Written Contribution for the EU-Moldova Human Rights Dialogue 2016

Rights of the Child

ChildPact’s written contribution for the EU-Moldova Human Rights Dialogue 2016 is mandated by our Moldavian child-focused coalition member, APSCF, reuniting 89 NGOs working and advocating for better child welfare in the Republic of Moldova.

We welcome the current advancements made by the Government of Moldova in order to reform its child protection system and align it according to European and international standards. However, the current situation of children in the country speaks for itself: more efforts need to be paid by Moldova to ensure a decent life for its younger citizens.

Our concerns below aim to further detail the current child protection challenges hindering progress in Moldova:

A. The elaboration and the adoption of the Child Rights Strategy 2014-2020 was a success. However, we are still concerned that so far, the Moldavian authorities did not manage to approve an Action Plan to implement the Strategy. Even more, the budgetary insufficiency foreseen by the latest Draft of the Action Plan in line with the envisaged actions is worrying and needs to be rethought. In this scenario, the involvement of civil society experts is essential.

B. The fact that deinstitutionalization of children is a priority of the Child Protection Strategy for 2014-2020 is an advancement in the field. Nonetheless, we are arguing that special attention should be given to the closing process of institutions and to the development of alternative care services (such as maternal assistants) and to the prevention services to be developed or improved at local level, providing adequate financial resources for them.

C. Although local autonomy is desirable, when it comes to budgetary management, with the amendments brought to the local public finances law last year, it is likely that poorer communities will start cutting from the social services’ budget. Thus, this new legal financial frame is hindering social services at local level. Despite of the national level funds aiming to balance this situation for the next 2 years, it is still unlikely that poorer communities won’t make cuts from the social services once they have to manage the budget on their own. Thus, in the near future, children will be discriminated depending on the district’s income and possibility to develop and finance social services for them. We argue that social assistance and child protection ought to be a responsibility of the State, just like education and health. Consequently, we suggest that a standard package of community social services should be supported by the state from the national budget and that the local communities should

1 Find more information at: http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&id=312821
contribute to those standard services according to their budgetary possibilities. APSCF is currently trying to convince governmental authorities about the importance of such a measure.

D. In Moldova, there are 64.5% children having parents without social insurance. This means that parents with children aged between 1.5 years old and 3 years old do not receive an allowance from the State and do not have the possibility to send their children to state-paid kindergartens. Still, these parents have to work to support their families. This reality is currently in opposition with the 3rd objective of the Child Rights Strategy 2014-2020 which requires the State to facilitate the balancing of the family and professional life of parents through the development of new social and educational services for families. Even more, other legal provision hinder the accomplishment of this objective: the current Code of Education foresees state budgeting for pre-school institutions only starting with children aged 3 and more. **We argue that there is a need to modify the current Code of Education in order to give mothers the possibility to resume their work before their child reached the age of 3.** Although a draft law in this sense has been elaborated by the Parliamentarian Commission for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sports and Mass Media, with the intensive participation of the civil society representatives, the draft law does not have the support of the Ministry of Finance, despite the wide approval of the Social Protection Commission. **APSCF further stresses the need to improve the draft law for its immediate adoption and implementation.**

ChildPact, the Regional Coalition for Child Protection, is a network of 10 child-focused national networks from 10 different countries: Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovó, Moldova, Romania and Serbia. Bringing together 600 NGOs, our members work with more than 500,000 vulnerable children from the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus areas. ChildPact’s four objectives are: 1. Monitor and influence child-related policies at regional and European levels; 2. Strengthen the capacity of its members by actively supporting their expertise development, visibility and credibility; 3. Advocate for regional cooperation at inter-governmental and civil society level; 4. Raise public awareness of child rights and protection issues.

For further information regarding ChildPact’s recommendations on child protection and child rights issues in the Republic of Moldova, please contact:

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3 More information at:  

4 Find more information about ChildPact at: www.childpact.org