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OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN MAKING DECISIONS FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN

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Abstract. In the intense pursuit of the states and the international organizations to address the challenges of migrant processes, the focus on child security neglects the value of the migrant child's personality. Often, a migrant child is given the status of a caretaker by being “attached” to an adult – a situation that guarantees the child's limited ability to participate in decision-making processes that directly affect him/her. Insisting of the young people to participate in decision-making processes goes beyond creating rules in the “adult world” and raises previously unknown political and administrative challenges, as well as professional and public debates to ensure that all children have access to their rights. Opportunities for the participation of migrant children in the decision-making process cause a synchronization globally of understanding and implementation of the child's right to participate and to express own views. These opportunities should be applied interregional and transnationally and, together with that, developed and supported at political and practical levels. It is therefore important to review the current policy framework, to highlight good practice examples and to mark some opportunities for further social and organizational development.

Keywords: migrants; child participation; child opinion; decision making

Introduction

The sharpness of the challenges faced by the different nationalities and countries that the migrant wave poses, and the protection of the rights of migrant children today, can be definitely compared to the desire to ensure equal treatment, freedom of movement and expression for all people. Engagements to ensure and safeguard human rights, incl. and the rights of the child marks the leap of global civilization in political and civic terms, emphasizing the merits of investing in the personality, in freedom and equality.

At the same time, an unexpectedly large influx of people seeking international protection is highlighting new challenges in dealing with migrant processes - those related to providing basic needs, such as shelter, food, language learning, eventually finding job opportunities, and (continuing) education. Tackling these provocations

focuses the efforts of institutions and organizations on managing a new, unfamiliar environment for asylum seekers so that the integration of a large influx of people can be achieved. In these extraordinary circumstances, it is very likely that states and international organizations (and people) will be able (unknowingly) to neglect the personality of the migrant child at the expense of ensuring his or her security and interest.

The analysis of opportunities for participation in the decision-making processes of migrant children may show:

1. an overview of the current policy framework;
2. good practice examples;
3. some opportunities for further development.

On the other hand, there will be an opportunity for further reflection on some additional political and operational perspectives and issues, such as:

- whether countries plan and implement measures to support the long-term integration of migrants;
- is integration understood as a tool for the full social and economic inclusion of all people (or is it merely a mean of meeting the basic needs of newcomers);
- where are the "white spots" in support of the personality of the migrant child at local, regional, national and supranational levels;
- the extent to which the value of young people's views in terms of society's development is realized.

Many children are on the move or displaced. This is a phenomenon that is occurring all over the world and is causing concern for the protection of children's rights. According to UNHCR 2020 data, 70.8 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide; of these, 25.9 million are refugees and 3.5 million are asylum seekers. According to UNICEF just for the first half of 2019 in Europe, migrant children are 8200, 34% of whom were unaccompanied and separated by their parents and/or loved ones.

About participation in decision making of migrant children

The participation of migrant children in decision-making processes is a problem that affects all main components of their future development. This makes it an important issue for the normal and effective management of public processes related to beneficiaries of international protection. It could be assumed that the participation of migrant children is a function of the processes of participation of children in general. At the same time, micro and macro policies on migrant matters apply a specific emphasis in law and practice, because of whom the participation of migrant children may also have an independent position of interest.

The presence of children in a process of increasing personal responsibility is an opportunity to stimulate the abilities of one child, to assert the young person's personality, and to accumulate new approaches to managing (micro and macro)

processes in society. Developing this, the participation of the migrant child in the decision-making process on issues that concern him, directly and indirectly, is an opportunity to enrich the finding of effective solutions to ensure adequate protection of the interests of migrant children in the contemporary environment, as well as the public debate on migrant issues.

The right of the child to participate in public life refers to involvement in the decision-making process that affects his or her life, the life of the community, and the society in which he lives. Children's participation involves encouraging children and young people to think for themselves, to express their views, and to interact. Never the less, it can relate to both public and personal decisions, it may be formal or informal, with a larger or smaller scope, one-off or systemic. Children's decisions can have a direct impact on the planning and development of a service, as well as the development of policy.

Planning with long-term intentions, without involving the opinion and position of migrant children in the process, the adult world is in fact guaranteed to fail. Those who are most vulnerable to the success or failure of any modern plan are the current young people. Those who should implement this plan are also them. Removing them from the definition stage of any future initiative really excludes them from being informed about the moves they are expected to follow, from the philosophy of the events to follow, and from the product knowledge that each plan seeks to reach. Boyan Slavenkov (Slavenkov 2019) sets the discourse on lagging standards and communication mechanisms between those who manage and those who are under managing, in the conditions of increased opportunities and self-confidence of the modern child. This is also the reason why this issue has yet to occupy an increasingly tangible space in all the discussions and programming documents that will claim to be dedicated to the modernization of activities and policies in support of migrants and asylum seekers.

A. The legal and policy framework

Many children are on the move or displaced. This is a phenomenon that is occurring all over the world and is causing concern for the protection of children's rights. The reasons why children seek asylum are related to global issues such as (military) conflicts, disasters, and climate change. These factors must be given due importance, both internal-organizationally and inter-continental and inter-organizational cooperation.

Migrant support policy marks a peak at the global level over the last two decades. If in the twentieth century the legal framework is defined by less than 80¹⁾ administrative products (conventions, decisions, regulations, surveys, recommendations, reports, regulations) at the level of the UN, the Council of Europe, the European Union or other international association, then in the twenty-first century they are above 1110²⁾ to 2017 only within the European Commission and the Council of Europe. In regard to migrant children, the legal framework is

shaped by barely 3³) administrative products in the XX century and 15⁴) in the XXI century. None of these over 1,190 documents detail the child's right to participate in the processes that directly affect him or her. So in general it can be said that the combination of the challenges facing migrants with the supreme interest of the child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)⁵) clearly emphasizes the weakness of sectoral humanitarian policies, both nationally and internationally at the point of intersection called 'personality'.

Migration processes affecting children are defining separately the status of a migrant child as a refugee, as an asylum seeker, accompanied or unaccompanied. With respect to legal definitions, as part of the international law definitions about unaccompanied minors could be found in Art. 2 (1) (l) of Directive 2011/95/EU on standards for the designation of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection⁶), where “‘unaccompanied minor’ means a minor who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person; it includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States”. At a national level, for example in the Bulgarian legal world, the Law on Asylum and Refugees adopts the definition of Directive 2011/95/EU without distinguishing between the two main categories – under-age and minors. The definition of “unaccompanied” is given in §1, item 4 of the Supplementary Provisions of the same law, as “Unaccompanied is that minor or underage alien who is on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and is not accompanied by his or her parent or another adult, who is responsible for it by law or custom”. In the same national legal framework, as regard to migrant children, a definition of a child seeking protection is found in Art. 10 of the Child Protection Act⁷), where “Every child has the right of protection for his or her normal physical, mental, moral and social development and for the protection of his/her rights and interests. The right of protection ... has also a person who has been a victim of violence or exploitation, whose age has not been established and which can be reasonably assumed to be a child. No restriction on rights or privileges based on race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, origin, property, religion, education, and belief or disability shall be allowed”.

None of the definitions directly affects the right of a migrant child to participate in the decision-making process. At the same time, a person's right to seek asylum is recognized as an individual right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to General Comment No. 6 (2005) “Treating unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin”, the best interests of the child should be a guiding principle in determining the priority of protection needs and in determining the order of measures to be applied to unaccompanied and separated from their families children. The rights of migrant children are guaranteed by

the UNCRC, which obliges all countries that have ratified it to respect its fundamental principles. Also, according to Art. 24 of the European Union Charter for Fundamental Rights⁸), “Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being”, and “In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration”.

Christina Jespersen (Jespersen 2014) draws the link between the best interests of the child as defined by the UNCRC and the impact of all decisions that affect unaccompanied and separated children. Jespersen recognizes the challenge for States to provide the necessary support and care and refers to the basic principle set by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that the greater the impact of a decision on the child, the higher the level of guarantees to be provided. To this end, the author notes that not every decision of a country that concerns children requires a complete and formal process of determining the best interests of the child.

Freedom of expression, of active participation in processes that directly relate to the person, is associated with adult migrants. Procedures that guarantee the right of a migrant child to express her/his views and positions are difficult to detect, not directly regulated in national legal frameworks, neither emphasized visibly in international acts. For example, UNCRC in Art. 12 highlights the opportunity of the child's participation in the decision-making process by regulating: “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”, expanded and supplemented meaningfully in Art. 13: “The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice”. With regard to an example of national legislation, it can be added that the same specificities are recognized in the texts of the Law on Child Protection in Bulgaria, where in Art. 12 “Every child has the right to express his or her opinion freely on any matter of his or her interest. It may seek the assistance of the authorities and persons to whom it has been granted protection under this Act”.

In general, both the legal and political frameworks are timidly demonstrating an awareness of the vital importance of migrant children to participate in all decision-making processes that affect them. This creates opportunities for institutions to be inclined to passively pass the opinions of children and to continue institutional inertia.

B. The humanitarian aspect

Every child involved in the migrant process is except a migrant child, and a child at risk, a disadvantaged child, a vulnerable child. All of these hypotheses, which exist in reality, do not undermine the supremacy of the status of being a child, exercising all rights, and bearing the appropriate responsibilities.

Often, the focus of events and administrative processes is limited to conducting an initial assessment of the need for child protection, the obligation to identify, account for special needs, to provide material conditions especially about housing, food, clothing; creating conditions for the prevention of physical and mental abuse. This focus places the migrant child as an object, while the legal framework (though not sufficiently confident) still recognizes her/him as a subject.

This recognition of the migrant child as a subject in the processes accretes functions of initiative, enterprise, innovation, personal and social responsibility. The main value while developing ideas for the participation of migrant children is the awareness and understanding of the young person's role as a creator of her/his development. Active people are those that society relies on to invest, create new activities and products, and be innovative. If despite their disproportionately greater efforts, these people do not feel appreciated, they will be demotivated to make such efforts. Many active migrants will find it easier and more cost-effective to do nothing and join the receiving ranks. Supporting the freedom of the personality of a migrant child to remain free, to compose, to build and to develop actively will create conditions for significant social contributions, regardless of the territory in which the child is presently located. The wisdom of UNCRC philosophy is built on equal opportunities for children, wherever they may be. An equal chance for expression and success for every child is the guarantee of freedom of opportunity which creates, rewards the talent, effort and success of the person and enhances the quality of life, moves humanity forward.

According to an analysis of the European Integration Website (EWSI), migrant entrepreneurship is increasingly the subject of research in most countries for beneficiaries of international protection, but few countries are working to activate that entrepreneurship as a means of achieving economic and social integration.

The value of contributing to foreign cultures has been steadily increasing, given cohesion policy, supported globally by both countries and international organizations, on the one hand, and the other, aided by the progress of new technologies and communications. UNICEF adds that children and young people themselves are the bearers of change, as they are most eager to improve their situation and have the knowledge and in-depth information to contribute. Besides, the perspectives of migrant children often lead to significant and positive changes in policy and practice.

According to Art. 5 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity "All persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity". It is a matter of quality and respect for the individual's understanding of themselves, which is why most often education policies are determined at the national or regional level, and activities depend mainly on the initiatives of individual schools. According to EWSI, it is difficult to assess the existence of integration measures in the education system. But integration must

also be understood as a process in which changes in human and social development are followed, and in this connection, the participation of migrant children in the planning and implementation of educational policies and practices can contribute to the development of understanding of awareness and reasoning of the young man's role as the creator of his/her own development.

The migrant child has access to a vast amount of information through information and communication technologies and the global network. This gives him/her a sense of knowledge and power, due to which is growing the ability to make increasing demands for participation. If this energy is not assimilated and directed appropriately in the processes in which the migrant child is involved, it would lead to confrontation not only between generations (typically justified by the child's environment in information and communication technologies) but also to the systems, which inevitably leads to a failure of social norms and order.

Although the environment of the processes concerning the migrant child is trans-national, the state support for regulation of relations, the security of people, assuming human rights obligations, dynamic synchronization of international standards (provoked by the globalization of processes and nations), should be unavoidable and essential in increasing the systemic commitment of each country.

C. Good practice

Tackling the global phenomenon of migration by inviting children to speak their minds and positions provides a significant impact on children in different regions of the world. This multiplies the opportunity to secure the right to life and development, to improve the prevention of harm to the dignity of children, and to minimize the opportunities for discrimination against migrant children.

Still, contemporary politics seems to fail to keep speed with the natural course of maturity and wisdom in generations of XXI-century children. The insisting of young people to participate in decision-making processes goes beyond creating rules in the “adult world” and manifests itself through self-regulation within child formations. An illustrative example is a process conducted by the Council of Children in Bulgaria⁹). For the first time in 2015 children from vulnerable groups were elected as members of the Council, not as representatives of the quota for vulnerable children, but as representing their region. The practice is developing and creating an experience for the participation of children in the decision-making process of the Bulgarian government and it is no wonder that in 2016 – 2017 the opinion of young people is necessarily taken into account. Uncertainty manifests itself when:

- establish and implement strategies, policies, and programs for child protection and child development;
- discuss proposals with state institutions and local authorities for the development of education, child health, cultural aspects and leisure of children, as well as any other issues of interest to children;

- implement ideas and projects aimed at developing the well-being of children;
- promote children's rights;
- as with other issues that affect the lives of children.

Part of the development is the revision of the Charter and the Procedure for the election of new members of the Council of Children. For the first time, deputy-members are elected. The deputy-members participate in meetings and initiatives of the Council when the titular members do not have the opportunity. Later, in 2017, a second chance to the New Members Selection Procedure is implemented, targeting migrant children. A new procedure for electing members of the Council of Children is being introduced, which allows the application and participation of migrant children – in the 5 quotas for children from vulnerable groups. This allows migrant children to express their views by participating in the National advisory body. Ms. Montserrat Feixas Vihe, UNHCR's representative for Central Europe, is interested in this initiative and is committed to promoting it as good practice through UNHCR.

The order of selection of migrant child members has been developed by the children – members of the Council of Children themselves with the aim to enable the opportunity for direct participation of asylum-seeking and migrant children in the Council's work. The order is based on the following commitments:

- Meetings with children at refugee centres for a period of one year and inform them of the possibilities to guarantee their rights and the importance of their participation in the Council of Children;
- communication with children seeking or receiving international protection in Bulgaria should be modelled on the Children Help Children initiative¹⁰;
- be under 18 years of age; to speak Bulgarian and/or English; intend to remain in Bulgaria or to be students in a Bulgarian school;
- to seek information from the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) about the schools in which refugee children study;
- to seek the support of the Bulgarian Red Cross, UNICEF, SAR, and non-governmental organizations to inform children seeking or receiving international protection about the opportunities to participate in the Council of Children;
- the Council will select the issues to be included in the cover letter for the election of members of this group;
- interview live or online with applicants;
- to enable migrant children to choose their mandate, with a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years.

The strong interest of the UNHCR leadership in the involvement of children is an occasion to invite Bulgaria to promote the model of children's participation "Council of Children" and to recommend it to all countries facing the challenge of the XXI century refugee wave. To ensure the best interests of the child, much of the progress is ensured through the active involvement of the child him/herself

in the decision-making processes during the migrant life cycle. Subsequently, UNHCR's interest in the Bulgarian model involving migrant children in public decision-making also aroused the interest of Tomas Bocek, Special Representative on Migration and Refugees of Council of Europe Secretary General.

D. Some future opportunities

Ensuring participation enables migrant children to be informed about the current child protection system as well as about effective integration into society.

With the increase of good practices at a local and national level, it is logical to expect international organizations to be more persistent in developing, approving and implementing special regulations regarding the participation of migrant children in decision-making processes. In these developments, the links with the institutional processes in which migrant children can participate should be clear and the representativeness of the participants should be guaranteed.

Jespersen's developments on the relationship between the UNCRC and the legal framework for migrant children form the basis of UNHCR's recommendations for countries interacting with refugee and unaccompanied children. Concerning the scope of child participation, UNHCR is drawing up a series of recommendations to the states. In essence, several can be distinguished:

- States endeavour to integrate procedures and structures by ensuring that processes are child-friendly, including by providing child-friendly information;
- States to enable children to be heard according to the age and maturity of the children;
- States to ensure the pursuit of a common vision for the child by all actors, incl. and the child, taking active efforts to build trust at an early stage.

The example that Bulgaria gives of including migrant children in the Governmental Council of Children is in line with national legislation, which is in line with European Union law and with the UNCRC¹¹⁾. By Bulgarian law, all children on the territory of Bulgaria, regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, and affiliation, including migrant children, have rights equal to those of other children in the country. The applicability, effectiveness and access to these rights is difficult to trace, which encourages young people – members of the Council of Children themselves to develop procedures to meet their needs – both for the effectiveness of the legal framework and for the effectiveness of its provisions. Although there are no legal restrictions in front of migrant children, their right to participate, regulated for other children in Bulgaria, can, in reality, be seriously questioned as to the actual ability of migrant children to assert and seek their own rights. Successful implementation of this process will be ensured by the country's efforts to provide children with accessible and adapted information on children in migration.

Such an example illuminates the transition from human rights based on needs to human rights based on development. The new spirit in human rights procedures and policies is, in fact, the motivation and core strength of the UN Sustainable

Development Goals¹²⁾ of the XXI Century. By transferring it to the rights of the child, it is no longer subject to parental care and protection. In this respect, a migrant child should be respected in his or her right to participate, regardless of his or her accompanied or unaccompanied status, because he or she is a person with a recognized opinion and position in the life process; a person who matters the human dignity and insists on the ability to develop.

At the same time, the inert reactions of institutions and organizations have the power to demotivate children and to make them withdraw from their right to participate. For this, it is important, apart from efforts to promote participation, the legal framework and the status of participation of migrant children, to actively invest information and understanding about participation in decision-making in all educational forms accompanying the migrant child's path.

By provoking doubts about the value of a migrant child as a human being, the real world today is directly blaming the value of any person. Then all civilization aspirations and achievements in support of man and personality can be subjected to new reading and test of effectiveness. Therefore, mechanisms for liberalization and a good competitive environment should be sought to allow innovative and creative individuals and approaches to enrich the person's chances of success. This is exactly the idea of the UN General Assembly to name children "Agents of Change"¹³⁾, raising the possibility of a new formula for social growth. The Assembly believes that children generate a contribution that will restore people's confidence and thus achieve sustainable change for positive development.

In this spirit, it would be essential to promote integration processes towards communities in which positive attitude and tradition for children's participation in decision-making processes is existing. Concerning the unavoidable and essential role of state regulations, guarantees can be created to capture the potential of the community environment, to create opportunities for highly efficient and productive integration of motivated persons, existing information, and available resources.

Conclusion

The management of processes related to the movement of children raises high expectations and demands both for international organizations and for individual state representatives, but also to every human being. On the one hand, it must fulfil tasks through the most up-to-date and systematic approach, on the other hand, to meet contemporary socio-economic needs, and on the third, to meet the demanding hopes of investing in the personality of a child. The most important thing here is to emphasize the so-called public farsightedness that drives management to commit itself to generations to come. Inspired by the direction to the future, both socially and personally, the modern world recognizes the young man as the creator of his/her life, as an agent of social change, as a catalyst for multi-national trust and as a carrier of progress for sustainability development.

Humanity still owes the best it can give to children. In their quest to maximize the integration of the large influx of people, states and organizations often show a tendency to “blur”. And by looking in detail at the promotion and protection of the right and the ability of migrant children to actively participate in the processes in the territories to which their lives are brought, we are enriching the need to increase the sensitivity of communities with good examples that children can bring.

Every person needs to feel as subject in the processes in which participates. Ensuring the ability of a migrant child to have his or her tangible involvement in the definition of well-being is directly linked to the responsibility of the individual to have a position in the social course of events in which he or she exists.

The forms of participation of a migrant child can and should be diverse and differently applied in each community, region or country. They should seek and expect increased effectiveness and quality of civic competency education, rationality in personal choices, adequate preparedness for raising responsibilities, promoting cooperation and interaction, growing social responsibility, and, in general, social progress.

The free expression of opinion as a basic characteristic of the personality can be defined as an essential and permanent feature of the child care policy of migrants so that, while recognizing the migrant child as a human being, once again emphasizes the categorical nature of the right and the protection of the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes.

In the face of a series of constraints imposed by the emergency of a migrant child situation, moral freedom can be safeguarded and civil liberty guaranteed. The migrant child is part of a community; although in a process of transfer and pursuit of a new community, its individuality is preserved. The right to participate in common deliberations and decision-making processes is a real application of moral and civil liberties on various scales – from everyday opinion to the normative limits.

This can also be defined as the creation of opportunities or the pursuit of self-cultivation and the exercise of broad public activity through inclusion in the multinational space. Involvement in the decision-making process could also be seen in the context of the process of building a knowledge-based economy.

Working to support participation in the decision-making processes of migrant children has every reason to be a challenge and a circumstance that satisfies the high public expectations and attitudes in a modern and executable way with a responsible view and commitment to the future. This eliminates obvious injustice to children and future generations; fulfills the duty of society towards migrant children.

The multicultural policy of Western societies is in crisis. Both international organizations and state leaders report a failure in their work, highlighting the continued ghettos and intolerance of cultural diversity in everyday life. Globally,

the sociality remains in human debt to migrant children, but more dangerously, it is deprived of the opportunity to fully embrace the resource that children represent for the progress we want to make.

Integration, as we have understood it so far, has failed. To find humanity a new face of multicultural policy, young people from different cultures must be empowered to contribute to society. In order, not to provoke continuing doubts, the different treatment of a migrant child must be denied at both institutional and social levels. To address the issue of global communication through the prism of migrant processes, it must be fully implemented bilaterally to build maturity, both on a personal and a social scale. All this is feasible by opening spaces where the voice of a migrant child is legitimized and where to interact in real-time with an expression of understanding, positive attitude, recognition of uniqueness, responsibility, and communal trust.

NOTES

1. Year 1951 – 1 Convention, year 1961 – 1 Convention, year 1971 – 1 Convention, year 1977 – 1 Convention, year 1981 – 1 Resolution, year 1987 – 1 Recommendation, year 1988 – 1, Convention, year 1989 – 1 Convention, year 1990 – 3 Conventions, year 1991 – 1 Directive, year 1993 – 2, year 1995 – 7, year 1996 – 6, year 1997 – 9, year 1998 – 2, year 1999 – 17.
2. Year 2000 – 31, year 2001 – 37, year 2002 – 23, year 2003 – 58, year 2004 – 63, year 2005 – 55, year 2006 – 68, year 2007 – 102, year 2008 – 84, year 2009 – 102, year 2010 – 70, year 2011 – 98, year 2012 – 60, year 2013 – 71, year 2014 – 46, year 2015 – 51, 2016 – 51, 2017 – 40, year 2018 (until March) – 6.
3. 1989 – Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1996 – Communication from the European Commission COM (96) 547 final; 1999 – Communication from the European Commission COM (99) 262 final.
4. 2000 – 2: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Council Decision 2000/375 / JHA; 2006 – Communication from the European Commission COM (2006) 367 final; 2007 – 3: European Parliament Decision No 779/2007/EC, Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; Decision and Report of the European Commission COM (2007) 716 final; 2008 – Decision No 1351/2008/EC of the European Parliament; 2010 – Feasibility study on the possibilities and needs for standardized national legislation on violence against women and children; 2011 – 2: Comparative study of the Council of the European Union HOME/2009/RFX/PR/1002, Directive of the European Parliament 2011/93/EU; 2012 – European Commission Survey HOME/2010/EBFX/PR/1001; 2016 – 4 reports of the European Commission on Directive 2011/93/EU.

5. Convention on the Rights of the Child Ratified by the decision of the Grand National Assembly of April 11, 1991, published in the State Gazette no. 32 of 1991, prom. SG, issue 55 of 12 July 1991. Effective for Bulgaria of 3 July 1991.
6. Directive 2011/95/EU on the standards for the designation of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection for the uniform status of refugees or persons qualifying for subsidiary protection, and the content of the protection granted.
7. Child Protection Act, prom. DV. pcs. 48 of 2000, as amended. and ext. DV. pcs. 24 of 2019.
8. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, (2016/C 202/02), Official Journal of the EU, 2016.
9. The Children's Council is a government advisory body, composed only of children. Established by the Child Protection Act in 2003, it has been functioning since 2008. It works to implement the basic principles of the UN Convention on the rights of the children. It aims to encourage children's participation in the process of developing policies for children and decision-making. The Council delivers opinions and positions on issues related to the rights of the child to protection, development, and participation in socio-political life. The advisory body has 33 child members – representatives of each administrative district and children from vulnerable groups. All of them have the opportunity to exchange knowledge, skills, values, and to interact with governmental and non-governmental organizations at the national and regional level.
10. “Children help children” is an initiative of the Children's Council, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection since 2016, which aims to attract young people from all over the country to help improve socialization and the integration of children left without their families and living in social centres.
11. This is done through the Child Protection Act (Art. 12), the Preschool and School Education Act (Art. 171), the National Strategy for the Child 2008 – 2018, the Charter for Child Participation. The right of children to participate in proceedings and decisions that affect them personally is also affected by several special laws: The Law on Combating Antisocial Behaviour of Minors, the Health Act, as well as the Family Code and the Labour Code.
12. Sustainable Development Goals, UN, 2015.
13. Increasing support for education decisive for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, Summit, UN General Assembly, GA 11925, 71st Session, 2017.
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