

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALBANIA

4 APRIL 2019

UPR Info Pre-sessions

Current Developments

(Violence and Child exploitation)

New Developments

Law No. 18/2017 “On Child Rights and Protection” was adopted by Albanian Parliament. **Law 18/2017 defines:**

- the rights and protection that every child enjoys;
- responsible mechanisms and authorities that efficiently guarantee such rights exercise, observance and promotion;
- child’s special protection under special conditions;
- defined measures that needs to be taken by the relevant institutions in the case of violence against children;
- roles and responsibilities of all institutions in all cases of child protection

Challenges

(Violence and Child exploitation)

New needs – Violence Against Children

- The YOUNG VOICE- violence is spread in the Albanian society. **58% of interviewed children** have seen someone get punched or hit in the past year;
- Although the number of Child Protection Units has more than tripled, they are **still not established in all municipalities** and administrative units with more than 3,000 children (lack of properly functioning to meet demands of children for protection; staff turnover due to political rotation and staff incompetency are some of the reasons of the ineffectiveness etc.);
- Although majority of children consider “home” the safest place, there are some who experience domestic violence, which is a long standing, complex social issue;
- Not all children feel secure and protected in the classroom (1 out of 10 children does not feel safe);
- Bullying phenomena spread widely in all school settings - Unfortunately, the education system and the whole Albanian society are not yet ready to address bullying;

Facts: Almost 1/3 of children (34,6%) have felt bullied or harassed during this term or the last one. Significantly girls in urban areas, nearly 40% (39,5%) have felt bullied and harassed as much as twice more than boys (20,3%) while the percentage of girls and boys that felt bullied or harassed in rural areas are almost the same (40,8% and 38,9%). Almost **40 % of children** who participated in Young Voices reported that they don't know or are unsecure on where to turn to when they feel violated, bullied or unfairly treated.



Recommendations

(Violence and Child exploitation)

We urge the Albanian Government to:

- ❑ Organize awareness raising programmes and campaigns against violence in all environments (family, schools and communities) and the promotion of good practices of family conflict resolution and positive parenting.
- ❑ Take concrete actions, including capacity building of relevant professionals, to prevent violence against children and to ensure identification and referral of child victims to the relevant structures, and to hold perpetrators accountable.
- ❑ Effectively implement and disseminate the Law No. 18/2017 “On Child Rights and Protection” to all institutions and schools.
- ❑ Guarantee that the issue of bullying is addressed in school curricula.

Current Developments

(Discrimination)

- ❑ Measures have been taken to ensure the rights of minorities. In October 2017 the Law '*On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania*' was adopted, providing for special rights and protection to national minorities.
- ❑ A network of **7 focal points** has been created among the key ministries responsible for education, civil registration, health, employment, social housing and vocational trainings.
- ❑ A database of **57 focal points** at the municipal level that coordinate policies for Roma and Egyptians has been created.
- ❑ The electronic system RomAlb was developed, a web application allowing for collection and management of information on Roma and Egyptian minorities at all levels.



Challenges and recommendations

(Discrimination)

New needs:

- ❑ For children, poverty and economic disparities are the root causes of exclusion;
- ❑ Albania should do more to help children who live in poverty;
- ❑ Children recognise that school is not yet able to identify excluded and discriminated children, to get them enrolled and included in social environment;
- ❑ The government is not yet capable of guarantying that all children have equal access to basic services.
- ❑ There is lack of collection, processing and publishing of statistics on disability in various fields such as education, health, and housing.

We urge the Government to:

- ❑ Ensure that child protection services are in place and accessible for marginalized and excluded children at local level, supported with the sufficient budgetary allocations.
- ❑ The government must guarantee the organizing of awareness campaigns aimed at sensitizing public opinion against discrimination practices and stereotypes.

Current Developments

(Child Participation)

New developments:

- ❑ Increasing children's participation in decision-making at school and outside the school is a strategic objective of the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2017-2020.
- ❑ Law No. 18/2017 "On Child Rights and Protection" stipulates the right of the child to be heard and consulted.
- ❑ Youth participation is encouraged also by the National Action Plan for Youth 2015-2020.
- ❑ Sanctioned by Pre-university Law as Amended in 2018, the voices of children are also represented through bodies established in each school, including children government and the school board.

Challenges

(Child Participation)

New needs: Young Voice report, brought about the issue of “institutional responsiveness”. Children have the right to express their views, but institutions-duty bearers have to take them seriously.

- Although almost all children (88%) acknowledge the importance of being listened to by the politicians and decision-makers on what they think about different issues, most of them admit that they lack opportunities (13 %) or have few opportunities (48 %). 81 % would prefer more influence on issues that concern them.
- The municipality is the closest political arena to children and where most of the decisions concerning them are made. However, less than 6 % have managed to influence decision making at local level out of 59 % who could give their views on important issues.
- Children try hard to make institutions hear their voice, utilizing pupils' governments and other fora, however they are not always taken seriously, first of all by school.



Recommendations

(Child Participation)

We urge the Government to:

- Establish Institutional structures and mechanisms which promote an on-going and regular dialogue between duty bearers and children, and guarantee that these mechanisms are functional.
- Undertake the responsibilities as per the Law No. 18/2017 “On Child Rights and Protection”, to coordinate, monitor and report on the realization of the rights of the children.
- Give enough information and evidence on municipal plans that regard children’s rights to facilitate their participation and engagement in municipal decision-making meetings.

