Concluding observations for Croatia’s combined third and fourth periodic reports

CRC/C/HRV/CO/3-4

*Below is a short summary of some of the key issues from the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s 67th session concluding observation for Croatia’s combined third and fourth periodic reports to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

*Read the full text here.*

*You can find other documents related to the Committee's 67th session (including alternative reports submitted by NGOs and the Committee's concluding observations for other States reviewed in this session) on* [*the Committee’s session page.*](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=837&Lang=en)

**Non-discrimination:**

The Committee was concerned that de facto discrimination continues to be prevalent against children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations and that the number of complaints received by the Ombudsperson for Children relating to discrimination against children, in particular in the field of education concerning Roma children, has risen (para.20).

**Respect for the views of the child:**

The Committee was concerned that children’s views are not adequately implemented in practice in all matters that affect them, including judicial and administrative proceedings; Traditional societal attitudes towards children continue to limit respect for their views, within the family, schools, other institutions, and society at large and consent to medical intervention for children under the age of 18 is given only by the child’s representative (para.24).

**Nationality:**

The Committee remained concerned that the Act on Croatian Citizenship does not ensure citizenship for all children born in the State party’s territory as it remains possible that a child, who has been considered Croatian national until the age of fourteen, becomes stateless, if it is later determined that his or her parents are foreign citizens, but he or she cannot acquire their nationality. The Committee remained concerned the issue of citizenship for Roma children is not adequately addressed. (para.26).

**Right to privacy:**

The Committee was concerned that the privacy of children is insufficiently respected, in particular in the media, health care and social welfare institutions, and in practice relevant legislation is insufficiently implemented (para.28).

**Access to appropriate information:**

The Committee was concerned that libraries are inadequately equipped for children in remote areas and smaller communities and television and radio programmes do not always meet the needs of children and are of low quality. Children are still exposed to inappropriate media content, such as pornography and alcohol advertisement, and lack consistent monitoring and adequate sanctions for violations (para.30).

**Corporal punishment:**

The Committee was concerned that corporal punishment is still used as a disciplinary method in the family and is widely accepted in society (para.32). The Committee recommended that the State party strengthen its efforts, including through awareness-raising and parenting education programmes, to end the practice of corporal punishment in all settings, in particular in the family, and promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative (para.33).

**Sexual exploitation and abuse:**

The Committee was concerned about the lack of adequate support systems for victims, incidents of re-victimization of children, insufficient measures aimed at deterrence of perpetrators and limited access to prevention programs for children as they are not systematically organized (para.34).

**Violence:**

The Committee was concerned about ongoing violence experienced by children in schools, social welfare and other institutions, including physical violence, bullying, social exclusion and emotional violations, and the lack of adequate training for law enforcement officials, school teachers and staff in social welfare and other institutions to effectively respond to incidents of violence (para.36).

**Family environment:**

The Committee was concerned about insufficient availability and quality of support services offering counselling and assistance to families with respect to the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities; Lack of quality support services for children with disabilities and their families, children in remote areas and children living in poverty; Lack of adequate guidance and supervision for families where there are signs of neglect or abuse.

**Children with disabilities:**

The number of children with disabilities in institutional care is increasing and there is a lack of adequate treatment and care in these institutions; There were incidents of ill-treatment of children with disabilities in some health care institutions; The support system for children with disabilities to ensure inclusive education is unevenly developed, particularly in rural areas; and abandoned children with disabilities are primarily placed in health care institutions and not in children’s institutions, and therefore are not included in official data of children available for adoption (para.42).

**Health:**

The Committee was concerned about the uneven geographical coverage of health services for children; the shortage of health care professionals; and the lack of adequate support for children in need of mental health care systems. The Committee is further concerned that despite legislative improvements allowing parents to stay in the hospital with their children, they still have limited accommodation facilities and treatment of hospitalized children is not always adequate (para.44).

**HIV/AIDS and Alcohol abuse:**

The Committee was concerned that laws are not respected and enforced resulting in the easy availability of alcohol, especially non-registered alcohol, for adolescents and the increase in drinking, including binge drinking, among young people, especially among girls, as well as increased used of psycho-active drugs. The Committee was further concerned about the lack of long-term, systematic health education, including on sexuality, responsible sexual behaviour and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS (para.46).

**Breastfeeding:**

The Committee was concerned that there is still a lack of awareness of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and risks of formula feeding; (para.48). The Committee recommended that the State party take all the necessary legislative and structural measures, including monitoring, to control the marketing of breast-milk substitutes (para.49).

**Education:**

The Committee remained concerned that many children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations, including Roma children, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children living in remote areas and foreign children, do not have equal access to the education system. Moreover, the Committee was concerned that Roma children continue to be segregated in schools; The education system continues to be centralized and uniform in the design of programmes (para.50).

**Rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities:**

The Committee is concerned that there is a lack of adequate play spaces and facilities in many communities, that they are not properly regulated and about the increasing phenomenon that children have to pay for leisure activities (para.54).

**Asylum-seeking and refugee children:**

The Committee was concerned that reception conditions for unaccompanied and separated children are not adequate; Asylum seeking children are not provided with free legal aid or other appropriate forms of assistance for all stages of the process; and asylum seeking children continue to face difficulties in accessing education (para.56).

**Juvenile justice:**

The Committee was concerned that children are subject to prolonged pre-trial detention; Detention centres are not regularly visited by judges despite their legal obligation to carry out such visits; Children are still detained together with adults in some institutions and conditions of detention facilities for children and reformatories are inadequate; and adequate training of those involved in the administration of juvenile justice is lacking (para.58).