Children’s rights included in EU-Georgia Association Agenda
- Press release -

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ChildPact welcomes the inclusion of a section specifically dedicated to children’s rights in the EU-Georgia Association Agenda, in spite of the fact that child protection reforms were previously left out of the Association Agreements.

In January, ChildPact and Georgia’s Coalition for Child and Youth Welfare publicly stated their concern for the absence of child protection from the main document establishing the framework for cooperation between the European Union and Georgia, in defiance of a formal request from the EU Parliament to “include in the Agreement a section on the protection of the rights of the child”. In June, just days before the finalization of the negotiations on the Association Agenda (a 30-page document highlighting the priorities for the implementation of the 1000-pages Association Agreements), ChildPact’s Secretary General Mirela Oprea published an op-ed that argued for the fundamental importance of explicitly including child protection reforms in the documents defining EU-Georgia cooperation.

ChildPact warmly welcomes the fact that the sides eventually acknowledged the importance of children's rights and decided to include in the Association Agenda a section specifically focused on this issue, and looks forward to cooperate with initiatives aimed at sharing relevant experiences in this field as requested by the Agenda.

Indeed, sharing experiences and know-how in the field of child protection reforms is one of ChildPact's key activities. In late July, for example, representatives of child-focused national coalitions of NGOs and state officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova attended a special study visit in Bucharest.

Such initiatives are fundamental for sharing best practices and to prevent repeating past mistakes in a neighboring country. Hopefully, such efforts will be strengthened and become a regular field of cooperation within the framework of the Association Agenda, thus allowing to speed up the pace
of child protection reforms and enhance the welfare of thousands of children in Georgia and other countries of the region.

About the Association Agenda
From a press release issued by Georgia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

“The Association Agenda lists a series of jointly agreed priorities for the implementation of the Association Agreement during the period 2014-2016. [...] The Association Agenda will replace the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan between Georgia and the EU, and will establish a practical framework for Georgia’s political association and economic integration. [...] The European Union will employ different instruments to help Georgia implement the Association Agreement, including the provision of financial support and technical expertise and the sharing of relevant experience.”

You can see the full text of the section of the Association Agenda from this link.
The section dedicated to children’s rights is at page 7:

- Address the situation of children’s poverty and give considerably higher priority to the situation of vulnerable children;
- Continue juvenile justice reform;
- The National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan should prominently include child rights;
- Provide adequate resources and strengthen the role of Public Defender to undertake further ombudsman work for children and monitor the situation in relevant institutions;
- Focus on measures to protect children against all forms of violence.

Mirela Oprea, ChildPact Secretary General
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