**Member contributions to the European Parliament own initiative report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU for the period of 2004-2007**

**Responses from Members**

In preparation for the European Parliament own initiative report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU for the period of 2004-2007, the European Children’s Network has been invited by Mr Giusto Catania MEP, rapporteur, to present a position paper on the situation of children’s rights in Europe.

Nine contributions were received from EURONET members. By reflecting cross-cutting concerns on the implementation of the UNCRC in Europe, they underline a need for urgent action to be taken by Member States and by the EU in several areas, such as combating all forms of violence against children, child poverty and exclusion, discrimination, to grant every child in Europe the full enjoyment of his/her rights.

Members are warmly thanked for their rich and invaluable contributions. Their integral responses are reported hereby.

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Recommendations to fight against violations of the Rights of Children without parental care or at risk of losing it in the EU.

Children with inadequate or no parental care are at risk of being denied a caring and protective environment and they face many violations of the fundamental rights. Appropriate legislative, political and financial measures must be ensured to provide adequate alternative care options, with priority to family- and community- based solutions. According to the particular needs of individual children, different forms of care should be provided. In situations where it is in the best interest of the child to be separated from his/her family, the most appropriate form of out-of-home care should be identified and provided. When alternative care is provided, qualitative standards should be applied, to ensure the respect of the child’s fundamental rights, as enshrined in the UN CRC.

Recommendations:

1. Support and encourage the development of policies and actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of families to care for their children
   As a matter of principle and where-ever possible: children should remain in their own families and in their own distinctive communities. Family preservation efforts should aim to empower families to provide adequately for the protection, care and development of their children and such efforts should draw on the complementary capacities of the State and civil society. To ensure this, State governments should develop national policies which strengthen families, by providing subsidies and material assistance, including access to social and health services, child-sensitive family counselling services, education and adequate housing. Concern must be raised, regarding the fact that children living in poverty are over-represented among the children separated from their parents, both in the developed and developing countries. In this regards, national capacities must be strengthened to ensure access by poor families to services and safety nets needed to protect and care for their children. Programmes aimed at preventing children from falling out of their family and community must be supported. Local multidisciplinary teams working with the most vulnerable families are more likely to reach the family and to find individual solutions based on the actual situation of the family. Thus, services should be directly accessible at community level and actively involve the participation of families as partners, supporting in particular the participation of children and women, with a view of empowering them.

2. Support the development of quality standards for children in alternative care at national level
   To ensure that children who are placed outside their families grow in dignity, with full respect of their individuality and in the best possible conditions ensuring respect of their fundamental rights, quality care standards for children in out-of-home care must be ensured. They should comply with the existing international standards developed by the United Nations (UN Guidelines on children without parental care), the Council of Europe (Recommendations on the rights of children in residential care) and some NGO initiatives, like the “Quality childcare provision” developed by Save the Children in East and Central Africa, or the “Quality4Children” standards developed in Europe through a joint initiative of FICE, IFCO and SOS Children’s Villages. On that basis, States should adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary, including national action plans and guidelines and create national monitoring and evaluation procedures.

3. Support and encourage States to reform (national) child care system
   The debate and process must be based on an understanding of the different policy elements involved in providing child care services, including prevention, maintaining an appropriate balance
of provision and ensuring that all substitute care is of a high quality standard. The process is essentially aimed at moving away from a care system based on large institutions, and involves restructuring the system of public care in order to diminish the use of institutions, develop and strengthen effective family- and community-based alternative care as well as preventive and protective social services. In this regards, funds should be reallocated to prioritise preventive and family- and community-based alternative care options. Action should also be taken to fight against discrimination that brings children into public care - in particular discrimination against children from minorities, children with disabilities, children with HIV/AIDS, etc.

Annex 1: Summary of main findings from report on policy analyses of national out-of-home care systems carried out by SOS Children’s Villages National Associations in Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Baltic States (Based on countries analyses carried out in 2006)

Problems as seen by governments and non-governmental organizations in their reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:

• Child abandonment and lack of a family support system
• No periodic review of placement, systems of complaints, or monitoring mechanisms
• No data on children without parental care
• Institutionalization of children and poor living conditions in institutions
• Underdeveloped or missing alternatives to institutional care
• The principle of continuity of care is not sufficiently considered
• Uneducated staff
• Low and irregular payments to foster parents
• Contact between children in care and biological parents is not supported
• Lack of after-care support or follow up measures for children leaving institutions
• Lacking cooperation between state bodies and NGOs, and between governmental bodies responsible for child protection
• Insufficient public awareness of the need to campaign for the rights of children without parental care

Self evaluated achievements by governments

• Creating family-like life conditions in residential settings;
• Keeping siblings together in the same setting;
• Reintegration of children with their biological family;
• Providing alternatives of family-based childcare (with relatives, other families/persons, professional maternal workers, and family type houses/apartments), often in cooperation with UNICEF and INGOs. States are developing and diversifying the range of alternative services providing individualised childcare and are also promoting adoption as a special form of childcare, stressing the need to encourage national adoptions. International adoptions are seen as the last option in childcare.
• “Trust lines for children” consist of the provision of legal or psychological assistance in institutions and the improvement of living conditions in these institutions;
• Governments are concluding agreements with banks on financial support programmes for children in institutions and providing more funding to foster families;
• Some countries have established a new system of accreditation and monitoring for NGOs active in child protection, and are agreeing on compulsory minimum standards of care. Progress has also been made in terms of the establishment and development of a national system of monitoring and evaluation by the state of children at risk, the services and institutions for child protection and the financial resources allocated at the central/local level.
Prevailing recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to the states

• The Committee recommends that states give high priority to the assistance provided to families in order to prevent placement of children in alternative care.
• The Committee expresses its concern about the large number of children in institutions, their living conditions and the low level of care they receive. The Committee recommends establishing or strengthening alternative forms of care within the social welfare system at a local level. It further recommends ensuring institutionalization is used only as a measure of last resort. It further recommends that adequate resources be allocated for the proper functioning and monitoring of care institutions and foster care. The Committee is also concerned about the apparently insufficient monitoring of placements.
• An adequate follow-up and reintegration support as well as services for children leaving institutional care should be provided.
• The Committee recommends that further efforts be made to ensure that the principle of respect for the views of the child be implemented.
• The Committee recommends: respecting the children’s right to maintain personal relationships and direct contact with their biological parents and families on a regular basis; establishing effective mechanisms for children in care to voice complaints and efficient periodic reviews of placements; and providing support and child-rights oriented training for staff at the institutions, as well as the social workers.

Annex 2: Leaving care – key findings from Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and France

National legislation on leaving care

The issue of youth leaving care given little attention in national legislation

Even in countries that have national child care legislation, the issue of leaving care is not given due importance. The issue of leaving care is mentioned mainly through one of its sub related aspects: preparation for leaving care. This is limited to the period of time immediately prior to a youth’s departure from care settings and there is a request to include preparation for leaving care in the child’s individual care plan.

4 countries have no legislation regulating leaving care (Austria, France, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan) and in BiH there are current discussions on the need for such regulations.

Positive example from Bulgaria:

Advanced provisions on leaving care in the national care legislation; the increased international concern on the situation of child care in Bulgaria (expressed mainly through the pressure of the EU) has brought improvements in the care system, some of which can be observed in the area of leaving care.

What should change?

- The national care legislation should include special regulations for leaving care; the importance of “Leaving Care Laws” has been highlighted
- A monitoring system should be included in legislation and this system should work effectively in the field
- In addition to the care legislation, employment and social assistance legislation should include provisions for youth leaving care (support with employment, social facilities, social and medical insurance, etc.)
- The legal status of children aged 14 to 18 should be clarified within the care legislation
- After-care should be offered with a long-term perspective
**National services that support leaving care**

*In the absence of a legal framework, after care services are a particularly unstable part of the care system and are insufficient and sometimes not adapted to the needs*

Despite the lack of legislation, leaving care services are offered in all eight countries. Because these services are mainly provided by NGOs and a few state orphanages, it appears that the needs of all youth leaving care in these countries are not covered. They are mainly oriented towards satisfying basic needs, such as housing, job support, and financial support. Still, life skills and vocational training for youth leaving care is needed; however, a few have NGOs organised centres that offer such services. Boarding schools are often depicted as an after care service.

In countries where legislation is in place, the State is obliged to provide certain services to youth leaving care; however, in practise many times these are not available. Some international organisations (including SOS Children's Villages) offer leaving care services.

**Annex 3: UNCRC framework**

The UNCRC provides a key framework to guide programme and policy interventions with and for children without parental care. The preamble of the UNCRC emphasises the role of the family as "the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children." Articles within the convention seek to prevent separation of children (article 9), to support family re-unification (article 10), to provide alternative care for children when required (article 20), with regular reviews of care plans to ensure attention to their individual needs and development (article 25), and children’s own views (article 12). Taking account of the key principles of the CRC, care responses must always be made in the child’s best interests (article 3), tailored to the individual needs and characteristics of each child. Action to fulfil the CRC also enables a focus on some of main causes for children’s separation from the families, namely poverty (article 27), maltreatment (article 19), discrimination (article 2), armed conflict (article 38) and disability (article 23).

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**SOS Children’s Villages** is the umbrella organisation for more than 130 affiliated national SOS Children’s Village associations worldwide. It takes action for children as an independent, non-governmental and non-denominational social development organisation by providing family-based care for children who have lost their parents or can no longer live with them. SOS Children's Villages also supports vulnerable children and their families through programmes aimed at strengthening their coping skills, ensuring their access to essential services, and providing health, educational, and psycho-social support.

At the European level, it promotes and supports children’s rights and the principles and standards of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this context, SOS Children’s Villages is actively involved in the development of children policies in Europe, in particular in the field of children without parental care.
Who cares for Children? Children’s Rights in Austria

Civil Society Meeting with Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, 21 May 2007

Statement by the Austrian National Coalition (NC) for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Austrian Child Rights National Coalition (NC) brought up seven of our key concerns to the attention of Mr. Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

1. In November 2004 the Austrian government has adopted a National Plan of Action for Children’s Rights – it started with a comprehensive and participatory effort, but ended with a political document, which excluded the majority of recommendations of the consultation process; furthermore, implementation remains weak, with no clear political will and no additional resources.

2. One particular issue lacking attention in the NAP: child refugee protection and assistance! The situation of child refugees (2006: 488 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Austria (asylum statistics of the Ministry of the Interior)) has already been raised with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2004; in the meantime some improvements in basic care have to be noted, but it is still inadequate in relation to specific rights and best interests of children: over the last years, up to 300 children below 18/year have been placed in detention pending deportation, which is not compatible with the CRC; and even if they are accompanied – more frequent use of detention pending deportation also with adults leads to separation from fathers from their families often for months. Other serious issues of concern: still inadequate age assessment by unqualified public officials; inappropriate accommodation and care, including lack of space for children and their specific needs (school work, sports etc. for children with special needs/disabilities, for babies); lack of access to out-of-home care/kindergarten; lack of extra German language classes; access to secondary education after compulsory schooling only based on „good will“ of schools; no access to vocational training, labour market; in general, difficult emotional situation of insecurity for children with parents awaiting asylum decision for several years (almost 6.000 asylum cases open for more than 3 years!); sometimes solidarity initiatives to keep well-integrated children and their families in Austria.

3. One related concern: children victim of trafficking. Currently no national referral mechanism for identification of child victims and assistance in place, no adequate shelter and best interests determination procedure. A new National Plan of Action to counter Trafficking in Human Beings, including children, has been adopted by the government in April 2007, which requests the preparation of a concept for a child trafficking victim assistance centre, which is already urgently needed!

4. Another long-standing demand of our National Coalition: improve situation of children in conflict with the law and reinstitute a specialised Juvenile Court in Vienna! Until recently Austria had a very good reputation in the juvenile justice field, but in 2003 the specialised Juvenile Court in Vienna was shut down due to political controversy; but this specialised institution is necessary for a major city like Vienna, with cluster of related institutions.
(specialised public prosecutor, probation system, prison etc) – recent developments include: cases of serious maltreatment between juvenile inmates, lack of adequate occupational activities, strong increase of pre-trial detention for juveniles.

5. Additional demands in relation to child access to justice and court system: the new system providing „Prozessbegleitung“/psychosocial and legal assistance to victims of violence should be fully adapted to children’s needs – information lacking (including translations), no cases of child trafficking included so far etc. Apart from that, the new instrument of a „Kinderbeistand“/Child counsellor is currently at pilot stage: it should provide for representation strictly of interests of the child in situations of conflict between parents, e.g. in divorce proceedings – if evaluation is positive, this instrument should be made available to all children as a standard scheme.

6. Child and youth ombudsoffices have recently started a public campaign against child poverty in Austria („Berührungspunkt – Jugend ohne Netz“, www.beruehrpunkt.info) including calls for a basic income also for children, reform of the legislation on securing maintenance allowances from parents, improved child-focused health care services, full availability of day care institutions etc.

7. Finally, as a ceterum censeo and NC public call for more than ten years now: guarantee children’s rights in the Austrian Constitution! CRC has been ratified already in 1992, but CRC has no constitutional rank, and a reservation of domestic implementation has been declared by Parliament, which excludes direct applicability of the CRC in Austria by any court or public authority! Our call on the new government: no realisation of children’s rights in Austria without ability to use the principal international legal document for children’s rights in court!

In case of any questions or need for further information, case studies and practical examples, please don’t hesitate to contact us (elisabeth.schaffelhofer@kinderhabenrechte.at).

Thank you, Mr. Hammarberg, for your attention!

Helmut Sax, on behalf of the NC

The Austrian Child Rights National Coalition (NC) works for the full implementation of the CRC in Austria for all children and young people. It is an independent network of 25 institutions, including all regional child and youth ombudsoffices, National Committee for UNICEF and national and international NGOs/institutions based in Austria. Kinderrechtebüro Austria/FICE Austria, Welt der Kinder.
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN’S HUMAN RIGHTS

Reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
The UK Government continues to have two reservations in place on the UNCRC despite calls from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the UN Committee) to remove them in 1995 and 2002. There has been no progress on removing the general reservation on immigration and citizenship, which has been described by the UN Committee as “incompatible with the object and spirit of the Convention”. Despite a UK Government assurance that: “there are appropriate social and legal mechanisms in place to ensure that all children present in the UK receive appropriate levels of protection and care”, in practice the effect of the general reservation has been to create a lower standard of care for children from abroad (see below).

The UK Government has recently stated that “it would like to retain its reservation to article 37 (c), but on the basis that the position is kept under review”. It has been recognised that the requirement of article 37 (c) “that every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child’s best interest not to do so” has not been met in Scotland and the North of Ireland. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons reports have also questioned whether the complete separation of girls from women has been achieved in England and Wales.

The UK Government should:
- immediately withdraw its general reservation on the UNCRC in relation to immigration and citizenship;
- act with urgency to ensure it meets the requirements of article 37 (c) and remove its reservation.

Ratification of Optional Protocols to the UNCRC
Despite signing the Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 7 September 2000 the UK Government has yet to ratify it, despite assurances that it planned to do so. When the UK Government ratified the Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the involvement of children in armed conflicts in June 2003 it put in place a declaration which set out a number of circumstances when it might not be possible to prevent the deployment of under-18s in hostilities. The Government has confirmed that it has no plans to withdraw this declaration.

The UK Government should:
- ratify the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography at the earliest opportunity;
- remove its declaration to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts to ensure that children are never deployed in hostilities.

General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
There is still no adequate co-ordinating body for the implementation of the UNCRC across central government departments and only limited coordination across the devolved administrations. There has been no progress by the UK Government to “Incorporate into domestic law the rights and principles of the Convention to ensure compliance of all legislation” as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2002.

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1 Save the Children UK is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance in ECOSOC status with the UN
There are no mechanisms in place to fully child rights proof all Government policy and legislation which will have an impact on children - there is only limited rights proofing of legislation under the Human Rights Act 1998 and through the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. There are no effective government mechanisms in Wales and Scotland, although the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young people produce child rights impact statements on proposed legislation. In the North of Ireland Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 placed a duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity including “people of different ages”. However, the potential of this unique duty has not been realised in respect of children and young people. The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People has developed a children’s rights impact assessment tool based on the Scottish model.

The UK Government has still not undertaken an analysis of all sectoral and total budgets across the State Party in order to show the proportion spent on children, identify priorities and allocate resources to the maximum extent available in line with the UN Committee’s recommendation. There is still an absence of disaggregated data on this issue and spending on children is not expressed as a proportion of GDP. A Children’s Budget has only been developed by the Welsh Assembly Government and is absent in the rest of the UK.

Of the four governmental children’s plans in place across the UK only those for Wales and Northern Ireland are explicitly linked to the UNCRC. The recent government consultation in England called by for a new children’s plan Time to Talk is not based on the framework of the UNCRC.

Four children’ Commissioners have been established across the UK. However, the statutory base of the Children’s Commissioner for England is inadequately linked to the UNCRC and has a remit to “promote awareness of the views and interests of children” instead of safeguarding and promoting their rights. It also fails to meet the minimum standards of the Paris Principles, by not being fully independent of Government. The new Equality and Human Rights Commission (England, Scotland and Wales) will promote and protect children’s rights and the remits of both the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland include children.

The UK Government should:
- affirm its political will to fully embrace a culture of children’s rights and set up the necessary institutional frameworks needed to promote and protect children’s human rights across the UK, including:
- co-ordinate the implementation of the UNCRC across UK Government and devolved administration departments;
- incorporate the principles and provisions of the UNCRC into domestic law;
- establish child rights proofing mechanisms;
- ensure availability of disaggregated data about spending on children;
- develop plans of action for implementation of the UNCRC;
- ensure Paris Principle compliant legislation relating to the duties and powers of Children’s Commissioners.

IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN

Analysis of Government action on the UN Committee on the Right of the Child’s 2002 Concluding Observations has shown that there has been little progress in taking forward the Committee’s recommendations.

Corporal punishment
Rather than having clear, univocal protection, legislation across the UK continues to justify violence against children by seeking to limit its use rather than end it completely. In 2002 the UN
Committee, echoing its 1999 recommendation, stated: “…governmental proposals to limit rather than to remove the ‘reasonable chastisement’ defence do not comply with the principles and provisions of the Convention… particularly since they constitute a serious violation of the dignity of the child.” In 2005, the European Social Rights Committee declared that the UK is in breach of article 17 of the Charter - the right of children and young people to appropriate social, legal and economic protection - despite last year the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children recommended that States: “prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings, including all corporal punishment.”

Contrary to these clear recommendations, there continues to be resistance to reforming the law. Indeed, the UK Government’s recent review of Section 58 of the Children Act 2004 in England and Wales concluded that it was “neither correct nor incorrect to say that ‘smacking is legal.’” Despite its own analysis of consultation responses (which concluded that the “overwhelming majority of respondents called for children to enjoy the same rights to protection as adults”) and its own qualitative research with children aged between 4 and 16 years (which found that children associated smacking with fear, shame and anger and believed that smacking was out of place in modern childhood. The Welsh Assembly Government has taken a principled stand against the physical punishment of children and agrees with the UN Committee that corporal punishment should be prohibited in law but does not have the power to change the law.

We fully endorse the UPR submission by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

The UK Government should:
- move quickly to satisfy its human rights obligations by ensuring that children have full protection from abuse under the law.

Asylum-seeking children
The Government has not taken steps to “address thoroughly the particular situation of children in the ongoing reform of the immigration and asylum system to bring it into line with the Convention” as recommended by the UN Committee.

There is increasing concern over the development of dual systems of care and support – one for citizen children and one for asylum seeking, trafficked and other children who are subject to immigration controls. A key example of this is the omission of immigration agencies from the duty to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of children’ introduced by Section 11 of Children Act 2004 in England and Wales. In addition, recent proposals to reform the system for separated children in the UK are driven by a desire to reduce the cost of support services for these children and are not compatible with the principles and provisions of the UNCRC.

The detention of children with their families, without charge or trial, for unlimited time and without automatic supervision of the court, continues to be UK Government policy despite it being damaging to children’s health and welfare and breaching key international human rights standards. The four UK Children’s Commissioners have also expressed “profound” concern about the detention of children. In 2006, 1,235 children were detained with their families for between 7-268 days.

Financial destitution is increasingly being used as a tool by the UK Government to force families to return to their countries of origin. Section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004 provides for the withdrawal of asylum support from failed asylum seeking families who have not taken steps to leave the UK.

The UK Government should:
- end the detention of asylum-seeking children in families in immigration removal centres;
- scrutinise the Unaccompanied asylum seeker children reform proposals against the framework of the UNCRC;
- ensure that the UNCRC, Children Act 1989, Children (Scotland Act) 1995 and Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 remain the frameworks for the care and protection for all separated children in the UK;
- extend the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children to immigration agencies in all parts of the UK.

Juvenile justice
Since 2002, UK Government compliance with the UNCRC in the area of juvenile justice has worsened and continues to violate the standards set out in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice - “The Beijing Rules”.

The age of criminal responsibility is much too low - 10 years in England, Wales and the North of Ireland and 8 years in Scotland. This is lower than most European countries and is incompatible with social rights and responsibilities.

28 children in England and Wales died in custody between July 1990 and January 2005. Increasingly children are being imprisoned despite being assessed as too young and vulnerable to cope in a prison environment. Detention is not used as a last resort with more children, at lower ages and for lesser offences being detained in custody on remand and as a sentence. As at February 2007 there were 8,828 children in custody in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the average number of 10-17 year olds held in the Juvenile Justice Centre each month is 37, with a further 25-30 under 18s held in the Youth Offender Centre on any given day.

Children are routinely brought before the adult magistrate court in a range of circumstances - when co-accused with an adult or if there is no youth court sitting - and legislation also allows for children to be brought before the adult crown court when they are being tried for violent or sexual offences.

Anti-Social Behaviour legislation in England and Wales continues to allow children to be named and shamed despite a recommendation by the UN Committee to ensure that the privacy of children is fully protected.

The UK Government should:
- raise considerably the age of criminal responsibility;
- ensure that detention and custody is only used as a measure of last resort;
- make certain that no child should be tried as an adult - irrespective of the circumstances or the gravity of his/her offence.
- abolish ‘Naming and shaming’ of children and guarantee their right to privacy is protected at all times.

Child poverty
Levels of child poverty are unacceptably high throughout the UK – with 3.8 million children living below the poverty line and 1.3 million children living in severe poverty. The UK Government missed its target (set in 1999) of reducing child poverty by a quarter in 2006. In 2007, child poverty levels rose for the first time in seven years. It now looks increasingly likely that, without significant policy intervention, the UK Government’s target of halving child poverty by 2010 will be substantially missed. This target is a key staging post in the long-term commendable commitment to eliminate child poverty by 2020. It is estimated that an additional £4 billion a year will need to be invested by the Government in order to meet its 2010 target.

The UK Government should:
- allocate the additional funds needed to meet its target of halving child poverty by 2010 as a matter of urgency.

Education
The educational attainment of some groups of children are significantly below the national average – specifically among working class White males and children from some minority ethnic groups such as Gypsy/Traveller children and Black and Asian children.
The rates of children excluded from school remain high across the UK with roughly 10,000 children being permanently excluded each year. Despite Government actions to address the particularly high exclusion rates for children from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and children with Special Educational Needs, progress has been slow.

Children in custody in England and Wales remain excluded from the statutory right to education under Section 562 of the Education Act 1996 despite the UN Committee urging the Government to address this inequality.  

The UK Government should:
- put more resources into addressing inequalities in the educational attainment of disadvantaged children and young people, including: the poorest children, looked after children, Gypsy/Traveller children, disabled children and those with additional support needs;
- considerably reduce school exclusions;
- give children in custody a statutory right to education.

Use of plastic baton rounds in Northern Ireland
The UN Committee recommended that the use of plastic bullets be abolished as a means of riot control given that they can cause injuries to children and may jeopardise their lives. While the L21A1 version of the plastic bullet is no longer used it has simply been replaced with another version (the Attenuating Energy Projectile or AEP). No evidence has ever been produced of a child impact assessment having been conducted prior to the introduction of the AEP, and a recent study by a group of doctors at four hospital emergency departments in Northern Ireland suggested that AEPs have caused more harm than the previously used plastic bullets.

In addition, the Chief Constable confirmed at the Northern Ireland Police Board meeting of June 7 2007 that the Police Service of Northern Ireland intends to purchase 12 Taser stun guns for use in the North of Ireland – again there has been no child impact assessment conducted in relation to this plan.

The UK Government should:
- ensure that AEPs are not “used in any circumstances where children are present and at risk of being harmed.” in line with the statement by the Commissioner for Children and Young people in Northern Ireland.

For more information contact Louise King, Save the Children UK Policy Advisor, Child Rights: l.king@savethechildren.org.uk +44 (0) 20 7012 6762
London, 20 November 2007

Save the Children UK fights for children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. We work with them to find lifelong answers to the problems they face in over 60 countries around the world. These are countries suffering crises, developing, transition and developed countries. We support young people to lead groups, networks and organizations so they can work for change themselves. Key themes of our work across the UK include poverty and discrimination (especially focusing on education and health), young refugees, violence against children such as bullying and physical punishment, positive parenting and citizenship. We identify and work with the most vulnerable children, who have previously been left out or forgotten.


UK Government (2007) The Consolidated 3rd and 4th Periodic report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, paragraph 8

UK Government (2007) The Consolidated 3rd and 4th Periodic report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, paragraph 4

UK Government (2007) The Consolidated 3rd and 4th Periodic report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, paragraphs 3 and 4


See for example Hansard House of Lords Column 9 Oct 2006: Column WA17 “The Home Office is undertaking a review to determine the extent to which the United Kingdom complies with the articles set out in the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Government want to ensure that there are no gaps in the measures which exist to protect children in the way the protocol intended. Once the Government are confident that the United Kingdom is fully compliant, the optional protocol will be ratified”.


The Human Rights Act 1998 requires government departments to publish a statement on all Parliamentary Bills on their compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights


Every Child Matters in England and A vision for Children Centred around their Needs and Wishes in Scotland, do not constitute a plan of action for implementation of the UNCRC

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) Time to Talk

Children Act 2004 Part 1 Sections 2 and 8

Established by the Equality Act 2006 the EHRC merged the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission


Section 58 of the Children Act 2004 (England and Wales) and Article 2 of the Law Reform (miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and do not remove the defence of “reasonable chastisement”, in Scotland Section 51 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 does not remove the defence of “justifiable assault”


Jane Hutt, Minister for Children. NAfW Record of Proceedings/Cofoiwd for October 23rd 2002 and NAfW Record

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002) Concluding Observations on the United Kingdom of great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 48.g
Recent HMIP reports have been highly critical of the failure to protect children and safeguard their welfare, see for example HM Inspector of Prisons, August 2005 Report of a follow-up inspection of Oakington IRC, June 2005.

Joint Statement (Green/Williams/Marshall/Clarke), 2006.

Save the Children (2005) No Place for a Child: Children in UK immigration detention: Impacts, alternatives and safeguards


This has been calculated using a measure developed by Save the Children UK, which is a mixed measure of income and deprivation - 50% median income plus children and adults lacking at least one basic necessity and either children or adults lacking more than one.


UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002) Concluding Observations on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 46 (d)


Submission to the UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence against Children, Northern Ireland Commissioner for children and Young people, March 2005
Current Key Violations of Children’s Rights in Sweden.

General improvements in the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child have gradually been made in Sweden. The Swedish Government is active in its endeavour to improve the lives of children.

The overall problems of decentralisation of the implementation of the CRC in Sweden, which the Committee has pointed out in its previous Concluding observations to the report of the Swedish Government remain. The problems of decentralisation runs through many of the comments Save the Children Sweden has made in its third report to the Committee. Partially there are general structural problems behind some of the problems of decentralisation, which has to do with demographic and regional imbalances, restructuring of trade and industry, unemployment, urbanisation etc. But the effects of these problems turns out in practice as e.g. economic vulnerability for particular groups of children in the absence of a clear strategy to meet those problems. Save the Children Sweden believes that the Government should develop more distinct mechanisms than at present to follow up the effects of decentralisation of the implementation of the CRC to municipalities and community councils.

Children in Sweden are generally well-off in comparison with many other children in Europe, especially as regards material standard, general welfare, education, health and security. Sweden however, shares the increasing problems of inequalities of distribution of resources and welfare between different groups of children. Ethnicity is a watershed in welfare, child poverty, educational performance, housing segregation etc. Children of single households are, together with children with parents born abroad, the most vulnerable groups of children.

Sweden is still struggling to adjust to the fact that we, during the last 50 years, have gone from being one of the most ethnically homogenous countries of Europe to become one of the ethnically more heterogeneous. 15 per cent of all children in Sweden are born in families with two parents being born abroad or are born abroad themselves. If children with one parent being born abroad are added to this figure, there is yet another 10 percent. Thus in all, there are some 25 per cent of all children not being of “Swedish origin”. This is basically an asset for the Swedish society but it has also created increasing tension between different groups as it is obvious that all children do not get the same start and the same chances. The overrepresentation of poor immigrant households in bad housing, unemployment, criminality among teenagers with foreign background, drop-outs from school and unfulfilled education is a big problem.

In relation to the CRC, inequalities between different groups tend to develop into discrimination, that is, violations of article 2. The fact that a child with a foreign background is four times more likely than a child with a Swedish background to live in a family that cannot guarantee him/her an adequate standard of living must be regarded as a problem in relation to the general principle of non-discrimination.

But, the question is when the need for justice and equality turns in to breaking rights? If the welfare system with social and child allowances, housing allowances, parents insurance etc. had not been a buffer for the most vulnerable groups, the discrimination of many children would have been even more obvious!

The Swedish government has not presented overall strategies to meet the particular challenges of the increasing gaps between immigrant children and other children in Sweden, other than the general measures of welfare. These gaps are connected with social background and vary between
different groups of immigrant children but generally ethnicity divides different groups of children in terms of their welfare situation.

Some problems meet asylum-seeking children already when they enter Sweden. The unaccompanied children or separated children are the most vulnerable. Children who are hiding from the authorities after having received a negative decision of their application or staying in the country without appropriate papers are still excluded from their right to education and health care although the CRC Committee has criticised this in their concluding observations. This is a violation of the principles of non-discrimination and of the principle of the best interest of the child and must be changed. The government has expressed an intention to change this, after ten years of criticism from NGO:s the CRC Committee etc. but has not yet done so.

Save the Children Sweden works in Sweden and internationally – both directly and through other organizations. We contribute with ideas, experience and funding to 500 projects in more than 60 countries. Their vision is a world which respects and values each child, a world which listens to children and learns, and a world where all children have hope and opportunity. Our work has two main approaches: support to children at risk, and influencing public opinion and politicians by means of reports, seminars and campaign work. We are a referral body in legislation in Sweden and active in several UN bodies. Save the Children Sweden is a member of the Save the Children Alliance in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Save the Children is a popular movement with some 85 000 members and 15 local offices in Sweden.
European Child Helplines: Highlighting the Needs of Children in Europe

Child helplines are a key strategy in the child protection system and provide insight into the struggles faced by children. CHI collects data from its global member network of child helplines and consolidates it in the flagship publication Connecting to Children (CTC). In 2006, child helplines in Europe received nearly 6 million contacts from children, and responded to over 2 million of those contacts. The reasons that drove children to look towards European child helplines for help include peer relationships, sexuality, abuse and violence. (see table below) Europe with its vast resources can do much more to assist children in need of care and protection, particularly the marginalised child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for contact</th>
<th>Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Relationships</td>
<td>283577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>222516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse and Violence</td>
<td>202030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-social, mental health</td>
<td>160407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships</td>
<td>152586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information requested</td>
<td>84663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Related</td>
<td>68562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness/Runaway's/Basic needs</td>
<td>26126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>26835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child substance use and abuse</td>
<td>33122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Matters</td>
<td>14873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Exploitation</td>
<td>2551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS infected/affected children</td>
<td>3610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differently-abled children</td>
<td>9475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>3516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global network of children’s helplines and outreach services, which was launched in September 2003 in Amsterdam to strengthen and develop helplines for children and young people. A child helpline is founded on the belief that children and young people have rights, and that they can identify their problems. Child helplines therefore provide children with an opportunity to express their concerns and talk about issues directly affecting them. Working in 150 countries, Child Helpline International counts 43 European child helplines as members.
The situation of children living and/or working in the streets in Europe - Overview of the key violations of fundamental rights suffered by street children in the EU

As a very first unavoidable starting point, it must be remarked that there are a variety of definition for describing the phenomenon of children living and/or working in the streets. This lack of a common definition, together with the difficulties related to collecting data among groups who often fall out of the reach of administrative registers, is seriously hampering the possibility to give detailed and comparable figures for a detailed presentation of the key violations suffered by them. The Council of Europe defines street children as “children under 18 who, for shorter or longer periods, live in a street milieu. They are children who live wandering from place to place and who have their peer groups and contacts in the street. Officially these children may have as their address their parents’ homes or institution of social welfare. Most significantly they have very few or no contacts with those adults, parents, school, child welfare institutions, social services, with a duty towards them” (Council of Europe, 1994); this definition can be taken as an orientation for this document. Due to the lack of a common definition and of comparable data, the following points will address the issue of street children in a rather general way.

Street children usually suffer from multiple contemporary violations of their rights. Violations of different fundamental human rights are often interlinked and mutually reinforcing and therefore require a holistic approach to be solved, including investing more in the qualification of social workers.

1. **Right to survival**
   - Children living in the streets carry out high-risk lives in highly risky environments and need to find ways not to die from hunger, cold, or illnesses, or from violence and abuses. They need to find reasons to live whenever they feel they are not loved or profoundly depressed.

2. **Right to non-discrimination**
   - Many street children belong to ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma population, and to migrant groups and therefore suffer under the prevalent patterns of discrimination against those groups. They are very likely to suffer from forms of multiple discrimination where social stigma for their socially excluded situation is made worse by their ethnic and/or migrant background, to which adds their often weak mental health. Girls are particularly vulnerable as they are also particularly exposed to trafficking and sexual exploitation.

3. **Right to protection**
   - Street children are particularly vulnerable to economic exploitation, child labour – particularly hazardous and illicit ones – as well as physical and sexual violence, to using narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Being more vulnerable and less informed than street adults, they are

---

2 The EFSC is currently contributing to improve the level of available data through its Anti-Violence Project, which is aimed at collecting data about the violence suffered by street children and to develop a methodology to detect and tackle it. Results should be available within the next two years. In addition, the EFSC is planning to submit a project proposal aimed at improving data collection on street children to the European Commission under the Daphne Programme in the next years.

3 “Street Children & Youth as a priority of the EU’s social inclusion policies for the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe”, proceedings of the Symposium organised by the EFSC on 9-10 December 2004.
exposed to abuses by these adults. Street children are more exposed to sexual abuses and to sexually transmissible diseases than other children living in poverty.

4. **Right to a family**

- Besides being often violated in the case of street children, it is to be remarked that the violations and abuses suffered from street children tend to be reiterated from one generation to another. In some cases, street children come from abusive families, which limit or distort their emotional development, offer deficient models of participation and of family life. In other cases, parents are not able to provide their children with security and protection on grounds of their own material and immaterial deprivation.

- As an EFSC Romanian Member Organisation reported, it is often the case that children are left alone in the street by parents who emigrate from the new member States to other EU Member States.\(^4\)

- On the other hand, the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors who leave their home countries dreaming of and being promised a better life, and who end up homeless, begging, shoplifting and prostituting themselves and are exposed to trafficking, exploitation and violence is on the rise. This phenomenon is often linked to the situation of the families of origin, and in particular to problems of parental unemployment, extreme poverty, and alcoholism in the countries of origin. More generally, this phenomenon seems to be due to obstacles that prevent children “from pursuing their own life-project in the country of origin”\(^5\).

5. **Right to birth registration and to nationality and identity**

- Due to the extremely marginalised conditions in which street children are born, particularly children of Roma origin, asylum seekers or children with migrant background who lack access to administrative registered and/or are in irregular situations, very few documents are available for them. Boys are overrepresented in NGOs’ registers whereas girls are particularly invisible as they are more likely to fall into trafficking and exploitation routes.

6. **Right to education**

- This right is scarcely enforced or in an extremely erratic way: street children show significantly lower school attendance, consistently higher levels of criminal convictions, lower achievement and attainment, and higher levels of social exclusion.

- Some of them are identified for having special educational needs. Not all of the children with special educational needs are so identified, as EFSC member organisation report\(^6\); on the other hand, as is the case for Roma children in some Member States, addressing special educational needs might translate into school segregation and hampering of the opportunities for these children to learn the basic skills required to function in society.

- Early school dropouts are extremely frequent among street children and particularly where children live on their own in the streets and are forced to work, often involving themselves in illicit or dangerous activities activities, or to beg. These children are particularly exposed to becoming the victims of human trafficking, prostitution, drug addiction and crime.\(^7\)

- Nevertheless, even the educational rights of street children who can count on members of their families for ensuring their survival and protection is often jeopardised by the long working hours of the parents, who cannot properly support those children in schools.

7. **Right to health**

- This right is in general scarcely enforced or in an extremely erratic way: many street children do not live in adequate hygienic conditions nor receive adequate treatment for serious illnesses, often as a consequence of their scarce knowledge about the available services, of

\(^4\) *European good practices regarding successful initiatives carried out by municipalities in Europe and the social reintegration of street children*, report produced by the EFSC under the project “Building a Europe for and with children” of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, forthcoming.

\(^5\) *European good practices…*, cit.

\(^6\) *European good practices…*, cit.

\(^7\) *European good practices…*, cit.
their scarce knowledge in the field of health and of their own irregular condition which prevents them from visiting healthcare practitioners in due time.

- There is a remarkable connection between social stigma and the right to food and nutrition: EFSC Member organisation reported that, although entitled to free school meals, children living in extremely marginalised conditions, may freely choose to renounce to them for avoiding the stigmatisation which follows from this8.

- Closely related to the point above is the relation between social marginalisation and children’s mental health. An Estonian EFSC member organisation reported about a particularly high rate of child suicides in the regions where children are left alone by the emigration of their families and end up in the street9. The level of self-esteem of those children is very low and their likelihood to fall into drug addiction is very high. In case of mental diseases, the lack of care accentuates the marginalisation of people with diseases such as schizophrenia, autism or Down syndrome.

8. Right to a decent standard of living

- The phenomenon of street children is clearly closely related to child and parental poverty. Street children live in extreme material deprivation of food, clothing and housing. The lack of access to health and education for them and their families further reduces their capacity of breaking the vicious intergenerational circle of poverty.

- In addition to this, EFSC member organisations stress the specific problems connected with the lack of supervision on those children10. Given their extremely deprived situation, children can easily look for jobs in illicit activities which are relatively much more rewarding in terms of money than regular jobs. For instance, prostitution and drug selling can provide a child with very high amounts of money compared to the time that they invest on that. Lacking supervision and alternatives, they are likely to overlook the medium-term consequences of entering those illicit activities and easily end up under the exploitation of adults. At the same time, they are likely not to be able to make their own best interests in the use out of the money and spend them for articles, which are not contributing to their material well being. Material deprivation, combined with lack of supervision, is therefore likely to increase their social exclusion and their involvement in criminal activities11.

9. Right to participation

- Due to their marginalised situation, street children often have a limited vision on their future and an emotional vulnerability which make them easy to manipulate by people expressing new and different points of view. Therefore, the opportunities for street children to express their views in adequate fora result insufficient. Moreover they need help to develop critical thinking and to formulate own opinions.

EFSCW is a non-profit Brussels-based foundation committed to the improvement of the rights and living conditions of children at risk, particularly street children. As a platform for lobbying and advocacy towards the European Union, EFSCW provides non-governmental organisations who are working with children at risk, both within and outside of the EU, with information and advice concerning all children and youth-related policies and EU assistance programmes. It also facilitates the exchange of best practice between member organisations. EFSCW aims to improve the rights and living conditions of young people at risk by raising both public understanding and political awareness within the EU institutions.

The foundation promotes and facilitates an improved level of mutual exchange and cooperation between EU policy makers, national governments and NGOs working for children and youth at risk. To achieve this goal, it organises seminars and conferences for its members, experts, researchers and politicians to encourage networking and information exchange at international, European, national and local level.
Children’s rights in Macedonia: SOS line for children and youth

The SOS line for children and youth (080012222) which operates within the frames of the First Children’s Embassy in the World - Megjashi is the first free helpline for children and youth in the country which has been working continuously for 15 years. Since the beginning, around 120 young people have volunteered (psychologists, pedagogues and social workers). The SOS helpline is sponsored by the Macedonian Telecom and Stopanska Banka.

More than 16 000 calls have been received from children and youth about violence related problems (physical, sexual and mental), problems in the family, with their friends, problems on the street, love problems, personal problems etc.

This year (2007) 361 calls have been registered. Although our line is open to all generations, the adolescents were the best interlocutors, like in the past. We were mostly contacted by girl juveniles, although the difference in number of calls made by male and female juveniles is low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CALLS</th>
<th>OF NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest rate of the phone calls were related to family relationships (24.62%), followed by abuse and violence on children (13.43%), commercial exploitation - prostitution, pedophilia, beggary (9.32%) and financial problems (7.46%). It is interesting to note that this year there have been calls on sexuality and sexual information, unlike the previous years where there were none.

The greatest number of phone calls related to and incited by the family life were: domestic violence, divorce, misunderstandings between the parents, misunderstandings between parents
and children, disturbed family relationships because of alcoholism of the parents, difficult economic situation etc.

The violence as the reason for the phone calls usually occurred in schools, in the family, on the streets. In these cases, the FCEW - Megjashi cooperated with the Ombudsman, and for certain cases when necessary, we contacted the police, the courts, the centers for social work and other institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF PROBLEM</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abuse and violence (physical, sexual, emotional, rape, incest)</td>
<td>13.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Psychosocial, mental and physical health (suicide, depression, phobia, obsessions, fear and anxiety, lack of self-confidence, identity)</td>
<td>5.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information on the SOS line</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family relations (domestic violence, custody, conflicts, problems, divorced parents)</td>
<td>24.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Legal issues</td>
<td>3.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use and abuse of psychoactive substances (addicts, information on drug addiction)</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Financial aid</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. School problems (difficulties, problems with teachers, violence among peers, discrimination, homework, anxiety from oral exams)</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relations among peers (violence outside schools, problems with friends, friendship)</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Homelessness - basic needs (need of housing, abandoned child, children who need food, death of a child)</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Commercial exploitation (prostitution, pedophilia, beggary etc.) (kidnapping, child trade, child labour abuse, beggary, use of children for criminal acts)</td>
<td>9.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Other</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sexuality and sexual information (information, pregnancy, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases)</td>
<td>5.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Child delinquency (children in conflict with the law)</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Asking information</td>
<td>5.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>101.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison with the previous year, the number of the following calls has increased: family relationship (for 15.36%), commercial exploitation of children (for 7.43%), sexuality and sexual information (there were none in 2006, and in 2007 there were 5.49%), problems on the streets (for 3.57%) etc.

The rate of the following phone calls have decreased this year: love relationships (for 13.12%), information on the SOS line (for 7.93%), abuse and violence on children (for 6.95%), psychosocial and mental health (for 4.56%) etc.

Regarding to the other types of problems there are also differences, however they are slight and insignificant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF PROBLEM</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abuse and violence</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>13.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Psychosocial, mental and physical health</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>5.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information on the SOS line</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family relationships</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>24.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Legal issues</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>3.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use and abuse of psychoactive substances</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Financial aid</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. School problems</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relationships among peers</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Homelessness - basic needs</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Commercial exploitation (prostitution, pedophilia, beggary etc.)</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>9.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Other</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sexuality and sexual information</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>5.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Child delinquency</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Asking information</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>5.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi is an international NGO with the purpose to protect children and their rights and to strengthen the NGO movement for the children's rights. Founded on the 29th of April 1992, Megjashi strives for respecting the child's personality through protection of their rights, advocating for their best interests, connecting children from different backgrounds and enriches their lives with events that make the childhood secure and fruitful. It also strengthens the NGO movement for protection of children rights in the Republic of Macedonia, by developing the voluntary approach in its operation and by exercising concern for the Convention of Children Rights.