health centres and nine maternity hospitals benefitted from support to prevent the spread of infection through strengthening infection prevention and control capacities, provision of supplies and equipment, development of protocols, design and implementation of monitoring tools. More than 13,000 health-care workers benefitted from personal protective equipment. A tool for the quantification, forecasting and uninterrupted supply of personal protective equipment was developed.
4. Staff of social care institutions took measures to implement the protocol of care, ensured uninterrupted services and were equipped with protective measures.
5. Directive 253/2020 “On the management of cases of children in need of protection, during the period of natural disaster due to the epidemic caused by COVID-19” was adopted, which fostered collaboration between child protection workers (CPWs), health and education professionals in addressing child protection concerns as well as raising awareness on COVID-19. The directive also required CPWs to offer professional support to children who cannot be taken care of by the family members due to COVID-19-related sickness, hospitalization or death or isolation. To guide directive’s effective implementation, regular online meetings were conducted with CPW and State Agency for Children’s Rights and Protection (SACRP).
6. 1,800 frontline workers and other professionals attended 8-week training on the provision of mental health and psycho-social support in emergency situations. Among other topics, modules included prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, 160 health personnel were trained in preventive maternal and child health services in four regions.
7. Measures were taken to protect children online: (a.) A new Online Portal was launched by the National Authority for Electronic Certification, where responsible institutions report sites with illegal and/or inappropriate content (b.) The State Police joined campaign “DontBeAnEasyCatch”, organized by the Centre for the Fight against Cybercrime, Europol, raising awareness of children over age of 10 on online safety;<sup>1</sup> (c.) national forums and workshops were organized in collaboration with civil society organisations (CSOs) and participation of children to discuss the online risk and necessary measures for online safety was fostered.
8. Measures were taken to ensure education continues during the COVID-19. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) responded by moving learning online, while reviving and updating its key policies, including official recognition of alternative ways of

<sup>1</sup> Link to the video: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?t=8&v=279131809909220>.

learning. Teachers were trained to address students' psychosocial and mental health needs and integrate awareness raising on COVID-19 as part of the learning.

9. The learning process has been adjusted to home-school-learning, lectures and virtual classes were broadcasted on Albanian Radio Television <sup>2</sup> and online platforms, like Akademia.al. Only in 2021, in this platform 500,000 children and teachers were registered, 200,000 virtual classes took place, 16,000 video lessons were online, including 3,000 videos for children with hearing difficulties. In September 2021, supplementary teaching took place in all pre-university education institutions based on the guidelines of the Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education (AQAPE) to improve the achievements and address learning deficiencies of students as a result of COVID-19. Trainings were carried out for directors and teachers of pre-university institutions on the creation of a more friendly and inclusive environment for students, and instructions were issued on the priority registration of children with special needs, the reduction of school dropouts, the implementation of plans to prevent bullying, violence, extremism and ensure gender equality. The psycho-social service has provided direct services to all children in pre-university education with a special focus on children in need. In the context of COVID-19 and blended learning, during the 2020–2021 academic year, the Psychologist's Corner was created at the official websites of the institutions responsible for pre-university education at subnational level. In this space, students or parents can contact psychologists to receive counselling or access counselling materials during the pandemic period. For the school year 2021–2022, around 630 employees of the psycho-social service have exercised their function as professionals, while for the school year 2022–2023 another 250 employees have been added to the education system. Currently one psycho-social service worker covers 300–499 students, and two psycho-social service workers work for every school with 500 or more students. Several documents have been drawn up to support the work protocols of psycho-social workers: a) Guide to the work practice of the psycho-social service that orients the psycho-social service workers on the procedures to be followed offering to offer a unified framework of institutional actions, which are in accordance with the best interest of the child. b) Principles for the Professional Ethics of the School Psycho-Social Service, which is placed within the context of current issues important for education and important psycho-social aspects, relying entirely on the best international practices. c) General Professional Standards of School Psycho-Social Service which is also based on international best practices in order to support school psycho-social service workers to promote effective and comprehensive services.

#### **Reply to paragraph 2 (b) of the list of issues**

10. Various by-laws were adopted to strengthen the implementation of the legal framework on children's rights, including five instructions and 18 by-laws for implementation of the Law no. 18/2017 aiming to create an effective inter-sectorial system for the protection of children, which also fosters child participation.

11. 241 child protection workers (CPWs) were appointed to provide services in Local Government Units (LGUs). Series of trainings have been carried out on the implementation of the regulatory framework and case management, benefiting 195 professionals from different sectors in 2019, 612 in 2020 and 1364 in 2021. Trainings covered case management in COVID-19 context, online safety, violent extremism, unaccompanied children, victim of trafficking, children in street situation, and children in contact/conflict with the law.

12. By-laws were also adopted for Law no. 37/2017. Through the Ministerial<sup>3</sup> Order, two working groups for the analysis of the problems of domestic violence and the improvement of the system of prevention and addressing of sexual abuse against minors were established.

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<sup>2</sup> the Ministry of Education and Sports in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Agency Pre-University Education (ASCAP) and with the General Directorate of Pre-University Education (DPAP).

<sup>3</sup> Order No. 75, dated 09.06.2020, of the Prime Minister, "On the establishment of the inter-institutional working group for the improvement of the system of prevention and treatment of violence against minors".

The Joint Instruction of the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council<sup>4</sup> created a special database for domestic violence cases in the courts, while setting the unification of their registration.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (c) of the list of issues**

13. Cooperation and relationship between institutions working on the rights and protection of children is provided in Law no. 18/2017 and is further operationalized in the National Agenda for Child Rights and Protection (2021–2026), in drafting of which the 2012 CRC Concluding Observations presented a guiding point.

14. NCCRP is an advisory body created by order of the Prime Minister and provide advise and coordinates issues of children's rights and protection. SACRP is a legal entity under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) that coordinates work on issues of children's rights and protection, coordinates and organizes the integrated child protection system in the implementation of national policies and measures for children's rights and protection. The agency is financed by the State Budget. The budget of SACRP for 2020–2022 was 10,470,000 ALL. Currently, it has seven employees.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (d) of the list of issues**

15. The total fund disbursed for the local government by the Social Fund during 2020–2022 is 539 million Albanian Leke or 4.7 mil EUR, which covered 27 social services at municipality level and 13 specialized services in 6 regions (more in para. 47).

**Reply to paragraph 2 (e) of the list of issues**

16. For the implementation of the package of by-laws and Law No. 18/2017, many informative and awareness-raising activities were carried out for children/adolescents, the representatives of central and local government HRIs, parents, teachers and CSOs. Activities were frequently, and culminating in context of international days, like 7th February (Safe Internet Day), 12th of April (International Day of Children in Street Situation), 12th of June (Day Against Child Labour), 18th October (European day against Trafficking), 20th November (International Child Rights Day), and 19th of November (European day Against Sexual Exploitation of Children).

17. More than 2,000 copies of the Law 18/2017 prepared in the child friendly versions were distributed and discussed with children/adolescents.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (f) of the list of issues**

18. The pathway to justice is progressively made more accessible through the recent reform of the Juvenile Justice System (see also paras. 43, 73, 77, 84).

**Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues**

19. The monitoring report<sup>5</sup> of NARC, which was coordinated by MSHP in close coordination with responsible institutions, CSOs and participation of children, confirms that up to 80% of the planned measures were addressed, and a total of 222 Million Albanian Leke (ALL) invested for its implementation.

20. The implementation of the Social Protection Strategy 2015-2023 focuses on transformation of the economic assistance into an active social reintegration scheme, the review of the disability assessment system/interventions and reintegration of children into families and communities by giving special care to social or biological orphans, ensuring child's highest interest and provision of integrated services. Some of the achievements are: (i.) expansion of the availability of community-based social services for children through Social Fund (SF) and increase in beneficiaries (children and young people); (ii) start of the

<sup>4</sup> A joint instruction of the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council was issued in June 2020 regarding “Defining the rules for the creation of a special database for domestic violence cases in the courts and the unification of their registration”.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3906/file/FOUR-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.pdf>.

deinstitutionalization reform with adoption of National Plan for De-institutionalization (NPDEI) 2020–2022, extended for 2023. More on SF and NPDEI refer to sections 15, 47 and 52.

21. Through DCM No. 77, dated 2.2.2022<sup>6</sup> it became possible to assess the health and social needs of children aged 0–2 years. A specific evaluation form was approved which corresponds to the activities that this age group can perform.

**Reply to paragraph 3 (a) of the list of issues**

22. Legislative changes are foreseen as part of the harmonization with the European Union (EU) Acquis on Children’s Rights, to prohibit child marriages, as well as additional efforts are planned to be carried out to prevent this phenomenon through public consultations and information.

**Reply to paragraph 3 (b) of the list of issues**

23. Measures have been implemented to protect children from discrimination, particularly those most vulnerable. MHSP has established mechanisms to implement and monitor social-economic rights of Roma and Egyptian minorities and children with disabilities to guarantee equality and non-discrimination and rights protection. The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030,<sup>7</sup> National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025<sup>8</sup> has been drafted with reference to the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020–2030 for equality, inclusion, and participation.

24. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) is actively working on receiving cases, issuing recommendations and giving opinions on issues related to discrimination. Several measures were taken in relation to prohibition of discrimination in education setting against national minorities, including Roman and Egyptians and persons with disabilities in education sector (see more in paras. 66–68). Accessibility and prevention of discrimination is also a commitment encompassing all areas of the National Action Plan for Disability 2021–2025 (NAPD)<sup>9</sup> (see para. 52).

25. The National Action Plan for LGBTI+ Persons (2021–2027)<sup>10</sup> foresees measures that address hate speech and strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions in addressing discrimination against LGBTI+ persons, including children/adolescents. The implementation of policies against hate crimes against LGBTI+ is also monitored by independent mechanisms, including the Inter-institutional Thematic Group on Inclusion and Social Protection. The network of gender officers was established at the ministerial and local level, responsible for different social groups, including LGBTI+. Contact persons were also appointed at all district police directorates.

26. The Alliance against Hate Speech was established in 2019 by the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD), the Audio-visual Media Authority (AMA) and the Albanian Media Council. Alliance has a common agenda and a 3-year action plan, aiming to promote diversity and awareness among the public, promote cooperation with organizations and agencies in the fight against discrimination and hate speech, support partners in identifying effective mechanisms to combat hate speech based on European practices and standards and to identify mechanisms for improving information sharing and training.

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<sup>6</sup> Amendment to DCM no. 722, dated 11.11.2019 “On the Determination of the Measure, Criteria, Procedures and Documentation for the Assessment and Benefit of the Disability of the Personal Assistant, and of the Responsible Structures and their Duties”.

<sup>7</sup> DCM no 400, dated 30.06.2021.

<sup>8</sup> DCM No.701, Date 18.11.2021.

<sup>9</sup> DCM Nr. 276, date 12/05/2021.

<sup>10</sup> DCM Nr.700, date 18/11/2021.

### Reply to paragraph 3 (c) of the list of issues

27. The CPD<sup>11</sup> exercises powers in three main spheres: (I.) providing assistance to victims of discrimination through reviewing complaints, conducting administrative investigations, imposing administrative sanctions and representation in court for civil cases; (II.) monitoring the implementation of the law on protection from discrimination and (III.) raising awareness. The Commissioner supports the implementation of all national and international legal mechanisms for the protection of human rights, ratified by the Republic of Albania.

28. The CDP is an ex-officio member of the NCCRP and is supported by the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination,<sup>12</sup> which structure was revised in 2018, leading to an increased number of employees from 23 to 34.<sup>13</sup> With the new structure, three regional offices of the CDP in cities of Korçë, Fier, Shkodër, become permanent offices.

29. CDP addressed cases of discrimination against children: in 2019, 22 complaints and 3 ex-officio cases (seven decisions were discrimination decisions); in 2020, 11 complaints and 3 ex-officio cases (seven complaints and 2 ex-officio carried over from 2019 and 4 complaints and 1 ex-officio registered during 2020); in 2021, 9 cases were reviewed (2 decisions on discrimination in the most serious form). The number of cases related to the discrimination of children with disabilities and Roma/Egyptian students in the field of education.

30. CPD also issued recommendations<sup>14</sup> on ex-officio cases of children, including on topics such as (a.) preventing discriminatory situations due to residence (b.) education in context of COVID-19 (c.) provision of technical assistive devices for all persons with total or partial lack of sight (d.) registration of Roma/Egyptian children in schools, kindergartens and nurseries.

### Reply to paragraph 3 (d) of the list of issues

31. Article 6 of the Law No 18/2017 states that normative framework and any by-laws shall be subject to the principle of the best interest of the child. The Albanian Adoption

<sup>11</sup> The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and its organizational structure.

The Assembly of the Republic of Albania approved Law No. 10 221, dated 04.02.2010 “On protection from discrimination”, amended, which entered into force on 13 March 2010. On 15.10.2020, with Law No. 124/2020 “On some additions and changes to Law No. 10 221, dated 04.02.2010 “On protection from discrimination”, published in Official Gazette No. 191 dated 03.11.2020, the amendments to the Law “On Protection from Discrimination” were approved, which entered into force on November 18, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Based on Article 22, point 2, of Law No. 10 221/2010 “On Protection from Discrimination”, amended.

<sup>13</sup> With Decision No. 88, dated 23.07.2018, of the Assembly of Albania.

<sup>14</sup> 2021: 1. Recommendation “For the drafting and approval of the relevant sub-legal act for the provision of typotechnical assistive devices for all persons with total or partial lack of sight, born or acquired, who benefit from Law No. 8098, dated 28.03.1996 “On the status of the blind”. 2. Suggestions of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination regarding the Draft Law “On the status of “Children in the care of the Republic”. 3. Recommendations of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination for the Draft Law “On the creation of a registry for perpetrators of sexual crimes” 4. Recommendations of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination for the Draft Law “On the national registry for those convicted of sexual crimes”. 5. Recommendation regarding the “Draft Action Plan Matrix for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians (2021-2025).”

2020: 1. Recommendation for taking positive actions, at the border points, giving priority to: the elderly, children, people with serious health conditions, people with disabilities and pregnant women. 2. Recommendation for the approval of an additional fund for the economic assistance scheme, in the amount of 500 lek per month, for each child of families treated with economic assistance, who regularly follow the learning process.

2019: 1. Recommendation regarding the handling of cases with flexibility, in cases where parents/legal guardians request to take children temporarily from residential institutions. 2. Recommendation for taking measures to guarantee, without discrimination and within effective deadlines, the right to education of children with disabilities, through inclusive education, in pre-university education.

Committee has at its core the protection of the best interests of children declared abandoned by court decision. NPDEI reform aims to ensure the best interests of the child through transformation of residential care into alternative community-based services and implementation of a standardized reunification costed program to ensure that the child can return to the family.

#### **Reply to paragraph 3 (f) of the list of issues**

32. Child participation is an integral part of the child rights policies: (a.) Children have observer status at the NCCRP; (b.) 106 children/adolescents were engaged as part of monitoring of NARC (2017–2020), including out-of-school children, children with disabilities and those in residential institutions; (c.) Extensive consultations, supported by CSOs and MoES were carried out with 210 children, aged 12–18, to inform the priorities and activities of the NACRP (2021–2026).<sup>15</sup> A joint consultation plan and a detailed guide on consultation process was developed, including on inclusion of children from most vulnerable groups.<sup>16</sup>

33. Mechanisms for children's participation in decision-making are also embedded in the pre-university education system, with students having representatives in (i.) the Ethics and Behaviour Commission, responsible for handling cases of ethical violations committed by staff; (ii.) the Board of Educational Institution, contributing to the smooth running of the educational institutions and (iii.) the Health, Safety, Maintenance and Environment Commission,<sup>17</sup> supervising the educational institution on the conditions of maintaining health, hygiene, cleanliness, safety of students and employees.

34. Students' Parliament of Albania is a representative body at national level, aiming to strengthen the active participation of students of primary and secondary schools in decision-making processes, increasing the quality of the learning process and supporting students in gaining leadership skills and create a clear idea about democracy.

#### **Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues**

35. In 2019, the “Civil Status” Law was amended, which addressed the risk of children becoming stateless and enabled the registration of at least 1,000 children, mostly those born abroad and from Roma and Egyptian communities.

#### **Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues**

36. Many trainings on case management were carried out for the key professionals in the last three years (see paras. 11 and 74). Furthermore, the social care and decentralisation laws asks municipalities to: (I.) assess needs in their territory and prepare local social care plans; (ii) plan and monitor the provision of social care services; (iii) refer and manage the cases, by setting up Needs Assessment and Referral Units (NARUs) with Social Workers professionals. A skilled workforce, the tools and methods to be used by social workers, and the decision-making processes organised around NARUs have been developed.

37. Within technical assistance through the ‘European Union Support to Social Inclusion in Albania’ the capacity building at municipal level will be carried out, with the focus on promoting social work as a tool for case management, which allows for coordination and cooperation between different players involved in the provision of social care services. The assistance will also support the establishment and effective implementation of the case management by NARUs.

<sup>15</sup> Led by Save the Children in Albania, Terre des hommes Albania, and World Vision in Albania and Kosovo.

<sup>16</sup> included children from ethnic minorities (Roma/Egyptian), children from immigrant parents, children from urban/rural areas, children from vulnerable families (families in economic difficulty and families benefiting from economic assistance), children with divorced parents, children with disabilities, children seeking asylum, children returned from EU countries and children in residential care institutions.

<sup>17</sup> Also, based on Order no. 31, dated 28.01.2020 “On the approval of the regulation for the operation of public educational institutions of pre-university education in the Republic of Albania”.

### **Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues**

38. In the healthcare system, children, victims of violence needing medical attention are immediately referred and treated by health professionals in primary health care facilities, hospitals and the paramedical service. All cases of violence are immediately reported by the health personnel to the law enforcement for further investigation, and respecting confidentiality of the case. MHSP is reforming Primary Health Care – new Statute of Health Care Centers (HCC) was approved in 2022. A specialized counselling service will be provided by psychologists appointed in HCC. Only in 2022, 50 psychologists were employed.

39. MoES is working for development of comprehensive protocol of preventing and reporting all forms of violence in the school setting. A new directive<sup>18</sup> excludes all individuals that have ever been convicted for an offence against children to be hired in the education institutions. In the context also of implementing the National Strategy for Cyber Security 2020–2025, collaboration is taking place with MoES and National Authority on Electronic certification and cyber security for education of children and parents on online safety.

40. In the prosecution system, children are interviewed by prosecutor or the judicial police officer in the presence of the Coordinator for Subjects with Special Status, who are trained on domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking and children in conflict with the law. The Coordinator provides psychological support to the victim, helps facilitate the discussion and drafts a needs assessment report.

41. The Law No.37/2017 requires protective environment for interviewing of minors entering the justice system. Additional guidelines for interviewing are defined in Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) "Special rules for questioning a minor victim or witness". With support of partners, State Police has created 15 juvenile interview units in local directorates and police stations, equipped with audio and video recording, to facilitate implementation of Standard Procedures for the "Juvenile Interviewing Unit, technical standards and procedures for the use of these premises" (2019). In 2020, the Manual on Motivational Interviewing: User's Guide to Cognitive Behavioral Work and Motivational Interviewing (Directorate of Prisons) was adopted. In addition, six child-friendly quarters in the courts and nine child-friendly quarters in the prosecutor's office at the first-instance courts of judicial districts were established.

### **Reply to paragraph 7 (a) of the list of issues**

42. Cameras have been installed to better control the quality of service provided to children by professionals, guardians, and educators in residential care centres. However, if cases were still reported, urgent situation assessment was carried out by multidisciplinary teams of psychiatrists, psychologists or doctors, leading to suspension of the perpetrators from work until decision from the justice system. For more on measures to address abuse in online environment see paras. 2 and 39.

### **Reply to paragraph 7 (b) of the list of issues**

43. NACRP 2021–2026 prioritizes the immediate response and recovery of children, victims of sexual abuse, including online abuse. Support is ensured with the establishment of two one-stop emergency response centers (Fier, Shkodër) for child victims/survivors of sexual abuse and other serious forms of violence (in addition to the Lilium center). The centers are now functional, and the service provision standards have been approved. Child sexual abuse is also addressed by strengthening the child protection system, including through the implementation of comprehensive legal framework on children's rights and corresponding measures (see para. 12).

### **Reply to paragraph 7 (c) of the list of issues**

44. Prosecution Office and the victim coordinator refer children to the organizations authorized by the Ministry of Justice to provide primary legal aid. In 2020–2021, 403 children

<sup>18</sup> Order no. 23, date 01.12.2021.

benefited from primary and secondary legal aid. Ten primary legal aid service centers have been established and 12 licensed CSOs concluded agreements on providing primary legal assistance.

**Reply to paragraph 7 (d) of the list of issues**

45. Detailed response on data is available in paras. 101–107.

**Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues**

46. NJCS 2017–2020 was monitored annually. The 2022 assessment showed 100.6% realization of the actual expenses, 87.3% of which was covered by MoJ and other governmental institutions. The Report informed NJCS 2022–2026, adopted in December 2022,<sup>19</sup> drafted in coordination with international partners, legislators, and NGOs. The new Strategy goes beyond criminal justice, and also addresses family, civil and administrative justice.

**Reply to paragraph 9 (a) of the list of issues**

47. Law No. 121/2016 established the Social Fund as financial mechanism to support quality SCS, responsive to the needs of individuals. The Fund allows for the procurement of SCS by interest groups or CSOs. The total funds disbursed to local authorities through Social Fund in 2020–2022 is 539 million ALL (4.7 mil EUR). This covered 27 social services at municipality level and 13 specialized services in 6 regions. Out of this, 13 services are dedicated to children (from whose 2 new pilot child and family support hubs in 2 Municipalities), benefiting 317 children with disabilities; 225 children, 168 young people and 474 families in multifunctional community services, 140 children in shelters for victims of trafficking; 7 unaccompanied foreign minors; and 261 families supported in Child & Family Support Hubs.

48. Measures have been taken to increase the cash-transfers, especially for the female-headed households and those composed by three or more children, for which the amount is doubled. About 80,000 children have benefited from this increased amount. Financial assistance to children without parental care was tripled. The baby bonus policy, starting from 2019, directly supports children and the family, guaranteeing the reward (bonus) for each newborn (40 thousand ALL for the first child, 80 thousand ALL for second and 120 thousand ALL for the third child). From this year, a new policy is being implemented by supporting the unemployment women with three and more children by the state subsidy for the social and health insurance payments.

49. In first part of 2022, two one-time financial cash transfers of 9,000 ALL were given to mitigate the effects of the Ukrainian war. To mitigate the impact of inflation, a financial support was given to the beneficiaries of economic aid at the amount of 8,000 ALL for 57,300 families and at the amount of 20,000 ALL for 6,700 female heads of households. 71,000 people with disability received financial support at the amount of 8,000 ALL.

50. Mapping of SCS was carried out in 61 municipalities (May 2021), showing the distribution of services by typology, source of funding, beneficiary groups and type of provider institution. The mapping aims to improve the needs assessment, development and implementation of such services.

51. The reform of the disability assessment system 2020–2022 is ongoing, moving from the medical assessment model to the bio-psycho-social model, and has been progressively extended throughout the country. As part of bio-psycho-social assessment, children aged up to 18 years are assessed by multidisciplinary teams consisting of doctors and social workers. Needs assessment covers also needs for SCS, and children assessed as having disability are referred to receive SCS at the municipalities and education and professional training offices of their residency.

<sup>19</sup> <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2023/13/c1e49a36-62a7-46a0-a9bc-6aabafadb6b0>.

### Reply to paragraph 9 (b) of the list of issues

52. The principles of de-institutionalization and empowering of the family are integrated as key principles of social care services. NPDEI 2020–2023 foresees the deinstitutionalization as an ongoing process of transition from residential institutions into community-based services with the view of reducing the number of children living in these institutions until their full replacement into family-based foster services. Achievements so far include:

(a) Two Child and Family Support Hubs in Korca and Vlora, for which the following were defined: (i.) new service models within institutional structure and financial and human resources; (ii.) human resource assessment, development and pre-settlement plan; (iii) financial re-allocation plan, with costing and annual budget per new services and per child and identification of applicable mechanisms for reallocation of existing resources; (iv). Infrastructure Improvement Plan following needs assessment for new services.

(b) In Shkodra, a new service that aims to transfer eight children from the public residential institution to alternative family-home services was supported through Social Fund.

(c) Standards were designed for two new services implemented in six municipalities (specialised mobile social care service and safe emergency services).

53. In first half of 2022 eight children were reintegrated into their biological families, five children were adopted, and fourteen children moved in independent living. 19 families with children placed in social care institutions have been supported through psychosocial, economic and empowerment programs, while 308 children with disability are supported with specialized mobile services and 23 children at risk of institutionalization are supported in their biological family.

### Reply to paragraph 9 (c) of the list of issues

54. Measures, more extensively elaborated in other paragraphs, include:

- (a) Diverse typology of SCSs through Social Fund
- (b) Approval of NPDEI 2020–2023
- (c) Establishment of new models of alternative services
- (d) Piloting the “Child & Family Support Hubs” service model
- (e) Provision of mobility services in families for children with disabilities in 5 municipalities
- (f) Promotion of the alternative guardianship service
- (g) Monitoring of SCS by monitoring and inspection structures (State Social Services & Social Services Inspection), in cooperation with CPWs.

### Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

55. Ten standard treatment protocols for neonatal care were approved by Minister of Health and Social Protection (order 727, date 30.12.2022) (see footnote<sup>20</sup>).

56. Training for 160 health personnel in preventive maternal and child health services in four regions was held, which included the module on parental well-being for home-visiting personnel, supporting home visiting health personnel to provide advice and support health needs of pregnant woman, new mothers and fathers.

<sup>20</sup> The national medical clinical protocols that were prepared are: (1.) Resuscitation of the newborns; (2.) Neonatal hypoglycaemia and its management; (3.) Neonatal transport; (4.) Respiratory detritus in the newborn; (5.) Neonatal Convulsions. The national clinical nurse protocols that were prepared are: (1.) Nursing management of born asphyxiate newborn; (2.) Nursing management of newborn with hypoglycaemia; (3.) Nursing management of newborn during transportation; (4.) Nursing management of newborn with Respiratory Detres; (5.) Nursing management of newborn presenting convulsions.

#### **Reply to paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues**

57. Gains were achieved in reduction of malnutrition and stunting among children. The ratio of children too thin for their height and too short for their age has fallen from 6% to less than 1%, and from 11% to 4%, respectively (ADHS 2018), and there has been decline in the stunting of children from 23 to 11 children for every 100 children. The prevalence of stunting correlates with the education of mother and is 22% among mothers with four or less years of education to 8% among mothers with higher education. The National Health Promotion Plan 2022–2030 further envisages activities and sets the goals to reduce the obesity of children from 16% (2018) to 11% (2030), and stunting of children under the age of five from 11 (2018%) to 6% (2030).<sup>21</sup>

#### **Reply to paragraph 10 (c) of the list of issues**

58. Health system is mainly public and free, with state providing promotion, preventive, diagnosis and care. Pediatric care services are offered according to levels of health care: (i.) Primary Health Care centers and ambulances in the village and cities providing care for 0–6 years old; (ii.) Pediatric hospital care is provided in pediatric wards of regional, and municipal hospitals; and (iii) Pediatric Service of the “Mother Teresa” Hospital in Tirana offering the most specialized pediatric care.

59. Mental health services for children are provided by the National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children, as a specialized central public institution at national level, while services for adolescents are also provided by the mental health community centers. For patients from 0–25 years old, the diabetic test strips are reimbursed by the Compulsory Health Care Insurance Fund. The Cochlear Implant and Screening Program for newborns and children are provided free of charge in public hospitals.

#### **Reply to paragraph 10 (d) of the list of issues**

60. Measures were taken to increase cash transfers for families and children, including increasing the amount of economic aid, adopting a baby bonus policy, tripling the assistance for children without parental care, and provision of state subsidy for the social and health insurance payments for women with three or more children is being planned for 2023 (see para. 48).

#### **Reply to paragraph 10 (e) of the list of issues**

61. All family planning services are offered free of charge in public sector and are integrated into the health system at primary, secondary and tertiary level. Services are offered in 416 family planning centers (of which 326 at the Family Planning Center and 90 are in the women’s and maternity counseling rooms). In urban areas, family planning services, in addition to women’s counseling centers, are also offered in maternity hospitals, district and regional hospitals, and university hospitals (tertiary level – only in Tirana). In rural areas, family planning services are offered at Health Centers, which cover several ambulances. Adolescent health services are part of the package of primary care services, which sets forward specific responsibilities of family doctors and nursing staff towards the doctors and include reproductive health care services, including HIV testing and treatment service.

62. National Health Promotion Plan 2022–2030 envisaged activities regarding reproductive health, including strengthening and expanding services to protect women’s sexual and reproductive health; strengthening the antenatal system (before birth), and strengthening maternal mortality surveillance to improve the quality of maternal care, etc.

63. In November 2022, vaccination of girls with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) to reduce the occurrence of cervical cancer has been included in the vaccine calendar, starting with girls born in 2009. This was done following the inclusion of the HPV test for primary diagnosis included in health centers, which benefited about 16 thousand women per year. Apart from that, a Rotavirus vaccine (from 2019) was included in vaccine Calendar, bringing the number of free vaccines for children 0–18 years old to a total of 12.

<sup>21</sup> National Health Promotion Plan 2022–203.

64. The National Program for Children's Vision Care for age group from 0–14, approved in 2022, enables improved eye care for children up to age 14 through regular screening in schools, followed by the referrals to specialist doctors, if needed. The service is piloted in 10 schools in Tirana. The Dental Health Care Screening Program for children aged 6–14 years is also carried out in dental cabinets in schools. More than 80,000 were screened in dental cabinets in schools and health centers.

**Reply to paragraph 10 (f) of the list of issues**

65. National Health Strategy 2022–2030 foresees specific objectives on promoting, enabling, and contributing to “Healthy Citizens” and integrated waste management, urban planning, and a healthy environment, including assessing their impact on health and responding to mitigation strategies.

66. In 2022, the 5-months long digital campaign by Ministry of Tourism and Environment widely engaged young people on air and climate issues, through 15 capacity building workshops organized in five municipalities, reaching 254 young people. Topics covered: 1) air & climate; 2) air & climate watchdogging techniques and 3) youth action in addressing air and climate. In the Youth Air&Climate Hubs, 73 young people generated proposals and solutions for air and climate issues in Albania to be addressed to decisionmakers.

**Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues**

67. The integration of Roma/Egyptian children and youth in kindergartens, schools and universities is priority of the GoA reflected at:

(a) National Education Strategy 2021–2026, which places special attention to the education of national minorities and promotes school's interaction with social services for the treatment of Roma and Egyptians children with socio-economic problems;

(b) National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians in Albania (2021–2025);

(c) Series of Instructions approved during 2019–2022 that ensures free school textbooks for Roma and Egyptian children (Decision 486, date 17.6.2020; Directive 21, date 13.08.2020), improve the financial quota for food at dormitories, and possibility to receive scholarship for children of families in need, including Roma and Egyptian, and those with only one parent (the other parent deceased) (DCM 511, date 28.07.2022). Staff will be identified as mediators to serve as a connecting bridge between education institutions and vulnerable communities. After-school learning programme will be offered at schools to support Roma and Egyptian children.

68. Extensive efforts are focused on supporting the education of the children of nine national minorities, including through provision of special educational institutions for Greek and Macedonian national minority studies and their right to learn and be taught in their mother tongue and their history and culture. The new curriculums adopted in 2022<sup>22</sup> allows for 70% of the teaching subjects for Greek and Macedonian minority students in basic education to be in their mother tongue. The instruction from 2022 prioritize the registration of children of national minorities and promotion of their language, culture and traditions.<sup>23</sup> All children belonging to national minorities receive free school textbooks, and classes are organized separately for them in basic education.<sup>24</sup> Their teachers are trained with accredited courses at least 3 times a year.

69. The “National Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2026” provides for comprehensive inclusive education, enhanced role of Interdisciplinary Evaluation for

<sup>22</sup> Instruction no. 20, dated 19.07.2022 “On determining the teaching subjects that are taught in the Albanian language and in the mother tongue by students of national minorities in basic education in Albania”. Order no. 531, dated 9.09.2022 “On determining the curriculum for national minorities in basic education”.

<sup>23</sup> Instruction no. 22, dated 27.02.2022 “For the school year 2022-2023 in the pre-university education system” asks local education offices to prioritize registration of children from minorities.

<sup>24</sup> Directive 25, date 01.08.2022.

Disability and assistant teachers for Students with Disability. In 2021–2022, 4,748 students with registered disabilities attended classes in public and private educational institutions, 78% in basic education, 10% in preschool education and the rest attend upper secondary education. The ratio of students with disability attending comprehensive education compared to special education has improved from 75% in 2014 to around 90% in 2022. Students with disabilities in pre-university education benefit from free transport, free treatment in special education institutions and free textbooks. In the school year 2022–2023, 1,515 assistant teachers are employed in the pre-university education system, with the child/assistant teacher ratio of 3:1. About 150 predominantly basic educational institutions have development spaces or resource classes near schools that support inclusiveness, which benefit about 1120 students with disabilities.

**Table 1**  
**Registration of children with disabilities**

	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022
Preschool	494	471	502
Basic education	3 218	3 152	3 136
Upper secondary education (general)	529	508	560
Special schools	527	541	588

*Source:* MoES.

70. In the period 2019–2022, 61 professional networks of assistant teachers are effectively functioning. MoES, in cooperation with Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, provides professional support and development of assistant teachers, including through the development needs assessment, training curriculum and series of trainings. Since 2019, first choice of hiring assistant teacher is from those that are licensed in the profile of ‘special education’.

71. For deaf children it is now possible to study through high school. The curriculum and subject programmes are prepared to accomplish this. A multidisciplinary working group has drafted the model for the transformation of special schools into resource centers for children with disabilities. Changes to law 69/2012 are drafted to enable this transformation.

72. The education of children/citizens in the Institutes for the Execution of Criminal Sentences is ensured through cooperation of number of institutions, aiming the development of an individual intervention plan in the basic subjects. 156 students attended classes at CSEI in 2021–2022. The teaching and educational process at these institutions is carried out in accordance with the standards of the educational service in the Republic of Albania,<sup>25</sup> and teaching staff at these institutions attends regular trainings.

#### **Reply to paragraph 12 (a) of the list of issues**

73. Under auspices of General Prosecutor, the Development Center (Office) for Juvenile Justice was established in 2019, composed of one prosecutor and one judicial police officer. The office is responsible for drafting documents, policies, guides, and manuals in the field of juvenile justice identifying, sharing and implementing best practices in the field at national and international levels, and providing support and advice to prosecutors who work with cases involving children. The Development Center (Office) proceeded with the drafting of nine template acts/model forms, which are included in the General Instruction (No. 8/2021).

<sup>25</sup> Based on the joint ins of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Finance and Economy, “For the 2022–2023 school year in the pre-university education system”; The Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Justice, “On the education of individuals in detention/penalty institutions in the Republic of Albania”, and in implementation of the Regulation on the functioning of educational institutions, are planned, organized and carried out activities with the involvement of all minors and young people, who are serving sentences in IEPP.

74. In 2021, Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth crimes is established, and its full administrative structure is in place.

**Reply to paragraph 12 (b) of the list of issues**

75. The recently approved guideline<sup>26</sup> on case management methodology for children in conflict with the law from CPWs intends to set joint frame and unify the case management procedures. For children under the age of criminal responsibility, CPWs prepares and supports the implementation of their individual plans of protection.

76. According to existing legislation and instructions, the Judicial Police Officers handling juvenile cases have the obligation to inform the juvenile immediately, in a way that corresponds to his/her level of development, directly or through a representative, on charges and his/her rights during the criminal process. The children in conflict with the law in the prosecution office are informed of their rights by the Coordinator for Subjects with Special Status, who is also responsible for directing the child to relevant services (see also para. 40).<sup>4</sup>

77. A number of instructions and guidance documents have been developed to ensure effective implementation of the child justice normative framework:

(a) Instruction of the Attorney General and the Code of Criminal Justice for Juveniles and criminal procedural provisions, Judicial Police Officers handling juvenile cases<sup>27</sup>

(b) General Instruction No. 5/2018 on the Provision of Assistance to Child Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses and

(c) Instruction No. 8, dated 15.11.2021 of the General Prosecutor on the “Effective Investigation and Criminal Prosecution of Criminal Offenses involving Children in Conflict with the Law, Child Victims and/or Witnesses”.

**Reply to paragraph 12 (c) of the list of issues**

78. The entry into force of the Juvenile Justice Code clearly states that deprivation of freedom should be taken as a measure of last resort.<sup>28</sup> The juvenile justice system encourages restorative justice for children, which has the primary aim of re-socialization, rehabilitation, and prevention of law violation. This is reflected in the low number of arrests issued to children by prosecution. In first nine months of 2022, 4.2% (20) of children under investigation were arrested (compared to 5.9% (31 children) in 2020).

	2020	2021	2022 (January–September)
Children 14–17 under investigation registered by prosecution	525	744	473
Children, for which is given the measure of arrest	31 (5.9 % of the total)	32 (4.3%)	20 (4.2%)
Children receiving alternative measures	213	251	

*Source:* General Prosecution Office.

<sup>26</sup> No. 262, date 26.05.2021.

<sup>27</sup> Attorney General, no. 08, dated 15.11.2021 “On the investigation and prosecution of crimes involving minors in conflict with the law, victims and/or witnesses”.

<sup>28</sup> The Code of Criminal Justice for Minors, articles 15 “Restriction or deprivation of liberty as a last measure.

### Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues

79. Criminal Code provides for criminal offenses that include trafficking of minors, abuse/exploitation, exploitation for prostitution and pornography with minors<sup>29</sup> in Article 124/b (Mistreatment of a minor), Article 114 (Exploitation of prostitution) and Article 117 (pornography”).

80. The Cooperation Agreement for the operation of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking, signed in 2012, constitutes the basic inter-institutional agreement for the standard identification, referral, protection and re-integration of victims of trafficking. NRM is composed of 13 state and non-state institutions and structures. The NRS clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each signature institutions in relation to identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking, as well as to ensure that they receive all the necessary protection and support.

81. National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Trafficking 2021–2023<sup>30</sup> aims to minimize the phenomenon of human trafficking and present a continuation of the anti-trafficking efforts and objectives foreseen in the Strategy against Organized Crime and Serious Crimes 2021–2025 and its Action Plan. The plan presents a well-oriented platform of strategic goals and objectives, in accordance with other national strategic documents, and focus specifically on most affected groups of society, such as women/girls, children and the Roma and Egyptian ethnic communities. It sets roles and responsibilities of a range of state and non-state institutions and agencies, while aiming to improve the functioning of a multi-agency system, through strengthening the mechanism of identification, protection and reintegration of victims of trafficking.

### Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues

82. Since October 2020, the repatriation and reintegration of children and women of Albanian origin from the conflict zones and refugee camps (in Syria and Iraq) started for 37 persons (28 children and 9 women). Repatriates received immediate protection in a form of psychosocial support, clothing, meals and access to hygiene items through the Center for Combating Violent Extremism in Albania in collaboration with international partners. After this initial stage (up to 5 months) mothers and children were integrated in the respective communities in close collaboration with SACRP and CPWs.

## Part II

### Reply to paragraph 15 (a) of the list of issues

83. Concrete actions in transposing international standards into national laws and harmonizing legislation and strengthening the prevention and protection mechanisms are in place and a wide range of regulations and policies have been adopted with the aim to transpose the legal framework in the practices. This includes the adoption of the number of by-laws aiming to implement legislative framework protect and ensure children’s rights, adapted in recent years, including Law No.18/2017 ‘On the Rights and Protection of the Child’, and Law No.37/2017 ‘Code of Criminal Justice for Children’ (and accompanying

<sup>29</sup> Article 128/b “Trafficking of minors” provides that: “Recruitment, sale, transportation, transfer, hiding or reception of minors for the purpose of exploitation of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, labor or forced services, slavery or forms similar to slavery, use or transplantation of organs, as well as other forms of exploitation, shall be punished with imprisonment from ten to twenty years. Organizing, directing and financing the trafficking of minors is punishable by imprisonment from ten to twenty years. When this offense is committed in collaboration or more than once, or is accompanied by the mistreatment and coercion of the injured party with physical or mental violence, to perform various actions, or brings serious health consequences, it is punished with imprisonment of not less than fifteen years. When the offense resulted in the death of the victim, it is punishable by imprisonment of not less than twenty years or life imprisonment. When the criminal offense is committed through the use of a state function or public service, the prison sentence is increased by ¼ of the given sentence.”

<sup>30</sup> With VKM no. 670, dated 10.11.2021.

regulations). Further, Law 17/2018 ‘On Official Statistics’ helps strengthen the existing data collection framework (for more see paras. 107–112).

84. The amendments of 2021 Mental Health Law<sup>31</sup> further strengthen the rights of persons with mental health disorders, while also expands provision of multidisciplinary specialized mental health services for children provided by the National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children (former National Center for the Welfare, Development and Rehabilitation of Children). The center also expands the age -group of children receiving multidisciplinary services from 0–6 years old to 0–18 years.

85. The amendments to Law No. 37/2017, “Juvenile Justice Code” were made in accordance with UNCRC. An instruction on the Provision of Assistance to Child Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses (2018) guarantees the rights and freedoms of children by ensuring the presence of the psychologist during investigation, information confidentiality and preventing the publication of relevant investigation acts thereof gathered by the judicial police. The instruction requires immediate notification of parents or legal representatives.

#### **Reply to paragraph 15 (b) of the list of issues**

86. The Minister of State for Youth and Children is an institution established by GoA in 2021, and it plays the main and fundamental role in organizing and supporting youth development in the country. The Minister is responsible for general youth policy and legal framework, monitoring the implementation of youth policies and representing GoA at the international level regarding youth issues.

87. The State Police, in implementation of the obligations of the code of criminal justice for minors, reorganised its structures and organic functions, with the aim of extending the organic functions “for juveniles and violence in family” at all levels. The new structure is as follows: (i.) the Department of Juveniles and Domestic Violence has been created within the Criminal Police department, in the Directorate of Crimes against Persons and Property of the General Directorate of the State Police (ii.) one organic function “Specialist for protection of juveniles and domestic violence” was added in 12 Police Directorates and (iii.) 1 to 3 organic functions “Specialist for the investigation of crimes for juveniles and domestic violence” are added in the police stations.

#### **Reply to paragraph 15 (d) of the list of issues**

88. NACRP 2021-2026 has been developed, presenting a strategic document, guidance, and commitment to achieve children’s rights in Albania in the period of 2021–2026. The document was developed by MHSP, SACRP and in consultation with other responsible ministries, local self-government units, independent institutions, CSOs, and international organizations working in the field of child rights and protection.

89. The NACRP addresses ongoing gaps and new challenges, as well as reflects innovative perspectives, particularly those related to the European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC, SDG agenda and complements all relevant national policies. NACRP commits in four main results areas: a) Improved governance for children; b) elimination of all forms of violence and abuse; c) child and adolescents friendly services; d) promotion of child rights in the digital world. NACRP is a document that was produced with the help of children, with their input and ideas taken into consideration. MHSP is in the process of drafting the 2 years (2021–2022) monitoring report of the NACRP 2021–2026, in full collaboration with line ministries, municipalities, CSOs, and HRI.

90. In 2022, the cross-sectoral National Youth Strategy 2022–2029,<sup>32</sup> was adopted following the meaningful consultation of 1500 young people (892 girls).

91. National Health Strategy 2021–2030 was approved as the umbrella strategic document in the field of health. The Strategy includes measures to improve the health of

<sup>31</sup> (Law no. 20/2021 for some additions and changes in Law no. 44/2012, “for mental health”, as amended).

<sup>32</sup> <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2022/10/26/692/30d81e7b-e599-493f-bfe8-34c90132d385;q=strategjia%20e%20rinis>.

mothers and children, adolescents, as well as sexual and reproductive health. It also foresees the reduction of physical and emotional violence among school-aged children from 47.5% to 30% in 2025 and 25% in 2030 and reduction of cases of domestic violence by 30%.

92. This strategic provision is further developed in a dedicated draft-policy document Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan 2022–2030, which is in the approval process. This action plan aims to improve the sexual and reproductive health status adolescents by increasing equal access to universal reproductive health services, improving the quality, efficiency, effectiveness of services and improving their response to the needs of the population.

93. The Strategy for the Development of Primary Health Care Services in Albania 2020–2025, approved in May 2020, foresees an important reform in this level of health care, introducing the socio-health services integration at the primary care, addressing relevant needs of vulnerable groups, especially in mental health through the presentation of a new professional figure in this level of care, that of psycho-social staff.

94. In terms of improving the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents, promotional and preventive activities are foreseen also in the Health Promotion Action Plan 2022–2030, approved in September 2022.

95. The National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Non-Infection Disease 2022–2030, approved in September 2022, also foresees important intervention in child and adolescents age group, mainly focusing on child obesity prevention and reduction of some risk behaviors (as smoking, alcohol use, etc.) as well as promoting healthy consumption through fiscal and marketing policies.

96. The Dental Health Care Screening Program for children aged 6–14 years in schools and the National Program for Children’s Vision Care for age group form 0–14 were also piloted (see paras. 62 and 63).

97. National Action Plan against human trafficking 2021–2023,<sup>33</sup> stands as a cross sectorial strategy that has a renewed focus on women and children.

98. National Strategy for Culture, 2019–2025, with DCM No. 903 from 2019 introduced “Arts and Crafts in the Curriculum of Pre-University Education” aiming to increase pro-social cultural/community orientation among children and adolescents and transforming schools into centers of community life beyond the school curriculum. GoA will commit up to 5 million USD for the programme implementation.

99. The new Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030 to be approved, provides measures to include students from Roma and Egyptian community and those with disability in vocational education.

100. [National Official Statistics Programme 2022–2026](#) comprises the strategic plan for the development of official statistics and Statistical System, that meet quality standards. For the first time, children/adolescent and youth related statistics are portrayed as a principal component of the social statistics. The annual publication of such indicators and conduct of Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) are integrated into the Programme.

#### **Reply to paragraph 15 (d) of the list of issues**

101. No new human rights instruments were ratified.

<sup>33</sup> DCM no. 670, date 10.11.2021.

## Part III

### Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

*Information for the past three years on the budget lines regarding children and social sectors*

As % of GDP	2019	2020	2021
Health	3,03	3,14	3,36
Education	3,3	3,3	3,1

*Source:* INSTAT<sup>34</sup> (values for 2020 and 2021 not yet confirmed in publication).

102. Ministry of Culture invested 791,738 ALL in 2022 to cover 212 culture activities for children at municipal level, where participation of 8,034 children was enabled. Planned National Children's Center, with a radius of about 4500 m<sup>2</sup>,<sup>1</sup> is expected to cost about 1.6 billion ALL.

103. Funding for vocational education is expected to increase from 260 million ALL in 2022, to 288 million ALL, mostly for scholarships and free box benefiting the most vulnerable.

### Replies to paragraphs 17–20 of the list of issues

#### *Statistical data*

The data provided by General Prosecution Office, shows a general increase in cases of violence against children investigated in the first nine months compared to previous years. The cases of domestic violence, which involves child witnesses were increasing (in 2020: 3.6 % involve child victims,<sup>6</sup> 2021: 5.3% and in the 9-month period of 2022, they were 8.96 %), with a significant increase in the number of cases of child victims of domestic violence, with 147% increase in the first 9th months of 2022 (102 cases), compared to the same period in 2021 (42 cases in the first 9 months of 2022).

#### **Statistical data for the 9-month period of 2022**

Criminal offense	9-months period of 2022				
	No. of recorded proceedings	No. of proceedings in trial	No. of defendants recorded	No. of defendants in trial	No. of convicted defendants
Homicide because of family relations Article 79/c	10	9	11	15	5
Domestic violence Article 130/a	1139	721	910	779	532
Trafficking in adult persons Article 110/a	7	0	0	2	7
Sexual crimes Articles 100-108/a	105	54	68	61	41
The exploitation of prostitution Article 114	21	4	8	6	6
128/b “Trafficking of minors”	1	0	0	0	1
Coercion or obstruction of cohabitating, concluding or dissolving a marriage Article 130	6	0	2	0	0

*Source:* General Prosecution Office.

104. For more data refer to annex 1.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/10320/shqiperia-ne-shifra-2021.pdf>.

### Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

105. This has been accomplished in the framework of planning, monitoring and reporting the NACR 2016–2020 and NACRP 2021–2026, were SDG goals and indicators have been integrated to the widest extent possible.

### Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

#### *Data collected or other new developments.*

106. In the recently approved (March 2022) National Official Statistics Programme 2022–2026<sup>35</sup> for the first time, children/adolescent and youth related statistics are portrayed as a principal component of the social statistics. The annual publication of such indicators and the conduct of Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) are part of Programme’s commitment for which the financial resources as expected to be allocated by GoA in 2024 budget. This will provide the opportunity to produce national representative and international comparable data, including SDG related and on various domains, including mental health, disability, etc.

107. SACRP developed and regularly updates the online statistical platform.<sup>36</sup> It provides statistical information<sup>37</sup> on the realization of children’s rights as well as the protection of children from violence, abuse, and exploitation for the period 2017–2021.

108. The National Electronic Register of Social Care Services (NERSCS) is made functional in context of digitalizing Social Care Services (SCS) reform. NERSCS enables the administration (identification, referral, intervention and monitoring) of social care services and enables real-time information on the referral and management of cases.

109. The Socrates system administered by the Educational Services Center provides data on education, and collects info also on profile of families, such as children with divorced parents, with disabilities, Roma, Egyptians, etc.

110. Pursuant to various orders/instructions<sup>38</sup> Integrated Juvenile Criminal Justice Data System registered 187 active users in June 2022. Training on the system is progressively being extended to all responsible professionals’ part of State Police, District Prosecution office, IEVP Kavaje, district and Appeal courts, district probation offices.

111. Mapping of the national regulatory framework and data management systems with the OECD standards for reporting crime statistics has been completed by INSTAT and justice system institutions. Steps will be taken to reach actual alignment in reporting.

### Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues

112. The following are some of the priority areas:

- (a) Achieve legislative alignment with EU Acquis on the Rights of the Child and policy alignment by 2026;
- (b) Updating legal framework to safeguard child rights in alternative care (2026);
- (c) Improve online safety for children’s policies, focusing on smart use of digital equipment and online safety and security by 2024;
- (d) Child participation in reporting related to policy implementation to be further improved by 2023;
- (e) Support for unemployed women with three or more children in January 2023;

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/9910/psz-2022-2026.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> <http://statistikafemijet.gov.al/#tregesit>.

<sup>37</sup> VKM. No. 636, dated 26.10.2018 (amended) “For determining the types, the way of exchanging and processing information and statistical data”.

<sup>38</sup> Order of the Minister of Justice no. 623 dated 05.11.2021, “On the establishment of the Working Group on the operation of the Integrated Data System of the Criminal Justice for Children”; Order of State Police no. 513 dated 04.06.2021; General Prosecutor’s Order No. 124, dated 24.09.2020.

- (f) Establishment of specialized child friendly sessions in every court and prosecution office by 2024;
- (g) Ensure full use of the Integrated Justice for Children Data System by 2026;
- (h) Increase the number of children obtaining free legal aid in both criminal and civil proceeding.

## Annex 1

In country available indicator	Source	2019	2020	2021	2022
Birth registered in the country and abroad	Ministry of Interior	51 181	44 941	51 102	
Out of above, delayed birth registration	Ministry of Interior	530	481	274	
Cases (children) managed by CPWs	SACRP	2 449	2 193	2 389	1 380 (until sept.)
New cases managed by CPWs	SACRP	1 078	1 020	1 047	239
Cases closed by CPWs	SACRP <a href="http://statistikafemijet.gov.al/">http://statistikafemijet.gov.al/</a>	546	530	470	133
Children victims and potential victims of labour and sexual exploitation	Ministry of Interior	55	49	84	
Married girls and boys before the age of 18	General Civil Registry Directorate Men and women 2022, 2021	20	16	19	
At risk of poverty rate by age groups and sex (in %)	SILC Survey INSTAT <a href="http://www.silc-international.org">Income and living conditions in Albania</a>	29.7	28.4	28.5	
Children in centers with residential care (public and non-public))	General Directorate of State Social Services		521	477	451
Children in formal foster/kinship care	General Directorate of State Social Services	335	374	364	344
Children with disabilities part of the financial assistance	General Directorate of State Social Services		15 685	15 181	14 581
Children with disabilities in residential institutions (public)	General Directorate of State Social Services		71	54	50
Children 9–17 alleged offenders	General Directorate of State Police	1 337	3 308	1 940	
Children 14–17 detained (Pre-sentence)	General Directorate of Prisons	19	20	18	
Children 14–17 imprisoned	General Directorate of Prisons	4	1	1	