



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports
submitted by Croatia under article 44 of the
Convention, due in 2019*, ****

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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



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1 Introduction

1. The Republic of Croatia (RC) submits the *Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report of the Republic of Croatia pursuant to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Report), which contains answers to the *List of issues prior to the submission of the Consolidated Fifth and Sixth Report of the Republic of Croatia (CRC/C/HRV/QPR/5-6)* sent to RC by United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.
2. The Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP) established the Working Group¹ for drafting the Report, and coordinated the collection of information for the preparation of this Report.
3. The Report covers 2014 - 2018, including most significant data until submission of the Report.
4. Terms used in this Report, regardless whether they're used in masculine or feminine gender, equally encompass both. All amounts expressed in Croatian kuna, unless otherwise noted.
5. Abbreviations and additional statistical data are available in the Annex.

2. Legislation, policies and programs

Reply to paragraph 2 (a) of the list of issues prior to reporting CRC/C/HRV/QPR/5-6

6. In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Croatia (GRC) adopted the National Strategy for Children's Rights in RC 2014/2020² (NSCR) and Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia 2014/2020.³
7. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure⁴ was ratified in 2017. The implementation of the Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Act⁵ is in force since 2019.
8. The Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence⁶ entered into force in 2018.
9. The Family Act⁷ (FA), adopted in 2015, was harmonized with the Directives of the European Parliament (EP) and Council of the European Union (Council), the implementation of viewpoints and instructions of the European Court of Human Rights, normative assumptions for complying with internationally accepted documents and application of international legal standards was ensured.
10. The Social Welfare Act⁸ (SWA) was amended and supplemented in 2015 and 2017. The new SWA is being drafted, which provides improvements regarding exercise of rights (benefits and services) and improvement of living standards for children and families.
11. The new Foster Care Act⁹ is in force since 2018. Legislation was improved concerning allowances (amendments to the Child's Allowance Act¹⁰ (2018) and the Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits¹¹ (2017 and 2020)).
12. The Youth Advisory Boards Act¹² was adopted in 2014.
13. The new Protection against Domestic Violence Act¹³ (PDVA) entered into force in 2018.
14. The new National Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence 2017/2022 was adopted.¹⁴
15. The Agreement on Interdepartmental Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2018) was signed, and a new Action

¹ See Annex for all Footnotes.

Protocol in Domestic Violence Cases was adopted in 2019¹⁵, which ensures an integrated approach and a more significant role of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and media.

16. In the field of combating human trafficking, a new National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking 2018/2021¹⁶ was adopted. The Protocol for the Identification, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking¹⁷ and Action Protocol for Voluntary and Safe Return of Human Trafficking Victims¹⁸ were adopted in 2017, while the Protocol on Integration/Reintegration of Human Trafficking Victims¹⁹ was adopted in 2019.

17. Regarding international protection of unaccompanied children, a new International and Temporary Protection Act²⁰ (ITPA) was adopted in 2015, and a new Protocol on Treating Unaccompanied Children²¹ was adopted in 2018.

18. The implementation of National Strategy for Roma Inclusion in the Republic of Croatia 2013/2020 is ongoing²² (NSRI), and the drafting and adoption of the Action Plan 2019/2020 was started on the basis of external evaluation and with the financial support by the UNICEF Office in Croatia (UNICEF).

19. The new National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2017/2020²³ (NSEOPD) was adopted in 2017, the Committee for Persons with Disabilities of the GRC has been continuously active.

20. Regarding criminal-law protection, a new National Strategy for the Development of Support Systems for Victims and Witnesses in the RC for 2016/2020²⁴ and the Action Plan for the period until 2020 were adopted.

21. The Criminal Procedure Code²⁵ was amended in 2017²⁶, which implemented provisions of Directive 2012/29/EU of the EP and Council from 2012 on establishing minimum standards on rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

22. The Criminal Code²⁷ (CC) prescribes felonies of sexual abuse and exploitation of a child, and felonies against marriage, family and children. The new Protocol on Treatment in Event of Sexual Violence²⁸ was adopted in 2018. Article (Art.) 95 of CC (recruitment of mercenaries) sanctions a perpetrator who recruits a child for armed conflict or armed groups, which are separate from armed forces, or uses the child for direct hostile action.

23. The Anti-Discrimination Act²⁹ forbids any type of discrimination, and protection against discrimination is embedded in numerous national documents. The National Plan for Combating Discrimination 2017/2022 (NPCD) was adopted.³⁰

24. The provisions of Art. 114 of Juvenile Courts Act³¹ (JCA) prescribe that specialized youth police officers act in cases of criminal-law protection of children.

25. Pursuant to Act on Police Duties and Powers³² and accompanying Ordinance on Police Officer Conduct³³, a police officer treats children and felony and misdemeanor victims with special care.

26. The Ministry of Interior's (MI) Regulation on Internal Organization systematizes the post of youth police officers; from local to national level (Police Directorate).

27. The Action Plan for Prevention of Violence in Schools 2020/2024 was adopted in February 2020.^{34 35}

28. Regarding education; Amendments to the Act on Primary and Secondary School Education^{36 37}, Ordinance on Teaching Assistants and Expert Communication Intermediaries³⁸, Amendments to Vocational Training Act³⁹, and Textbooks and other Educational Materials for Primary and Secondary School Act in 2018⁴⁰ stand out.

29. Regarding healthcare; the Act on Compulsory Health Insurance and Health Care of Foreigners in Republic of Croatia⁴¹ (ACHIHCA), Medicinal Products Act⁴² and Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders Act⁴³ as well as the new Health Care Act⁴⁴ are underlined.

30. We would like to highlight the Adoption of the Implementation Act of General Data Protection Regulation⁴⁵ (2018), which governs child consent regarding information society services.

Reply to paragraph 2 (b)

31. The new FA was adopted in 2014. Following constitutional complaints, in January 2015, the Constitutional Court adopted a decision for the conformity assessment procedure of abovementioned Act with the RC Constitution. The execution of all individual acts and actions, undertaken on the basis of aforementioned act, was temporarily suspended by Constitutional Court's decision, and the FA from 2003 was brought back into force. The GRC of that time decided legal uncertainty occurred, because citizens were unable to achieve appropriate standard of family protection established by the FA from 2014, therefore it adopted the new FA in 2015 which is still in force.

32. The fact that a great number of children, found in RC, don't possess identification documentation is an obstacle and challenge regarding the protection of migrant children, which makes the process of finding or reuniting them with their families more challenging (depending on the assessment of the child's best interest). After a guardian is assigned to a child, and the child is placed in an open-type welfare institution, oftentimes the child voluntarily leaves the institution, regardless of decision on the child's status. Children often flee during the first days of accommodation to reach their destination, most often West European countries. Desiring to reach their destination, the children are at-risk of exploitation and abuse, which is pointed out to them during the accommodation and explanation of statutory rights procedure. However, regardless of the adapted and expert approach, and provided opportunities (such as submission of the application for international protection or submission of the application for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds) unaccompanied children have a plan on which country they want to reach and use the first opportunity to escape.

33. Regarding the protection of children in the digital environment, we would like to point out that the development of communication technologies and storage of incriminating content in virtual space, i.e. servers located outside the jurisdiction of the country in which perpetrators of felonies of sexual exploitation of children live, calls for the standardization of international legal collaboration between Internet Service Providers and law enforcement authorities. It's imperative to standardize duration for which Internet Service Providers are obligated to store data which is significant for ascertaining Internet user's identity, and conditions and delivery method to competent police services to increase the number of identified victims and detected perpetrators of such criminality, which especially impacts most vulnerable groups.

3. Comprehensive policy and strategy

National Strategy for Children's Rights in the Republic of Croatia 2014/2020

34. The MDFYSP coordinates the drafting of reports on implementation of NSCR and action plans based on data submitted by competent bodies of state administration (SA), local and regional self-government units (LRSU's) and CSO. The NSCR Implementation Reports were adopted for 2014, 2015 and 2016, and the Action Plan for 2017. Reports for subsequent reporting periods, and the Action Plan for 2020, are being drafted.

35. During 2014 and 2015, 181 out of 272 measures were implemented, and 213 measures in 2016.

36. The Work Plan of the Children's Council (ChC) prescribes monitoring the implementation of the NSCR and action plans, consequently discussions were held at the sessions regarding the progress and difficulties in implementing measures.

37. During the reporting period, the following effects from the measures of the I. strategic goal *Ensuring Child-friendly Services and Systems* stand out:

- The reconstruction of Correctional Institute Turopolje began through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) 2012 *Support to the Prison System of RC* project,

and activities were implemented for continuous advancement of competencies of all experts in judicial procedures. The courts have regularly monitored the implementation of imposed juvenile penalties, reviewed hearings and visited children in correctional institutions.

- The Ministry of Health (MH) and the Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH) report on activities of the National Program *Living Healthy*, provision of expert support and assistance to primary schools (PS) regarding implementation of National guidelines for student nutrition in PS, activities of Counseling Center for Proper Nutrition and Physical Activity, promotion of mental and sexual health at CIPH. MH has organized a palliative care international conference *Collaboration towards Quality Palliative Care* and *2nd International Symposium on Pediatric Palliative Care*, and has undertaken activities for establishing centers for coordination of palliative care in the counties, and continuous education for members of palliative care teams.
- The MDFYSP collaborated with the Brave Phone for Children on the project *Regional Departmental Center for Protection of Children in Southeastern Europe*, under which the forum on the decentralization of social services was held.

38. The impacts of measures of II. strategic goal *Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Children* are mentioned in answer to question 17, followed by 13, 15, 16, 28.

39. Under the III. strategic goal *Ensuring Children's Rights in Vulnerable Situations*, the following is highlighted: establishment of the website subpage on adoption for potential adoptive parents about whom the Center for Social Welfare (CSW) has a positive opinion, and who listed in the Register of Potential Adoptive Parents; adoption of *Protocol on Conduct During Adoption Procedures*, *Protocol on Competent Bodies Conduct in Procedures of International Adoption of a Child from RC*, *Foster Care Development Plan 2016/2017*; projects *Improving Standards for the Assessment of Behavioral Problems of Children and Youths in Care Homes in RC*, twinning project within framework of Transitional instrument *Institutional Strengthening of the Welfare System in Order to Improve the Guidance of Social Programs and Poverty Reduction*, call for proposals *Provision of School Meals for Children at-risk of Poverty*; implementation of expert guidance for senior students in PS and secondary schools (SS) who are alternative care beneficiaries; activities pursuant with *Operational Plan of Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Welfare Home and other legal entities which conduct welfare activities in RC*.

40. Pursuant to measures of IV. strategic goal *Ensuring the Active Participation of Children*, the following is highlighted: presentation of CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016/2021 by the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in collaboration with the Committee on the Family, Youth and Sports of Croatian Parliament; activities of the Network of Young Advisers to Office of the Ombudsman for Children (NYA); Union of Societies "Our Children" Croatia (SOC Union)⁴⁶.

41. Table 1. shows data on resources spent for local level NSCR implementation.⁴⁷

Table 1. Funds spent on NSCR by LRSU's⁴⁸

Year	2014 and 2015	2016	2017
Amount in kuna (HRK)	55,360,229.85	178,406,227.30	106,418,972.64

Source: MDFYSP

42. The City of Zagreb and 17 counties submitted data regarding expended resources, which also includes rural areas and islands (Table 2.), for the purpose of drafting the Report for the Implementation of the Action Plan 2017.

Table 2. Overview of resources spent by counties (2017)

County	Amount (HRK)
Brod-Posavina	16,500.00
Koprivnica-Križevci	92,219.00
Šibenik-Knin	109,000.00
Dubrovnik-Neretva	390,000.00
Varaždin	934,957.57
Split-Dalmatia	1,478,845.88
Lika-Senj	1,592,795.35
Krapina-Zagorje	1,765,000.00
Vukovar-Srijem	2,189,198.51
Zagreb	2,459,196.00
Karlovac	3,272,610.04
Osijek-Baranja	6,543,175.16
Požega-Slavonia	10,547,609.24
Zadar	10,627,620.59
Sisak-Moslavina	10,815,597.11
Međimurje	18,360,359.70
Primorje-Gorski Kotar	22,432,329.57
City of Zagreb	97,650,707.27
Total	191,277,720.99

Source: MDFYSP

43. The MDFYSP has been implementing the *Expansion of the Kindergarten Network* measure since 2018, in collaboration with local self-government units (LSU) based on *Program for Supporting Improvement of Material Conditions in Kindergartens*.⁴⁹

44. Since 2018, the MDFYSP has been continuously collecting data⁵⁰ from LRSU's on demographic measures and activities which it's implementing.⁵¹

45. The Ministry of Regional Development and Funds of the European Union (MRDFEU) collaborates and coordinates activities with LRSU's regarding preparation and implementation of developmental programs and projects, which involves encouraging the development of areas which are lagging, and the drafting and implementation of measures for island development.

46. The MRDFEU reports that the Island Development Program projects are co-financed through the public call issued to island local and regional self-government units to submit projects for island development. The projects aimed towards children are also financed through the abovementioned measure (kindergartens, schools, playgrounds, sport halls). Tenders for project proposals by associations on islands encourage active participation of CSO's, through which projects aimed towards children are co-financed.⁵²

47. With the aim of quality and systematic planning and fund expenditure for exercising children's rights at LRSU's level, during the following period the LRSU's will be obligated to prepare a *Children's Budget*, i.e. to submit annual reports on planned and spent resources.

National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013/2020

48. The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of Republic of Croatia (OHRRNM) coordinates the preparation of NSRI and action plan implementation report, and the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of abovementioned Strategy is also working continuously.⁵³

49. From 2014-2018, progress has continued in the field of education by including Roma children and students in all levels of the education system, which is evident in the growing number of children involved in preschool education/preschool programs.

50. The policy for ensuring conditions for full integration of children and equal access to education for Roma national minority members was achieved by implementing measures from the jurisdiction of Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA), such as the professional training of Roma assistants and expert associates in PS which was conducted for over 500 participants, expert meetings for over 700 teachers with the aim of achieving intercultural communication competencies and various other training.

51. One of the primary goals of the NSRI is the improvement of health of the Roma population, and reduction of inequality and gulf between the health status of Roma and the remaining population by ensuring the same level of quality and availability of healthcare. The MH points out that Roma, who have obtained citizen status, achieve right to healthcare pursuant with provisions of the Health Care Act⁵⁴ and Compulsory Health Insurance Act⁵⁵, in the same manner and conditions as other citizens. It's not possible to ascertain accurate data regarding health status and healthcare of Roma, because the data isn't kept by national/ethnic affiliation.

52. Regarding welfare; capacity building and employment of expert workers is ongoing in the CSW's with the largest share of Roma population.⁵⁶ Individual CSW's point out that Roma oftentimes refrain from declaring their nationality, rather they declare themselves as members of the majority population, which makes it difficult to apply the principle of positive discrimination and involve them in vulnerable group programs, and to keep records on them as members of a national minority.

53. The MI activities regarding the regulation of status (especially of persons of undetermined citizenship) and prevention of violence aimed against the Roma population (which also includes hate crimes), and violence within Roma communities, are ongoing. The difficulty of keeping statistics under ethnic affiliation presents an obstacle in evaluating the effectiveness of measures which the Ministry of Justice (MJ) is conducting, while important activities were also carried out by the CSO's specialized in providing free legal aid.

54. With regards to physical planning, housing and environmental protection, special attention is given to the legalization of illegally constructed buildings, and during the reporting period, the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning continued to (co)finance the drafting of documentation necessary for issuing decisions on derived status for illegally constructed buildings in Roma settlements.

55. Pursuant to the Report on the Implementation of NSRI for 2016 and 2017, the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia (SBRC) expended 49,482,185.25 HRK for the implementation of NSRI at the balance sheet lines of competent bodies and carriers of measures.

4. - 5 Coordination

56. The ChC, as an advisory body to the GRC, monitors the achievement of NSCR goals, coordinates work of state and other bodies in monitoring the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention), national legislation and programs, achievement of planned measures and activities.⁵⁷

57. The MDFYSP, which initiated the adoption of the new Decision on the establishment of ChC58 (2017), carries out expert, administrative and technical activities. The decision on the appointment of the president, vice president, members and alternate members of the ChC was adopted in 2018⁵⁹, and the decision on the appointment of the new president was adopted in 2020.⁶⁰

58. After the appointment of members and alternate members, the first, inaugural session of the ChC in its new composition was held, and *Rules of Procedure and Work Plan for 2018 and 2019* were adopted (Appendix 1 to the Annex).

59. Five sessions were held by November 2019, during which, inter alia, the National Ethics Commission for Research with Children was established, discussions were held on children participation in the education system, legislation regarding education, rights and possibility of children participation and decision-making in PS and SS, next steps regarding the development and priority activities of the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the NSCR* for the following period were contemplated, and this *Report* and *Report according to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography* were considered.

60. The resources needed for the work of the ChC are ensured from the SBRC, at the MDFYSP's balance sheet item line.

6. Allocation of resources

61. Despite budget constraints during the economic crisis, certain increases in SBRC can be seen regarding investments for children.⁶¹ Likewise, as follow up to the adoption of *General commentary no.19(2016)* of the Committee on the Rights of a Child, in 2018, the methodological manual was prepared which was the basis for the *Children's Budget – Projection*, drafted in 2019, which shows resources planned for exercising children's rights, legal basis, performance indicators as well as a system for monitoring results (answer to question 36 and the Annex).

7. Data collection

62. Disaggregated data is available in following data collection systems:

- Eurostat databases (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>);⁶²
- Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS) research (e.g. *Childcare Arrangements* from the *Survey on Population Income*);
- *CIPH's Registry of Persons with Disability*;
- Joint register of educational institutions in e-format (*e-Matica*)⁶³ which contains the most important data on students and PS and SS employees;⁶⁴
- Ministry of Science and Education (MSE) databases on schooling of Roma national minority members and students within the context of migrations;
- MI's system for statistical tracking of felonies, misdemeanors, and criminality against children;
- *Records on certain categories of foreigners* (data on illegal migrant children found within RC, who were illegally crossing the state border or illegally residing, third-country nationals);
- The databases relating to the resolution of status issues (regulating temporary or permanent residence; obtaining Croatian citizenship) of Roma members which is collected by MI pursuant to NSRI chapter IV *Improving the Collection of Statistical Data*;
- Publication *Inclusion of Roma into Croatian Society: Research of Base Data* which was published by the OHRRNM as part of the *Collecting and Monitoring Base Data for the Efficient Implementation of NSRI* project;
- Records from the police, State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia (SAORC), court, CSW, healthcare and educational institutions on undertaken activities from the scope of the PDVA pursuant to the *Ordinance on the Manner of Collection, Processing and Submission of Statistical Data and Reports*;⁶⁵
- Data collected by the MDFYSP on decisions on the appointment/dismissal of special guardians/guardians and accommodation of unaccompanied children;

- *The SocSkrb* information system (data on children who are beneficiaries of welfare system's rights and services, and measures for protection of rights and welfare of children within the purview of CSW).

8. Independent monitoring

Reply to paragraph 8 (a)

63. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children was granted use of commercial premises in 4 cities which met technical conditions for working with children and volunteers. 18 out of a total of 21 expert team employees are university graduates. A growth was recorded regarding planning and execution of budgetary resources (4,996,538.00 HRK planned for 2014, and 5,301,006.00 HRK for 2018).

Reply to paragraph 8 (b)

64. The Ombudsman for Children (Ombudsman) receives children's complaints and complaints on behalf of children. An average of 1,544 complaints for individual child rights violation were received during the reporting period; mostly related to personal, health and educational rights, on which basis the Ombudsman monitors that these rights are protected, gives recommendations and warnings, requests information on treatment and delivery of relevant documentation, communicates with competent bodies and institutions, parents and children who directly request aid.

Reply to paragraph 8 (c)

65. The Ombudsman annually issues several hundred recommendations in individual cases of protection of children's rights, and fifty general recommendations with the goal of improving the protection of children's rights. More than half are accepted by competent state institutions.

Reply to paragraph 8 (d)

66. Pursuant to Art. 4 of the Ombudsman for Children Act⁶⁶, the Ombudsman for Children acts independently and no one can give instructions or orders to the Ombudsman regarding his work. Pursuant to Art. 26 of the Act, the Ombudsman for Children and Deputy Ombudsman for Children are relieved from duty before expiry of the term, inter alia, if their activity report isn't accepted, or due to illegal, untimely, or unprofessional conduct of duties prescribed by the Act.

67. In the RC, pursuant to special Acts governing the scope of activity of specialized Ombudsmen⁶⁷, the issue of dismissal of an Ombudsman, before the expiry of his appointed term, in the event of non-acceptance of annual activity report, is regulated in the same manner.

9. Dissemination, awareness-raising and training

68. The criminal-law protection of children, children's development and children's rights from a psychophysical and sociological point of view, ethical treatment, protection and promotion of human rights, suppression of all discrimination on any grounds are part of the curriculum and programs of secondary and tertiary education of relevant experts.

69. The MI is continuously conducting systematic specialization of youth police officers through the *Specialist Course for Juvenile Delinquency and Crimes against Youth and Family*, one of the course modules is education on provisions and application of the Convention and corresponding protocols. In the reporting period, 4 such courses were held

at the Police Academy, over 15 courses and seminars related to other topics regarding protection children's rights. The Secondary Police School implemented the education program regarding criminal-law protection of children in the *Program of Basic Police Education*, while study programs of the Police College address the issue from a legal viewpoint. Training of police officers regarding suppression of racial discrimination, especially discrimination of Roma, is embedded in all curricula, programs, specializations and professional training. In order to sensitize the public, i.e. awareness-raising regarding importance of implementing the Convention and protecting children from violence, the MI is continuously conducting a series of national prevention projects whose purpose is to promote a culture of tolerance and non-violence and prevention of all forms of violence.

70. With the aim of interdepartmental linking concerning domestic violence and protection of children, 5 workshops were held for participants from police, justice department, welfare, healthcare, education, CSO's, and 5 workshops for police officers and judicial officials.

71. In 2014, the MJ and UNICEF implemented the project *Criminal-Law Protection of Child Victims and Witnesses* in 8 county courts, which provided training for experts. The program for adjusting the croatian justice system for children comprised of equipping 10 courts with latest audio-video equipment for recording children in rooms where they're interviewed by trained experts; more than 150 legal experts were trained; the facilities intended for meetings between children and parents in prison were furnished; *Manual for Experts and Judicial-Decision Makers Regarding Issues which involve Children Victims or Witnesses of Felonies* (2014)⁶⁸, guidebook *Collaboration between Experts in Working with Children Witnesses and Victims of Felonies* (2016)⁶⁹ and corresponding brochures *Preparing a Child for Court - a Brochure for Children*⁷⁰, *Preparing a Child for Court - a Brochure for Parents/Guardians*⁷¹ were issued.

72. Training courses, covering over 15 topics regarding children's rights, were held as part of the annual professional training program for expert employees of CSW's and welfare homes/centers for community services who care for children without adequate parental care, children with behavioral problems and developmental disabilities (DD). Training courses are held for CSW expert employees who are responsible for large numbers of Roma members, these educations contribute towards better work efficiency regarding Roma.

73. The ETTA continuously carries out education programs for educators from the field of children's rights and preventing all types of unacceptable behavior, and has organized over 80 education courses and expert meetings for educators.

74. The provisions of the Convention and corresponding protocols were implemented into education programs for teams from the healthcare system for the protection of mental health, prevention and outpatient addiction treatment, and in pre-deployment training courses of the Republic of Croatia Armed Forces (CAF) whose members are participating in international peacekeeping operations.

75. The education of students on children's rights is carried out through the Civic Education for Primary and Secondary Schools in Republic of Croatia⁷², where they're introduced to national and international documents and the Convention.

76. The education of children is continuously carried out through Children's City Councils, Children's Forums, etc. Ombudsman's project *I Know and Respect Children's Rights* (2018) is an example of introducing children to the Convention in an understandable way, through use of students' artwork which is published in the calendar.

77. Additional information available in answers to questions 16, 17, 18.

10. Definition of the child

78. The FA prescribes that age of majority is reached when a person turns 18 years old. A child obtains full legal capacity on attaining majority or by marriage before majority. A person who hasn't reached the age of 18 cannot enter into a marriage. Exception to the rule is conclusion of a marriage with court's permission which is given to a 16-year-old person if

it's established that the person is mentally and physically mature, and conclusion of a marriage is pursuant with person's well-being. The FA regulates the annulment of a marriage concluded contrary to presumptions on the existence and validity of marriage.

79. The FA prescribes suspension of parental care due to legal obstacles which occur ex lege if the child's parent is a minor. During the suspension of parental care rights due to legal obstacles, everyday childcare can be carried out by the child's parent whose parental care rights are suspended, together with the adult parent, or together with the child's guardian. Child of a minor parent must have a legal representative; the other child's parent can be a legal representative if he is an adult or child's guardian. In those circumstances the decisions regarding the child are made jointly by the minor parent and adult parent, or child's guardian. Suspension of parental care rights occurs ex lege, no judicial decision is required, but the CSW's decision on appointment of child's guardian is necessary if the child has no other parent. The right to exercise parental care regarding the ex lege representation of a child is activated through attaining legal capacity (entering into marriage if 16 or ex lege if 18 years old).

80. Pursuant to items 36 and 41 of *United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children* (64/142 from 24/02/2010), states must ensure that minor parents retain all rights arising from their double status; as parents and as children (especially taking into consideration the extreme vulnerability of minor parents), which is made possible through FA provisions.

81. The CC sanctions forced marriages through Art. 169, and it introduces the conclusion of illicit or forced marriage as a modality of exploitation in Art. 106, even when the victim is a child, or a person hasn't yet turned 18 years old. From the civil substantive and procedural law perspective, a child, who has acquired legal capacity before turning 18 years old, is legally capable and has the same rights as other legally capable persons.

11. Non-discrimination

82. The CC prescribes the following felonies: Violation of Equality (Art. 125) which punishes every type of discrimination, especially based on ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, expression of gender identity, sexual orientation; Violation of Freedom to Express National Affiliation (Art. 126) and Violation of Religious Freedom (Art. 130). Hate crime is defined in general part of CC (Art. 87, item 21).⁷³

83. The Felony of Public Incitement to Violence and Hatred (Art. 325) punishes public incitement towards violence and hatred (through press, radio, television, computer systems or in some other manner) against a group of people, or group members, due to race, religion, national or ethnic origin, language, origin, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or other traits.

84. The MI statistics on reported and detected hate crimes against children and minors show there were no recorded hate crimes against children and youths in 2016 and 2018, and 3 felonies were recorded in 2017. The Bullying from Art. 323a, Bodily injury from Art. 117, paragraph (2), and Threat from Art. 139, paragraph (3) of the CC, against a minor aged 17, because of sexual orientation.

85. The Anti-Discrimination Act⁷⁴ governs protection from discrimination in regards to various discriminatory basis over a wide area. The Act contains detailed procedural provisions which introduce special anti-discriminatory lawsuits and possibility of a class action lawsuit.

86. The measures from NPCD and corresponding action plan (2017-2019)⁷⁵, National Program for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013/2016⁷⁶, and NSEOPD were/are being implemented in this field.

87. As part of the National Program for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013/2016, through activities of goal 8 *Application of Anti-discrimination Act pursuant with EU acquis and Best Practices of Member States*, principle of non-discrimination was

successfully promoted through numerous seminars for judicial officials, state officials, educators, representatives from media and educational programs for children and youths.

88. The Foreigners Act⁷⁷ (FoA) forbids forceful removal of third-country nationals, including children, to a country where their life or freedom is endangered due to their race, religious or national affiliation, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, or where they could be subject to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, punishment, or a death penalty could be carried out against them, and to a country where they face risk of refoulement. Before the expulsion of unaccompanied minor third-country national, it will be established if he will be handed over to a family member, appointed guardian or appropriate reception facility in the country of return.

89. According to current regulations regarding access to healthcare and education, illegal migrant children are allowed access to education and healthcare in the RC. The abovementioned is prescribed in the FoA, and in special regulations such as the ACHIHCA⁷⁸, which states that in the RC the SBRC ensures resources required for healthcare of illegally residing foreigners. Furthermore, an unaccompanied child exercises the right to healthcare in the same scope as an insured person from compulsory health insurance system and the costs are covered by SBRC.

90. The *Common Approach to Refugees and Other Migrant's Health - CARE* project⁷⁹ was successfully completed, through which a number of activities were conducted, which involved CIPH, with the purpose of providing efficient healthcare pursuant with migrant's and refugee's needs.

91. The Primary and Secondary School Education Act⁸⁰ prescribes that foreign nationals illegally residing in the RC are allowed to attend primary education classes if they're housed in a reception center for foreigners, if their expulsion was temporarily postponed, or if they have a return deadline, for the duration of the term. In accordance with Art. 70 of ITPA⁸¹, unaccompanied children, children asylum-seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection are entitled to primary, secondary and higher education under same conditions as Croatian citizens pursuant with special regulations.

92. The RC efforts were recognized in the European Commission Report regarding implementation of Framework of the EU for National Roma Integration Strategies and Recommendations of the Council for Successful Implementation of Integration Measures in Member States.

93. On the basis of the NSRI, the MSE continuously undertakes activities in order to ensure access to quality education, including education and care provided during early childhood, and throughout the entire education, with special emphasis placed on preventing early school leaving and ensuring smooth transition from school to employment for Roma.

94. The annual reports on the implementation of measures clearly show that they're suitable for ensuring access to good quality and inclusive educational system in early childhood, the goal of the educational system is to reduce initial inequality and eliminate discrimination, as well as achieve significant positive improvements regarding the education of members of the Roma national minority.

95. From the abovementioned activities we would like to highlight the following: co-financing the parental share in the economic price of preschool education/kindergarten, co-financing preschool programs, ensuring the learning of the Croatian language for students who don't know it or have insufficient knowledge of the Croatian language, ensuring after school care, nature school/out-of-classroom teaching, graduation trips, summer schools, ensuring secondary school and higher education scholarships for Roma students, ensuring accommodation in student residence halls, co-financing literacy and training for adult Roma. The MSE co-finances the implementation of special forms of class (summer schools) in the RC and in the country of origin for students who are members of the national minority, and provides financial support to national minority associations.

96. In order to achieve and implement national policy measures for the education of Roma, the MSE annually ensures resources which amount to approximately 10,000,000.00 HRK.

97. The MH points out that the exercise of healthcare rights is established with the ACHIHCA for Roma with unregulated citizenship. It was not possible to establish accurate data regarding health condition and healthcare of Roma because the health and other data regarding the healthcare system isn't sorted by nationality. The 3rd measure Preventing and Suppressing Epidemics in Roma Populations is envisaged pursuant to *Program for the Implementation of Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in RC 2014/2020*. Prevention and suppression of epidemics in the Roma population.

98. The Act on Primary and Secondary School Education (2014) prescribes the inclusion of teaching assistants or expert communication intermediaries into the educational process as one form of providing assistance to DD students. The Ordinance on Primary and Secondary School Education of Students with DD is used to establish what types of difficulties the students with DD are suffering from, on the basis of which students exercise the right to suitable education programs and appropriate forms of education assistance. According to the NSRI Report, resources were ensured in 2016 for teaching assistants for 2,746 students, which represents an increase in comparison to 1,696 students in 2014/2015.

99. The inter-subject topic Civic Education (CE) for PS and SS in the RC is part of the new curriculum and inter-subject topics for PS and SS published in 2019, where special emphasis was placed on respecting and protecting human rights and suppressing discrimination.

100. The NSEOPD contains numerous measures and activities whose goal is early identification and provision of good quality healthcare to children with DD.

101. The MH prepared the Expert Guidelines for the Drafting of the Opinion of Health Care Workers and Psychologists on Establishing Conditions and Preconditions for Gender Reassignment and Life in a Different Gender Identity⁸².

102. In 2017, the Croatian Radio Television's (CRT) Program for Children and Youths started a specialized portal *Project Others* intended for school-age children and youths and their teachers, the project focuses on foreigners, refugees, members of national and religious minorities, socially vulnerable persons, elderly, Roma, members of the LGBTQ population, persons with disability and health problems.

103. Some of the more important national projects are: *I Have a Choice* (since 2012, collaboration between the police and Roma associations, CSO's and educational institutions); *Together against Hate Speech* (since 2017, with the goal of promoting a culture of tolerance and non-violence, as well as prevention of all types of hate speech as a socially unacceptable form of behavior, and ultimately the prevention of criminality motivated by various forms of hate); *I Dislike Hate - Say NO to Online Hate Speech* (2014-2015, campaign against online hate speech, with special focus placed on children and youths).

104. The MDFYSP continuously announces calls for the application of CSO projects aimed towards the protection of rights and/or raising public awareness regarding unaccompanied children, child victims of human trafficking, children whose parents are in prison or child beggars.

12. Best interests of the child

105. The FA is based on the principle of primarily protecting the child's rights and welfare. Parental care consists of the right and obligation to protect the child's personal rights; taking care of the child's health, development and protection, right to education, having a personal relationship with the parent with whom the child isn't living, as well as close relatives, the right and obligation to maintain the child and protect the child's property. The courts and bodies governed by public law, which conduct proceedings in which decisions are made directly or indirectly regarding child's rights, must primarily protect the rights of the child and his well-being. In all proceedings where decisions are made regarding child's rights and interests, the child has the right to be acquainted, in an appropriate manner, with all of the important circumstances of the case, receive advice and express his opinion and to be informed of all possible consequences of having his opinion acknowledged. In accordance with the FA, the Center for Special Guardianship was established in order to independently

represent a child in marital or family proceedings, as well as in other disputes, and during the conclusion of individual legal affairs where a conflict of interest exists between the child's representative and the child, and in the proceedings for the imposition of measures for the protection of the child's well-being, etc. In accordance with the applicable legislation and strategic documents, a child without appropriate parental care may be temporarily placed in a welfare institution even if, due to the specific traits of the child, it's not possible to provide appropriate protection in non-institutional forms of accommodation.

106. Subordinate legislation⁸³, protocols⁸⁴, and other documents also highlight the best interest of the child.

107. The ITPA prescribes that the body competent for welfare affairs will appoint a special guardian trained in working with children to an unaccompanied child who expressed intent to apply for international protection. An unaccompanied child is ensured accommodation in the welfare system. Exceptionally, if the unaccompanied child is a seeker of international protection and is over 16 years of age, he may be placed in the Shelter for Asylum-Seekers (e.g. if he is accompanied by an adult relative or if it's assessed that it's in the child's best interest), based on the opinion of the special guardian, where he will be provided with special reception guarantees. If doubt exists after a medical examination regarding the age of the child, the principle of the benefit of doubt will be applied pursuant to the principle of the child's best interest. The Dublin procedure will be conducted if it's in the best interests of the unaccompanied child to be reunited with his family members or relatives in an EU Member State.

108. The FoA prescribes that minors fall under the most vulnerable persons' category and that the best interest of minors will be taken into account during the application of measures for ensuring return.

109. The courts⁸⁵ apply the child's best interest principle in all proceedings in which decisions are made in regards to a child, and in which a child is a party to the proceedings, which allows for a more encompassing and better protection of child's rights because he is actively participating in the proceedings. Representation by parents is restricted only to those proceedings where there no dispute exists, and child support proceedings. In all other proceedings, the court or CSW appoints a special guardian for the child. The Courts also apply the principle in question in such a manner that they allow the children to express their opinions in all proceedings, and the children have the right to be acquainted with the proceedings in a suitable way.

110. The Act on Police Duties and Powers⁸⁶ prescribes that a specially trained police officer uses police powers against minors, as well as in cases of criminal-law protection of children, who is obliged to take into account the best interest of the child and his privacy.

13. The right to life, survival and development

111. The Road Traffic Safety Act⁸⁷ (2019) amendments are aimed towards improving the level of road safety and traffic culture, and ensuring safe and responsible driving for all traffic participants. The abovementioned Act stipulates stringent punishment of perpetrators of offenses which are known to cause major and most severe traffic accidents.⁸⁸ Increased fines are also stipulated for not using a seat belt while driving, improper transport of children in a vehicle, and improper use of a cellphone while driving.

112. The MI focuses its activities towards monitoring and penalizing drivers under the influence of alcohol, failing to obey the speed limit, not using a seat belt, improper use of a cell phone, and also collaborates with the Roda Association regarding the secure placement of a child in a car seat and transport of children.

113. The Ordinance on Traffic Signs, Signalization and Equipment on the Roads⁸⁹ prescribes the type, meaning, shape, color, dimensions and placement of traffic signs, signalization and equipment on the roads. Horizontal and vertical signalization, speed bumps, traffic enforcement cameras, pedestrian crossings and devices for slowing down traffic are placed in the vicinity of PS and SS, and fall under road infrastructure which contributes to

children safety. Before the start of each school year (SY), the traffic signalization in school zones is inspected, renewed and supplemented.

114. The Road Traffic Safety Act⁹⁰ stipulates that educational programs must include content whose goal is to ensure safe participation in traffic, and promote and improve the level of traffic culture, starting with preschool institutions.

115. On the basis of the National Program for Road Traffic Safety RC 2011/2020, a number of police preventive projects are being conducted, which are aimed towards the safety of children in traffic, as well as educational activities.⁹¹

14. Respect for the views of the child

116. The FA prescribes that parents are obliged to respect the views of the child. The child is entitled to: express his views in all proceedings concerning his rights and interests, unless the child objects; be informed, in an appropriate manner, regarding all important circumstances of the case and possible consequences; a special guardian in all proceedings concerning his rights and interests. The child's opinion is obtained during court proceedings, exceptionally the child may express his opinion in the presence or with the support of an expert, if it's necessary under the circumstances of the case.

117. The Ordinance on the Manner of Obtaining a Child's Opinion⁹² specifically prescribes the manner in which the child provides his opinion before the court. A child who has turned 12 years of age gives his consent for adoption, and a child under the age of 12 gives his opinion on the adoption. A child who has turned 14 years of age has the right to independently participate in all proceedings before competent bodies and independently initiate proceedings (partial legal capacity) in which decisions are made regarding his personal and property rights and interests, present facts, propose evidence, submit legal remedies and undertake other actions in the proceedings, by a decision of the body which is conducting the proceeding; to oppose enforcement for the realization of personal relationship between parents and the child, gives his consent for the conduct of the paternity proceedings, consent for the partial or complete exercise of parental rights by the person who takes care of the child; independently decide on the choice or change of religious affiliation.

118. The Judicial Academy (JA) holds seminars and workshops with the goal of educating judges, state attorneys, advisors and other associates in the justice system on topics regarding the application of relevant legislation.⁹³

119. The right to child participation is one of the strategic goals of the NSCR, and a participative approach was applied while preparing the Strategy by having children participate in work group activities, focus groups and workshops, and it will also be applied during the preparation of the new strategic document. On the occasion of marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention, with the aim of promoting the participation of children in process of making decisions which impact their lives, a joint session was held which was attended by children and members of parliament in collaboration with UNICEF, SOC Union and the Ombudsman.

120. Discussions were held at the sessions of the ChC regarding children participation in the education system, as well as the research results regarding this topic which was conducted by scientists from the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb (FERS) during 2017 and 2018.

121. Collaboration with the CSO's is conducted on a continuous basis by providing financial support for projects aimed towards the active participation of children in society. The activities of the SOC Union, kindergartens and children's forums are highlighted as an example of good practice, they contribute towards the participation of children and parents in the local community.

122. A Student Council is active in PS and SS which is comprised of students from each class. Student Council's representative participates in the work of the school's bodies when decisions are made regarding student's rights and obligations; the representative has no decision-making rights.

123. The RC National Student Council represents the interests of all students, proposes measures for the improvement of school conditions, provides proposals for the improvement of laws and ordinances, as well as other important suggestions.

124. When the expert-pedagogic supervision and expert-advisory visits are conducted in schools, if they're related to concerns regarding children's rights, the ETTA also conducts interviews with children and their opinions are taken into account when preparing findings and reports.

125. Youths, who are 15 years of age, can run for Youth Councils and LRSU's advisory bodies, which enable youths to participate in the decision-making process and proceedings, which in turn allows them to advocate their needs and interests.

126. The representatives of the competent BSA's, scientific institutions, CSO's and children participate in the work of the Children's Participation Advisory Board, which was established by UNICEF⁹⁴, and whose work is monitored by the ChC.

127. The NYA continuously participates in activities related to the prevention of bullying, protection of rights of children whose parents are in prison, impact of poverty on the youngest children, and other activities whose aim is to participate in the creation of public policies for children.

15. Nationality

128. The acquisition of Croatian citizenship is prescribed with the Croatian Citizenship Act.⁹⁵ The Act contains fundamental standards of European legislation, expressed in the principles of legal continuity of citizenship, equality of marital, extra-marital and adopted children, and prevention of statelessness. The origin principle - *ius sanguinis* (blood ties) is the fundamental principle for acquiring citizenship.

129. The entry of children into the Register of Birth Certificates, as well as the acquisition of Croatian citizenship by grounds of origin and by being born in the territory of the RC, falls under the jurisdiction of the State Administration Office, or the City Office of the City of Zagreb in charge of general administrative affairs. A child born in the territory of RC acquires Croatian citizenship by grounds of origin if one of his parents is a Croatian citizen. A child who is a foreign citizen or stateless, who was adopted by Croatian citizens, acquires Croatian citizenship by grounds of origin. Children born abroad whose one parent, at the moment of birth, is a Croatian citizen, can acquire Croatian citizenship by grounds of origin until they're 18 years of age, regardless if they have foreign citizenship.

130. The application of the principle of child's best interest is best expressed through the avoidance of statelessness - a child born or found in the territory of RC acquires Croatian citizenship if both of his parents are unknown, of unknown citizenship or stateless.

131. The acquisition of Croatian citizenship by naturalization falls under jurisdiction of the MI. A minor acquires Croatian citizenship (Art. 13 of abovementioned Act) by naturalization if both of his parents are acquiring citizenship by naturalization; or if only one parent is acquiring citizenship by naturalization, and the child is living in the RC and is authorized to stay; or if only one parent is acquiring citizenship by naturalization, and other is stateless or of unknown citizenship, and the child is living abroad. It should be pointed out that the only criteria for accepting a minor into Croatian citizenship is fulfillment of prescribed legal presumptions, regardless of their national, religious, ethnic, social, cultural or other affiliation.

132. In the reporting period, 195 requests for acquiring Croatian citizenship were positively resolved under the Act (Art. 13).

133. In Croatian citizenship acquisition proceedings, the MI provides all of the necessary legal aid and special care for priority and legal conclusion of the administrative proceedings for the acquisition of Croatian citizenship for persons who have declared themselves to be members of the Roma national minority. The majority of Roma in the RC acquired Croatian citizenship under various legal grounds, most commonly by grounds of origin.

134. The NSRI approaches status issues with the general goal *Completely (100%) regulated status pursuant with legal framework (citizenship or permanent residency) of Roma who have a strong connection to the RC (or former FRC) until 2020, with significant support from competent bodies*, or 3 special goals: To establish, with the help of mobile teams, the number of persons with significant difficulties regarding their status in the RC; To raise awareness and to encourage members of Roma community to fully cooperate in proceedings for resolving their status; To establish mechanisms for faster and more efficient resolution of status issues of Roma in RC. Measures and activities undertaken so far for promoting the position of Roma have achieved significant and positive changes.

16. Access to appropriate information

135. A budget decrease for the children's television production of CRT was noted in comparison to 2015, in a ratio of 26.92%. This occurred for a number of reasons, from editorial policies to the fact that some children's shows started in 2015, so their expenditure in their nascent year was greater than the following year, due to the fact that the sets were already in place and similar.⁹⁶

136. Pursuant to the Electronic Media Act⁹⁷ and Ordinance of the Fund for Promoting Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media⁹⁸, resources from the Fund for the Production and Publication of Audiovisual and Radio Programs are awarded to local level TV and/or radio broadcasters, non-profit TV and/or radio broadcasters, and non-profit service provider of public and special interest, and which are especially important for quality children and youth programs in order to promote their well-being. The Electronic Media Agency annually publishes a *Public Invitation to Tender for Co-financing Activities related to Encouraging Media Literacy*.

137. The Croatian Radio-Television Act⁹⁹ prescribes the obligation of informing members of national minorities in their language, which also includes children's programs, (Art. 9 paragraph (2), subparagraph 6), adapting and broadcasting programs regarding children with DD, and translating the program into Croatian sign language (Art. 9 paragraph (2), subparagraph 7).

138. The curricular reform provides that medial literacy should be addressed in a number of subjects and inter-subject topics in primary and secondary schools.

139. The *CoE's Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment* which were adopted in 2018, were translated, published and disseminated to relevant departments through their representatives in the ChC.

140. In 2016, the Council for Electronic Media adopted the *Recommendations for protecting children and safe use of electronic media*¹⁰⁰ and awarded resources for implementation of children and youth program. Recommendations were made regarding the implementation of Ordinance on Protection of Minors in Electronic Media¹⁰¹ to assist media service providers in classifying programs with the correct rating, and parents, so they can choose appropriate audiovisual content.

141. Along with the Electronic Media Act, children's rights are protected with the *Code of Honor of Croatian Journalists and Advertising and Market Communication Code*.

142. The NSCR contains two measures concerning *Protection from Violence Outside of the Family and School, in the Media Space and from Electronic Violence*.

143. The CRT clearly stipulates that parental/guardian consent is obligatory for each recording of a minor.

144. The Personal Data Protection Agency (PDPA) was established as an independent body which oversees personal data processing pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation and Implementation Act of the General Data Protection Regulation.¹⁰² The PDPA provides expert opinion to competent bodies and institutions regarding the application of Regulation related to school and preschool institutions, which also includes publication of student's personal data on institution's website and on social networks, proceedings for the

appointment of a data protection officer in school and preschool institutions, etc. The Implementation Act of General Data Protection Regulation also governs provision of information of society services directly to a child, which prescribes that the processing of a child's personal information for provision of services can be legal under certain conditions and only if the child is at least 16 years old, and regarding younger children, the provision of services may only be contracted with the approval of their legal representatives. The abovementioned Act prescribes that the anonymization technique is applied to opinions and decisions of the PDPA, and correspondingly to the decisions by other institutions, which relate to children in order to ensure high-level protection of their privacy.

145. The PDPA developed 2 mobile applications which contain useful tips for children on how to act and protect themselves online and on social networks, the application is useful for parents, teachers, pedagogues and psychologists.

146. The portal *medijskapismenost.hr*¹⁰³ was launched as a product of collaboration between Electronic Media Agency and UNICEF, the portal hosts content regarding the improvement of media literacy, children's media skills, focused towards parents, guardians and teachers; media literacy days and other educational activities are also organized.

17. Corporal punishment

147. National prevention project, *Living a Life without Violence*, is aimed towards preventing domestic violence and violence against and among youths, and has been systematically conducted since 2010.

148. The MI has made it possible to report child abuse online via *Red Button*¹⁰⁴ application, in order to raise public awareness and facilitate reporting of suspicion of violence against children.

149. The 2-year project, *From Policy to Reality - Change of Attitudes and Practices from Corporal Punishment to Children Protection Measures*, started in 2016 as a collaboration between the Brave Phone for Children and partners from Latvia and Poland, it focuses on suppression and prevention of corporal punishment of children through training courses for kindergarten employees and parents, and through raising public awareness regarding legislation, dangers of corporal punishment and promoting positive discipline.

150. A number of lectures, workshops, and public campaigns are regularly held as part of the commemoration of *International Children's Rights Day*, *World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse* and similar.

151. Prevention programs that teach parents about positive parenthood and improve parental skills are conducted as part of Family Center activity.

152. Programs such as *Grow Together* (workshops for parents of toddlers) and *Grow Together PLUS* (for parents of preschool children with DD) are conducted in kindergartens, Family Centers and CSO's. Programs were developed in collaboration with UNICEF, national experts and participants from the field of children's early development. It was implemented in kindergartens in collaboration with ETTA and MSE.¹⁰⁵

18. Violence against children

153. The GRC adopted the fourth National Strategy for Protection Against Domestic Violence, 2017 – 2022.¹⁰⁶

154. In 2018, the Committee for Monitoring and Improving the Work of Criminal and Misdemeanor proceedings Bodies, and Execution of Sanctions regarding Protection Against Domestic Violence was established within the MJ framework.

155. The Ordinance on the Manner of Collecting, Processing and Submission of Statistical Data and Reports from the purview of Protection from Domestic Violence Act¹⁰⁷, which obliges the police, state attorney's office, court, CSW, health and education institutions to keep records on undertaken activities, gender, age, kinship or other relation between victim

and perpetrator, and children. The abovementioned bodies are obligated to submit consolidated annual reports on the number of initiated and concluded proceedings, or other measures conducted pursuant to the PDVA.

156. The MDFYSP announced 5 calls for application of association projects, in this field.¹⁰⁸

157. All of the educational institutions are applying the Ordinance on Educator Conduct in Educational Institutions Regarding Protection of Student's Rights and Reporting of any Violation of those Rights to Competent Authorities.^{109 110}

158. The MI is implementing the Prevention of Violence in the Digital World project together with educational institutions and others, the project is intended for PS students in order to prevent digital media violence.

159. Numerous institutions/organizations act preventively and provide support to families and children who are victims of violence.¹¹¹ *Directory of institutions, organizations and other institutions which provide assistance, support and protection to domestic violence victims*¹¹² is available on MDFYSP website.

160. The police give out child-friendly forms on victim's rights to felony victims, and a list of organizations and associations which provide support for victims and witnesses.

161. *Brave Phone for Children* provides a toll-free helpline for children (116111)¹¹³, available on working days from 9-20, and chat from 15-19.

162. The international festival of preventative-educational films on safety, *Blue Carpet*, was held in 2017, which was organized by MI; the festival was dedicated to prevention of violence, especially domestic violence.

19. Family environment

163. Establishment of family courts isn't planned at this moment. Namely, in RC all Municipal Courts and their permanent departments are competent to act in family cases, as this provides access to court for all citizens. It's possible to have judges at every court who specialize in family cases, and it's also possible to establish departments (as special organizational units) in charge of only such cases, if it's justified by their number. Applicable Courts (Areas and Seats) Act¹¹⁴ in Art. 4 paragraph (2), prescribes the jurisdiction of only three county courts, of 15, which can decide on complaints against decisions of all municipal courts in family cases (Pula, Split, Zagreb), which ensures additional specialization of judges for abovementioned cases. Also, it should be noted that the jurisdiction of certain courts in juvenile criminal cases is prescribed with the JCA so that youth departments, which are comprised of a youth council and youth judges, will be established in municipal courts at the county court seat and in county courts.¹¹⁵ A youth council will be established at the Supreme Court of RC. The Implementation Act on the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction¹¹⁶ prescribes exclusive jurisdiction of Municipal Civil Court in Zagreb for all international child abduction cases in RC in the first instance, and the County Court in Zagreb in the second instance, pursuant to recommendations on concentration of jurisdiction and judge specialization in these cases.

164. The FA provisions allow parents to mutually agree on child support through a Joint Parental Care Plan, which is confirmed by the court or through court settlement. The Act prescribes that CSW is obligated to monitor the execution of child support obligation and undertake actions due to non-payment of child support. The court is obligated to deliver the final decision or settlement on child support to CSW, which is obligated to inform in writing the parent with whom the child is living and parent who is obligated to pay child support about rights and duties, and caution the parent, with which the child is living, that he is obligated to notify the CSW if the person obliged to pay child support isn't fulfilling his obligation regularly, and inform him on the conditions under which the child has the right to temporary child support. The FA prescribes special child support enforcement proceedings due to non-payment or irregular payment of child support and avoidance of child support obligation, which is carried out pursuant to the Enforcement Act. Special insurance

proceedings are also prescribed by adopting temporary measure for the purpose of determining child support, prior to initiation of court proceedings in which a decision is made about the right which is ensured with temporary measure, in this case; child support obligation.

165. Right to temporary child support¹¹⁷ is governed by Temporary Child Support Act.¹¹⁸

166. The SWA regulates services of assisting and advising an individual or family provided by CSW, centers for the provision of community services and others. Family Centers are continuously implementing preventative programs aimed towards providing support to children and families at-risk, and programs for improving parental skills necessary for successful parenthood.

167. The MJ is implementing a number of activities to improve rights of children whose parents are serving prison sentences.¹¹⁹

168. The MDFYSP announced 5 calls for application of association projects in this field¹²⁰, and awards the *Family Friendly Employer* award.¹²¹

169. The FA prescribes that courts and bodies governed by public law, which conduct proceedings where decisions are directly or indirectly made regarding children's rights, must protect child's rights and well-being (answer to question 11).

20. Children deprived of family environment

170. The MDFYSP drafted the *Plan for the Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities which Provide Welfare Services in Republic of Croatia 2011-2016 (2018) with the Operational Plan for the Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities providing Welfare Services in Republic of Croatia 2014 - 2016*; and *Plan for the Deinstitutionalization, Transformation and Prevention of Institutionalization 2018 - 2020*. The First Plan encompassed measures for developing non-institutional services for children and persons with disability. An analysis was conducted in 2018 on the need for services at county level, and a need for developing non-institutional services for other user groups was identified (elderly, addicts, domestic violence and human trafficking victims, homeless, etc.), as well as development of preventative measures. Pursuant to 2018/20 Plan, measures are planned for preventing entry of users into institutions, responsible parenthood support programs, and measures for CSW empowerment regarding early recognition and ensuring necessary social services.

171. In 2010, 990 children (38%) were covered by institutional services, and 1,600 (62%) by community services; in 2016 the number of children covered by institutional services decreased to 665 (23%), and 2,182 children (77%) were covered by non-institutional services. In January 2019, 554 children were placed in institutions (18,6%), 2,423 (81.3%) non-institutionally.

172. So far, 3 providers of social services for children and youths were completely transformed by abolishing institutionalized forms of care, i.e. provision of accommodation services, and they provide non-institutional social services in order to prevent further institutionalization of children and youths, and providing support services within the community (organized housing service, residency services, counseling and support services for biological and foster families and children and youths after leaving care system). Following the completion of projects which are currently being implemented¹²², 2 additional providers of social services for children and youths will stop providing accommodation services and will focus on non-institutional forms of care, while other providers will continue providing temporary accommodation service in a reduced scope, and will develop/expand the network of non-institutional support services for children and their families.

173. A new Foster Care Act¹²³ was drafted (entered into force in 2019) for ensuring equal availability of foster care. The Act introduces the possibility of practicing foster care as a profession, compulsory insurance contributions are ensured, special obligations are prescribed for welfare homes and centers for providing community services.

174. In order to improve quality and mechanisms for monitoring foster care, various training courses were held for expert employees, educations and foster parents networking (for example through *Forum for Quality Foster Care of Children - Foster Parents for Children*), foster care allowance was increased for all foster parents, and living cost allowance for users regarding certain categories of children, *Every Child Needs a Family* campaign was conducted, and collaboration was established with UNICEF (National program *For a Stronger Family*) in order to standardize the assessment, licensing, education and support process for foster families.

21. Children with disabilities

175. Currently 18 homes for persons with disabilities are involved in the deinstitutionalization and transformation process, some of which provide social services to children with DD, and Individual Plans for the Transformation and Deinstitutionalization for 6 welfare homes for persons with disabilities were adopted, of which 4 also provide service to children with DD. With the aim of expanding the network of non-institutional social services, 5 homes are implementing projects funded through tenders within the framework of European Structural and Investment Funds.

176. The Foster Care Act prescribes specialized foster care to ensure that children requiring highest levels of support, i.e. child with behavioral issues, severe DD, or gravely ill child, have a chance to be part of a family growing up. The possibility of specialized foster care as a profession was prescribed for the first time; it can be performed by experts who have experience in working with aforementioned groups of children.

177. *The Commission for Early Childhood Intervention* was established with GRC's decision from 2019, with which the *Management Body for Early Intervention* was established in order to coordinate the drafting of National Strategic Plan for Creating a System of Early Childhood Intervention, and for providing support for the development of an Action Plan, guidelines, standards, and procedures for early intervention services.

178. *The National Prevention Program for the Early Detection of Amblyopia* is conducted since 2016 for all children until the age of 4. Drafting of the National Prevention Program for the Early Detection of Amblyopia 2018 - 2028 was started.

179. In collaboration with MDSFY, MH and MSE, the pilot project for the establishment of the first diagnostic center for children with autistic spectrum disorders was initiated in Osijek, where the National Framework for Early Screening and Diagnostics of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders for Children Ages 0-7 was presented in 2017.

180. The ETTA implemented, in collaboration with FERS and Faculty of Teacher Education, *Early Socio-Educational Interventions* project which identified students with behavioral problems in regular PSs.¹²⁴

181. The CIPH is conducting activities, in partnership with county Institutes for Public Health (IPH), within the *Living Healthy* project, which are aimed towards advancement of health literacy of educators concerning mental health of children and youths in order to advance early detection of mental health issues and seeking expert assistance. Initially, an analysis of educational staff literacy concerning mental health of children and young people was conducted through research.¹²⁵ Development of an educational program was started through findings from conducted research and examples of good practice around the world.

182. The Ordinance on Elements and Criteria for Selecting Candidates for Enrollment in Grade I of Secondary School¹²⁶ allows candidates with DD, who have finished PS pursuant with decision of State Administration Office on the appropriate education program, to rank on separate lists which include only candidates with DD, based on total number of achieved points ascertained during evaluation process, for educational programs for which they have the expert opinion of The Croatian Employment Service's career guidance service. Right of enrollment in an educational program is achieved by as many candidates with DD as that particular educational program can enroll, pursuant to *State Pedagogical Standard for Secondary Education*.

183. The Action Plan for **Implementing** the National Plan for Combating Discrimination 2019 contains, in the priority area *Education, Science and Sports*, Measure 1.5 *Harmonization of Vocational Training Programs for Children with DD with Labor Market Requirements by Canceling Outdated and Introducing Modern Education Programs* in order to increase the number of students with DD who achieved requested professions.

184. Notifications on adaptation of exam technology and, inter alia, experiences of DD graduates, are available on the *National Center for External Evaluation of Education's* website.

185. In order to support families with DD children and prevent institutionalization, we are highlighting the following social benefits: allowance for assistance and care, personal disability allowance, benefit for energy buyers at risk, transportation cost benefit, up-to-employment allowance and one-time allowance, and parent caregiver status. Parent caregivers are entitled to a monthly benefit and rights arising from pension insurance, healthcare insurance, and unemployment rights, as a person employed under special regulations. The following social services are highlighted: early intervention, psychosocial support, assistance with inclusion of children with DD in programs of regular preschool or school institutions (integration) and after school care.

186. Child's allowance in the amount of 25% of tax base, regardless of total income of household members is established with the Child's Allowance Act¹²⁷ for children with severe disability, and the Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits¹²⁸ prescribes exemption from work, i.e. a leave for caring for a child with severe DD and a right to work half your working hours in order to provide your child with more care.

22. Health care and health services

Reply to paragraph 22 (a)

187. Healthcare of infants and small children is ensured at primary healthcare level through healthcare of preschool children, general/family medicine practice, and home health attendant services. In 2018, pediatricians contracted at primary healthcare level provided care for 90% of children up to 7 years of age, while doctors contracted in general/family medicine practices care for the remaining 10%. Public healthcare service network defines the number of teams in the healthcare of preschool children, the aforementioned envisages 330 teams (281 teams at the end of 2018).

188. A medical doctor contracted in general/family medicine practice is entitled, exceptionally, to contract the implementation of healthcare from the compulsory healthcare for children up to 7 years of age, if according to the place of residence they don't have the option of choosing a pediatrician, or a specialist of general/family medicine practice. Under certain conditions a pediatrician is entitled to contract the implementation of healthcare from compulsory health insurance for school-age children until they finish PS.

189. In order to simulate medical doctors to work in primary healthcare, and in rural and less developed areas, by using resources from European Regional Development Fund; Operational Program *Efficient Human Resources* for the period 2014-2020, under the activity Specialist Training of Medical Doctors, a total of 5 specialties will be funded, which consist, inter alia, of primary pediatrics in health centers in targeted deprived areas with the goal of filling the vacancies of the Public Health Care Network. The abovementioned project will fund 5 types of shortage specialties in targeted areas, which includes, inter alia, pediatrics.

Reply to paragraph 22 (b)

190. Vaccination, pursuant to Vaccination Program, is administered by doctors in health centers or private contracted medical practices or school medicine specialists from competent County IPH, with expert support being provided by epidemiology specialist. Reports indicate that vaccine coverage of Roma children is almost identical to the vaccine coverage of children of the majority population, and list numerous local activities in this field.

191. According to the Vaccination Program, school medicine physicians hold educational meetings with parents of eight graders at the beginning of the SY and give them vaccination invites against human papillomavirus (HPV). Parents who fail to appear are sent vaccination invites via school or children, and a brochure containing invites for 9-valent vaccination is distributed, as well as informed consent forms for 8th grade students.

192. Public awareness was raised regarding the importance of vaccination via lectures on children vaccination program being held at expert gatherings and public forums, media campaign *Protect our Children*, by publishing brochures *Vaccination - Brochure for Parents* and *Vaccination - Brochure for Health Care Workers*, etc.

Reply to paragraph 22 (c)

193. The first *National Program for Protecting and Promoting Breastfeeding* was adopted in 2014. *National Program for Protecting and Promoting Breastfeeding 2018/2020* is currently in force, its goal is to increase the number of exclusively breastfed children up to the age of 6 months and increase the total number of breastfed children up to ages 1 and 2. Measures defined by the Program include continuous work on maintaining UNICEF's program *Maternity Hospitals - Friends of Children*¹²⁹, which was achieved by all Croatian maternity hospitals, ensure application of International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, initiate activity *Community - a Friend to Breastfeeding* together with coordination teams for promotion of breastfeeding in LRSU's, promotion of breastfeeding in units for intensive neonatal treatment, in primary healthcare, and implementation of various forms of education and creating social networks which will contribute towards a more successful implementation of breastfeeding.¹³⁰

194. In 2019, the MH sent *Instructions on Applying International Ordinance on Advertising Supplements for Mother's Milk, Patronage and Sponsorship by Manufacturers*.¹³¹ to health centers, maternity hospitals, expert associations of Croatian Medical Association, and associations.

195. Breastfeeding support networks were created within and outside the healthcare system jointly with CSOs, UNICEF and World Health Organization.¹³²

196. Pursuant to NSCR report, implementation of the *For a Child's Smile in the Hospital* continues, as well as activities from the Program for Protecting and Promoting Breastfeeding.

Reply to paragraph 22 (d)

197. All persons up to the age of 18, or until the end of regular schooling (26), who are Croatian citizens, or foreigners with permanent residence, may apply to Croatian Health Insurance Fund on the basis of Compulsory Health Care Act, after which they're insured in the compulsory healthcare insurance system. There are no differences between persons insured under compulsory healthcare insurance on the grounds of their ethnic, religious or any other affiliation. Healthcare is free for all children, even in the event of rights which are ensured through supplemental health insurance (surcharge for certain health services).

198. According to ACHIHCA, resources were earmarked in the SBRC for healthcare protection of foreigners, dependent on civil-legal status (applicants for international protection, asylum-seekers and other persons pursuant to content of abovementioned Act), wherein children have equal rights as adults. An unaccompanied child achieves right to healthcare in the same scope as an insured person of the compulsory healthcare insurance.

23. Adolescent health

199. *Living Healthy* program continues with the aim of informing, educating and sensitizing all age groups, including children, regarding positive aspects of healthy life styles - proper nutrition, physical activity, obesity prevention, reducing excess weight, and reducing morbidity from chronic non-communicable diseases. CIPH and other partners implement the project *Living Healthy* (ESF resources), *Dental Passport* (early detection of cavities), *Second*

Chance (HPV vaccination of SS students) and evaluation of the project *Starring in a Healthy Film* (healthy nutrition for students).

200. In September 2012, *Health Education Curriculum* was introduced into PS and SS which contains modules *Living Healthy*, *Prevention of Bullying*, *Prevention of Addiction* and *Sex/Gender Equality and Responsible Sexual Behavior*.

201. Each educational institution is obligated to carry out a semi-annual evaluation of school's prevention programs.

Reply to paragraph 23 (a)

202. Mental healthcare is implemented at primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare levels, and it's implemented by the CIPH, county IPH's and health institutions.

203. In order to promote and protect children's mental health, the Commission for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry was established in 2016 in order to draft the Strategic Plan for Advancement of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in RC.

204. In 2019, the MSE adopted the Decision on adopting the curriculum for inter-subject topic Health for Primary and Secondary Schools in RC¹³⁴ and a Decision on adopting the curriculum for inter-subject topic Personal and Social Development for Primary and Secondary Schools in RC¹³⁵, where work is conducted through *Domain B (Others and I)* on developing social and emotional skills which contribute to student's emotional adjustment and mental health.

205. Institute of Public Health "Dr. Andrija Štampar" implements protection of mental health through activities such as promotion, prevention, early detection, treatment and rehabilitation of behavioral and mental disorders, aimed towards the entire population, and towards specific, at-risk and vulnerable groups.

Reply to paragraph 23 (b)

206. Since 2005, the Program for preventing addiction and violence *Life Skills Training* is continuously implemented through teacher education, which enables them to pass it forward during class for students from 3-7 grade.

207. Measures and programs for preventing addiction and violence were integrated into the National Strategy for Combating Drugs Abuse 2012 - 2017, Action Plan for Combating Drug Abuse 2015 - 2017, National Addiction Prevention Program for Children and Youths in the Educational System, and Children and Youths in the Welfare System 2015 - 2017, Minimal Standards for Addiction Prevention for Children and Youths in the Educational System, and School Preventative Programs.

208. The MDFYSP continuously conducts activities in this field through public tenders¹³⁶, implementation of prevention programs with children and parents through the CSW, and contracts placement/organized living social service.¹³⁷

209. In December 2018, and during 2019, expert educations, organized by CIPH, were held for the preventative program *MOVE*¹³⁸, and regional education courses on preventative interventions pursuant with EU drug prevention quality standards. An expert meeting was organized in order to improve diagnostics and treatment of minors suffering from problematic substance abuse, and work has continued on the Project for Residential Treatment of Minors with Problematic Substance Abuse.

210. The CIPH monitors students' health by researching alcohol and drug use¹³⁹, and researching students' health behavior.¹⁴⁰

211. Regular control of the ban on selling alcoholic beverages to children and minors is conducted pursuant to Hospitality and Catering Industry Act.¹⁴¹

Reply to paragraph 23 (c)

212. Recommendations and guidelines containing measures and activity proposals for improving children's mental health, which will be included in strategic documents, were prepared as part of *Joint Action for Mental Health and Well-being*, whose project coordinator is MH, *Mental Health in Schools* work package and *twinning* project *Ensuring Optimal Health Care for Persons with Mental Health Disorders*.

213. Educational program *PoMoZi Da*, for improving health literacy of educators in schools regarding children's and youth's mental health, was developed as part of the *Living Healthy* project.

214. The *Croatian Committed Suicide Registry* is a state registry established in 1986 at CIPH.

215. In the event of a child suicide attempt or suicide case, police conduct a criminal investigation to ascertain whether it was connected to a criminal offense where he was a victim of or to some other violation of children's rights.

Reply to paragraph 23 (d)

216. Children and parents in PS requested counseling help for children and youths at the service of school medicine predominantly due to chronic diseases, learning, mental health issues, reproductive health and at-risk behavior, and sexually transmitted infections for SS students; the number of counseling center visits keeps increasing.¹⁴²

217. According to the NSCR report, in 2017, 5 educational workshops were held for 270 SS and university students, 3 national campaigns, thousands of posters and leaflets on sexual health and viral hepatitis were distributed, 50 video and radio spots, 5 television and radio shows were aired. Online content is continuously published, the mobile application *Sexual Health* and Facebook page *CroAIDS* is also active.

218. As part of the subelement *Sexual Health* of the *Living Healthy* project, the expert methodological materials for sexual and reproductive health education, educational brochure for adolescents on sexually communicable infections are prepared, as well as the education course for healthcare workers from county IPH.

24. Standard of living

219. In order to combat children poverty and social exclusion, activities of the Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in RC (2014 - 2018) are conducted continuously in places where children and youths were identified as especially at-risk groups.

220. Within the framework of the NSCR strategic goal *Ensuring the Right of Children in Vulnerable Situations*, a series of measures are conducted aimed towards a systemic approach to reducing the rate of child poverty, ensuring services from various social policy systems and including parents in various psychosocial support and assistance program with the goal of advancing parent competencies.

221. In cash and in kind benefits and social services are ensured¹⁴³, pursuant to the SWA¹⁴⁴, to support children and families at-risk of poverty.

222. The amendments to the Child's Allowance Act¹⁴⁵ from 2018 increased the income census as the condition for exercising the right to child's allowance (from 50% to 70% of the budgetary basis), which created conditions for expanding the circle of potential beneficiaries of child's allowance, and the birth grant received by child's allowance beneficiaries for third and fourth child.

223. With the new Foundation Act "Croatia for Children"¹⁴⁶, the purpose of the Foundation was expanded to include promotion of well-being and other content aimed towards children.¹⁴⁷

224. *The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived* earmarked 322.5 million HRK for 2014-2020, with 85% EU co-financing rate. Funds are used for 2 types of Calls: poverty alleviation of most deprived persons by distributing food and/or basic material assistance, and ensuring school meals for children living in or at-risk of poverty.

225. During 2016-2019, 71.36 million HRK was contracted through 3 implemented calls for *Ensuring School Meals for Children at-risk of Poverty* for funding school meals for over 30,000 children in approximately 470 schools. In July 2019, a call was published for the 2019/2020 SY with 25 million HRK total value. Up to now, 22 projects were contracted with a total value of 18.68 million HRK. The contracting continues.

226. In 2017, 98 projects and programs amounting to 11,600,000.00 HRK were funded through MDFYSP's call for application of projects aimed towards combating poverty and social exclusion.

227. *Poverty Indicators* were established and included in the welfare's information system; they are used for measuring poverty risk.¹⁴⁸

228. The Children's Budget¹⁴⁹ contains more details regarding funding children-related activities.

25. Education, including vocational training and guidance

Reply to paragraph 25 (a)

229. Since October 2014, the preschool program is compulsory for all children in the year before starting PS. Program content, duration and implementation is governed with Preschool Education Act¹⁵⁰, State Pedagogical Standard for Preschool Education¹⁵¹, and Ordinance on the Content and Duration of the Preschool Program.¹⁵²

230. At the Special Expert Committee for the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology session in March 2017, it was proposed that the number of preschool children in preschool institutions should be increased by 5% annually from 75% until 2020 to ensure preschool education for every child, and to achieve the rationality of constructing model preschool institutions (Feasibility Coefficients of National Pedagogical Standards). According to Eurostat data, updated in September 2019, the RC exceeded the planned growth rate by increasing the ratio of children, aged 4 until starting school, who are enrolled in preschool institutions, from 75.1% in 2016 to 82.8% in 2017.

231. By implementation of the measure *Kindergartens for a More Harmonious Life*, based on the call *Improvement of Services for Children in Early and Preschool Education System*, MDFYSP contributes to a more even distribution of kindergartens, and towards harmonizing and balancing of family and work life by introducing extended and/or shift work of kindergartens.¹⁵³

232. The MRDFEU and the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts secured resources from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for building, reconstructing and equipping kindergartens in rural areas, and capacities are increased annually.¹⁵⁴

233. The MSE prepared a call¹⁵⁵ with which a larger number of students, members of Roma national minority, will be included in after school programs, and transport will be organized from their homes to kindergartens/schools which are conducting preschool programs.

234. *Backpack (full) of culture* is a national supplementary support program for curriculum in kindergartens, PS and SS.¹⁵⁶

Reply to paragraph 25 (b)

235. The implementation of the experimental program *School for Life* is ongoing in 74 schools in 2018/2019 SY. A total of 134,960,044.92 HRK was secured for the implementation of curricular reform.¹⁵⁷ Total investments into Complete Curricular Reform

(CCR) amount to approximately 2 billion HRK (2017 - 2020), i.e. an average of 1.5 million HRK per school for textbooks, equipment and training. Through CCR II, 684,289,409 HRK was secured for frontal introduction during 2019-2022; these resources are used for ensuring prerequisites and implementation of CCR through professional training of educators, development of necessary tools, and frontal introduction of curricula based on learning outcomes.¹⁵⁸

236. As part of using ESF resources the MSE, through calls for submission of project proposals, has provided support for the inclusion of students with DD, has increased social inclusion and integration of Roma children/students, and has advanced various forms of literacy.¹⁵⁹

237. The activities *Polygon for Physical Activity of School-Aged Children* and *Daily 10-minute Exercise*, for students of 1-4 grades in the PS, were developed as part of the National Program *Living Healthy*, which implies the implementation of a multipurpose group of kinesiology aids to assist in the conduct of Physical Education classes in PS's without gyms.¹⁶⁰

238. The National Strategy for Promoting Reading 2017/2022¹⁶¹ and Corresponding Action Plan 2019 were adopted, the Committee for Monitoring Implementation of abovementioned Strategy was established.

Reply to paragraph 25 (c)

239. During 2014/15 SY, based on MSE's Decision on the Program and Program of Inter-subject and Interdisciplinary Content of Civic Education for Primary and Secondary Schools¹⁶², mandatory program implementation started in all PS and SS, the program covers topics, key terms and outcomes for each grade of PS and SS, which relate to 6 structural dimensions of civic competency (human-legal, political, social, cultural, economic and ecological).¹⁶³

240. The MSE and ETTA are conducting activities for advancing education of universally accepted values and human rights in the educational system by organizing expert meetings (for teachers, expert associates and principles), project reviews related to *National Program of Education for Human Rights and Democracy* (for PS and SS students), and supporting/financing projects of associations which are active in non-institutional education of children and youths *P1: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights*.

241. In 2017, ETTA published the *Report on the Survey of Teachers' Attitudes as part of project Instruments for Implementing Competency Framework for a Democratic Culture*¹⁶⁴, also available in English.¹⁶⁵

Reply to paragraph 25 (d)

242. New provisions of the Education in Primary and Secondary School Act¹⁶⁶ have improved the accessibility of SS education. Renewal of regular student status was allowed, even if more than 2 years elapsed after the interruption of education, in justifiable cases the SS student can enroll in same class more than 2 times, the student is allowed to continue education for a high-qualification level (student retains status of regular SS student for a longer period), and the education quality and efficiency of students with DD, who enter the system of vocational training, was improved.

243. The Ordinance on the Terms and Manners of Continuing Education for a Higher Qualification Education establishes terms and manner of continuing education for a higher qualification level for regular students.¹⁶⁷

244. Based on NSRI, the MSE continuously undertakes activities in order to improve access to quality education for Roma students, which includes education and care during early childhood, and during primary, secondary and university education, with special emphasis placed on prevention of early school leaving and ensuring smooth transition from school to employment for Roma members. In order to encourage the inclusion of Roma

children/students and prevent early school leaving, in addition to ensuring the learning of Croatian language for students who don't know or have insufficient knowledge of Croatian language, and provision of after school care, nature school/outside classroom teaching, graduation trips, summer schools and out-of-classroom activities, the Roma students also achieve additional points when enrolling in SS.

245. With the adoption of Regulations on Elements and Criteria for the Selection of Candidates for Enrollment in I Grade of Secondary School¹⁶⁸, the number of points which the Roma candidates achieve during enrollment into SS has increased from one to two additional points.

246. As part of the Erasmus+ program, ETTA participates in project *PEARLS*¹⁶⁹ (2014 - 2017), which was used to train educational staff¹⁷⁰ in order to prevent early school leaving and improve work conditions.

Reply to paragraph 25 (e)

247. The MSE is conducting, pursuant to NSRI, measures for co-financing parental share of the economic price of preschool education/kindergarten, preschool programs, ensuring learning of the Croatian language for students who don't know or have insufficient knowledge, after school care, nature school/out-of-classroom teaching, graduation trips, summer schools, secondary school and higher education scholarships for Roma students, accommodation in student dormitories, etc.

248. The MSE's Call Program, *Expert and Financial Support of Education of Children and Roma National Minority Students* encompasses activities for including a large number of Roma students into quality after school programs, and organizing transport of Roma children from their homes to kindergartens/schools which are conducting preschool programs in order to ensure conditions for the improvement of their educational accomplishments and a more successful socialization.

249. Extracurricular and out-of-classroom activities, workshops and joint work on projects, such as the *Citizen Project*, whose purpose is to develop a collaborative relationship by resolving common problems in the local community, are being organized in order to ensure the development of an intercultural dialog between students of Croatian, Roma, and other nationalities, ETTA regularly organizes national reviews as part of the *Citizen Project*.

250. In the Međimurje County there are departments where only Roma are educated, but this only relates to PS with a high percentage of Roma population (from 42% to 100% Roma students). The reduction of classes which are attended only by Roma members depends on the school network and catchment areas, ratio of the total population and Roma in the area, request of parents who ask that brothers and sisters attend same classes, and school criteria regarding equal gender distribution, children relationships and their interaction in the preschool program, etc. Schools which have departments where Roma students are educated, during all other activities all students participate together.

251. Projects in PS Kutina¹⁷¹ and Beli Manastir¹⁷² are examples of good practice.

26. Rest, leisure, recreation, cultural and artistic activities

252. The Primary and Secondary School Education Act allows special extracurricular activities in order to satisfy various students' needs and interests.¹⁷³

253. By financially supporting non-institutional sports programs, the Central State Office for Sports (CSOS) wants to allow as many children and youths as possible to pursue sport activities; this is achieved by co-financing sport programs and encouraging local sport and sport competitions throughout the territory of RC, and allocations for these grants are growing.

254. The CSOS secured resources for the Croatian School Sport Federation for programs which annually include approximately 120,000 students in sport activities. The most significant programs are the *Universal Sport School* and *Gymnasium*.¹⁷⁴

255. A total of 57 projects valued at 62.91 million HRK were contracted as part of the call funded by ESF, *Inclusion of Children and Youths At-risk of Social Exclusion, and Persons with Disability and Children with DD into the Community through Sports* (2018), their purpose is to increase the availability of free sport content for children and youths at-risk of social exclusion, improve access and participation of persons with disabilities and children with DD in sports.¹⁷⁵

256. The CSOS finances activities of the Croatian Paralympic Committee, which also conducts special program activities whose users are exclusively young athletes with disabilities, and Croatian Deaf Sports Association, which initiated the *Universal Sports School for Children* that brings together children through organized sports from the earliest age.

257. *Action Plan for the Implementation of the NPCD* provides activities for children who don't attend elective classes in PS between the first and last class of the school day in order to ensure quality activities in all PS.

258. Two activities are conducted that focus on organizing leisure time physical activity as part of the National Program *Living Healthy: Walking Towards Health* and *Volunteers in Park*.

259. *Backpack (full) of culture* has been conducted continuously since 2013.

260. The MDFYSP plans to publish the call *Play and Learn - Providing After-school Care Service*¹⁷⁶, and is preparing the *Children's Card* project.¹⁷⁷

261. The City of Zagreb is continuously conducting and funding a number of various programs.¹⁷⁸

27 - 28 Asylum-seeking, refugee children and children in situations of migration

Reply to paragraph 27 (a)

262. The FoA amendments¹⁷⁹ from 2017 stipulate that unaccompanied minors will be placed in welfare facilities, and minor's best interests will be taken into account during the adoption of any decision, as well as the needs of other vulnerable persons, family life and healthcare of third-country nationals against whom measures are undertaken. Art. 101 of the FA prescribes that minors fall under the category of vulnerable persons, and any return decisions are adopted on the basis of individual assessment in accordance with the proportionality rule, and all vulnerable persons have the right to free legal aid in accordance with Art. 117.

263. The FoA¹⁸⁰ forbids the forceful removal of third-country nationals, including children, to a country where their life or freedom are endangered due to their race, religious or national affiliation, particular social group membership, political opinion, or where they could be subject to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, or punishment, or a death penalty could be carried out upon them, and to a country where they face the risk of refoulement. Art. 110 prescribes that during the adoption process of an expulsion decision, except in circumstances from Art. 101, length of stay, age, health condition, family-economic situation, social and cultural integration in RC and relationship of the third-country national with his country of origin, will be taken into account. Also, existence of circumvention risk, prescribed in Art. 133, will be taken into account. Before expelling an unaccompanied minor third-country national, it will be established whether he will be entrusted to a family member, appointed guardian or appropriate reception facility in the country of return.

264. The Protocol on the Treatment of Unaccompanied Children was adopted during 2018.

Reply to paragraph 27 (b)

265. The FoA regulates human rights protection during the removal process in such a way that allows MI to conclude agreements with other state bodies, international organizations and CSO's. In order to ensure forcible removal, while respecting basic human rights of third-country nationals who are being removed, the process can be recorded. In that event the third-country national, or his guardian, will be informed on the purpose of recording.

266. RC ensures free legal aid during the return procedure in the form of drafting an action against the return decision and representation before the Administrative Court. Appointed guardian represents the interests of children in the return procedure.

267. Unaccompanied children, who are applicants for international protection, achieve the right to free legal aid pursuant to conditions prescribed in ITPA. Access to a special guardian is provided in all cases when an official ascertains that the person in question is a minor, and then immediately contacts the body competent for welfare affairs which will appoint a special guardian.

268. The FoA prescribes that CSW appoints a special guardian to protect a foreign national or a stateless child found on the territory of RC without legal representative, and that a guardian should be appointed to a child when placing him in an institution or foster family. A special guardian can undertake all measures to protect the children.

Reply to paragraph 27 (c)

269. Pursuant to *EP and Council Directive 2008/115/EZ from 2008 on Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third-country Nationals*, it's stated that minors and families with children will be detained only exceptionally and for the shortest possible time. In this regard, considering that the FoA was harmonized with abovementioned *Directive*, detention of children in exceptional situations is legally allowed. In that event the minor third-country national will be placed in the Reception Center for Foreigners (RCF) accompanied by family or appointed guardian, separate from other nationals, and separate accommodations will be ensured for family members which guarantee appropriate levels of privacy. If it's not possible to ensure separate rooms, due to large numbers of third-country nationals, the members of the same family are placed in RCF regardless of abovementioned conditions, and the European Commission will be notified on the commencement and cessation of conditions due to which the minor and his family, or guardian, will not be placed separate from others.

270. In case of detention, which is used only exceptionally, a minor can be placed in the facility for vulnerable groups¹⁸¹, and in the case of a shorter stay, in RCF.¹⁸² The facilities meet the highest standards for restricting migrant movement, which are established with CPT¹⁸³ standards and other documents which establish detention conditions, including families with children. As a rule, unaccompanied minors are placed in open-type welfare facilities (alternative to detention) which is regulated with the FoA (Art. 138 (b) paragraph (1)).

271. Some measures from Art. 132 of the FoA may be imposed on minors accompanied by family, who will not be placed in welfare facilities, which prescribes that handing over of travel documents and tickets, deposit of a certain amount of funds, ban on leaving a certain address of accommodation and reporting to a police station at a certain time are considered stringent measures (detention alternative).

272. It's possible to restrict movement of unaccompanied children who are applicants for international protection, if there are justifiable reasons as prescribed by ITPA. However, an additional criterion is applied to unaccompanied children which prescribes that the most severe measure, the movement restriction measure through placement in the RCF, can be imposed if it's ascertained through individual assessment that such placement is necessary, in that case the unaccompanied child is placed separate from adults and for the shortest possible duration.

Reply to paragraph 28 (a)

273. In 2018, the GRC adopted a Protocol on Treating Unaccompanied Children, and appointed an Interdepartmental Committee for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children in order to achieve efficient interdepartmental collaboration.

274. The FA governs the issue of guardianship regarding unaccompanied children, which prescribes that the CSW appoints a special guardian to a foreign national or stateless child found on the territory of RC without a legal representative, and the placed unaccompanied child is appointed a guardian to represent his rights and interests.

275. Treatment of illegal migrant children is conducted in the presence of a special guardian, or CSW employee who will take care of the child's well-being during the entire procedure, and will explain to the child what his options are, such as reuniting him with his family, the right to submit a request for international protection, voluntary return to the country of origin.

276. Welfare home employees care for the child's psychophysical state, mental health, socialization, leisure time and education; children are provided support for building a positive self-image, learning social skills, and assistance with integration. CSW expert employees monitor accommodation and childcare conditions, ensure resources necessary for child's subsistence and monitor the work of special guardians.

277. An initial health examination is mandatory prior to placement in welfare institutions or foster family, i.e. Shelter for Asylum-Seekers, and after being placed, the child is entitled to healthcare in the same scope as person insured by compulsory health insurance.¹⁸⁴

278. Efforts are invested into integration through education¹⁸⁵, and RC is involved in the *SIRIUS the European Policy Network on Migrant Education of Children and Youths from Migrant Backgrounds*.

Reply to paragraph 28 (b)

279. In the event of suspicion or knowledge of any type of abuse or violence against migrant children and asylum-seeker children, specially trained youth police officers conduct criminal investigation, whose purpose is determining whether offence or misdemeanor was committed against the child, they apply measures to protect the child, ascertain the perpetrator's identity and further prosecution. Child victim and his guardian will be informed verbally and in writing regarding rights they can exercise, with referral to Support Service. A parent or guardian will be present with the child during the police procedure, as well as another person whom he trusts, if the child so wishes. Police Departments were instructed to consistently apply procedures set out in applicable protocols.¹⁸⁶

Reply to paragraph 28 (c)

280. Pursuant to the SWA, an unaccompanied child will be entitled to temporary accommodation in crisis situations or organized housing service, and the unaccompanied child will be placed in the nearest welfare home, as follows: a) child under the age of 14 - a home for children without adequate parental care; b) child over the age of 14 - in a home for children and youth with behavioral problems. A child older than 16 can be placed in RCF in cases prescribed by FoA, if CSW expert employees assess that this is in the child's best interest, and the accommodation conditions are appropriate for the child's age.

281. The Foster Care Act¹⁸⁷ prescribes the option of placing an unaccompanied child into a foster family. UNICEF and MDFYSP plan to expand foster care to include unaccompanied children, and provide support and assistance for foster parents and children.

29. Sale, trafficking and abduction

282. *National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking* adopts programs, plans and guidelines regarding combating human trafficking and suggests improvement measures. *National Coordinator*, responsible for the *Operational Team* of abovementioned Committee, is a member of EU Network of NREMS¹⁸⁸, which builds on *Directive 2011/36/EU*. Also, RC is part of the informal network of national coordinators of Southeastern Europe.

283. The National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking for 2018/2021 was adopted; it focuses on providing special attention to strengthening criminal proceeding collaboration regarding human trafficking between SAORC and MI, advancing methods for identifying human trafficking victims and ensuring best interests of human trafficking victims. Protocol for Identifying, Assisting and Protecting Victims of Human Trafficking, Protocol on Conduct During Voluntary and Safe Return of Human Trafficking Victims, and MDFYSP's Standard Operational Procedures were adopted.¹⁸⁹

284. Child trafficking is incriminated through Art. 106 paragraph (2) of CC, and child trafficking by use of force is sanctioned as a qualified form of that act in paragraph (3).

285. All Police Departments and regional *Offices for Suppressing Corruption and Organized Crime* have police officers who participate in identifying victims and discovering perpetrators, and youth police officers and detectives are engaged if the victim is a child. Children enjoy special protection through guaranteed additional rights, such as representatives whose costs are covered by the budget, audio-video interviews, interviews conducted by same gender officers, and giving a statement, as well as oral and written notification on their rights, in a language they understand.

286. Experts were trained through various projects.¹⁹⁰

287. CSO's which are funded from SBRC manage two shelters for human trafficking victims (adults are housed separately from children). Toll-free telephone number 08007799 is intended for victims and citizens with information and questions regarding human trafficking; it's available daily from 9-18 and all information is forwarded to MI.

30. Administration of juvenile justice

Reply to paragraph 30 (a)

288. The JCA Amendment Act is in force since 1 January 2020, it's harmonized with *Directive 2016/800* regarding procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings. Principles from *Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE on Child-friendly Justice* were implemented into the legal system.

289. The JCA prescribes in Art. 70 and 71 that the State Attorney may, pursuant to Art. 206 of the Criminal Procedure Code¹⁹¹ (CPC), dismiss criminal charges and stipulate that the minor must perform special obligations pursuant with Art. 10 of JCA.¹⁹² Unconditional opportunity¹⁹³, i.e. conditional opportunity, is prescribed with Art. 71 and 72. Art. 66 of JCA prescribes that when conditions exist for pre-trial detention, pursuant to CPC, pre-trial detention will be imposed against the minor only as a measure of last resort.¹⁹⁴

290. The JCA prescribes the option of imposing precautionary and temporary measures, as an alternative to pre-trial detention. The court may decide that the minor should be placed in a welfare institution during proceedings. Temporary measures can last until the definitive termination of proceedings, but the court is obliged to examine the merits of temporary placement every 2 months, starting from the date of legal finality of the previous decision.

291. The *Stop Program*, drafted by the Association of Youth Judges, Family Judges, and Child and Youth Experts (AYJ), offers the option of replacing court proceedings against minors with voluntary humanitarian work, counseling, or social skills training. During 2012-2016, it encompassed approximately 100 minors. The program is still conducted in the City of Velika Gorica and the City of Zagreb.

Reply to paragraph 30 (b)

292. Educational measures may be imposed on minors pursuant to JCA¹⁹⁵ and Misdemeanor Act.^{196 197}

293. Current extra judicial settlement practice shows a success rate of approximately 80% for all cases, non-initiation of court proceedings in over 85% of cases, and satisfaction of victims and perpetrators in 95% of cases. Within 3 months 75% of the proceedings were completed, and the rest within 6 months. UNICEF organized mediator training in collaboration with former Ministry of Social Policy and Youths, Extrajudicial Settlement Association and SAORC.

294. With the implementation of the project IPA 2012 Support for the Prison System of RC, the “boarding school” facility (capacity for 48 minors) in the Correctional Institute Turopolje was renovated and upgraded and the facility was built which now houses the Diagnostics Department (capacity for 12 minors).

Reply to paragraph 30 (c)

295. In addition to basic courses, JA also holds additional education courses for prison staff which focus on working with minors, and has held over 70 workshops for other expert staff, and developed in collaboration with UNICEF a lifelong learning framework for judicial officials and non-legal expert associates who work with children in state attorney offices and courts.

296. AYJ annually holds 6-7 public forums which are used to educate experts and present new scientific research.

31. Child victims and witnesses

297. Victim and witness support is available through National Call Center for Felony and Misdemeanor Victims, Departments for Victim and Witness Support established at 7 county courts, which are also active at competent municipal and misdemeanor courts¹⁹⁸, through the *Support and Collaboration Network for Victims and Witnesses of Felonies* program in 13 counties which still don't have aforementioned Departments, and from the police, CSW's, and CSO's which provide psychosocial and legal aid. Police officers give a written *Notification on Victim's Rights* to victims who report a felony.¹⁹⁹

298. Pursuant to Act on Police Duties and Powers²⁰⁰, the process of obtaining information from a child must be undertaken by a specially educated police officer, usually in the presence of parents, unless there's suspicion that a parent has committed, or is somehow connected to, the felony against a child, in which case the interview with the child is conducted in the presence of CSW employees.

299. The Ordinance on Police Officer Conduct²⁰¹ prescribes that interviews with a child must be conducted in specially equipped and child-friendly rooms, and the option for a 16-year-old child to file criminal charges (in the presence of parents or a guardian).

300. Pursuant to provisions of JCA and CPC, if not prescribed differently by special act, an investigating judge conducts interviews with a child who hasn't turned 14 years old. The JCA, as a special Act, prescribes that if a child, against whom a felony from Art. 113 of JCA was committed, is interviewed as a suspect, and the child hasn't turned 16 years old at the time of the interview, the interview in question will be conducted pursuant to provisions of JCA on interviewing a child as a witness (Art. 292 paragraph (1) of the CPC). A person whom the child trusts can attend the interview. Children, as witnesses against whom the felony from Art. 113 of JCA was committed, may be interviewed at their home, or in another specially equipped facility, instead of the court. When a child is interviewed as a witness (pursuant to Art. 115 paragraph (2) and (3), the interview tape will be played at the hearing.

301. The interview is conducted, without the judge and parties present in the room where the child is located, through an audio-video device handled by an expert assistant. The

interview is conducted with the help of a psychologist, pedagogue or other expert, and unless it's contrary to the interests of the proceedings or the child, a parent or guardian will be present. Parties may ask the child-witness questions, with the approval of the investigating judge, through an expert. Questioning will be recorded with an audiovisual recording device; the recording will be sealed and attached to the file. The child can be interviewed again only exceptionally, and in the same manner (Art. 292 CPC).

302. The Ordinance on the Work of Non-legal Expert Associates on Youth Delinquency and Criminal-law Protection of Children in State Attorney Offices and in Courts²⁰² prescribes activities which persons who have completed university graduate studies from social pedagogy, social work or psychology conduct in state attorney offices and courts. We would like to point out the widespread use of forensic interviews (*NICHD*²⁰³ protocol) during the recording of a child witness interview.

303. If the felony occurred in the primary family, or was committed by members of the primary family, CSW will assess if the child needs to be promptly separated, carry out further proceedings, and suggest that court should impose appropriate measure for child protection.²⁰⁴

304. Healthcare services are provided pursuant with prepared needs plans for each individual child. Mainly this involves provision of psychosocial assistance from county IPH' services for mental health protection.

305. Significant projects and programs: *Enhancement of the Victim and Witness Support System Effectiveness in RC*, brochure *Guide through the Criminal and Misdemeanor Proceedings for Victims and Witnesses* (in Croatian and English), *Capacity Building Concerning Combating Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children*, and *Providing Assistance to Vulnerable Crime Victims*, through which police stations were equipped with child-friendly furniture and audio-video equipment for obtaining information from children, which was delivered to judicial bodies for child interviews during proceedings.

32. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

306. Up to now, the RC has provided reports regarding the field which is covered by provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, through various mechanisms, and certain aspects can be found in other reports, with emphasis placed on reports pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review.²⁰⁵

33. Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Reply to paragraph 33 (a)

307. Control of export, import and transport of military technology and equipment is based on common EU criteria, which GRC accepted by adopting the *Decision on Accepting Principles of the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports EU*. Pursuant to Surveillance of Military and Non-military Ordnance Act²⁰⁶, the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts is responsible for issuing permits for exporting and importing goods, provision of service and transport of defensive products between EU members and third-countries, based on prior approval by the Commission.²⁰⁷

The RC is a party and active participant in all major international treaties for non-proliferation of weapon of mass destruction, and treaties on arms control and disarmament.²⁰⁸

Reply to paragraph 33 (b)

308. Art. 95 of CC sanctions perpetrators who recruit a child for armed purposes, or armed groups which are separate from the armed forces, or use a recruited child for direct hostile action. If recruitment of children is conducted during wartime, pursuant to CC, it would represent a war crime.

309. Pursuant to provisions of the Defense Act²⁰⁹, Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia²¹⁰, Ordinance on Voluntary Military Training²¹¹ and Ordinance on Keeping Records of Conscripts and Performance of Military Duties²¹², the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and CAF don't hire or forcefully enlist persons under 18 years old.

310. Military service obligation occurs when the RC citizen turns 18 years old, and in that year RC citizens are entered into military records. The aforementioned cannot be deemed as violation of Art. 2 of the Optional Protocol, which stipulates that Member States are obliged to ensure that persons who haven't yet turned 18 are not forcibly recruited into armed forces.

311. Currently, there is no mandatory military service in RC, and in accordance with Art. 26 of the Defense Act, military training is conducted on a voluntary basis which can only be attended by adult citizens of RC. The same Act prescribes that no person can be hired by the CAF if he hasn't completed military training (voluntary military training, mandatory military service) and hasn't turned 18 old.

312. The RC has accepted the Declaration on Safe Schools, including Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.

Reply to paragraph 33 (c)

313. If the terms of anti-terrorist legislation imply offense of terrorism and other terrorist offenses prescribed in Title (IX) - Crimes against humanity and human dignity, child recruitment, regarding the offense of recruitment for terrorism (Art. 100 of CC), should be viewed as an aggravating circumstance when determining the type and extent of the criminal penalty.

Reply to paragraph 33 (d)

314. The MOD doesn't have or, more precisely, doesn't manage military schools whose enrollees would be children, but it does implement a scholarship program for students of senior classes of certain SS's, with the aim of subsequent employment with CAF.²¹³ But candidates/scholarship holders are sent to military training only after they turn 18.

Reply to paragraph 33 (e)

315. The MI has no record of a child who was previously a member of a terrorist or violent-extremist group, therefore it has no services aimed towards reintegration and rehabilitation.

34 - 35. Statistical information and data

316. See answer to question 6.

36. Statistical information on general measures of implementation

317. During 2014-2018, there was no national obligation to collect data from competent bodies regarding planning and allocation of resources for exercising children's rights (available financial data of individual BSA's, which have the most significant program activities aimed towards children, is in the Annex). Only by establishing the Children's

Budget on a national level will we be able to see planned and spent resources intended for children.

318. The RC drafted the “Children’s Budget”, according to which the ministries, offices and departments planned to spend a total of 18,672,145,750.90 HRK in 2019, and projections for 2020 and 2021 amounted to 18,945,828,798.32 HRK and 18,616,906,444.87 HRK respectively (Annex).

37. Statistical information on the definition of the child

319. Table 3. of the Annex shows the number, i.e. share, of children in the reporting period. In 2014, there were 769,942 children (18.17 share), and 723,552 (17.54 share) in 2017.

38. Statistical information on general principles

320. Table 4. of the Annex shows the number of suicides and attempted suicides. During the reporting period, 33 boys and 11 girls committed suicides. A total of 84 boys and 193 girls attempted suicide.

39. Statistical information on civil rights and freedoms

Reply to paragraph 39 (a)

321. Entry into the birth registers immediately after birth was not conducted for 810 children, of which 39 were of Roma nationality.

Reply to paragraph 39 (b)

322. Ministry of Public Administration doesn’t keep statistics on persons who have or haven’t been issued a birth certificate.

Reply to paragraph 39 (c)

323. Pursuant to *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings (2011)*, the number of stateless children is 116.

40. Statistical information on violence against children

Reply to paragraph 40 (a)

324. In the 2014-2018 period, there were 13,891 children victims of abuse, violence, including domestic violence, and sexual abuse. There were 13,237 complaints against adult perpetrators of felonies against children, 714 investigations, and 7,031 indictments (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 40 (b)

325. The neglect and abuse of children is statistically tracked by the police through the number of felonies from CC, whereby there are no special statistics kept on acts committed in institutions and alternative forms of care, as shown in answer to subquestion 40 (a) of the Annex.

Reply to paragraph 40 (c)

326. There were 569 children victims of punishment, humiliation, and corporal punishment pursuant to PDVA214, and their share, relative to the total number of children-victims, has increased from 4.4% in 2014 to 9.9% in 2018 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 40 (d)

327. At the time of this Report's submission, the MDFYSP has contracts with 9 providers of temporary accommodation for children and adult victims of domestic violence²¹⁵, and co-finances programs of 7 associations²¹⁶ whose activities include accommodation for women and children domestic violence victims.

41. Statistical information on family environment and alternative care**Reply to paragraph 41 (a)**

328. Total number of children separated and abandoned by parents is shown in Table 9. of the Annex, an increase is seen during 2016 and 2017 (5,640), compared to 2 years ago (3,587).

Reply to paragraph 41 (b)

329. Number of children annually placed in homes amounts to approximately 1,600, and approximately 2,200 are placed in foster families (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 41 (c)

330. During 2014-2018, 548 children were adopted (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 41 (d)

331. During 2014-2018, the number of children placed in welfare homes for children and young adults with behavioral problems was approximately 1,052 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 41 (e)

332. The MJ reports on number of children whose mothers are imprisoned, as follows: 2015 - 11 children, 2016 - 48 children, 2017 - 89 children.

42. - 43. Statistical information on disability, basic health and welfare**Reply to paragraph 42 (a)**

333. Data on infant mortality and mortality rate of children under-5 is shown in Tables 17. and 18. of the Annex.

Reply to paragraph 42 (b)

334. The analysis of the percentage of people that should've been vaccinated in 2017 shows that the legally prescribed minimum (95%) was not achieved in primovaccination with any

vaccination, with the exception of BCG vaccination. Low vaccination coverage was recorded in Dubrovnik-Neretva, Split-Dalmatia, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Osijek-Baranja Counties (<90%). In addition to the overall satisfactory percentage, vaccine coverage for all vaccinations in 2017 was slightly reduced compared to 2016, and this is the sixth consecutive year that vaccine coverage is reduced. MH data is available in the Annex (Tables 19.-25.).

Reply to paragraph 42 (c)

335. During the reporting period, there was a reduction in the number of teen births (Annex) which can be attributed to the development of the network of youth reproductive health counseling centers and adolescent medicine service of IPH, as well as to the implementation of health-educational programs and promotion of youth health. Medical exams during pregnancy are available for adolescent women through primary healthcare at their chosen gynecologist, or through specialist-consultant or hospital activities, pursuant to Program of Health Care Measures from the Compulsory Health Care Insurance.

Reply to paragraph 42 (d)

336. The number of reported, legally induced, abortions has declined during the reporting period (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 42 (e)

337. The RC is one of the countries with a low level of HIV²¹⁷ epidemics and AIDS²¹⁸ infections. In the 1985 - 2018 period the number of HIV and AIDS diagnoses for 0-14 age group is 18 (HIV infection transmitted from the mother). For ages 17-18, 21 persons were infected with HIV through sexual contact. For other diseases, see Annex.

Reply to paragraph 42 (f)

338. According to ESPAD²¹⁹, in 2015, the trend of increasing number of young people who imbibed alcohol in the last 12 months (92%) continued, and RC ranks 5th in Europe (47%) according to the prevalence of drinking 5 or more drinks in one occasion in the last month. Share of persons under-19 who were treated for psychoactive substance abuse in the healthcare system ranges from 7.3% in 2014 to 5.0% in 2017. The number of persons under-14 has increased in 2017, 24 children were treated in the healthcare system for substance abuse (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 43 (a)

339. Number of children living in poverty is continuously decreasing, from 233,000 in 2014 to 189,000 in 2017. (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 43 (b)

340. In May 2019, there were 109,375 users under-18 registered in MDFYSP information system who are using some of the rights from SWA, FA and JCA.

44. Statistical information on education, leisure and cultural activities

Reply to paragraph 44 (a)

341. Number of children attending preschool, PS and SS education is shown Tables 31.-36. of the Annex.

Reply to paragraph 44 (b)

342. Approximately 2,100 children attend special schools each SY, of which an average of 124 are Roma children (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 44 (c)

343. Since October 2014, the preschool program is compulsory for all children in the year prior to starting PS. Education coverage of young and preschool age children is 75%. In the reporting period, number of children in system of early and preschool education fluctuates around 155,000. An increase in the number of Roma children included in the preschool program was recorded (Table 32. of the Annex).

Reply to paragraph 44 (d)

344. On average, 0.29% of PS students and 1.64% of SS students had to repeat a grade compared to the total number of enrolled students; and 0.91% and 2.95% of students with DD respectively compared to the total number of students with DD.

345. During a SY, the highest number of Roma national minority students dropped out of PS was 205 (3.78%), and in SS 124 out of 820 enrolled Roma national minority members dropped out. An average of 383 students repeat grades in PS, and 59 in SS (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 44 (e)

346. In November 2017, Ministry of Labor and Pension System reported²²⁰ there were 8,089 youths ages 15-18 who were no longer in the education system, nor employed, as follows: 556 fifteen-year olds, 385 sixteen-year olds, 1,322 seventeen-year olds and 5,826 eighteen-year olds.²²¹

Reply to paragraph 44 (f)

347. The ratio of the number of PS teachers and students in full-time education ranges from 1:9.4 to 1:10.1, and 1:1.9 to 1:2.1 for children and young people with DD.

The number of students and teaching staff from PS and SS from the 2014/2015 and 2018/2019 SY is shown in Tables 40. and 41. of the Annex.

Reply to paragraph 44 (g)

348. During the reporting period, the average number of peer violence cases in schools was 133.75, with the highest number occurring during 2016/2017 (187), and the lowest during 2014/2015 (70) (Annex).

45. - 47. Statistical information on special protection measures

Reply to paragraph 45 (a)

349. The smallest number of unaccompanied children - foreign nationals for whom CSW has appointed a special guardian was recorded in 2015 (100), and the largest in 2017 (334).

350. The number of children who are seekers of international protection is rising, with 22 in 2015, and 514 in 2017, after which it fell to 359 in 2018 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 45 (b)

351. The number of children migrants placed in reception centers and juvenile detention centers is rising, from 31 in 2014 to 186 in 2017 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 45 (c)

352. According to MI data, from 2010 to 2017, a total of 7,128 children migrants were registered, of which 190 were forcibly removed.

Reply to paragraph 45 (d)

353. A minor can be placed in 3 facilities.²²²

354. In 2014, 22 children were identified as human trafficking victims (16 sexually exploited girls). In subsequent years the total number is decreasing and ranges from 4 to 14 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 47 (a)

355. Lowest number of children taken to police detention for suspected criminal offenses was recorded in 2015 (55), and highest in 2017 (109). Number of children detained during processing due to migration was 7 in 2015, compared to 73 in 2017 (Annex).

Reply to paragraph 47 (b)

356. Art. 63, paragraph (2) of JCA²²³ prescribes that State Attorney will order the arrested minor released or brought before a youth judge for questioning, and youth judge is obligated to question the arrested minor within 12 hours from him being remanded to the detention supervisor, and State Attorney and defense attorney must be present at the questioning. The minor will be released if no detention or remand prison is imposed against him within 20 hours of his surrender to the detention supervisor.

357. The time that a child in illegal migration can spend in a detention center, i.e. restriction of freedom of movement, is prescribed by Art. 133, paragraph (1) of RCF, which states a third-country national may be placed in the center for up to 6 months if there's a risk of avoiding the obligation to leave the European Economic Area, i.e. RC.

Annex

Abbreviations, footnotes and additional statistical information and data

Appendix 1 of the annex: rules of procedure and work plan of the chc
