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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It has been an intense year for our regional coalition! 2015 is our first year as an officially registered organisation! In 2014 our members had agreed that it was time for ChildPact to formally embody the tight cooperation existing between child protection professionals across Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, Romania and Serbia. This means ChildPact has been legally enabled to represent its members in grant acquisition, partnership, and policy dialog with key regional and international stakeholders.

Encouraged by the trust and support of our members, partners and donors, we developed the following projects throughout this year: ‘United Voices for Children’, ‘Young with a Voice’, ‘Stronger Networks for Children’. We are proud for having piloted, together with World Vision International, the Child Protection Index in most of the member countries.

Through the Child Protection Index we want to initiate evidence-based advocacy actions to ensure that every child benefits of accessible, affordable and continuous protection inside and outside of family environment. Holding policymakers accountable to their promises, showing them what needs to be changed for the wellbeing of children and reforming the national child protection systems requires concrete data and stories that can influence hearts and minds.

All the projects we developed this year aimed to strengthen our collective capacities so that together we can make our voices heard by both policy makers and the wider public. We see that ending violence against children remains an elusive goal. We believe that ending violence against children is not impossible, but it requires a radical shift in our approaches, in particular unified, strong and vocal coalitions.

But many coalitions are much less than that, with funding attached to erratic project cycles that hardly allow them to seize important political influencing opportunities. Therefore, one of the main challenges for the child rights coalitions, that ChildPact plans to address in the future, is the need to ensure financial stability. Creating a regional trust fund for children is one of our most ambitious dreams at this time!

Mirela Oprea – ChildPact Secretary General
Mariana Ianachevici – ChildPact President
WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF

THE FORMAL REGISTRATION OF CHILDPACT

In 2014 our members agreed that it was high time for ChildPact to formally embody regional cooperation among child protection professionals. We are now legally enabled to represent our members in grant acquisition, partnership, and policy dialog with key regional and international stakeholders!

THE CHILD PROTECTION INDEX

Proud for having built a measuring instrument that can assess the extent to which governments comply with their promises according to their UNCRC obligations!

OUR FIRST FULLY-FLEDGED STRATEGY

Every child benefits of accessible, affordable and continuous protection inside and outside of family environment. ChildPact changes children’s lives by inspiring transformational child protection policy making and implementation.

THE TRUST AND SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS

Proud that so many people encouraged us in this beginning. Proud that more and more people become involved in our work. Regional cooperation for child protection concerns everyone: experts, professionals, policy makers, donors, academics and parents!

EVIDENCE ABOUT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Through the Child Protection Index we know now what the reality is behind the policy promises and what needs to be improved.

CHILDPACT: A CREATIVE SOURCE FOR CONTENT

With 100,000 website page-views and 12,000 minutes of video visualizations on our YouTube channel, we hope to have inspired and empowered real life stories from experts, parents and children in our region.
OUR 2015 AT A GLANCE

- **3 PROJETS**
  Young with a Voice
  Stronger Networks for Children
  United Voices for Children

- **9 COUNTRIES**
  Child Protection Index piloted in 9 countries in order to identify the child protection gaps between policy and practice

- **72 EXPERTS**
  A big team of legal and child protection experts and consultants involved in the projects implementation

- **7 WORKSHOPS**
  5 social media trainings and 2 regional coalition building workshops

- **1 CAMPAIGN**
  Promoting the simplification of the legislative and bureaucratic hurdles within child protection systems in 5 countries

- **5 CONTESTS**
  Real-life stories of children, parents and child protection experts gathered through national story-telling contests

- **30 EVENTS**
  25 events participated and 5 events organised in our region

- **CHILD PROTECTION ADVOCATE**
  ChildPact profiled as an active advocate for child rights and protection
PROMISES VS. REALITY

ASSESSING CHILDREN WELLBEING THROUGH THE CHILD PROTECTION INDEX

Children’s rights are formally granted by international documents — most prominently by the UNCRC, signed by all the countries in the region. But even after 25 years, countries still do not fully comply with the standards they were bound to respect. We want to change that! Thus, with the Child Protection Index - a comparative policy tool implemented by local and national level civil society organisations - we look into the state of play of those UNCRC articles that are most relevant for the vulnerable children in our region, gathering evidence to support our advocacy work. The results from each country level index illustrate each government’s actions towards child protection through the lens of policy, service delivery, capacity, accountability and coordination. This means that this instrument measures to what extent the governments adopted and put in practice relevant good policies that nurture children. The Index points out how each country performs across 626 indicators, adapted from the UNCRC Implementation Handbook. The Child Protection Index does not measure the well-being of children directly, but it focuses on government policy, investment, and services related to child protection.

Piloting the Child Protection Index started in Romania in 2014 and it was then extended in Moldova, Georgia, Bulgaria and Serbia during 2015, followed by Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* in 2016. The data gathered through the Index was compiled in country specific reports presenting the current status of the national child protection systems. These reports were presented to a wide range of stakeholders during high-level events. An online visualisation platform for the Index is now developed and it will be launched in 2016.

The Child Protection Index is the result of the collaboration between World Vision International and ChildPact, and it is supported by a consortium of local, national, regional members of civil society organisations.
YOUNG WITH A VOICE

In the last 20 years governments in the Balkan countries have been striving to reform the child welfare system. However, reforms have been incomplete or inadequate. Nowadays, reports attest that in these countries the number of vulnerable children is increasing while the number of the general population has been decreasing sharply in the last years.

We are aware that the vulnerable children of today are the marginalised young people of tomorrow. And we also believe that coalitions are real agents of innovation and change - thus strong coalitions translate in better policies for children. Our ‘Young with a Voice’ project aimed to address this systemic issue by building the capacity of a large number of CSOs in order to give a voice to young people that risk social and economic marginalisation and influence social reforms through analysis, monitoring and advocacy. Furthermore, we have collected the views and stories of these children and propose low-cost measures to simplify bureaucratic procedures that hinder social inclusion.

One of the main idea behind the project is SIMPLICITY: the legislative and bureaucratic hurdles that prevent youngsters to break the cycles of social and economic marginalization need to be simplified. And the best way of realising how complicated are the procedures regulating child protection and how hard can be for one to understand them is to listen to the children. In this way, we can find sustainable solutions for simplifying these complex procedures and ease social inclusion for all. With the support of the national child protection networks from each participating country, all the ideas collected from children, experts and the wider public were presented to decision makers and we continue to advocate for the simplification of the child-related policies.

- donor
  European Commission, through the Civil Society Facility (Operating Grants to IPA Associations. Support to regional thematic associations)

- implementing partner
  Open Club, Serbia

- countries
  Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia

- time frame
  January - December 2015

- budget
  164,453 €
STRONGER NETWORKS FOR CHILDREN

Too many children in our region are abandoned, abused, hungry, poor or forced into hazardous labour. It is high time to turn the page. Instead of violence, children need love and care. Instead of orphanages, children need families. Instead of exploitation and forced labour, children need to go to school. And instead of passivity, children need adults who can defend their rights and challenge the status quo of the systems that poorly care for them. This is what our ‘Stronger Networks for Children’ project plans to do in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: strengthen the child protection systems so that vulnerable children have their rights guaranteed. The implementation of significant reforms is hindered by inadequate funding, competing political priorities, lack of shared regional learnt lessons and best practices, and particularly, by the absence of a strong and vocal civil society able to hold governments at account for their promises and implementation deficits.
Our ‘United Voices for Children’ project aims to contribute to maximizing child well-being, protection and rights by strengthening civil society. Child-focused coalitions have the expertise and the mission to solve the complexities that inhibit progress. Strengthened and united under ChildPact, these national actors will make use of their knowledge and joint power to monitor and influence government action on behalf of vulnerable children.

VULNERABLE CHILDREN NEED MORE THAN DIRECT SERVICES, THEY ALSO NEED GOOD POLICIES.

Strong coalitions can keep governments to account regarding the promises made to improve children’s lives. The political dialogue is more efficient as the decision-makers need to consult with one unified actor, instead of many actors.

Being strong in numbers, coalitions can promote the kind of pressure needed for policy change through knowledge, public image, media presence and good outreach at both local and national levels.

Coalitions can build on and complement the work of individual child-focused NGOs, as instead of providing services for children, coalitions work exclusively to ensure that good policies for children exist and are implemented.

Coalitions advocate for better policies. However, only very strong, visible, vocal and skilled child protection coalitions will be able to create the necessary vibe and hype needed for truly ending violence against children.

ACTIVITIES

- increasing the visibility of 7 national coalitions through trainings, coaching programs, roundtables and field trips for journalists;
- cultivating sustainability habits of CSOs from 7 countries by creating and implementing strategies for celebrity and business engagements, developing minimum operational standards and building long-term funding habits;
- creating an evidence base for advocacy and policy engagement by developing a Child Protection Index in 7 countries. The Index will capacitate the national coalitions to build policy recommendations based on regional snapshots and national comparisons.
- advocating at national and regional level and increasing the political and diplomatic engagement with stakeholders by organizing learning events, mentoring sessions and capacity exchanges.

| donor | The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| implementing partner | World Vision Germany & AgroInvest Serbia |
| countries | Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, Serbia |
| time frame | January 2015 - December 2018 |
| budget | 1,057,054 € |
ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

THE REVISION OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

For the public consultation launched by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy together with the European Commission regarding the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy, ChildPact advocated for the inclusion of child protection as an important cooperation area that the EU should keep in its field of priorities with the partner countries in the South-Caucasus region.

ChildPact recommended to the European Commission, the European Parliament, as well as the governments of EU member states and of partner countries involved in the ENP: (1) to recognize and explicitly include child protection as a strategic area of cooperation in the ENP Strategy; (2) to include child protection reforms as a component part of the Association Agenda and ENP Action Plans, in dialogue with national governments and local civil society organizations; (3) to include child protection reforms among the aspects monitored in future progress reports or alternative tools aimed at reviewing the reform process to be established; (4) to favour the exchange of experiences in the field of child protection reforms between partner countries and individual EU member states, considering in particular reforms implemented in countries previously ruled by communist regimes.

CHILDREN SHOULD BE A PRIORITY IN THE EU REGIONAL FUNDING

ChildPact participated at the public consultation with CSOs and CSO Networks in the Western Balkans and Turkey on the IPA 2014 Call for Proposals “Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations”, emphasising that child-focused CSO networks play a crucial role in promoting social reforms and donors should invest in them as they encourage innovation, regional cooperation and adherence to European value. ChildPact argued that child rights should be explicitly mentioned in such calls for proposals considering the following: (1) By investing in children, the EU can reduce the long-term risks of poverty and social exclusion in the IPA
countries; (2) By supporting child rights the EU can boost democracy, regional integration and inter-ethnic dialogue; (3) Protection of the rights of the children is one of the most powerful EU Enlargement success stories.

EU-MOLDOVA 2015
HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

ChildPact participated at the preparatory meeting prior to the EU-Moldova 2015 Human Rights Dialogue which took place in Brussels, on the 19th of May before the hearing of the Moldavian authorities in Chisinau. ChildPact, together with its Moldavian coalition member, APSCF, welcomed the National Child Protection Strategy for 2014-2020 of Moldova but pointed out that despite of the development of standard operating procedures in line with EU standards and good practices in regard to the respect of child rights, Moldova continues to be a source for child trafficking and a country at EU’s boarders where children still have to go a long run for a safe and decent life. ChildPact expressed concerns regarding several child protection challenges hindering progress in Moldova and made appropriate recommendations, such as: (1) a standard package of community social services should be supported by the state, from the national budget, and that local communities should contribute to those standard services according to their budgetary possibilities; (2) better final outcome and an eased further actual implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy would result from the coordination of the MLSPF with the National Council for Child Rights; (4) special attention should be given to the closing process of institutions and to the development of alternative care services and to the prevention services that need to be developed or improved at local level.

EU-GEORGIA 2015
HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

ChildPact participated at the preparatory meeting prior to the EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue, organised by the European External Action Service on the 1st of June, in Brussels. During the meeting, ChildPact welcomed the on-going efforts of the Georgian authorities in their endeavour to improving the life conditions for the vulnerable children in the country while emphasising that children still have to go a long run for a decent life as, to begin with, child poverty in Georgia in on the rise, with a level of poverty among children 50 % higher than among the general population. As mandated by the Georgia Coalition for Child and Youth Welfare, ChildPact raised several concerns which hinder the advancement of the child protection system in the country: (1) the cross-sector coordination and cooperation mechanisms needed for tackling child issues are not fully developed in Georgia – coordination protocols between the social, education and health services are lacking; (2) tackling child labour is still a concerning and needs to be addressed in terms of policy framework, services and coordination; (3) the quality of child protection services is not regulates as not all child protection services are regulated by quality standards.
CHILDPACT MEMBERS

ALBANIA
UNITED FOR CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION • BKTF
www.bktfcoalition.org

ARMENIA
CHILD PROTECTION NETWORK • CPN
www.armenialchildprotection.org

AZERBAIJAN
NGO ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS
www.ngoalliance.net

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
STRONGER VOICE FOR CHILDREN • SVC
www.snaznijglaszadjecu.ba

BULGARIA
NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CHILDREN • NNC
www.nmd.bg

GEORGIA
COALITION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WELFARE • GCCYW
www.gccyw.ge

KOSOVO
COALITION OF NGOs FOR CHILD PROTECTION • KOMF
www.komfkosova.org

MOLDOVA
ALLIANCE OF ACTIVE NGOs IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL PROTECTION OF FAMILY AND CHILD • APSCF
www.aiantacf.md

ROMANIA
NGOs FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN • FONPC
www.fonpc.ro

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