

**Country session:** Serbia

**Date:** 74<sup>th</sup> session - 24 January 2017

**Context:**

The delegation pointed out that Serbia was currently a candidate country for joining the European Union. It also underlined that the monitoring of the CRC in the autonomous province of Kosovo was the responsibility of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The Committee encouraged UNMIK to provide information on the implementation of the rights of the child in this territory, without prejudice to the final legal status of Kosovo.

**Background information**

[OHCHR press release](#)

[Webcast](#)

[Audio file](#)

**Reporting**

*Reporting methodology*

Regular reporting procedure

Simplified reporting procedure

Concluding Observations with urgent measures

*State report:*

<a href="#">CRC</a>		OPAC		OPSC	
No. of report	Combined second and third periodic report	No. of report	Integrated	No. of report	Integrated
<b>Due date</b>	12 March 2013	<b>Due date</b>	-	<b>Due date</b>	-
<b>Submission</b>	30 July 2015	<b>Submission</b>	-	<b>Submission</b>	-

<a href="#">Written replies to the List of Issues</a>	
Due date	15 October 2016
Submission	18 November 2016

*Public reports from children's rights defenders*

	<a href="#">Alternative reports</a>
<b>NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coalition for Monitoring Child Rights in Republic of Serbia</li> <li>▪ Human Rights Watch</li> <li>▪ National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS)</li> <li>▪ Autonomous Women's Center</li> <li>▪ Global Initiative against Corporal Punishment</li> <li>▪ Human Rights Watch</li> <li>▪ Praxis, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion and the European Network on Statelessness (ENS)</li> <li>▪ European Roma Rights Centre</li> </ul>

### State delegation

Large high level and multisectoral delegation led by Ms. Suzana Paunovic, Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights. She was supported by a high level and technical functionaries of the Ministry of Education, Foreign Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, Interior, Health, Justice, Defence and Social Protection.

List of State delegation representatives on [OHCHR site](#)

### Committee's Task Force members

<b>Name &amp; Last name</b>	<b>Country</b>
Madi GEHAD	Egypt
Amal Salman ALDOSERI	Bahrein

## Dialogue description:

### i. Character of the dialogue

The atmosphere during the session was cooperative and constructive. The answers of the State to the Committee's questions were focused on technical programs, activities and actions implementing the CRC.

### ii. General assessment made by the Committee:

The Committee welcomed the adoption of the National Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination 2013 -2018; as well as other policies and instruments to implement child rights. Nevertheless, it was concerned about the gaps between existing laws and their implementation.

### iii. Main issues discussed

- **Children belonging to minority groups:** The Committee raised its deep concern about the general discrimination and stigmatization against Roma children in all sectors, the widespread violence and hate speech against them, and the generalized obstacles for accessing social care services. The State acknowledged the exclusion of Roma communities, and stressed that the government is undertaking awareness-raising campaigns to enhance the inclusion of Roma children into society and fight generalized discrimination within population.
- **Violence against children:** The Committee was worried about the high number of cases of physical and sexual violence, particularly against children with disabilities living in institutions, and the generalized violence in schools and cyberbullying. The delegation replied that this was a cultural problem as violence was a mean of discipline. An action plan had been adopted to address this issue, which included a national campaign to raise awareness and changing people's mindset.
- **Children deprived of a family environment:** The Committee noted that despite the deinstitutionalization process taking place in the country, there was still a high number of children placed in institutions, especially Roma children and children with disabilities. In addition, living conditions in these institutions as well as reintegration measures were inadequate. The delegation stated that specific measures to discourage institutionalization were being taken, such as allowances for families with children with disabilities and fostering the adoption of children with disabilities.
- **Refugee and asylum- seeking children:** Being Serbia a transit country towards EU countries, the Committee asked about the conditions of children in asylum centers, the lack of a comprehensive protection system to suit the needs of refugees and asylum- seeking children, as well as the absence of an effective procedure to identify unaccompanied children claiming asylum. The delegation replied that the government was envisaging to improve health and nutrition services delivered to refugees and asylum- seeking children.

## Recommendations of the Committee

In its [Concluding Observations](#), the Committee recommended, inter alia:

- **Children belonging to minority groups:** The inclusion, attention, protection and integration of Roma children was included in most the Committee's recommendations to Serbia. The State should make a comprehensive assessment of the situation of Roma children and guarantee their access to social, education, and health services. Moreover, it should conduct awareness-raising campaigns to change



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negative attitudes towards Roma communities and prevent violence and hate speech, while ensuring the integration of Roma children.

- **Violence against children:** The State should reinforce the implementation of protocols and strategies combating violence against children and allocate the budget required. It should ensure comprehensive prevention strategies to protect children from violence at all levels while reinforcing education programs in schools for teachers and students to reduce peer violence and cyberbullying. And finally, the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to prevent ill-treatment in children's institutions as well as a child-friendly complaints mechanism must be set up.
- **Children deprived of a family environment:** The Committee urged the State to reduce the placement of children under 3 years in residential care institutions and chose family-based care, especially for children with disabilities and Roma children, as well as limiting the number of children per institution. Institutionalization of children with disabilities should be used as a last resort and parental guidance on the rights of children with disabilities must be assured. The State also should take all measures to protect children in institutions from physical or psychological abuse and neglect, while ensuring clear guidelines and protocols to determine whether alternative care is the best option for the child. Finally, awareness-raising campaigns to destigmatize children in alternative care must be conducted, and social services of quality for children living in institutions must be accessible.
- **Refugee and asylum-seeking children:** The State should establish child-sensitive asylum procedures identifying unaccompanied or separate minors and give them adequate support and protection. It should ensure the inclusion of unaccompanied or separate minors to the existing child protection system as well as respecting the principle of *non-refoulement*. Moreover, the State should guarantee the access to the asylum system for children in need of international protection, as well as the right to nationality for children with undetermined nationality living in the country.

## Next State report

CRC	
No. of report	Fifth and sixth periodic report
Due date	24 May 2022.

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