

3rd CYCLE OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

**SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND
YOUTH IN ALBANIA**

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VEPRO
PËR FËMIJËT!

Act for Children

Rrjeti Kombëtar për të Drejtat e Fëmijëve në Shqipëri
Albanian National Child Rights Network



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Legal and policy framework for children and young people

- Law on Child Protection and Rights;
- Law on Social Services;
- Law on Pre-university Education
- Law on Free Legal Aid
- Law on Social Housing
- Law on Domestic Violence

The respect for the rights of the child in Albania

Child Poverty

- More than 20% of children in Albania live in absolute poverty. This means that at least 100,000 children, due to poverty cannot attend regularly public education.
- There is no national programme to support children who live in extreme poverty.
- Children from the Roma community are the most affected by poverty, discrimination, prejudices, early marriages and migration. 1 in 4 Roma children is out of school.

Right to education

- Albania, in comparison to other countries in Europe, spends less on public education. Public schools are solely funded by the Government.
- Bullying and violence in schools are widespread. 1 in 2 children report being a victim of violence and 1 in 5 victim of bullying in schools.
- Schools do not have an effective and functioning mechanism where bullying and violence can be reported. Children often complain that teachers use verbal abuse against them. Law on pre-university education system needs to be improved in this regard.

Violence against children, internet safety and child trafficking

- The largest study on violence against children in Albania (2013) found that:
 - *69% of children were victims of psychological abuse;*
 - *59% of physical violence*
 - *11% of sexual abuse.*
- Lack of protection measures in internet is exposing children and young people towards bullying, violence, hate and exploitation. More than 200 cases of online child abuse were reported between 2016-2018;
- There is a significant lack of data on child trafficking. Reports estimate that over 5000 children were victims of trafficking and smuggling. Children are subject to sex trafficking and forced labour within the country, especially during tourist season.
- Although violence against children and trafficking constitute criminal offences, few legal actions have been taken to report the perpetrators and provide remedies to children.

Child protection system

- Child protection system is fragmented and lacks well-trained staff, funding and support from the local and national government.
- Social care services are almost inexistent and lack Government support both in case management and service provision.

The respect for the rights of youth in Albania

A forgotten social group?

- The population of young people in Albania is pursuing an ever-decreasing trajectory. The overall number of girls, because of selective abortions, continues to have a marked difference with the overall number of boys.
- In 2018 the difference among both groups aged 15-29 is 13,108 persons in favour of boys.

Youth poverty, unemployment and crimes

- Youth poverty is very common. Nearly 14 percent of the population continues to live in absolute poverty.
- According to official data (2017), almost 26% of young people are out of the labour market, mostly young men.
- Almost 50 percent of all criminal offenses are committed by youth.
- There are no specialised programs and services for children and youth in conflict with the law. Young people's participation in politics and decision-making processes remains extremely very low.

Recommendations

Child rights

- Policies and practices should ensure that the rights of every child are protected from violence in the family, school, and community;
- Increase share of GDP spent on education in order to ensure free, inclusive public education for all.
- The Albanian government should target Roma children, especially girls and those with disabilities, to enrol in primary education by providing incentives to their families, as well provide free meals for every child in compulsory education.
- Children have the right to education in safe schools. Based on this the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth must urgently address the issue of violence, bullying and discrimination in all education institutions by developing a National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence in Schools;

Child rights

- Child protection and social services should be harmonized and support the integration of children and their families;
- Every child should have universal health access and social care provided for free of charge;
- Albania should establish a national programme to support children living in poverty;
- The Ministry of Justice should support already established Legal Aid Offices of civil society organisations, providing free protection services for children and youth in Albania;
- Albania should apply new models of restorative justice and diversion measures in the spirit of the new Juvenile Justice Code;

Youth rights

- Albanian Parliament should encourage the Ministry of Economy and Finance and municipalities to increase the number of young people employed nationwide, through the development and implementation of various programs that promote youth employment.
- Albanian Parliament should promote and encourage cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, to support youth guarantees or loans for the establishment of youth business incubators and employment sub-programs that promote self-employment and establishment of youth led businesses.
- The Parliament should prioritize the establishment of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Youth within the Parliament.
- The Parliament should continue to take measures and increase the accountability of the Government regarding the fact that three years after its approval, the National Youth Action Plan remains to be implemented in its entirety.
- Albania should increase the participation and representation of young people at all levels of decision-making.
- Approval of the Youth Law is of paramount importance for the country and to improve considerably the situation of youth rights.