

# Mapping child protection systems in the EU (27)

Greece

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Authors: Anna Routsis, Samantha Stratidaki

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# 1. Legislative and regulatory framework and policies

## 1.1. Overview of normative and regulatory framework

Please provide an overview of the normative legal and regulatory framework of the national and sub-national child protection system. Include information on the scope of the child protection system, the specific needs it addresses, the human and financial resources allocated, and any relevant cultural, social, and historical factors. Please indicate the current priority areas in child protection.

The child protection system in Greece is based largely on the jurisdiction of the public prosecutor to investigate reported child protection issues and take emergency measures for the protection of the child(ren) involved. Depending on the nature of the reported problem, the prosecutor issues an order for investigation of the child’s family environment by a social service, for police investigation, or for a medical or psychiatric assessment of the child. All agencies report back to the prosecutor about their findings and recommendations, which are used to inform further action. Recommendations by social services may include further assessment, monitoring of the family, or removal of the child(ren) from the family. After removal, the child is admitted to a paediatric hospital or unit for medical exams, and often stays there until admission to a residential unit is possible – unless a relative can undertake their care - as there is no provision for emergency accommodation or immediate placement in foster care.

The alternative care system is based largely on an institutional model, despite efforts in recent years to promote foster care. Historically, this dates back to the post-war period, when large institutions were established to accommodate children orphaned by the 2nd world war or the civil war that followed, or children whose families were unable to raise them due to extreme poverty. The system has not been updated sufficiently to meet present-day standards about children’s rights and needs.

The child protection system faces chronic shortage of human and financial resources and therefore focuses primarily on emergency intervention in cases of child abuse or severe neglect, rather than addressing the long-term support needs of families with complex difficulties. Current priorities focus on enhancing mechanisms for identification of child abuse and reducing the length of children’s stay in institutions, by replacing it with family-based alternatives. Legislation introduced since 2018 provides a new framework for the implementation of foster care and adoption and emphasizes the obligation of residential institutions to cooperate with children’s families, in order to promote continued contact and children’s return to them, whenever possible.

## 1.2. Legal provisions in constitutional, civil, criminal, and administrative law related to children in need of protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.2.1. Does the constitution contain any provisions on children’s rights and child protection?	X		Article 21 para. 1 of the Greek Constitution provides that the state should guarantee the protection of both child and family
1.2.2. Is there a single legal instrument devoted to child protection and child rights, e.g. a Children’s Act?		X	There is no single legal instrument such as a Children’s Act, apart from UN CRC, which was ratified and incorporated into Greek legislation with increased

			<p>legal validity, with Law 2101/2002 (OG A' 192/2-12-1992).</p> <p>The Greek Ombudsman, in its special report on child protection and alternative care has proposed <i>“strengthening the institutional framework of child protection in the community and alternative care, by aggregating and incorporating all relevant provisions and pieces of legislation into a single legal instrument on child protection”</i><sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>However, there is no draft pending or any known government plan or initiative in the direction of introducing such a legal instrument.</p>
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1.2.3. Please provide an **inventory** of key child protection related legislation, including hyperlinks, date of adoption and the areas covered. Please include civil, criminal, and administrative legislation covering different areas of child protection (please add rows, as needed).

Legislation	Date passed	Child protection areas covered
Greek Constitution <sup>2</sup> , Article 21 para 1	1975/1986, amended in 2008	Provision of obligation of the state to guarantee the protection of childhood and family
Law 2101/1992 (OG A' 192/2-12-1992) <sup>3</sup>	2/12/1992	Ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
Law 3080/2002 (OG A' 312/10-12-2002) <sup>4</sup>	10/12/2002	Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

<sup>1</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, Athens, Greece, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Greece (2008), [Greek Constitution \(OG A' 120/27-6-2008\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> Greece (1992), [Law 2101/1992 \(OG A' 192/2-12-1992\)](#), 2 December 1992 .

<sup>4</sup> Greece (2002), [Law 3080/2002 \(OG A' 312/10-12-2002\)](#), 10 December 2002.

<p><u>Civil Code:</u></p> <p>(PD 456/1984, OG A' 164/24-10-1984)<sup>5</sup></p> <p>a) Art. 132 foll.</p> <p>b) Art. 1532 par. 3, As amended by Law 4800/2021 (OG A' 81/21-5-2021)<sup>6</sup></p> <p>c) Art 1589-1654</p> <p>d) Art. 1666-1668</p> <p>e) Art. 1655-1665</p> <p>f) Art. 1542-1588</p> <p>c,d,e,f: as amended by Law 2447/1996 (OG A' 278/30-12-1996)<sup>7</sup></p>	<p>1984</p>	<p>a) Age of legal capacity</p> <p>b) Jurisdiction of public prosecutor to take any appropriate measures for protection of children, in emergency cases (including regulation of custody and removal of a child from family)</p> <p>c) Guardianship of minors, appointment of guardian</p> <p>d)Judicial interdiction</p> <p>e) Foster care</p> <p>f) Adoption</p>
<p><u>Penal Code:</u></p> <p>(amended by Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/ 11-6-2019)<sup>8</sup></p> <p>a) art 323, 323A</p> <p>b) 348-351A</p>	<p>11/6/2019</p>	<p>a) Human Trafficking</p> <p>b) Child Sexual Abuse Material and prostitution</p>
<p>Law 3500/2006 (OG A' 232/24-10-2006)<sup>9</sup></p>	<p>24/10/2006</p>	<p>Law on domestic violence (including provisions on prohibition of corporal punishment of children and on teachers' reporting obligations)</p>

<sup>5</sup> Greece (1984), Civil Code, [PD 456/1984, OG A' 164/24-10-1984](#), 24 October 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A' 81/21-5-2021\)](#), 21 May 2021.

<sup>7</sup>Greece (1996), [Law 2447/1996 \(OG A' 278/30-12-1996\)](#), 30 December 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/ 11-6-2019](#), 11 June 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Greece (2006), [Law 3500/2006 \(OG A' 232/24-10-2006\)](#), 24 October 2006.

Law 3625/2007 (OG A'290/24-12-2007) <sup>10</sup>	24/12/2007	Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child Child Sexual Abuse Material (introduction and modification of Penal Code respective articles)
Law 3727/2008 (OG A' 257/18-12-2008) <sup>11</sup>	18/12/2008	Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (introduction and modification of Penal Code respective articles)
MD 49540/2011 (OG B' 877/17-05-2011) <sup>12</sup>	17/05/2011	Operation of Child Protection Groups – OPA (Ομάδες Προστασίας Ανηλίκων - ΟΠΑ) within municipalities
Law 4074/2012 (OG A' 88 /11-4-2012) <sup>13</sup>	11/04/2012	Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
Law 4198/2013 (OG A' 215/11-10-2013) <sup>14</sup>	11/10/2013	Prevention and combating of human trafficking and protection of victims - Harmonisation of Greek Legislation with Directive 2011/36/EU  Article 4: provisions for interviewing child-victims
JMD 30840/2016 (OG B' 3003/20-9-2016) <sup>15</sup>	20/09/2016	Establishment and operation of the National System for Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking including children - in accordance with Law 4198/2013 (OG A' 215/11-10-2013)
Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017) <sup>16</sup> , Articles 54-77	23/06/2017	Integration of Directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA 91A  Establishment of Children's Houses (Articles 74-76 of Law 4478/2017)

<sup>10</sup> Greece (2007), [Law 3625/2007 \(OG A'290/24-12-2007\)](#), 24 December 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Greece (2008), [Law 3727/2008 \(OG A' 257/18-12-2008\)](#), 18 December 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Greece (2011), [MD 49540/2011 \(OG B' 877/17-05-2011\)](#), 17 May 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Greece (2012), [Law 4074/2012 \(OG A' 88 /11-4-2012\)](#), 11 April 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Greece (2013), [Law 4198/2013 \(OG A' 215/11-10-2013\)](#), 11 October 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Greece (2016), [JMD 30840/2016 \(OG B' 3003/20-9-2016\)](#), 20 October 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017\)](#), Articles 54-77, 23 June 2017.

Law 4531/2018 (OG A' 62 /5-04-2018) <sup>17</sup>	05/04/2018	Ratification of Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and adjustment of Greek legislation (Istanbul Convention)
MD 7320/2019 (OG B' 2238/10-06-19) <sup>18</sup>	10/06/2019	Regulation of the operation of Children's Houses
Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018) <sup>19</sup> followed by Ministerial Decisions for its implementation  Ministerial Decision 19333/2023 (OG 1085 /B /28-2-2023) for the establishment of professional foster care, for minors with disabilities, living in institutions <sup>20</sup> . ( <a href="https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230201085">https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20230201085</a> )	16/05/2018	Implementation of foster care and adoption  Professional foster care, for minors with disabilities, living in institutions.
Law 4604/2019 (OG A' 50 /26-03-2019) <sup>21</sup> , Article 117	26/03/2019	Obligation of residential childcare institutions to submit an Individual Family Rehabilitation Plan (IFRP) for every child placed in them, within 90 days of the placement, including a reasoned proposal for a family-based alternative to institutional care
Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178 /1-10-2021) <sup>22</sup> , Articles 1-12.  Additionally, by provisions of Article 53 the National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS-EKKA) was appointed as the National Child Guarantee Coordinator having as its mission the effective coordination and monitoring of the	1/10/2021	Prevention and management of child abuse or maltreatment:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obligation of all childcare services to report to competent authorities - via the officer responsible for child protection of Art. 5 - any incident or alleged incident of child abuse (Art.4)</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4531/2018 \(OG A' 62 /5-04-2018\)](#), 5 April 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Greece (2019), [MD 7320/2019 \(OG B' 2238/10-06-19\)](#), 10 June 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018 .

<sup>20</sup> Greece (2023) [MD 19333/2023 \(OG B' 1085/28-02-2023\)](#), 28 February 2023

<sup>21</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4604/2019 \(OG A' 50 /26-03-2019\)](#), Art. 117, 26 March 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 1-12, 1 October 2021.

<p>implementation of the Recommendation EU 2021/1004 (L 223/14), as well as the National Action Plan for its implementation to prevent and combat the social exclusion of children in need, to promote their inclusion, to avoid and combat discrimination and stigma.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obligation of community and residential services (of the public and the private sector) that provide social services to children to nominate an employee as responsible for child protection (Art.5)</li> <li>• Establishment of National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors, coordinated by the National Centre for Social Solidarity – NCSS (<i>Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης, ΕΚΚΑ</i>) (Article 9)</li> </ul>
<p>MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>23</sup>, as amended by provisions of Common Ministerial Decision 49339/15.5.2023 (OG 3289/B/18.05.2023)<sup>24</sup></p>	<p>11/05/2022</p>	<p>Standards and conditions for the operation of residential childcare units of civil society organisations</p>
<p>Law 4939/2022 (OG A' 111/10-06-2022)<sup>25</sup> Migration Code - Articles 63 -66</p> <p>Presidential Decree 77/2023 (OG A'130/27-06-2023)<sup>26</sup>- Article 6</p>	<p>10/06/2022</p> <p>27/06/2023</p>	<p>Provisions for unaccompanied children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment of (all) children by migration authorities (Article 63),</li> <li>• Reception-identification of unaccompanied-separated children (Article 64),</li> <li>• Establishment of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, to which all the responsibilities of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors have been transferred, resulting in the abolition of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors -SSPUAM (<i>Ειδική Γραμματεία Προστασίας Ασυνόδευτων Ανηλίκων</i>)</li> <li>• National Strategy for the Protection of unaccompanied children (Article 66)</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), 11 May 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Greece (2023), [CMD 49339/2023 \(OG B' 3289/18-05-2023\)](#), 18 May 2023

<sup>25</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 63-66, 11 June 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Greece (2023), [PD 77/2023 \(OG A' 130/27-06-2023\)](#), Art. 6, 27 June 2023



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisions on guardianship, accommodation, the National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children, the National Emergency Response Mechanism, and escorting (under sub-sections A-ΛΔ of Article 66)</li> </ul>
Law 5029/2023 (OG A' 55/10-3-2023) <sup>27</sup> , Articles 1-16	10/3/2023	<p>Law titled “Live together in harmony-Break the silence” against bullying in school.</p> <p>According to the Law a new digital platform for the referral of cases is going to be established, as well as Action groups within the school community to deal with cases of bullying</p>

### 1.3. Policy framework

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>1.3.1. Is there a specific national or sub-national policy framework and/or a national or sub-national strategy on child rights and/or child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, does it require an integrated approach to child protection?</p>		X	<p>There is no comprehensive policy framework or strategy on child rights and child protection.</p> <p>Policies and legislative provisions introduced in recent years do not provide for an integrated approach and for systematic cooperation of agencies involved in child protection, especially if they belong to different Ministries.</p> <p>Although there is no overall national policy framework, some of the national action plans listed below (in 1.3.2. and 1.4.) include components related to child protection.</p> <p>E.g. <a href="#">National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child (2021-23)</a><sup>28</sup> includes chapters on Child-friendly justice, Protection of children in the context of migration and Child and family protection in the community-Deinstitutionalization (with several activities targeting specific areas of child protection,</p>

<sup>27</sup> Greece (2023), [Law 5029/2023 \(OG A' 55/10-3-2023\)](#), Art. 1-16, 10 March 2023.

<sup>28</sup> [National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child \(2021-23\)](#)

		<p>such as domestic violence, missing children, protection and support of abused children, etc.),</p> <p><a href="#">National Action Plan for the Protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation (2022-2027)</a><sup>29</sup> addresses issues related to prevention of abuse and provision of care and support to victims, etc.</p>
<p>1.3.2. Are there national or sub-national plans for action or policies targeting specific groups of children or particular areas, e.g. children with disabilities, children in care?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>A number of national action plans have been adopted in recent years, some of them targeting specific groups of children; namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child (2021-23)</a>, including provisions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Combating child poverty</li> <li>➤ Child friendly justice</li> <li>➤ Protection of migrant and refugee children</li> <li>➤ Right to Health</li> <li>➤ Right to Education</li> <li>➤ Child protection in the Community - Deinstitutionalization</li> <li>➤ Horizontal action for the rights of children with disabilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020-23)</a>, including provisions for inclusive education and deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities</li> <li>● <a href="#">National Strategy and Action Plan for Deinstitutionalization</a> including strategic goals for deinstitutionalisation of children and children with disabilities</li> <li>● <a href="#">National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (2021-2027)</a> - Children aged 0-17 in situations or at risk of social exclusion are among key beneficiary groups</li> </ul>

<sup>29</sup> [National Action Plan for the Protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation \(2022-2027\)](#)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors (January 2022)</a> (not officially adopted yet)</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Action Plan for “European Child Guarantee” (September 2022)</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">National Action Plan for the Protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation (2022-2027)</a></p> <p>Law 4491/2017 (OG A’ 152/13-10-17)<sup>30</sup>: Establishment of National Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Action Plans for the Rights of the Child (Article 8, as amended by Law 4786/2021, OG A’ 43/23-3-2021) under the General Secretariat of Justice and Human Rights (Ministry of Justice), acting as the coordinator and president</p>
1.3.3. Are there national or sub-national child protection policies regarding children in the digital space and when using online media?	X	<p>Child protection in digital space and online media is mainly guaranteed by the Cybercrime Police Unit. Part of the regulatory framework is provided in Law for the protection of consumers, e.g. Law 2251/1994 Article 7a, recently amended by Law 5019/2023 (OG A’ 27/14-2-2023)<sup>31</sup>.</p> <p>Children in media including online media are also protected by Law 4779/2021 (OG A’ 27/20-02-2021)<sup>32</sup> incorporating Directive 2018/1808 - Amendment of Directive 2010/13/EU, on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audio-visual media services (Audio-visual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities.</p>
1.3.4. Is there a (regular) child participation policy and/or mechanism and/or body related to child rights and/or other child-related	X	<p>There is no regular child participation policy or mechanism to ensure children influence policy making, directly or indirectly. There are fragmented mechanisms, such as the Youth Parliament’s yearly forum under the auspices of the Greek Parliament<sup>33</sup>.</p>

<sup>30</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4491/2017 \(OG A’ 152/13-10-17\)](#), 13 October 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Greece (2023), [Law 5019/2023 \(OG A’ 27/14-2-2023\)](#), 14 February 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4779/2021 \(OG A’ 27/20-02-2021\)](#), 20 February 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Youth Parliament acts as a participatory body to the Greek Parliament, as it is an educative programme for the promotion of youth participation and opinion expression and their familiarisation with democratic values and

<p>governance at national or sub-national level to ensure children have a (direct) voice in or can indirectly influence policy making, e.g. children's rights forum, child surveys, child participation platform?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, are appropriate child protection and safety measures in place?</p>		<p>The Greek Ombudsman and some NGOs (e.g. Action Aid), work on a regular basis with Young Advisory Panels that provide recommendations to be submitted to European and national bodies.</p> <p>UNICEF collects children's views on various matters through the U-Report programme.</p> <p>Children are planned to participate in the National Mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of Action Plans for Children, as advisors.</p> <p>During a public event on the European Child Guarantee held on 07/06/2022, the President of the Hellenic Republic, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and representatives of Parliament met with children in need and listened to their concerns. At the same time, children's voice, expressed through focus groups and surveys via structured questionnaires, contributed to the development of the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee.</p>
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#### 1.4. Particular groups of children: information on legislative and policy developments (if any) related to their protection

Please report on any significant developments in the last five years and comment briefly.

When answering you should consider all relevant civil, criminal, and administrative legislation, including regulations, ordinances, codes, ministerial decisions. On policy developments please include any relevant action plan, protocol, procedure, or guidance issued by competent authorities. Please always specify how children's participation in any respective judicial (civil, criminal, and administrative) proceedings are regulated and supported (e.g. procedural safeguards to be in place, ensuring children's right to be heard).

##### 1.4.1. Children victims of abuse, exploitation, or neglect

**In the areas of online and offline sexual abuse, pornography, exploitation and child labour, trafficking; domestic violence and gender-based violence including harmful practices, such as genital mutilation, child/forced marriage, honour-related violence; abuse or discrimination; ICT and cyber bullying; school**

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procedures. Since 2018-19 it has become a yearlong school procedure and the participants are elected by their schoolmates. There is no institutional obligation for the Parliament to follow or adopt Youth Parliament's proposals. For more information please visit Youth Parliament's website on [http://www.efivoi.gr/?CMD=to\\_programma](http://www.efivoi.gr/?CMD=to_programma).

**bullying; neglect and children at risk of abuse and neglect, including street children (begging or selling things)**

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><a href="#">National Action Plan for the Protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation (2022-2027)</a> includes goals related to prevention as well as treatment and care of children victims.</p> <p>Establishment of a National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors (Article 9), as noted in 1.2.3<sup>34</sup></p> <p>Establishment of National Referral Mechanism for the protection of victims of human trafficking, including children, under the management of NCSS and the coordination of the National Rapporteur for Human Trafficking</p> <p>The General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post of the Ministry of Digital Governance supports the funding of the EU project the Greek Safer Internet Centre (<a href="https://saferinternet4kids.gr/">https://saferinternet4kids.gr/</a>), that started its operation on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2016 under the auspices of the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH). FORTH is the premier multidisciplinary research institution in Greece with well-organized facilities, highly qualified personnel and a reputation as a top-level research institution</p>	<p>Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-21)<sup>35</sup> includes provisions on reporting incidents of child abuse or maltreatment (Articles 4, 5) and on establishment of a National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors (Article 9), as noted in 1.2.3</p> <p>JMD 30840/2016 (OG B' 3003/20-9-2016)<sup>36</sup> on the establishment and operation of the National System for Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking, including children - in accordance with Law 4198/2013 (OG A' 215/11-10-2013)<sup>37</sup> on prevention and combating of human trafficking and protection of victims</p> <p>Law 4322/2015 (OG A' 42/27-4-2015)<sup>38</sup>, Article 8 amended Art. 312 of the Greek Penal Code, which penalises constant harsh behaviour that causes bodily or psychological harm, also including under the scope of Law adult victims, an explicit reference on psychological pain and a stricter penal fine for perpetrators (6 months imprisonment instead of</p>

<sup>34</sup> It is worth mentioning that based on the law 4837/2021, articles 1-12, as well as on the establishment of the National System for Recording and Monitoring Minors' abuse reported incidents, monthly training seminars, for over 1300 "responsible persons for child protection" working on public and private child care structures, were held in 2023 by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS-EKKA) as coordinator, aiming at early recognition of child abuse/neglect signs and the recording of child abuse incidents.

<sup>35</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 4,5,9, 1 October 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Greece (2016), [JMD 30840/2016 \(OG B' 3003/20-9-2016\)](#), 20 September 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Greece (2013), [Law 4198/2013 \(OG A' 215/11-10-2013\)](#), 11 October 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Greece (2015), [Law 4322/2015 \(OG A' 42/27-4-2015\)](#), Art. 8, 27 April 2015.

worldwide. Greek Safer Internet Centre is member of the Expert Group on Safer Internet for Children for EC.

The Greek Safer Internet Centre is constituted by 3 different axes:

- The Awareness Raising which focuses on the internet threats and the ways minors can be protected from them.
- The Help-Line (<https://www.help-line.gr/>) which provides psychological support to minors in cases of cyber bullying, internet addition, sexual harassment, etc. ([www.help-line.gr](http://www.help-line.gr), tel: +30 210-6007686)
- SafeLine ([www.safeline.gr](http://www.safeline.gr)), the Greek Hotline that accepts reports for illegal internet content, giving priority to Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM).

three months as provided by previous law). This Law was recently re-modified by Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/11-6-2019)<sup>39</sup> (ratification of the Penal Code), which has further developed Article 312 (Physical injury of weak persons) of the Greek Penal Code in order to establish Bullying as a clear and actual criminal offense.

Law 5029/2023 (OG A' 55/10-3-2023) "Live together in harmony-Break the silence" against bullying in school, Articles 1-16<sup>40</sup>. According to the Law a new digital platform for the referral of cases is going to be established, as well as Action groups within the school community to deal with such cases.

#### 1.4.2. Children with disabilities

Please include children with learning difficulties, autism, and mental health impairments / psycho-social disabilities, severe chronic illnesses that prevent them e.g. from attending onsite school or sports activities

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b><u>National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020-23)</u></b> - including provisions for inclusive education and deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities</p> <p><b><u>National Strategy for De-institutionalization</u></b> - including strategic goals for the deinstitutionalization of children with and without disabilities (Chapter 3) European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), Brussels, February 2021</p>	<p>Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) 60135/1579/2017 (OG B' 4590/27-12-2017)<sup>42</sup> "Program: 'Deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities", aimed to relocate all persons with disabilities who live in the close-oriented structures located at Skaramangas and Lechaina to day-care centres, which are more community and/or family-oriented. Also, this JMD gave to persons with disabilities who lived in the abovementioned structures the</p>

<sup>39</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/11-6-2019](#), 11 June 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Greece (2023), [Law 5029/2023 \(OG A' 55/10-3-2023\)](#), Art. 1-16, 10 March 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Greece (2017), [JMD 60135/1579/2017 \(OG B' 4590/27-12-2017\)](#), 27 December 2017.

<p><a href="#">National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child (2021-23)</a> includes provisions on horizontal action for the rights of children with disabilities (as noted in 1.3.2.)</p> <p><b>Child Guarantee National Action Plan (2022)</b><sup>41</sup> includes children with disabilities as one of the child categories in need, integrating measures aiming at equal and qualitative access to early preschool care, education, healthy nutrition, medical care and appropriate housing.</p>	<p>possibility to return to their family environment by receiving, in parallel, support<sup>43</sup></p>
<p>1.4.3. Children in the context of migration</p> <p>Specific thematic areas: unaccompanied-separated children from third countries and within the EU; children in undocumented – irregular migrant families; asylum seeking children; refugee children</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>

<sup>41</sup> Greece (2022), [National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee](#), NCSS

<sup>43</sup> Greek National Commission for Human Rights (2021), *Written Responses to the List of issues in relation to the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Athens, Greece*. It is specifically noted that “Following the positions of the National Confederation of Disabled People (hereinafter NCDP),<sup>91</sup> although the project has been implemented for almost four years and despite the disability’s movement, parallel and continuous pressure both at central and political level and at the administrations of the Social Welfare Centres of Attica and Western Greece, poor changes have taken place so far”, p.21.

### **Summary of recent developments**<sup>44</sup>:

Since 2018 - when the numbers of homeless and living in precarious conditions UAC started to increase according to the bi-weekly dashboards of the competent authority (NCSS):

- **Street-work** was initiated by various child protection actors in Athens and Thessaloniki for tracing homeless children;
- **Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors** was established at the Ministry of Migration and Asylum<sup>45</sup> (February 2020) as the responsible authority of the protection of UAC;<sup>46</sup>
- Programmes of **voluntary relocation** to EUMSs included homeless UAC (2020);
- A **research study** into the needs of homeless UAC was conducted by Panteion University, in cooperation with UNCRF (2020);
- **Protective Custody was abolished** (2020)
- Tracing of homeless UAC was completed and the **National Registry** was cleared by SSPUAM/ UNHCR and CP actors;
- **National Emergency Response Mechanism** was piloted by UNHCR (2021-2022) and transitioned to the SSPUAM (January 2023).

**National Emergency Response Mechanism-NERM** (Εθνικός Μηχανισμός Επείγουσας Ανταπόκρισης - ΕΜΕΑ) was established initially as a pilot project by UNHCR (currently under SSPUAM), aiming at

Law 4554/2018 (OG A' 130/18-07-2018)<sup>49</sup> Articles 13 -32, introduced provisions on **guardianship** of UAC

PD 18/2020 (OG A' 34/19-02-2020)<sup>50</sup> established **Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors** at the Ministry of Migration and Asylum

Law 4760/2020 (OG A' 247/11-12-2020)<sup>51</sup>, Article 43, **abolished protective custody** for homeless UAC and assigned to SSPUAM the responsibility to ensure provision of emergency accommodation

MD 9889/2020 (OG B' 3390/4-08-2020)<sup>52</sup> replaced previous provisions on **age-assessment**

Law 4825/2021 (OG A' 156/4-09-2021)<sup>53</sup> Article 19, followed by JMD 605869/2022 (OG B' 5392/18-10-2022<sup>54</sup>) provides that **PAAYPA** (temporary Insurance Number for asylum-seekers) continues to be valid for UAC after rejection of application for international protection (therefore, they continue to have access to health services until the age of 18)

Provisions on **guardianship, accommodation and the responsibilities of SSPUAM** were incorporated in Law 4939/2022 (OG A' 111/10-06-2022)<sup>55</sup>, Articles 64-66.

<sup>44</sup> UNHCR - Child Protection Sub-Working Group Conference letter (March 7, 2023) *National Emergency Response Mechanism for unaccompanied children: from needs assessment to response*, Panteion University, Athens, Greece.

<sup>45</sup> For more information visit the ministry webpage on <https://migration.gov.gr/grammateies/eidiki-grammateia-prostasias-asynodeyton-anilikon/>.

<sup>46</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 65, 10 June 2022 provides that Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors is the responsible authority for protection, guardianship and accommodation of all unaccompanied and separated children in the country.

<sup>49</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4554/2018 \(OG A' 130/18-07-2018\)](#), Art. 13-32, 18 July 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Greece (2020), [PD 18/2020 \(OG A' 34/19-02-2020\)](#), 19 February 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Greece (2020), [Law 4760/2020 \(OG A' 247/11-12-2020\)](#), Art. 43, 11 December 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Greece (2020), [MD 9889/2020 \(OG B' 3390/4-08-2020\)](#), 4 August 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4825/2021 \(OG A' 156/4-09-2021\)](#), Art. 19, 4 September 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Greece (2022), [JMD 605869/2022 \(OG B' 5392/18-10-2022\)](#), 18 October 2022.

<sup>55</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 64-66, 10 June 2022.



identification and transfer to emergency accommodation of homeless or living in precarious conditions UAC. It includes a hotline for identifying and locating children in need, available in 6 languages (++30-213 2128888/++30-6942 773030, via WhatsApp/Viber), emergency accommodation (provided by IOM), implementation of a voluntary relocation programme and a mentorship programme (former UAC providing support to UAC)<sup>47</sup>

Also:

[National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors](#) (foreseen in Law 4960/2022 (OG A' 145/22-7-2022)- not officially adopted yet)

[National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child \(2021-23\)](#), includes provisions on protection of migrant and refugee children (as noted in 1.3.2.)

The **Child Guarantee National Action Plan**<sup>48</sup> includes migrant and refugee children unaccompanied children e.t.c., integrating measures for equal access to early preschool care, education, medical care, healthy nutrition and appropriate housing.

Law 4960/2022 (OG A' 145/22-7-2022)<sup>56</sup>, replaced and complemented provisions on **guardianship, accommodation and protection**, introduced the **National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors** (Article 38) and established the **National Emergency Response Mechanism**, under the responsibility of SSPUAM (Article 39). This law provided for a much more protective, efficient and effective framework for refugee children from Ukraine, among others.

Emergency mechanism also handles cases of children from Ukraine. There are almost no unaccompanied Ukrainian children in Greece. According to the monthly data sheet from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum/SSPUAM, on 3 April there are 3 cases of unaccompanied children and 9 minors accompanied by 3 guardians from Ukraine, who are accommodated in a special hostel. Overall the National Mechanism has been notified until the end of 30/06/2023 for 569 minors from Ukraine in total (555 separated, 4 fully unaccompanied and 10 from Ukrainian institutions).<sup>57</sup> Housing facilities and placements are explicitly mentioned in the monthly sheets of the Mechanism.

Special reference for displaced people from Ukraine is made in the respective webpage of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in English, Greek and Ukrainian. The children, either accompanied or unaccompanied are provided with exceptional facilities and simplified procedures regarding travel documents, certifications and age assessment. There is also a telephone helpline initiated by the

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<sup>47</sup>For more information visit the ministry webpage on <https://migration.gov.gr/apologismos-draseon-2022-egpaa/>. Also, see: <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/03/NERM-Procedural-Handbook-final-2.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Greece (2022), [National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee](#), NCSS

<sup>56</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), 22 July 2022.

<sup>57</sup> For more information please visit the Ministry's table on [https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/SSPUAM\\_Statistics\\_2023\\_04\\_01.pdf](https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/SSPUAM_Statistics_2023_04_01.pdf).

	<p>Deputy Minister of Health and provided by Ukrainian mental health professionals with special training and with the participation of, among others, the Smile of the Child<sup>58</sup>. As noted above, the unaccompanied children are very few as most children arriving in the country without their parents have the status of separated minors accompanied by an adult who is not their primary legal guardian<sup>59</sup>. This means that, although housing is provided as mentioned before, they mainly reside with their accompanying persons. The National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child can be applicable to children from Ukraine to the extent that it applies to all migrant or refugee children in Greece – safeguarding mainly the safety and accommodation of unaccompanied/refugee children, education, health, including mental health, etc.</p> <p>Presidential Decree 77/2023 (OG A’ 130/27-6-2023)<sup>60</sup> establishes the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, to which all the responsibilities of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors are transferred, and the Special Secretariat is abolished.</p>
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#### 1.4.4. Children in alternative care

Specific thematic areas: residential – institutional care; foster care; adoption (including international adoption)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>Strategy for De-institutionalization</b> - including strategic goals for the deinstitutionalization of</p>	<p>Law 4538/2018 (OG A’ 85/16-05-2018)<sup>61</sup>: Measures for the <b>promotion of foster care and adoption</b>, aiming at</p>

<sup>58</sup>For more information, please visit the website <https://migration.gov.gr/en/mental-health-ukraine/>.

<sup>59</sup> For more information please visit the Ministry’s webpage on <https://migration.gov.gr/en/ukraine/>.

<sup>60</sup> Greece (2023), [PD 77/2023 \(OG A’ 130/27-06-2023\)](#), 27 June 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A’ 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018.

<p>children and children with disabilities (Chapter 3)</p> <p><a href="#">National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child (2021-23)</a> includes provisions for deinstitutionalization of children with and without disabilities living in institutions (as noted in 1.3.2.)</p> <p>The <b>Child Guarantee National Action Plan</b> includes children in institutional care, integrating measures for equal access to early preschool care, education, healthy nutrition, medical care and appropriate housing.</p>	<p>moving from an institutional to a community-based model of alternative care.</p> <p>Law 4604/2019 (OG A' 50/26-03-2019)<sup>62</sup>, Article 117: Obligation of residential child care units to submit to a special registry an <b>Individual Family Rehabilitation Plan (IFRP)</b> for every child placed in the unit, within 90 days of its placement, with a proposal for a suitable alternative to institutional care, considering each child's needs and best interests.</p> <p>Ministerial Decision 19333/2023 (OG 1085 /B /28-2-2023) for the establishment of professional foster care, for minors with disabilities, living in institutions<sup>63</sup>.</p>
<p>1.4.5. Children affected by custody disputes, including parental abduction</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>There is increased emphasis on joint custody and the right of children to maintain contact with the parent they do not live with, but no specific policy developments concerning the emotional effects of custody disputes on children</p>	<p>Law 4800/2021 (OG A'81/21-5-2021)<sup>64</sup> introduced in the Civil Code joint custody as the rule after separation or divorce. The law also introduced the implementation of the right to contact as an <i>obligation</i> of the parent the child lives with, and as a <i>right and duty</i> of the other parent, and establishes that 1/3 of the child's time is the minimum time to be spent with the non-resident parent, unless the latter makes an application for less contact.</p> <p>Law 4808/2021 (OG A' 101/19-06-2021)<sup>65</sup> incorporated Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU providing parental and paternity leaves.</p>

<sup>62</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4604/2019 \(OG A' 50/26-03-2019\)](#), Art. 117, 26 March 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Greece (2023) [MD 19333/2023 \(OG B' 1085/28-02-2023\)](#), 28 February 2023

<sup>64</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A'81/21-5-2021\)](#), 21 May 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4808/2021 \(OG A' 101/19-06-2021\)](#), 19 June 2021.

1.4.6. Missing children	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
No recent developments	No recent developments
1.4.7. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity (AROPE)	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b><u>National Action Plan for the “European Child Guarantee”</u></b> (September 2022). According to the Plan “The fight against child poverty and social exclusion, along with mitigation of the adverse socioeconomic effects due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, including the energy crisis and the implications of the migration flow from the war zone of Ukraine, require a comprehensive and multidimensional approach, as well a support policy framework to tackle the barriers faced by children” (p.5). It addresses children in need because of risk of poverty and social exclusion<sup>66</sup>, children with disabilities, with mental health issues, migrant/refugee/Roma children, children in institutional care, in precarious family situations and underage prisoners</p> <p><b>The National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS)</b> has been appointed as <b>National Coordinator for Child Guarantee</b>, with a responsibility of coordinate and monitor the</p>	<p>Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178/1-10-2021)<sup>67</sup>, Article 53, states that the National Centre for Social Solidarity undertakes the role of National Coordinator for Child Guarantee</p> <p>Law 4512/2018, (OG A’ 5/17-01-2018)<sup>68</sup>, Article 214, introduced child benefit for all families of low to middle income, aiming to support mainly low-income families (as the amount payable is determined by the family’s annual income). It was followed by JMD ΓΠ.οικ.22/11/2705/58 (OG B’ 57/18-01-2018)<sup>69</sup> on the procedure for provision of child benefit.</p> <p>Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178/1-10-2021)<sup>70</sup> introduced the institution of the “neighbourhood nannies”, in an attempt to address the needs arising from this deficiency. Actually, this Law offers the legal basis for the institutionalization of the “Neighbourhood Nannies” program already implemented on a pilot basis in 61 municipalities all over the country. An online platform (<a href="https://ntantades.gov.gr/">https://ntantades.gov.gr/</a>) for the registration of the interested caregivers is in operation since 2022. The program was designed to support working mothers to</p>

<sup>66</sup> According to recent EU-SILC data for 2021, 32% of children (under 18 years old) in Greece lived in households experiencing poverty or social exclusion (Child Guarantee, p. 9).

<sup>67</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 53, 1 October 2021.

<sup>68</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4512/2018, \(OG A’ 5/17-01-2018\)](#), Art. 214, 17 January 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Greece (2018), [JMD ΓΠ.οικ.22/11/2705/58 \(OG B’ 57/18-01-2018\)](#), 18 January 2018 <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/oikogeneia/koine-upourgike-apophase-gpoik-d-22-11-2705-58-2018.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 40, 1 October 2021.

implementation of Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 and the National Action Plan.

[National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child \(2021-23\)](#) includes provisions for combating child poverty and its effects on children (as noted in 1.3.2.)

[National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Reduction of Poverty \(2021-2027\)](#)

Beneficiaries (among other groups): children aged 0-17 in situations or at risk of social exclusion (p. 26). The Strategy pillars referring to child poverty concern access to resources and services and address the support of family protection mechanisms (mainly through benefits) and prevention and combating child poverty. It addresses challenges among others for “the reduction of child poverty, as a serious social phenomenon”. It is connected to the European Child Guarantee and it includes mainly the improvement of the custody framework for unaccompanied minors, the deinstitutionalisation of children with or without disabilities, the time reduction for the administrative procedures on adoption and foster care, as well as social inclusion for Roma (incl. children). Access to education and promoting of its supporting role (school meals, parallel support, psycho-social services), mental health and activities in accordance to the UN CRC and the NAP are also addressed in the Strategy.

“Social market stores” were set up in many Municipalities during the economic crisis, operating under the responsibility of social services. They provide food, clothes, household products and other basic items (usually donated by individuals of local shops/ companies), free of charge, to families with very low or no income. Social pharmacies, medical centres or after-school classes for

take care of their babies, aged from 2 months to 2.5 years, by giving them access to accredited caregivers and providing the coverage of a percentage of the childcare cost through a voucher.

<p>children of low-income families also operate in some municipalities.</p> <p>School meals are provided in selected vulnerable areas</p> <p>Vouchers for laptops were provided to low income families for the access of children to education during the pandemic (2020-2021)</p> <p>Low income families are prioritised for provision of places in municipal day care facilities for pre-school age children. Vouchers are also widely provided to low income families through European co-funded programme for the access of children to nursery schools (see also 3.1.5.)</p>	
<p>1.4.8. Children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma, Sami, etc.</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p><a href="#">National Operational Plan for Roma Social Inclusion (2017-2021)</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Strategy and Action Plan for Roma Inclusion (2021-2030)</a> including measures to promote school integration of Roma children and combat discrimination</p> <p><a href="#">National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (2021-2027)</a> - Includes provisions for Roma population</p> <p>The <b>Child Guarantee National Action Plan</b> includes Roma children, as a child category in need, integrating measures for equal access to early preschool care, education, medical care, healthy nutrition and appropriate housing.</p> <p>Establishment of Educational Priority Zones/reception classes</p>	<p>Law 4808/2021 (OG A' 101/19-06-2021)<sup>73</sup>, Article 136 tackling school drop-out, through making school enrolment and regular attendance of compulsory education a criterion for eligibility for child benefit, housing benefit and minimum guaranteed income. Mainly implemented regarding Roma children</p>

<sup>73</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4808/2021 \(OG A' 101/19-06-2021\)](#), Art. 136, 19 June 2021.

<p>Law for attendance of mandatory education as a condition for receiving various benefits (see also 1.4.13)</p> <p>Law 4430/2016 (OG A' 205/31-10-2016)<sup>71</sup> provided the establishment of a Special Secretariat for Roma within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; however, this was abolished by PD 84/2019 (OG A' 123/17-7-2019)<sup>72</sup> and its responsibilities were transferred to the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Combating.</p>	<p>Law 3879/2010 (OG A' 163/21-09-2010)<sup>74</sup>, Article 26, para. 1α &amp; 1β: Establishment of Priority Educational Zones in areas of larger drop-out rates and poverty risk</p> <p>Law 4368/2016 (OG A'21/21-2-2016)<sup>75</sup> Article 4 (Community Centres) provides integrated services to support vulnerable groups, incl. Roma, in collaboration with municipal social services.</p>
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#### 1.4.9. Children involved in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses or parties

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Five (5) “Independent Offices for the Protection of Child Victims” (Children’s Houses) for forensic interviewing/evaluation of children involved in judicial proceedings as victims were set up in 5 Greek cities. To date, only one of them has launched its operation, in Athens (December 2021)<sup>76</sup>.</p>	<p>Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/23-06-2017)<sup>77</sup>Articles 54-77, “Integration of Directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA 91A”</p> <p>Articles 73-76: Establishment of Children’s Houses in 5 Greek cities</p> <p>MD 7320/2019 (OG B' 2238/10-06-19)<sup>78</sup>: regulatory framework for the operation of Children’s Houses.</p>

<sup>71</sup> Greece (2016), [Law 4430/2016 \(OG A' 205/31-10-2016\)](#), 31 October 2016.

<sup>72</sup> Greece (2019), [PD 84/2019 \(OG A' 123/17-7-2019\)](#), 17 July 2019.

<sup>74</sup> Greece (2010), [Law 3879/2010 \(OG A' 163/21-09-2010\)](#), Art. 26, 21 September 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Greece (2016), [Law 4368/2016 \(OG A'21/21-2-2016\)](#), Art. 4, 21 February 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), [Delay in the operation of Children’s Houses](#), September 2020, Athens, Greece.

<sup>77</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/23-06-2017\)](#), 23 June 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Greece (2019), [MD 7320/2019 \(OG B' 2238/10-06-19\)](#), 10 June 2019.

1.4.10. Children involved in judicial proceedings as suspects or accused persons	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><a href="#">National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child (2021-23)</a>, includes provisions on Child friendly Justice (as noted in 1.3.2)</p>	<p>Law 4619/2019 (OG A' 95/11-06-2019)<sup>79</sup> on Penal Code reform, increased the age of criminal responsibility for all crimes from 8 to 12 years (PC, Art. 121). For children aged 12 to 15 years, only correctional measures may be applied.</p> <p>Law 4689/2020 (OG A' 103/27-05-20)<sup>80</sup> integrated into national legislation Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings.</p> <p>Law 4855/2021 (OG A' 215/12-11-2021)<sup>81</sup>, among other provisions, introduced amendments in favour of convicted juveniles (Article 129: introduction of home confinement with electronic supervision)</p> <p>PD 6/2021 (OG A' 7/15-1-2021)<sup>82</sup>, Article 26, defined and clarified the operational framework of Minors' and Social Assistance Probation Services, stating that they are supervised by the head of the Public Prosecutor's Office of First Instance Courts and coordinated and inspected centrally, by the Ministry of Justice.</p>
1.4.11. Children at risk of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; child /forced marriages, honour-related violence	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Penalisation of forced marriages</p>	<p>Law 4531/2018 (OG A' 62/5-04-2018)<sup>83</sup>, Ratification of Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul, 11. V.2011.</p>

<sup>79</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/ 11-6-2019](#), 11 June 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Greece (2020), [Law 4689/2020 \(OG A' 103/27-05-20\)](#), 27 May 2020.

<sup>81</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4855/2021 \(OG A' 215/12-11-2021\)](#), Art. 129, 12 November 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Greece (2021), [PD 6/2021 \(OG A' 7/15-1-2021\)](#), Art. 26, 15 January 2021.

<sup>83</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4531/2018 \(OG A' 62 /5-04-2018\)](#), 5 April 2018.



	<p>The Law classifies forced marriage as a form of human trafficking. The legal practice of no criminal prosecution if marriage has taken place between the perpetrator and victim (stipulated by Article 339, para. 3 of the Greek Penal Code), was abolished. An article was also added to the Penal Code (Article 315 B)<sup>84</sup> regarding prohibition of female genital mutilation.</p> <p>PD 52/2019 (OG A' 90/11-6-2019)<sup>85</sup> aligns Muftis' powers on marriage between minors with the general conditions of the Greek Civil Code<sup>86</sup> (Article 1350 para. 2 setting the matrimonial age at 18 yrs., with the exception of very important reason). It should be noted that Law 4511/2018 (OG A' 2/15-01-2018)<sup>87</sup> – later replaced by Law 4964/2022, OG A' 150/30.7.2022) made the use of sharia law by members of the Muslim Minority in Thrace in some matters of family and inheritance law optional (until then, the application of sharia law in the abovementioned matters was considered as mandatory among members of the Minority).</p>
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#### 1.4.12. Children whose parents are in prison/custody

Policy developments	Legislative developments
Convicted mothers that have custody of their child(ren) of under 8 years and are sent to penitentiary can serve their sentence at home, regardless of the sentence	Penal Code Art. 105 as amended by Law 4619/2019 (OG A' 95/11-06-2019) <sup>88</sup>

#### 1.4.13. Children who drop out of compulsory education and working children under the legal age for work

Policy developments	Legislative developments
Tackling school drop-out, through making school enrolment and regular attendance of compulsory education a criterion for eligibility	Law 4808/2021 (OG A' 101/19-06-2021), Article 136 <sup>89</sup> ,

<sup>84</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/ 11-6-2019](#), 11 June 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Greece (2019), [PD 52/2019 \(OG A' 90/11-6-2019\)](#), 11 June 2019 .

<sup>86</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1350.

<sup>87</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4511/2018 \(OG A' 2/15-01-2018\)](#), 15 January 2018.

<sup>88</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4619/2019, OG A' 95/ 11-6-2019](#), 11 June 2019.

<sup>89</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4808/2021 \(OG A' 101/19-06-2021\)](#), Art. 136, 19 June 2021.

<p>for child benefit, housing benefit and minimum guaranteed income.</p> <p>School principals notify the local educational authority in case of systematic, unjustified absence of a primary school pupil, or drop out of a secondary school pupil under 16, and efforts are made to locate the child and family and investigate the problem, in cooperation with the police and/or a competent social service, in order to locate the family and investigate the problem. In case these have no effect, the public prosecutor is notified (not new developments)</p>	<p><a href="#">Law 4251/2014 (OG A' 80/1-4-2014)</a><sup>90</sup> <a href="#">Migration and Social Integration Code</a>, Article 21 para. 8, 1 providing access to education and supportive teaching</p> <p>Law 3879/2010 (OG A' 163/21-09-2010)<sup>91</sup>, Article 26, para. 1a &amp; 1b: Establishment of Priority Educational Zones in areas of larger drop-out rates and poverty risk.</p> <p>Law 4939/2022 (OG 111'A/10.06.2022)<sup>92</sup> re-incorporated into the Greek legal order Directive 2011/95/EU - Standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast). Article – 27 regulates access to education for minors in the same way as minors seeking international protection (beneficiaries of international protection). Every minor beneficiary of international protection has the obligation to join the primary and secondary education of the public education system with the conditions that apply to Greek citizens. In case of violation of this obligation, sanctions are imposed to the adult family members.</p> <p>PD 79/2017 (OG A' 109/01-08-2017)<sup>93</sup>, Article 13, on systematic absence or dropout of primary education</p> <p>MD 72367/ΓΔ4/2021 (OG B' 2675/24-06-2021)<sup>94</sup>, Article 2, on school drop-out of compulsory secondary education.</p>
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<sup>90</sup> Greece (2014), [Law 4251/2014 \(OG A' 80/1-4-2014\)](#), Art. 21, 1 April 2014 .

<sup>91</sup>Greece (2010), [Law 3879/2010 \(OG A' 163/21-09-2010\)](#), Art. 26, 21 September 2010.

<sup>92</sup> [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 64-66, 10 June 2022

<sup>93</sup> Greece (2017), [PD 79/2017 \(OG A' 109/01-08-2017\)](#), Art. 13, 1 August 2017.

<sup>94</sup>Greece (2021), [MD 72367/ΓΔ4/2021 \(OG B' 2675/24-06-2021\)](#), Art. 2, 24 June 2021.

1.4.14. Please insert any other group of children that is not listed above, such as children with drug or alcohol addictions (*add rows as needed*)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Regarding Gender Identity issues, young persons over 15 can change their ID data, with the consent of their parents/guardians and a recommendation from an Interdisciplinary Committee (the Committee has still not been established).</p> <p>Intersex genital mutilation procedures and other medical treatments are prohibited for children under 15, satisfying a core demand of the Greek and global intersex community for the protection of the bodily integrity and self-determination of intersex children. A young person over 15 may be subject to such treatments and surgical procedures, but ensuring their informed consent is a requirement</p>	<p>Law 4491/2017 (OG A'152/13-10-2017)<sup>95</sup>, Article 3</p> <p>Law 4958/2022 (OG A' 142/21-07-2022)<sup>96</sup>, Article 17</p>

#### 1.5. Contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards

Are there any contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards that have been pointed out by international bodies, national human rights institutions, ombudspersons, or civil society organisations? Please also refer to any contradictions within national and sub-national legislation.

There are conflicts and gaps between national legislation/policies and international/EU standards on child protection and children's rights, acknowledged by all actors in the field. The conflicts and gaps are related, especially, to the absence of a comprehensive strategy to address issues of child abuse and neglect, the inadequate provision of follow up and support to vulnerable families, due to inadequate human and material resources in the majority of social services, the lack of multidisciplinary assessment within social services, and the absence of protocols and provisions for interagency cooperation, to ensure an integrated approach.

In its special report on child protection and alternative care,<sup>97</sup> the Greek Ombudsman points out severe shortage of staff in the majority of municipal social services, resulting in inadequate service provision, lack of specialised training and supervision of professionals, lack of protocols for interagency cooperation and

<sup>95</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4491/2017 \(OG A' 152/13-10-17\)](#), Art. 3, 13 October 2017.

<sup>96</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4958/2022 \(OG A' 142/21-07-2022\)](#), Art. 17, 21 July 2022.

<sup>97</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), ["From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"](#)

absence of mechanisms ensuring implementation of children's right to be heard or their access to appropriate complaint mechanisms. The above gaps and overall lack of a cohesive child protection system are common realisations of all actors (public bodies and civil society organisations) the Ombudsman consulted with before drafting the report.<sup>98</sup>

In Concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses concern, among others, about the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address all forms of violence against children<sup>99</sup> and urges the state party to take measures to address the problems and gaps identified,<sup>100</sup> while with regard to family environment it recommends that the state party *“strengthen family support and community-based services as well as cooperation between social protection, education, health-care and other community services, while allocating adequate resources thereto, to prevent child abandonment and family separation”*<sup>101</sup>

### 1.6. Orientation/fragmentation of national child protection policy and legislation

Based on the above information please assess and explain if the national child protection policy and legislation is fragmented and if the child protection system is oriented towards prevention and/or intervention.

Child protection policy and legislation in Greece is clearly fragmented.<sup>102</sup> There is no comprehensive policy framework or a single legal instrument incorporating relevant provisions. There are no clear provisions or protocols for interagency cooperation, which often depends on individual attitudes and initiatives.

In addition, there are no policies and adequate resources to ensure consistent action to support vulnerable families and protect children at risk, and no statutory obligation of social services or other bodies to be proactive in relation to child protection.

It follows from the above that the child protection system is oriented towards emergency intervention, rather than prevention. The jurisdiction of social services to investigate or intervene is provided by an order of the prosecutor, *after* a report of child abuse/neglect. In many cases, after completion of an investigation, social services will not engage in further cooperation with the family – unless ordered to do so by the prosecutor - thus increasing the probability of another emergency and/or removal of the child(ren)<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>98</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, pp. 6 – 8.

<sup>99</sup> United Nations (UN), *The Committee urges the State party to bring together the fragmented provisions in the current legislation under a holistic legal framework and revise them where necessary in order to introduce a comprehensive child protection system*. 28 June 2022 (26) (a), see also 1.7.

<sup>100</sup> United Nations (UN), *The Committee urges the State party to bring together the fragmented provisions in the current legislation under a holistic legal framework and revise them where necessary in order to introduce a comprehensive child protection system*. 28 June 2022, para. 27.

<sup>101</sup> United Nations (UN), *The Committee urges the State party to bring together the fragmented provisions in the current legislation under a holistic legal framework and revise them where necessary in order to introduce a comprehensive child protection system*. 28 June 2022, para. 29 (c).

<sup>102</sup> United Nations (UN), *The Committee urges the State party to bring together the fragmented provisions in the current legislation under a holistic legal framework and revise them where necessary in order to introduce a comprehensive child protection system*. 28 June 2022, para. 7.

<sup>103</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, pp. 12-18.

### 1.7. Development in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection legislation and policies in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>104</sup> on foster care and adoption and other legislative provisions and policies mark a shift from an institutional to a community-based model of alternative care of children. In particular, in recent years, efforts have been made to promote foster care as the dominant form of alternative care and institutions have been obliged to promote actively children's transfer into foster care, adoption or their return to their family. Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178 /1-10-2021)<sup>105</sup>, Articles 4 and 5, introduced child protection obligations for all community and residential services for children. Also, legislative and policy measures have been introduced to enhance protection of UAC.

Persistent gaps and shortcomings are noted in relation to protection of children from intrafamilial abuse/neglect. As the Greek Ombudsman has pointed out<sup>106</sup>, the majority of municipal social services are severely understaffed and therefore unable to support vulnerable families effectively or to engage in preventative child protection work, there is absence of protocols and procedures and professionals lack specialized training and supervision to ensure their competence in dealing with child protection issues. Also, in Concluding Observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece, with regard to violence against children, including sexual violence, abuse and neglect, the CRC Committee expresses serious concern about: *"(a) the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address all forms of violence against children, including domestic violence and corporal punishment (b) the rise in the number of cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse ... (d) the lack of specialized services for children who are victims of such abuse and of child-friendly information on how to seek compensation, while the "children's houses" are not fully operational, (e) the low rates of intervention, investigation, prosecution and conviction in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse ..."*<sup>107</sup>

### 1.8. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection legislation and policies that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Promising developments in child protection legislation and policies include:

- The introduction of legislative provisions for child protection in community and residential services for children, i.e. the provision about an employee "responsible for child protection", with an obligation to report any incident or suspicion of child abuse, in all social care settings<sup>108</sup>
- The development of a National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child, of the National Action Plan for Child Guarantee as well as Action Plans for particular vulnerable groups
- The monitoring of the National Action Plan for Child Guarantee

<sup>104</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018.

<sup>105</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 4, 5, 1 October 2021.

<sup>106</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), ["From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"](#), pp. 12-13, 50, 55-56.

<sup>107</sup> United Nations (UN), The Committee urges the State party to bring together the fragmented provisions in the current legislation under a holistic legal framework and revise them where necessary in order to introduce a comprehensive child protection system. 28 June 2022, para. 26.

<sup>108</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7.](#), 1 October 2021.

- With regard to unaccompanied-separated children: the abolition of protective custody, the establishment of SSPUAM in the Ministry of Migration and Asylum as the responsible authority for their guardianship, protection and accommodation, the introduction of provisions for guardianship, the introduction of a National Registry, and the establishment of National Emergency Response Mechanism (SSPUAM and UNHCR, in cooperation with IOM and civil society organisations)
- The establishment of “Children’s Houses” for forensic interviewing of child victims (although only 1 out of 5 Children’s Houses is in operation to date).
- An increased interest in provision of training to professionals and in the use of tools, to ensure uniform, good practices, manifested in the development of tools (protocols, guides, indexes etc.) and provision of training in their use, by the Institute of Child Health, Department of Mental Health & Social Welfare<sup>109</sup> and other bodies (see 3.4.)

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<sup>109</sup> Institute of Child Health (2007-2013), [\*Integrated Approach to Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of cases of Child Abuse & Neglect\*](#), Athens, Greece.

## 2. Governance, coordination structures, and services

### 2.1. Primary institutions and main service providers responsible for child protection

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>2.1.1. Is there any lead institution/body (e.g. child protection agency, ministry, etc.) primarily responsible for child protection at the national level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the name in the comments box.</p>		X	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of Child &amp; Family Protection, is primarily responsible for alternative care, welfare and some elements of child protection policy; However, different structures in different ministries share responsibility in child protection processes.</p>
<p>2.1.2. Are there different structures sharing the primary responsibility (e. g. departments in the same or different ministries, different agencies etc.)?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the name under the comments box and please also mention which body has the lead in coordinating child protection policies and actions.</p>	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Directorate of Child &amp; Family Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</li> <li>➤ The Public Prosecutor’s Office in courts, Ministry of Justice</li> <li>➤ General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, established on 27 June 2023 after the Parliamentary Elections in Greece by means of the Presidential Decree 77/2023 (OG A’ 130/27-6-2023)<sup>110</sup> undertaking all the responsibilities of the abolished Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors,, (for unaccompanied-separated children)</li> <li>➤ National Centre for Social Solidarity-NCSS/EKKA, Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family.</li> <li>➤ Social Services of Municipalities, Ministry of the Interior</li> </ul>

<sup>110</sup> Greece (2023), [PD 77/2023 \(OG A’ 130/27-6-2023\)](#), 27 June 2023

			<p>The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has a leading role in relation to policies on child protection, alternative care and welfare, and an overall responsibility for the operation of welfare agencies for children of the public sector and of civil society organisations. NCSS is an agency of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family with a key role in coordinating and monitoring services in relation to child protection and alternative care issues.</p> <p>The newly established, as above mentioned, General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has the primary responsibility for the protection and care of unaccompanied and separated children.</p> <p>The Public Prosecutor has the lead in coordinating child protection action and in decision making, by ordering investigation and taking emergency measures to ensure the protection of the child(ren) concerned</p>
<p>2.1.3. Are there child focal points or similar in different ministries or agencies?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, in which ministry are they located, what are they called, and what role/functions do they have? How do they coordinate?</p>	X	X	<p>As part of the National Action Plan for Child Guarantee, an Interministerial Working Group has been set up where 12 Ministries are represented; this is their contact point with the National Coordinator (National Centre of Social Solidarity-NCSS/EKKA) both in terms of collection of administrative data at central level and policy planning with regard to the envisaged actions. The contact points of the Inter-ministerial Working Group shall inform the National Coordinator of any developments concerning the funding, timetables and any other prerequisite for the effective implementation of the</p>



actions under the NAP. Furthermore, they shall inform their respective ministries of the overall progress of the implementation of the NAP<sup>111</sup>

Please provide in the table below a list of the national/regional/local bodies or authorities having certain responsibilities related to child protection, e.g. child ombuds institution.

Please note: For the regional and the local levels please indicate only the type of body, do not list all different bodies at regional/local level in the country.

Name of the body	Level (national/regional/local).	Area of responsibility and roles in child protection <i>(for example coordination, legislation, policy making, training, monitoring, financing, implementing)</i>	Comments <i>(for example in case of ombuds institution, compliance with the Paris Principles)</i>
Directorate of Child & Family Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	National	Legislation, policy making, financing	Key responsibility for introducing and monitoring implementation of policies related to alternative care and welfare issues, and for the operation of welfare agencies (residential and childcare services)

<sup>111</sup> National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), *National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee*[https://ekka.org.gr/images/SYNTONISMOY-ORGANOSIS/ΔΗΜΟΣΙΩΝ\\_ΣΧΕΣΕΩΝ/National\\_Action\\_Plan-Child\\_Guarantee\\_in\\_English.pdf](https://ekka.org.gr/images/SYNTONISMOY-ORGANOSIS/ΔΗΜΟΣΙΩΝ_ΣΧΕΣΕΩΝ/National_Action_Plan-Child_Guarantee_in_English.pdf), Athens, Greece, September 2022, p. 15.

General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection that undertook the responsibilities of the SSPUAM, Ministry of Migration and Asylum	National	Legislation, policy making, monitoring, implementing	Responsibility for protection, guardianship and accommodation of unaccompanied and separated children
Public Prosecutor's Offices in courts  In Athens, Piraeus and Thessaloniki there are separate sections for minors	National	Investigation, coordination, decision-making	Investigation of reported cases or issues related to child protection (i.e. ordering investigation by police, social services and/or specialist evaluation of children) emergency decision-making on measures required to ensure protection of children, removal from parental care and placement in alternative care when necessary
Municipal Social Services	Local	Implementation, service provision	Investigation and assessment of a child's family environment and living conditions (following an order of the public prosecutor) – provision of support and monitoring families in relation to child protection issues
National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS)	National	Coordination, implementation, monitoring, capacity building	Responsibility for supervising/coordinating Child Protection Groups of Municipalities and for

			<p>monitoring/coordinating the implementation of foster care and adoption.<sup>112</sup></p> <p>NCSS also operates National Child Protection Line “1107”<sup>113</sup> and is the National Coordinator for Child Guarantee<sup>114</sup> and the coordinating mechanism of the National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors<sup>115</sup>.</p>
<p>Greek Police:</p> <p>In Athens and Thessaloniki there is a Sub-directorate for the Protection of Minors, and a “ Department of Online Child Protection” in Cyber-crime Unit.</p> <p>Five (5) Offices for the Protection of Minors have been established and are operating in the organizational structure of</p>	National	Investigation, implementation	Investigation, especially in cases of suspected criminal offences against children, emergency intervention

<sup>112</sup> For more information concerning the System for Foster Care-Adoption visit the webpage on [www.anynet.gr](http://www.anynet.gr).

<sup>113</sup> National Centre for Social Solidarity (2022), *The mission and responsibilities of National Center for Social Solidarity are stated in PD 68/2022 (OG A' 168/8-09-22)*, 8 September 2022.

<sup>114</sup> Greece (2021), *Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7*. 53, 1 October 2021.

<sup>115</sup> In accordance with Greece (2021), *Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)*, Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

the Security sub-Directorates of Patras, Larissa, Ioannina, Heraklion and Alexandroupolis.			
Minors' Probation Services	Regional	Implementation, service provision	Supervision and support of children involved in judicial proceedings as accused persons and of juvenile offenders (after conviction)
The Greek Ombudsman, Department of Children's Rights	National	Investigation, monitoring, protection and promotion of children's rights	The Greek Ombudsman complies with the main criteria for NHRIs set out in the Paris Principles <sup>116</sup> and the Department of Children's Rights is a full member of ENOC. Its role with regard to children's rights includes investigating complaints, intervening on its own initiative, promoting children's rights and participation, making proposals for changes in legislation, policies and administrative practices, monitoring and following up on implementation

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<sup>116</sup> Greek Ombudsman is established under the Greek Constitution, has formal and operational independence, financial autonomy (own budget), a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights, reports annually and cooperates systematically with a broad range of national and international actors

2.1.4. Please indicate if there were in the past five years any important changes concerning the child protection mandate/roles/responsibilities and outline what caused or influenced these changes (for example, a transfer of responsibility for child protection from one ministry to another ministry or a body or merging of responsibilities, etc. Please indicate notably if an integrated approach has been sought and/or achieved.

Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021), Articles 1-12, places responsibility for child protection on all organisations that provide services to children, by introducing an obligation of each unit to appoint an employee as “responsible for child protection”, i.e. for reporting any incident or alleged incident of child abuse or maltreatment<sup>117</sup>. It also introduces a National System for Recording and Monitoring Reports of Incidents of Child Abuse and allocates responsibility for its operation to NCSS<sup>118</sup>. Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>119</sup> places additional responsibilities relating to the implementation of foster care and adoption to district social services and to childcare institutions, and provides for closer cooperation between them.

Allocating to NCSS responsibility for the operation of the above-mentioned National System, responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the operation of district social services and childcare institutions in relation to foster care/adoption – in addition to its previous role of coordinating Child Protection Groups of Municipalities (since 2011) - and the role of National Coordinator for Child Guarantee<sup>120</sup> aim at promoting coordination and uniform practices of services in their respective areas or responsibility. Another important development towards an integrated approach has been the establishment of SSPUAM and the transfer of responsibility for accommodation and guardianship of UAC to it (from NCSS), along with overall responsibility for their protection<sup>121</sup>.

2.1.5. Please indicate, in the table below, the major service providers at national level in the area of child protection. Include family support services /measures (i.e. counselling, financial assistance) that are part of the overall social protection/welfare system for children in risk.

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<sup>117</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7.](#), Art. 4, 51, October 2021.

<sup>118</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7.](#), Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

<sup>119</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018

<sup>120</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7.](#), Art. 53, 1 October 2021.

<sup>121</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 65, 10 June 2022.

<b>Service providers</b> <i>(include the name and the type of institution i.e. public authority, NGOs, religious institutions, private)</i>	<b>Type of services</b> <i>(Include counselling, care institutions, day care centres, financial assistance, legal advice, rehabilitation services for victims, education awareness –training activities, etc.)</i>	<b>Target groups</b> <i>(For example, children with disability, children in risk of or living in poverty, immigrant children, children deprived form parental care, child victims of abuse or exploitation. When relevant, please indicate if third country nationals and irregular immigrants are entitled to such services)</i>	<b>Funding</b> <i>(national budget, EU funded, other)</i>
Municipal social services – Public (local authorities)	<p>Psychosocial support (assessment, counselling, advice, referral to services, material assistance, etc.)</p> <p>Investigation of children’s family environment and living conditions -by order of the public prosecutor- in cases of child protection concerns, monitoring and follow up</p>	<p>Families facing psychosocial problems in need of support, children and families in risk of or living in poverty</p> <p>Children suffering or at risk of abuse or neglect</p>	National budget

Community Centres ( <i>Κέντρα Κοινότητας</i> ) in (some) municipalities	Supporting the implementation of social protection policies, provision of information about welfare provisions and referral to welfare services, counselling, educational and creative activities for children from vulnerable groups, in cooperation with the municipality's social service.	Families facing psychosocial problems in need of support, children and families in risk of or living in poverty, children with disabilities, children from vulnerable groups  Some Community Centres include a separate section for Roma people	National budget  Eu funding
Municipal day care services (nurseries-creative activity centres) including children with disabilities – Public (local authorities)	Development of personal and social skills at primary stage, support	Children from low income families or vulnerable groups, children with disabilities	National budget  EU funding
Residential institutions – Public, NGOs, religious institutions	Provision of accommodation and care to children lacking a suitable family environment	Children deprived of parental care	National budget, funding from church, donations
Hostels and other accommodation projects for UAC – NGOs	Provision of accommodation and care to UAC	UAC	EU funding
National Emergency Response Mechanism (NERM)	Street work aiming at identification and transfer to emergency accommodation of	Homeless or living in precarious conditions  UAC	NERM was funded by UNCRC and the EU from Jan. 2021 to Dec.2022. Since 1/01/2023 it is funded by EEA Grants.

<p>– Public/NGOs (services are provided by NGOs and IOM)</p>	<p>homeless or living in precarious conditions UAC, operation of hotline, provision of emergency accommodation, registration and support, implementation of voluntary relocation and mentorship programme</p>		<p>Emergency shelters are operated by IOM and funded by the Danish Government<sup>122</sup></p>
<p>District social services – Public (local authorities)</p>	<p>Implementation of foster care/ adoption, inspection of residential and community services of civil society organisations</p>	<p>Children in alternative care (residential or foster care), recently adopted children  Children beneficiaries of services provided by civil society organisations</p>	<p>National budget</p>
<p>Centres for Diagnosis, Assessment, Counselling and Support-KEDASY - Public (decentralized services of the Ministry of Education)</p>	<p>Assessment, diagnosis, provision of counselling and support to children and parents, certification of learning difficulties, issuing recommendations about support measures required to ensure educational inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs</p>	<p>School-age children with disabilities, special educational needs, emotional/behavioural emotional/ behavioural problems</p>	<p>National Budget</p>

<sup>122</sup> Source: NERM Procedural Handbook, p. 33, [https://www.unhcr.org/gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/03/NERM-Procedural-Handbook\\_final-2.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/03/NERM-Procedural-Handbook_final-2.pdf)



<p>Child-psychiatric services – Public (mostly hospital services, but may be located in the community)</p>	<p>Psychiatric and/or psychological assessment and treatment of children and adolescents, prescription of special therapies, parent counselling</p> <p>Child psychiatric evaluation during investigation of abuse, by order of the public prosecutor</p>	<p>Children in need of psychiatric/psychological assessment, therapeutic treatment, or “special therapies” (speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.), and their families</p> <p>Child victims/suspected victims abuse or exploitation in need of psychiatric evaluation</p>	<p>National budget</p>
<p>National Centre for Social Solidarity, NCSS - Public</p>	<p>Operation of Centres of Social Support (providing counselling, psychosocial support, etc.), of shelters for women victims of trafficking or GBV and their children, and of National Child Protection Line “1107”</p> <p>Coordination and monitoring the implementation of foster care and adoption, registration of children in alternative care, coordination of Child Protection Groups, training of professionals, National Coordinator for Child Guarantee (see 2.1.3.)</p>	<p>Children victims or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, children in alternative care, children at risk of or living in poverty</p>	<p>National budget</p>

<p>Organisation of Welfare Social Solidarity Benefits - ΟΠΕΚΑ (Οργανισμός Προνοιακών Επιδομάτων Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης- ΟΠΕΚΑ) - Public</p>	<p>Dispensing welfare benefits: child benefit, minimum guaranteed income, housing benefit, disability benefits, foster care benefit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Low to middle-income families (child benefit, housing benefit)</li> <li>➤ Families living in poverty (minimum guaranteed income, housing benefit, child benefit)</li> <li>➤ Families with children with a disability of more than 67% (disability benefits)</li> <li>➤ Children in foster care (foster care benefit)</li> </ul>	<p>National budget</p>
<p>Smile of the Child («Χαμόγελο του Παιδιού») - NGO</p>	<p>Residential childcare units, day care services, medical services, counselling, training activities</p> <p>Operation of National Helpline for Children (1056), Amber Alert Hellas and European Line for Missing Children (116000)</p>	<p>Children at risk, of abuse/neglect, children deprived of parental care, families living in poverty, children in need of basic or specialized medical care, missing children</p>	<p>Mostly donations - some funding from EU programmes, and grants from the national budget</p>
<p>SaferInternet4kid.gr (The Greek Saferinternet Center)</p>	<p>-Awareness raising for safer internet use (threats and was to protect children)</p> <p>-Psychological Support to minors, victims of cyber bullying, sexual</p>	<p>Families, parents and children, teachers and students who need help and advices on the safe use of the internet.</p>	<p>Co-funded by EU</p>

	<p>harassment, internet addiction, etc.</p> <p>-Reporting of illegal internet content, giving priority to Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM).</p>		
Family counselling services – Public (usually municipalities), NGOs or private	Psychological assessment and treatment of children and adolescents, parent counselling	Children and families in need of psychological evaluation, treatment and support	National budget or EU funding
Special Therapy Centres - Private	Special treatment programmes i.e. speech therapy, occupational therapy, treatment of special learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia), psychotherapy, parent counselling	Children with disabilities, developmental disorders and learning or emotional difficulties	Private (parents get a refund for part of the cost as a social security provision)

2.1.6. Please indicate if any child participation or feedback mechanisms are part of child protection services.

There are no child participation or feedback mechanisms embedded in the child protection system. As the Greek Ombudsman stated in its Parallel Report on UNCRC (November 2019), *“In child protection units the absence of procedures for hearing the opinion of the children has been documented in several occasions”*.

Social workers, police officers and other professionals involved in child protection, generally, talk to children that can communicate verbally during assessment or investigation and record their views, as a rule of good practice.

With regard to judicial decisions, according to the Code of Civil Procedure (codified by PD 503/1985, OG A' 182/ 24-10-1985)<sup>123</sup>, Article 681 Γ", para. 3a), before a decision, the Court listens to the child's opinion, depending on their age. However, following it is not mandatory and the way it is practised might result in a traumatic experience especially for younger children<sup>124</sup>.

Also, Law 4800/2021 (OG A' 81/21-05-2021)<sup>125</sup> on “Reforms relating to parent-child relationships and other matters of family law”, Article 5, “The child's best interest”. Amendment of Article 1511 of the Civil Code<sup>126</sup>, provides that the child's opinion should be sought and taken into consideration, according to the child's maturity, before any judicial decision regarding parental responsibility and the child's best interest (para.4).

The newly introduced legislation on the guardianship institution (L. 4960/2022)<sup>127</sup>, being in full agreement with the objectives of the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, contains provisions that ensure the inclusion of minors in the procedures that affect them, by enshrining as a general principle the duty of the relevant authorities and bodies to inform minors of their rights, procedures, decisions and consequences in language they understand, to seek the opinion of unaccompanied minors and to take it into account, depending on their age and degree of maturity (Article 66-II L. 4960/2022),. It also provides for the establishment of a relevant complaints mechanism thus promoting the inclusion of minors in all matters that affect them (Article 66-XXII L. 4960/2022).

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<sup>123</sup> Greece (1985), [Code of Civil Procedure \(PD 503/1985, OG A' 182/ 24-10-1985\)](#), Art. 681, 24 October 1985.

<sup>124</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2019), *Parallel Report on UNCRC*, November 2019, p. 13.

<sup>125</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A' 81/21-5-2021\)](#), Art. 5, 21 May 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1511.

<sup>127</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-07-2022\)](#), 22 July 2022

2.2. Civil society organisations active in the area of child protection. Please consider also including information on the role of religious institutions and groups active in the area of child protection.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.2.1. Is there a registry of civil society organisations operating in the child protection area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly provide information on the legislative-regulatory framework and the responsible authority.</p>	X		<p>According to Law 2646/1998 (OG A' 236/20-10-1998)<sup>128</sup> Article 5, para. 1, in every District there is a Registry of civil society organisations providing social services – including child protection/welfare services - to which organisations have to register as soon as their license is issued. A National Registry is kept in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with data about all organisations forwarded by the Districts.</p>
<p>2.2.2. Is there a legal obligation for the accrediting; licensing; registering; inspecting the activity of any type of civil society organisations, e. g. NGOs, charities, church organisations, etc. in the area of child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, which is the responsible authority? How frequent are reviews and inspections?</p>	X		<p>There is a legal obligation for licensing, registration and inspection of civil society organisations providing social services, including residential care and other services to children.</p> <p>Accreditation is not mandatory, but it is a requirement for participating in national or EU programmes and for receiving funding. The legislative framework is provided by Law 2646/1998 (OG A' 236/20-10-1998)<sup>129</sup> and JMD ΓΠ: Π(2) γ/οικ. 34029/22-03-2012 (OG B' 1163/10-04-2012)<sup>130</sup>. Registered organisations apply to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for accreditation. NCSS examines the application and expresses an opinion, on the basis of which the Ministry issues an accreditation decision. Accreditation decisions are valid for 4 years and may be renewed, after an application by the organisation.</p> <p>Licensing is mandatory according to Law 2345/1995 (OG A' 213/12-10-1995)<sup>131</sup>, Article 1, para.1, and JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>132</sup>, Article 4. Organisations apply and submit the required documents to the responsible service of the local Municipality. After examination of the documents, the application is sent to a Building Appropriateness Committee, which examines</p>

<sup>128</sup>Greece (1998), [Law 2646/1998 \(OG A' 236/20-10-1998\)](#), Art. 5, 20 October 1998.

<sup>129</sup> Greece (1998), [Law 2646/1998 \(OG A' 236/20-10-1998\)](#), 20 October 1998. For more information see the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs webpage on <https://paidi.gov.gr/foreis-paidikis-prostasias/>

<sup>130</sup> Greece (2012), [JMD ΓΠ: Π\(2\) γ/οικ. 34029/22-03-2012 \(OG B' 1163/10-04-2012\)](#), 10 April 2012.

<sup>131</sup>Greece (1995), [Law 2345/1995 \(OG A' 213/12-10-1995\)](#), Art. 1, 12 October 1995.

<sup>132</sup> Greece (2022), [JMD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 4, 11 May 2022.

		<p>whether the unit meets the standards and requirements provided in legislation. The licence is issued after a positive recommendation by the Committee.</p> <p>Registration is mandatory, as soon as the licence is issued (see 2.2.1)</p> <p>District social services are responsible for inspecting the activity of civil society organisations - including those operating the area of child protection - via the Social Counsellors (social workers or related-area professionals appointed to perform this task), as provided by Law 2345/1995 (OG A' 213/12-10-1995)<sup>133</sup>, Article 1 para 4. Social Counsellors must visit residential childcare units for inspection at least twice a year, according to JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>134</sup>, Article 7.</p>
<p>2.2.3. Are there cooperation agreements/partnerships between government and the civil society at national or local level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, What is the prevalence of this practice?</p> <p>Please provide <u>indicative examples</u> and information regarding the main areas covered, type of services targeted, and financial aspects of such partnerships (i.e. if done in view of accessing EU funds).</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>There are some cooperation agreements or memorandums - concerning provision of services by NGOs in areas of child protection/welfare they specialize in - but, in general, it is not a widespread practice. Indicative examples:</p> <p>“Smile of the Child” provides services and implements programmes in cooperation with ministries or municipalities. For example, a cooperation agreement was signed on 24/11/2021 with the Ministry of Health<sup>135</sup> regarding provision by Smile of the Child of a range of specialised medical services for children. The organisation also operates the National Helpline, Amber Alert programme and Missing Children Line in cooperation with the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Greek Police, Municipalities etc. Funding is governmental, private (donors) and EU (project oriented)</p> <p>SOS Children’s Villages also implement projects in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, municipalities, and Centres of Social Welfare (responsible bodies for public residential institutions in each district). For example, a cooperation agreement with the Centre of Social Welfare of the District of Attica (CSWDA) has been in place since 2017, in relation to the operation of</p>

<sup>133</sup> Greece (1995), [Law 2345/1995 \(OG A' 213/12-10-1995\)](#), Art. 1, 12 October 1995.

<sup>134</sup> Greece (2022), [JMD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 7, 11 May 2022.

<sup>135</sup>For more information see the organisation’s webpage <https://www.hamogelo.gr/media/uploads/file/2021/11/24/p1fl8otkkgiis2obb9s1hl911gr4.pdf>.

		<p>“SOS Babies Home”, a care unit for infants deprived of parental care, aiming to prevent their stay in hospitals and promote placement in foster care. The unit operates in premises provided by CSWDA, with staff provided jointly by CSWDA and SOS Children’s Villages, technical advice and guidance by SOS Children’s Villages and funding initially from Stavros Niarchos Foundation and, later, from the Union of Greek Ship-owners<sup>136</sup>.</p> <p>A notable example of partnership is the cooperation of SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection with UNCHR, IOM and civil society organisations for the operation of NERM (see also 1.4.3). NERM is currently coordinated by the above mentioned Secretariat, supported by UNHCR experts, and co-funded by the EU (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund). Its operation is carried out through the NGO’s “Arsis” in Thessaloniki and “Network for Children’s Rights” in Athens, interpretation services are provided by NGO “METAdrasi”, and emergency shelters for homeless UAC are run by IOM, with funding from the Danish Government<sup>137</sup>.</p> <p>Moreover, in September 2022, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Migration &amp; Asylum, the Ministry of Health, and the International Organisation of “SOS Children’s Villages” for the promotion and improvement of unaccompanied minors’ mental health and psychosocial support<sup>138</sup>. Under this framework, a nationwide project is implemented for the capacity-building and supervision of the staff working with UAMs, for developing guidelines and protocols on how to respond in mental health needs of minors, as well as for the provision of counselling and treatment to unaccompanied minors in distress. In addition, a MoU between the Ministry of Migration Asylum and the National Kapodistrian University of Athens has been signed to develop an extensive training module and deliver the relevant trainings addressed to the professionals working in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors. Finally, the</p>
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<sup>136</sup> For more information see the organisation’s webpage on [SOS Villages](#).

<sup>137</sup> For more information see UNHCR webpage on <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/18899-greece-launches-national-tracing-and-protection-mechanism-for-unaccompanied-children-in-precarious-conditions.html>.

<sup>138</sup> [Annual Report 2022](#), Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors

			<p>Government of Norway provides support in enhancing the capacity of SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection to evaluate the quality of services provided to unaccompanied minors through the development and use of specialized tools, questionnaires, communication techniques, templates etc.</p> <p>SafeLine (<a href="http://www.safeline.gr">www.safeline.gr</a>), the Greek Hotline against illegal internet content has a very close collaboration with the Cyber Crime Unit of the Greek Police. In November 2022, SafeLine and the Hellenic police signed a MoU to strengthen their cooperation. In particular, SafeLine forwards to the Cyber Crime Unit of the Greek Police reports for illegal internet content.</p>
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### 2.3. Inter-agency cooperation in the area of child protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.3.1. Is there <u>coordination between national, regional, or local authorities</u> in developing and implementing policies and legislation in the area of child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, how is this done? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><u>For example</u>, is this cooperation – coordination regulated by the legislative framework? Does cooperation take place ad hoc, e.g. addressing specific issues and on specific thematic areas of interest or is it a key feature of the system?</p>		X	<p>There is no legislative framework regulating cooperation-coordination between different authorities in developing and implementing child protection policies and legislation.</p> <p>In some cases, legislation on the duties of particular agencies cites “cooperation” among these duties, but procedures are not specified, especially with regard to interministerial cooperation.</p> <p>Ministries may ask different stakeholders to submit their views and proposals, or to participate in work groups or committees to address specific issues on an ad hoc basis, but this is not a regular or a key feature of the system.</p> <p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for drafting and submitting Greece’s periodic reports to UN CRC, after collecting information from all relevant Ministries. As noted in the introduction of the Combined fourth to sixth periodic reports on the implementation of the CRC submitted by Greece <i>“The drafting of the report was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close cooperation with all Ministries involved in the protection on the rights of the child. The draft report was submitted to the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR); its views have been</i></p>



			<p><i>taken into consideration in view of the finalisation of the report”<sup>139</sup>.</i></p> <p>The National Commission for Human Rights and the Greek Ombudsman submit parallel reports as NHRIs, and numerous civil society organisations submit reports as well, as contribution to the periodic review.</p> <p>The lack of coordination in child protection policies and of inter-connectedness of services often results in difficulties in implementation and has been pointed out repeatedly by the Greek Ombudsman as a serious problem, including in the parallel report submitted to UN CRC in 2019<sup>140</sup></p> <p>For the Child Guarantee National Action Plan's development and monitoring, based on the Recommendation EU 1004/2021 and the law 4837/2021<sup>141</sup>, article 53, the National Coordinator (National Centre for Social Solidarity-EKKA) undertakes the coordination of a network of bodies' representatives (regular and alternates) working on child protection, which is structured at national, regional and local level, without currently having a strict institutional provision and legally defined responsibilities. Strengths: pluralism and wide participation by all involved parties as a single network in the dynamic process of preparing and monitoring the NAP. Weaknesses: difficulty in coordinating such a whole network, where information flow and data collection at national, regional and local levels is necessary to be defined and effectively operated. In this framework, an Interministerial Working group was established by a Joint Ministerial Decision (Government Gazette YODD 30/21.01.2022) with the participation of representatives of 10 Ministries. At the initiative of the National Coordinator, representatives from 2 other Ministries, are involved.</p>
2.3.2. Is there inter-agency cooperation between the relevant actors having		X	

<sup>139</sup>For more information see the webpage <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FGRC%2F4-6&Lang=en>.

<sup>140</sup> For more information see the webpage [file:///C:/Users/Pc/Downloads/INT\\_CRC\\_IFN\\_GRC\\_40862\\_E%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Pc/Downloads/INT_CRC_IFN_GRC_40862_E%20(3).pdf), p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), 1 October 2021

<p>responsibility in the area of child protection (including civil society organisations)?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please mention <u>how this is done</u> (for examples are there standing inter-agency committees or meetings, are digital tools used?). Which actor has a leading role?</p>			<p>Sometimes, inter-agency agreements are set up on an ad hoc basis (e.g. a protocol or memorandum of cooperation between a statutory agency and an NGO). There are also informal networks or cooperation schemes based on individual initiatives, e.g. Networks of civil society organisations for alternative care-deinstitutionalisation and for “children on the move”, coordinated by the Greek Ombudsman, networks of agencies involved in child protection in a particular geographic area, etc.</p> <p>The public prosecutor has a leading role in coordinating action in relation to child protection, as all actors ultimately report to them.</p> <p>In the framework of the Child Guarantee<sup>142</sup> network, there is inter-agency cooperation and consultation between the stakeholders at national, regional and local levels and the National Coordinator. During the National Action Plan's development, around 400 representatives of the network participated in an online consultation, organized by the National Coordinator as well as in a field survey through a data collection questionnaire.</p>
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**2.3.3. What are the main challenges regarding effective cooperation and coordination? (For example, lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and roles of actors, overlaps of responsibilities, and communication between organisations is not adequately structured and resourced)?**

The main obstacle to effective cooperation and coordination is the absence of a legal framework and protocols for inter-agency and interministerial cooperation. As a result, there is ambiguity and uncertainty among professionals as to whether cooperation – especially with regard to sharing information with other services - is allowed to them. Increased concern about data protection has accentuated the problem in recent years (GDPR-Law 4624/2019, OG A’ 137/29.08.2019)<sup>143</sup>.

Problems are more severe with regard to cooperation of services at the cross-sectoral and interministerial levels (see also 2.4.) Even when cooperation with particular agencies or organisations is cited among the duties of services or of professionals, communication procedures are not specified. As a result, the extent and quality of cooperation ultimately depend on individual attitudes and initiatives.

Other challenges regarding effective cooperation and coordination are related to different approaches and priorities within different services and among professionals of different disciplines, overall lack of a cooperation culture and difficulties in regular and structured communication (meetings, case conferences, etc.) due to the heavy workload and day-to-day pressure on professionals to carry out their specific duties.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
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<sup>142</sup> Greece (2022), [National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee](#), NCSS

<sup>143</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4624/2019 \(OG A’ 137/29.08.2019\)](#), 29 August 2019.

2.3.4. Are child protection authorities engaging in <u>transnational cooperation</u> in the area of child protection, for example with regards to missing children, parental abduction, or migrant children?	X	<p>The Greek Police cooperates with international services such as Interpol, Europol, SECI etc. in relation to child trafficking, missing children, parental abduction, cyberbullying, etc.</p> <p>Transnational cooperation also takes place with regard to intercountry adoptions, relocation and family reunification of UAC, or in the context of specific agreements for medical or other issues (see below)</p> <p>According to Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/23-06-2017)<sup>144</sup>, Article 33, the Section of International Judicial Cooperation in civil and criminal cases of the Ministry of Justice is the Central Authority for receiving requests of EU member states for placement of children in an institution, child protection unit or foster family in Greece, in accordance with Art. 56 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003<sup>145</sup></p>
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If yes, please briefly comment and include information on transnational agreements-protocols of cooperation as well as on the interaction between child protection authorities and other actors involved in transnational cooperation processes, for example law enforcement and judicial authorities, migration authorities, social services, Central Authorities under Brussels IIbis Regulation/Hague Convention, consular or diplomatic authorities. Are there any challenges relating to transnational cooperation? Are the challenges different for cross-border cases among EU countries or with third countries?

Please provide information on main relevant agreements – cooperation schemes in two of the following areas: missing children, parental abduction, inter-country adoption, migrant children (family tracing-family reunification –return-relocation).

Law 3765/2009 (OG A' 101/ 1-07-2009)<sup>146</sup> Ratification of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

The HCCH Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980 (Hague Child Abduction Convention) was ratified by Greece on 2 December 1992 by Law 2102/1992 (OG A' 193/2.12.1992)<sup>147</sup> and came into force on 1 June 1993. The central authority in Greece is the Ministry of Justice (Directorate of Pardon Award and International Judicial Co-operation, Section of International Judicial Co-operation in Civil Cases).

With regard to intercountry adoptions, the Central Intercountry Adoptions Authority of Greece - KADY (Κεντρική Αρχή Διακρατικών Υιοθεσιών – ΚΑΔΥ)<sup>148</sup> cooperates with other Central Intercountry Adoptions

<sup>144</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/23-06-2017\)](#), Art. 33, 23 June 2017 .

<sup>145</sup> Council Regulation (EC) 27 November (2003), *Concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, repealing Regulation (EC) No 1347/2000*27, November 2003.

<sup>146</sup> Greece (2009), [Law 3765/2009 \(OG A' 101/ 1-07-2009\)](#), 1 July 2009.

<sup>147</sup> Greece (1992), [Law 2102/1992 \(OG A' 193/2.12.1992\)](#), 2 December 1992

<sup>148</sup> For more information see the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs webpage on <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/koinoniki-allilengvi/paidiki-prostasia/>.

Authorities, in cases of countries that have ratified the Hague Convention. The Hellenic Branch of International Social Service (*Διεθνής Κοινωνική Υπηρεσία – Ελληνικός Κλάδος*) prepares and submits the case files of prospective adoptive parents through KADY, and also cooperates directly with responsible adoption authorities of countries that have not ratified the Hague Convention but legally permit intercountry adoptions (see also 4.5.16)

SSPUAM was responsible for coordinating action for the implementation of voluntary relocation programmes of UAC to other EU member states, in the context of relocation agreements.

Also, the National Dublin Unit of the Asylum Service (Ministry of Migration and Asylum) cooperates with competent migration services of other EU member-states with regard to assessment of family reunification requests of unaccompanied children<sup>149</sup>.

Intercountry Agreements regarding medical care, such as, in the case of children, an Agreement between Greek and Italian National Transplant Organisations regarding children in Greece suffering from acute hepatitis (according to Press releases in April 2022. Unfortunately, no original respective documents were detected) .

#### 2.4. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection governance, coordination structures, and services in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

In recent years, some progress has been achieved in relation to data collection, monitoring of the operation of services for children and promoting uniform practices. NCSS' coordinating role in the child protection system has been enhanced, as responsibility was assigned to it for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of foster care and adoption, in addition to its previous role of supervising/coordinating Child Protection Groups of Municipalities nationwide.

NCSS has also been appointed as National Coordinator for Child Guarantee and coordinating mechanism of the National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors<sup>150</sup> .

SSPUAM was established as the responsible authority for guardianship, protection and accommodation of UAC, thus bringing all aspects of their care and protection under one central authority.

In the Greek Ombudsman's Parallel Report on UNCRC, it is noted that *"The main challenges are related to budgetary restriction and the understaffing of services (especially social, medical and mental health services), to the deficiencies of coordination between the competent authorities and the funding resources and to the absence of a strategic planning regarding children's rights in Greece"*<sup>151</sup> . Also, the CRC Committee, in Concluding Observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece states: *"While noting that Greece does not have a permanent body with sufficient authority and a sufficient mandate to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention at the interministerial, cross-sectoral, regional and local levels, which may lead to insufficient clarity of roles and responsibilities resulting in overlapping and conflicting initiatives, the Committee urges the State party to establish clear legal mandates for the sectoral ministries and provide adequate resources to the National Mechanism for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Action Plans for the Rights of the Child"*<sup>152</sup> .

<sup>149</sup>For more information see the Ministry of Migration and Asylum webpage on <https://migration.gov.gr/en/gas/diadikasies/doyvlino-iii>.

<sup>150</sup>Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

<sup>151</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2019), *Parallel Report on UNCRC*, p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> United Nations (UN), (2022), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). para.9, 28 June 2022.

## 2.5. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in governance, coordination structures, and services that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021) introduced an obligation of all agencies providing welfare services to children to report to competent authorities - external to the organisation – any reported incidents of child abuse or maltreatment. It also establishes a National System for recording and monitoring such reports and assigns to NCSS the responsibility for its operation<sup>153</sup>.

As noted in 2.4., NCSS has undertaken a central role in child protection in terms of monitoring the operation of childcare and child protection services and providing training and guidance to professionals in identifying and managing cases of child abuse/maltreatment.

The establishment of SSPUAM, even though it has been currently (June 2023, as pre-mentioned) replaced by the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection that undertook all the SSPUAM's responsibilities, as the responsible authority for the protection, guardianship and accommodation of UAC children is an important development towards achieving an integrated approach in governance, coordination and service provision.

The development and operation of NERM is a promising example of partnership between government, international organisations and civil society. NERM was piloted by UNHCR for 2021-2021 and is coordinated by the newly established General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection currently, but still supported by UNHCR experts, while services to UAC are provided by different national NGO's and IOM. Another example of good practice is the development - by the National Dublin Unit of the Asylum Service - of a tool for Best Interest Assessment (BIA) of UAC, aiming to facilitate family reunification requests under the Dublin Regulation (EU) 604/2013, by gathering all necessary information required by Member-States when assessing family reunification requests of UAC<sup>154</sup>.

Another promising practice is the development and operation of the child guarantee network of stakeholders, structured at national, regional and local level. Also, within this framework, there will be the technical assistance project financed by the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) of the European Union for the monitoring of the National Action Plan, regarding the governance of this network (undertaken by UNICEF).

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<sup>153</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

<sup>154</sup> For more information see the Ministry of Migration and Asylum webpage on <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Best-Interests-Assessment-Form-29-7-2020.pdf>.

### 3. Capacities (human and financial resources)

#### 3.1. Information on budget allocation and funding

Question	YES	NO	Comments
3.1.1. Is budget allocation on child protection incorporated into legislative and policy instruments?		X	No, it is not.  Budget allocation is not mentioned in Laws. Moreover, in certain Ministerial Decisions, it is explicitly stated that their implementation <i>does not</i> require an additional budget allocation. Ministerial Decisions are issued <i>jointly</i> by the Ministry of Finances and other competent Ministries in cases that their implementation requires allocation of funding.
3.1.2. Is the budget allocated to child protection (alternatively on children’s rights or on social welfare) clearly specified in the annual national budget? Please refer to the specific budget item allocated to this in 2022?		X	Child protection budget is fragmented.  Budget derives mainly from the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Justice, Education and Finances, and it is not specified as allocated to “child protection”, as such.  In its’ Concluding Observations the CRC Committee recommended that Greece should “Establish a budgetary process with clear allocations for children in the relevant sectors and agencies, with specific indicators and with tracking and monitoring systems;” <sup>155</sup>
3.1.3. What percentage of the total state budget was allocated to child protection in the last five years? If data is not available, please provide information on the budget allocated to social protection/social welfare in general.			
The state budget allocated in all ministries is published every year. However, it cannot be defined, what explicitly is the budget for every sector <sup>156</sup> . According to UNICEF’s Analysis <sup>157</sup> of the Situation of Children			

<sup>155</sup> United Nations (UN), (2022), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) para. 10 (b) 28 June 2022.

<sup>156</sup> Hellenic Republic Ministry of Finance (2023), [Government budget 2023](#). Athens, Greece November 2022.

<sup>157</sup> UNICEF (UN) (2021), [UNICEF Analysis of the Situation of Children and Youth in Greece](#), p. 36.

and Youth in Greece 2021, in 2018 Greece social protection expenditure was a total of 2,591 billion EUR, but that covers a very large range of other type and allocation of costs<sup>158</sup>.

According to the reply on behalf of the Secretary General for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty to our request (10.3.2023) *“For every activity or programme implemented in Child protection sector there is a special code for its’ funding, either from national budget or from EU funding, in cases of co-funded programmes”*.

Furthermore according to the reply of the Secretary General for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty to our new request (6.4.2023), the social protection expenditure within the total national budget in years 2018 and 2019 was 25% and 24,8% while the percentage of the expenses for child and family were 1,7% and 1,5% respectively. Within the social protection budget, the expenses for social benefits were 45.292.000 euros in 2018 with the percentage of expenses for children and families being at 6,6%. The respective numbers for 2019 are 46.155.000 euros and 6,2% and for 2020 48.119.000 and 5,4%. The budget of the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty is 3.619.697.000,00 euros for 2023. From that, children benefit is 1.070.000.000,00, birth benefit is 160.000.000,00, state summer camps programme is 3.650.000,000 and financial support of foster parents is 3.000.000,00. [RE the budget percentages for 2020, 2021, and 2022, the answer (18.5.2023) from the Ministry was, that there is no available evidence yet for the years 2020-2022.]

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.1.4. Is the existing budget and funding of child protection services/institutions considered sufficient <u>and</u> sustainable (as compared to only project based for a limited period of time)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national level conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		X	<p>It is not. As noted in Concluding Observations of the UNCRC Committee, with regard to allocation of resources:</p> <p><i>“While noting the reform of the social welfare system, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 19 (2016) and reiterates its previous recommendations that the State party:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Continue to increase and prioritize budgetary allocations to ensure the implementation of the rights of the child at all levels, addressing child poverty, including by increasing allocations for social services for families and children, for health care and education and for children in situations of vulnerability, while protecting them from cuts, including cuts to funding from external sources;”</i><sup>159</sup></p>

<sup>158</sup> Eurostat (2022), [Social protection statistics – Expenditure on family and children benefits](#), June 2022.

<sup>159</sup> United Nations (UN), (2022), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) para. 10, 28 June 2022.

<p>3.1.5. Do EU funds play a substantial role in the funding of the national child protection system and/or related policies?</p> <p>Please provide information on the child protection areas and related services incl. providers that use EU funds (including what type of funds for which period of time).</p>	X	<p>EU funds play a significant role in a wide range of child protection policies and services. Child protection and other related services include: “<i>Work-Family Life Balance programme</i>”, through which families are provided with vouchers, which can be used to enrol their children to a range of public and private childcare facilities (Ministry of Labour &amp; Social Affairs)<sup>160</sup>.</p> <p>Vocational training programmes, teaching programmes, special education programmes (support measures for promoting inclusion of pupils with disabilities in general education), psychosocial support programmes for pupils (placement of psychologists and social workers in schools), integration of non-Greek-speaking children in education, etc. (Ministry of Education During COVID-19 over 90,000 laptops and tablets were provided by private donors, ESPA and other funding programmes to support distance-learning<sup>161</sup>)<sup>162</sup>,</p> <p>Housing programmes and other support services for Roma children (Ministry of the Interior - municipalities).</p> <p>Provision of accommodation and a range of support services to refugee families and unaccompanied-separated children (Ministry of Migration and Asylum).</p> <p>Main sources of funding: European Commission, European Social Fund, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), EEA</p>
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<sup>160</sup> Greece (2022), [JMD 77094/2022, O Gazette B' 4094/1-8-2022](#), 1 August 2022, for the year 2022-23.

<sup>161</sup> UNICEF (UN) (2021), [UNICEF Analysis of the Situation of Children and Youth in Greece](#), p. 96

<sup>162</sup> European Commission (2022), [European Commission Greece Education and Training Monitor 2022](#). The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) aims to address this gap and has already provided digital equipment to more than 500 000 pupils and students, subject to income criteria (European Commission, 2021). The scheme has recently been extended to teachers. The support provided includes the development of digital content accessible to all, equipment for all schools, support for the professional development of teachers, and digital services (European Commission, 2021). Greece allocates EUR 1 223 million to education and lifelong learning through the European Social Fund+ (ESF+). This amount is also allocated to supporting people with disabilities and special educational needs and people from vulnerable social groups. Some EUR 360 million from the European Regional Development Fund will improve access to inclusive education through infrastructure and equipment. Horizon 2020 also helps to tackle inequality and exclusion in schools”.



		Grants and Recovery and Resilience Fund <sup>163</sup> . The planned or realised expenditures and their sources and allocations are mentioned in more details in the Child Guarantee <sup>164</sup>
<p>3.1.6. Is corporate social responsibility developed at national level in relation to child protection services?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information on major child protection national programmes and actions that are primarily funded by the private sector or by public-private schemes/synergies.</p>	X	<p>CSR is developed to a <u>limited degree in relation to child protection</u>.</p> <p>There are companies that donate, for example, books or other supplies such as computers, toys, clothes, copybooks, etc. or engage their staff members as volunteers. Alongside, there are Foundations such as Stavros Niarchos Foundation<sup>165</sup>, which support financially public services for children, such as residential institutions, hospitals, ambulance services, bus services to remote health and educational services, etc, or Vardinogianni Foundation which has funded a public hospital specialised unit for children with cancer, as well as a guest house for the families<sup>166</sup>.</p> <p>In addition, for example, technical equipment for the operation of child protection services of “Smile of the Child” (Helpline, Amber Alert etc) is provided by private technology enterprises<sup>167</sup>.</p>

<sup>163</sup> Pillar 3.4 of RRF: Reform 1: Development of a comprehensive curriculum and program for schools aiming at the cognitive development of infants from 3 months to 4 years to prepare them for a smooth integration into primary education 2. Reform 2: Placement of minors, with severe disability (over 67%) and / or severe mental disorders, in the care of professional foster carers 3. Investment 1: Transfer of adolescents from Child Protection Units (CPUs) to Supported Independent Living apartments (SILs) with the aim of deinstitutionalization, development of self-sustaining abilities, skills’ building and improvement of employability capacity 4. Investment 2: Subsidize the starting/creation of new early childcare centres or of new places in existent childcare centres for babies starting from 2 months until 2,5 years old (baby centres) 5. Investment 3: Establish Centres of Creative Activities through Technology – STEM Centres for Children. (Programme ID 16919). RRF plans also involves the creation of childcare units within large companies (Programme ID 16945). For more information please visit the website <https://greece20.gov.gr/en/the-complete-plan/>

<sup>164</sup> National Centre for Social Solidarity (2022), [National Action Plan for Child Guarantee](#), pp.33-45.

<sup>165</sup> For more information visit [Stavros Niarchos Foundation webpage](#).

<sup>166</sup> For more information visit Vardinogianni Foundation webpage on <https://elpida.org/en/>.

<sup>167</sup> For more information visit Smile of the Child donors’ webpage <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/chorigoi/> and technology companies’ support <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/ta-nea-mas/omada-technologias-gia-to-paidi-dipla-se-kathe-paidi-oi-megaliteres-etaireies-kai-foreis-technologias-tis-choras-mas-mesa-apo-tis-ipiresies-pou-parechoun-ston-organismo-to-chamogelo-tou-paidiou/>.

<p>3.1.7. Has the involvement of the private sector in child protection recently significantly increased? Are there projects or programmes receiving governmental funding which outsource protection services for children? Please include civil society organisations and private companies contracted by government/local authorities to provide services.</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please explain the changes and the reasons hereof. Please provide information on the legal provisions regulating this and on the main services / groups of children that are covered. Provide information based on indicative examples.</p>	X	<p>In many cases the State assigns service provision to the private sector or civil society. The terms of cooperation are usually defined in agreements, memoranda of cooperation or in Ministerial Decisions. There is no significant increase of the private sector involvement, there is however an increase of NGO involvement, mainly in two sectors:</p> <p>UNICEF is more involved in exploring, monitoring and assisting child protection in Greece since 2020 when the Greece Country Office was formally established. As commissioned by the European Commission and in cooperation with the Greek State, UNICEF has prepared among others the Deep Dive report to provide the information and evidence base that the government need for the development of the evidence-informed European Child Guarantee National Action Plan<sup>168</sup>.</p> <p>The involvement of NGOs has increased significantly since 2015 with regard to provision of accommodation and a range of support services to UAC, as noted below.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>As noted in 2.2.3., “Smile of the Child” provides services and implements programs assigned, among others, by ministries or municipalities. For example, it provides medical services in cooperation with the Ministry of Health<sup>169</sup> or the Ministry, operates the National Helpline, Amber Alert programme and Missing Children Line assigned by the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Greek Police, Municipalities etc. The funding is governmental, private (donors) and EU (project oriented).</p> <p>UNICEF has been mandated by NCSS with a study identifying the technical specifications of</p>
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<sup>168</sup> For more information please visit UNICEF’s website on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/reports/deep-dive-european-child-guarantee-greece>.

		<p>a Single National Digital Platform for the coordination of the National Action Plan for Children. In addition to the collection of administrative data from all stakeholders in a uniform way, the platform will also enable the monitoring of the progress of actions and works under the NAP<sup>170</sup>.</p> <p>National Centre for Social Solidarity, Ministry of Social Cohesion had contracted the NGO “METAdrasi” in order to cover representation needs of unaccompanied or separated children with a prioritisation of cases based on vulnerability or urgency (this came to an end in August 2021)<sup>171</sup>.</p> <p>Provision of accommodation and support services for UAC (under the responsibility of the former SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection) has been assigned to civil society organisations, with funding mainly from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.</p>
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### 3.2. Information on human resources, qualification requirements, and training

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.2.1. Are the allocated human resources in the area of child protection at all levels sufficient? (services, institutions etc.)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as</i></p>		X	<p>There is severe shortage in human resources in the majority of community social services and residential care services for children.</p> <p>The Greek Ombudsman has pointed out the severe inadequacy of human resources in social services responsible for child protection as well as in residential institutions, recommending, specifically, the exemption of social workers working in child protection from the provisions imposing restrictions to recruitment of staff in</p>

<sup>170</sup> For more information, visit UNICEF webpage on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/what-we-do>

<sup>171</sup> For more information on respective activities of METAdrasi visit the organisation’s webpage on <https://metadrasi.org/en/our-activities/>.

<p><i>concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>			<p>the public sector<sup>172</sup> (which have been in place in Greece since 2010, as part of the country's obligation to reduce public spending). The problem is pointed out unanimously by public and civil society organisations, with whom the Ombudsman consulted before drafting the report.</p> <p>MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>173</sup>, Article 13, as amended by Common Ministerial Decision 49339/15.5.2023 (OG 3289/ B/ 18.05.2023)<sup>174</sup> and is in force, introduced specific staffing requirements for childcare units of civil society organisations, regarding qualifications and the numerical adequacy of staff (in terms of the ratio of workers to children). All units are obliged to conform to the requirements fully by May 2023. However, there are no similar standards applying to child care units of the public sector.</p>
<p>3.2.2. Are the allocated human resources competent in the area of child protection and appropriately trained?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		<p>X</p>	<p>There is <u>no</u> regular, mandatory training of social workers and other professionals, or any procedures in place to ensure their competence in the area of child protection.</p> <p>In concluding observations on the combined forth to sixth periodic reports of Greece, the CRC Committee <i>“reiterates its recommendations that the State party ... ensure systematic, mandatory and ongoing training on children’s rights for relevant professionals, such as social workers, health workers, teachers, the police and judicial authorities”</i><sup>175</sup>. The Greek Ombudsman, in the above-mentioned special report, also points out the problem and the need of measures to address it<sup>176</sup></p> <p>In UNICEF Analysis of Children’s Situation in Greece, 2021, it is noted that <i>“Internet addiction in children is <u>only treated systematically in one</u></i></p>

<sup>172</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, pp.12-16, 42, 55.

<sup>173</sup> Greece (2022), *MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)*, Art. 13, 11 May 2022.

<sup>174</sup> Greece (2023), *CMD 49339/2023 (OG B' 3289/18.05.2023)*, 18 May 2023

<sup>175</sup> United Nations (UN), (2022), *Convention on the Rights of the Child* para. 13, 28 June 2022.

<sup>176</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, p.p.42, 56.

			<i>of the Children’s Hospitals in Athens, while most of social welfare and mental health professionals have not received any information and guidelines on how to deal with cyber bullying”.</i> <sup>177</sup>
3.2.3. Is there a <u>compulsory certification or licencing</u> process for social workers and other professionals who work for child protection?  <u>If yes</u> , briefly describe the process.		X	There is no special certification or licensing process for social workers or other professionals working for child protection in addition to the general licensing and registration required for practising their profession.
3.2.4. Are there any <u>selection criteria</u> (for example qualification requirements) and <u>vetting procedures</u> for volunteers working with children in various areas?  <u>If yes</u> , please describe briefly.		X	MD 40494/2022 (OG B’ 2302/11-05-2022) <sup>178</sup> , Article 14, introduced vetting procedures and criteria for volunteers working in child care units of civil society organisations. It provides that selection should take place on the basis of general suitability criteria, such as mental health and lack of criminal convictions for certain crimes, as well as special criteria related to the duties they are expected to carry out. Prospective volunteers submit medical certificates on their physical and mental health - which must be updated every year – proof of their criminal record, and certificates of educational or training qualifications, depending on the services they are going to provide. Childcare units are obliged to provide initial training and ongoing supervision, support and evaluation to volunteers.  However, no similar criteria or procedures are in place for volunteers in residential institutions of the public sector or other settings. The duties performed by volunteers and criteria for their selection vary according to internal regulations and practices of different organisations.  The Greek Ombudsman has repeatedly pointed out the need for a regulatory framework for the

<sup>177</sup> UNICEF (UN), (2021), *Analysis of the Situation of Children and Youth in Greece*, p. 50

<sup>178</sup> Greece (2022), *MD 40494/2022 (OG B’ 2302/11-05-2022)*, Art. 14, 11 May 2022.

			involvement of volunteers, especially in residential institutions. <sup>179</sup>
<p>3.2.5. Is there <u>regular training</u> on issues related to the identification, referral, and intervention for children delivered to specialists involved in this area?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please include information on the training of law enforcement officials (judges, persecutors, police), health and education personnel (doctors, nurses, teachers, school counsellors).</p> <p>Please provide information on the mandatory nature of training, its frequency, funding, if it relates to specific needs of children, etc.</p>		X	<p>Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017), Article 70<sup>180</sup>, on <i>training of professionals in accordance with art. 25 of Directive 2012/29/EU</i>, stipulates that the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with other competent ministries and training bodies, ensures that all professionals involved in interviewing, evaluation and provision of care and support to victims of crime, in any capacity, receive specialized training on issues related to the protection of victims and the principles enshrined in the law, with a special emphasis on victims in need of special protection. Lawyers' associations are also required to support the training and sensitisation of their members in the principles of the law with regard to the protection of victims.</p> <p>However - as noted in 3.2.2. – to present, there is <u>no</u> regular or mandatory training on child protection for all professionals.</p> <p>Law 4800/2021 (OG A' 81/21-05-2021) "Reforms relating to parent-child relationships and other matters of family law", Article 17<sup>181</sup>, stipulates that cases related to the provisions of the Law should be adjudicated by judges who have attended special seminars on the international legal framework, esp. UNCRC and the Istanbul Convention, thus introducing some form of mandatory training. Such seminars are provided by the National School of the Judiciary -NSJ (<i>Εθνική Σχολή Δικαστικών Λειτουργιών</i>), as part of continued, post-qualification training of judges and prosecutors.</p> <p>According to the reply of the NSJ to a request for information (4/04/2023), in 2022, days of seminars on the following topics took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "EU Charter on Human Rights – Children's Rights – Child Friendly Justice" (5 and 6 May 2022), attended by 48 administrative court judges, 31 civil/criminal court judges and 20 prosecutors</li> </ul>

<sup>179</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), [From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families](#)", p. 43 and Greek Ombudsman (2015) "[The rights of children living in institutions](#)" p. 41.

<sup>180</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017\)](#), Art. 70, 23 June 2017.

<sup>181</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A' 81/21-5-2021\)](#), Art. 17, 21 May 2021.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Domestic violence</i> (8 and 9 December 2022), attended by 239 civil/criminal court judges, 82 prosecutors and 112 judges of small claims courts</li> <li>• <i>Victims of Crime</i> (20 and 21 October 2022), attended by 112 judges (all directions) and 30 prosecutors.</li> </ul> <p>It is also noted that NSJ participates in the European Programme “Child Front”, in cooperation with Centre for European Constitutional Law (CECL), the Ministry of Justice and Cyprus School of the Judiciary, and a series of training seminars for judges (all directions) will take place, starting December 2023.</p> <p>Regarding <b>police officials</b>, according to the reply of the Greek Police to a request for information<sup>182</sup>, in addition to the training included in the curriculum of studies of police officials (see 3.2.6.), training programmes for Greek Police staff on children rights and child protection issues are implemented every year – within Police training facilities - and officials from the departments managing cases that involve minors (Child Protection Unit, Domestic Violence Unit, etc.) participate in them, on the basis of their training needs, according to their duties.</p> <p>The training is provided by the Greek Police “School of post-qualification education and training” and the training departments of Police Directorates, as well as, occasionally, by various external organizations. If any costs arise, they are covered either by the budget of the Greek Police or by the bodies/organizations providing the training (usually EU funding). Since 2020, 17,000 police officers have participated in training programmes on issues related to child protection and children’s rights.</p> <p>Education, medical and social care professionals attend seminars and workshops offered by</p>
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<sup>182</sup> Letter of reply with Ref. No. 1728/23/756980 (dated 12/04/23) of the Department of Education and Development of Human Resources of the Greek Police HQ

		<p>various organisations on a <u>voluntary and ad hoc</u> basis. In particular:</p> <p>NCSS provides training - mainly to social workers and social care professionals -on child protection issues and legislation. According to the reply of NCSS (10/04/2023) to a request for information, 10 3-day training courses took place (totally 180 hours) - which were attended by over <b>200 social workers and psychologists</b> of Child Protection Groups (OPA) - aiming at strengthening their capacities in evaluating the needs of children and families during investigation of possible abuse. The training took place in cooperation with other bodies, such as the Children’s Rights Dpt. of the Greek Ombudsman, ICH and the Hellenic Association of Social Workers (SKLE)</p> <p>A one-day training event also took place for professionals (mainly social workers) from civil society organizations nominated as “responsible for child protection” in accordance with Article 5 of Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178 /1-10-2021)<sup>183</sup>, with <b>1500</b> participants (in-person and online).</p> <p>In addition, in the framework of the National Mechanism for Monitoring Minors' abuse, coordinated by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) (under the Law 4837/2021, articles, 1-12), monthly training seminars for over 1300 "responsible for child protection" working on public and private child care structures were held (from March to April 2023), regarding the theoretical and institutional framework of child abuse, the early detection of child abuse signs and the recording of child abuse incidents.</p> <p>The Institute of Child Health (ICH) undertakes training of social and health care professionals on issues related to child abuse and child protection, including the use of <i>the “National Protocol for Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of child abuse and neglect”</i> developed by the Institute (see 3.4.). According to the reply of ICH (11/04/22) to a written request for information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As part of the Programme <i>“Integrated approach to investigation, diagnosis and</i></li> </ol>
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<sup>183</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 5, 1 October 2021.



		<p><i>management of cases of child abuse-neglect</i>” <b>400 professionals</b> attended a 5-day training (35 hours) on the use of the Protocol and the National system for reporting incidents of abuse-neglect (May to July 2015). The training took place in groups of 25 participants each, composed of law enforcement officials, judicial officials, teachers, health/mental health and social welfare professionals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>112 professionals</b> (social workers, psychologists, doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.) from 62 different services attended 10 hours of online training on CAN-MDS system (for identification, registration and referral of incidents of child abuse-neglect via the CAN-MDS System<sup>184</sup>) (June 2021 to spring 2022)</li> <li>3. <b>210 social workers</b> from municipal services working in child protection, attended a 4-day (28 hours) training programme on deinstitutionalisation of children (April to Nov. 2019)</li> <li>4. As part of a Programme on <i>transition from institutional to community care and prevention of institutionalisation of children at risk</i>, <b>273 professionals</b> (mainly social workers, but also some psychologists, health visitors, etc.) from community social services in Attica, attended a 3-day (21 hours) training course on the use of tools and methodology for identification and assessment of children at risk, and on reintegration into their families of children removed from them (Sept. 2021 to Oct. 2022)</li> </ol> <p>The National School of Public Administration - NSPA (<i>Εθνική Σχολή Δημόσιας Διοίκησης</i>) - the main training body for public sector employees - offers 5-day courses on child protection<sup>185</sup> and public sector employees working with children, including teachers, get priority in attending.</p>
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<sup>184</sup> For more information visit the website [http://www.can-via-mds.eu/sites/default/files/WS%20D3\\_CAN-MDS%20Toolkit\\_Operator%27s%20Manual\\_GR.pdf](http://www.can-via-mds.eu/sites/default/files/WS%20D3_CAN-MDS%20Toolkit_Operator%27s%20Manual_GR.pdf).

<sup>185</sup> The training course on child protection offered at NSPA – introduced in 2017 - was proposed and designed by the Department of Children’s Rights of the Greek Ombudsman.

		<p>The frequency of the NSPA 5-day course on child protection (mentioned above) depends on expressions of interest. Since its introduction in 2017, the course takes place on average 3-4 times a year with about 20 participants each time (however, every professional may attend only once, i.e. there is no follow up or higher-grade training)<sup>186</sup>.</p> <p>Various programmes (mostly EU-funded) include training/capacity-building activities for professionals. Indicatively, “Eliza” (an NGO aiming at prevention of child abuse), since 2016, provides training to health care professionals in recognizing early signs and indications of abuse, within the programme “Active Citizens Fund”<sup>187</sup>.</p> <p>With regard to funding, the training provided by the public bodies mentioned above (NSJ, NSPA, NSPS, etc.) is funded by their own budget (i.e. state funding).</p> <p>ICH implements mainly EU-funded Programmes, which include training components.</p> <p>Training programmes for professionals implemented by civil society organisations, universities, research centres etc. are mostly EU-funded.</p> <p>Given that training is not regular or mandatory, frequency varies, and attendance of seminars and other training events - offered by various different bodies and organisations (via state or EU funding) - depends on individual interest and motivation. Therefore, there are no aggregated data on the frequency and type of training received by (all) professionals, in addition to their basic studies – apart from those mentioned above - or about the total number or percentage of them that have attended such training.</p>
3.2.6. Are child rights and child protection topics included in the curriculum of studies for professionals other than social workers and psychologists	X	In general, child rights and child protection are <u>not</u> included <i>as distinct topics</i> in the curriculum of studies of professionals involved in child

<sup>186</sup> Information from Ms. M.Tsangari, Senior Investigator in The Department of Children’s Rights of the Greek Ombudsman, who has participated in designing the course and is a regular trainer in it.

<sup>187</sup> For more information, see the organisation’s webpage on <https://eliza.org.gr/en/our-work/training-for-professionals/>.

<p>involved in child protection systems? (Please include information regarding law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, health, and education personnel)</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>		<p>protection, other than social workers and psychologists.</p> <p>The curriculum of studies of primary school teachers includes topics on child psychology and development.</p> <p>Regarding police officers, according to the reply of the Greek Police to a request for information<sup>188</sup> <i>“The issues related to child protection and children rights are included in the curriculum of studies of all Schools of the Police Academy, both at a basic level (School of police officials) and at a post-qualification level (School of post-qualification education and training and School of National Security). (see also 3.2.5.). Therefore, child-specific topics are included in the curriculum of studies of all police officers, while some of them, in addition, attend relevant courses at post-qualification level, according to their specific duties and professional needs (as noted in 3.2.5.).</i></p> <p>Lawyers, judges and prosecutors are taught about issues related to children in the context of relevant provisions of civil and criminal law.</p> <p>One day (6 hours) of training on <i>“the rights of victims of criminal acts”</i> (especially trafficking, involvement of children in armed conflicts, domestic violence and sexual abuse or exploitation) and <u>one day</u> on <i>“EU Charter on Fundamental Rights – Children’s Rights – Child friendly justice”</i> were added to the NSJ curriculum of studies for judges and prosecutors, in 2022.<sup>189</sup></p> <p>According to the reply of the NSJ to a request for information (4/04/2023) the students of the “28<sup>th</sup> series” (2022) that received the above training were 15 prosecutors, 9 small claims</p>
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<sup>188</sup> Letter of reply with Ref. No. 1728/23/756980 (dated 12/04/23) of Department of Education and Development of Human Resources of the Greek Police HQ

<sup>189</sup> For more information, see the curriculum on [https://www.esdi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1\\_stadio\\_28poleir.pdf](https://www.esdi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1_stadio_28poleir.pdf).

			<p>court judges, 47 civil/criminal court judges and 53 administrative court judges.</p> <p>All of them attended a day of seminars on the rights of victims of crime (18/02/22) and one on “EU Charter on Fundamental Rights – Children’s Rights – Child friendly justice” (16/03/22). Administrative court judges attended another day of seminars on “EU Charter on Fundamental Rights – Children’s Rights – Child Friendly Justice” (12/09/22).</p>
<p>3.2.7. Are there <u>joint training activities</u> involving professionals and personnel from various disciplines in place?</p> <p>Please provide some examples.</p>		X	<p>Professionals from different but related fields (health/social sciences) may participate jointly in training courses organised by NCSS or ICH (see 3.2.5. for specific examples). Public sector employees from various disciplines may also attend the same courses at the National School of Public Administration. However, training is usually theoretical and does <u>not</u> focus on how they can work together, according to their different roles.</p> <p>In general, most training programmes or activities are addressed to professionals of the same or similar background and are related to the nature of their duties (i.e. training for front-line workers, like teachers or nurses focuses on recognising signs of abuse, training for law enforcement officials is related to interviewing and treatment of children in judicial proceedings, etc.). Indicatively, an EU funded training programme for legal and justice professionals on forensic interviewing of children victims or witnesses of violence<sup>190</sup> - completed recently - included separate training activities for each discipline.<sup>191</sup></p> <p>Training provided by ICH and NCSS is based on and fully compliant with international tools and guidelines.</p>

<sup>190</sup> ENCLAVE (2020). [Enhancing the capacity of legal & justice professionals on forensic interview procedures for child victims and witnesses of violence.](#)

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Ms. O. Themeli, Associate Professor of Criminological Psychology, University of Crete, trainer of law enforcement officials/responsible for “ENCLAVE” programme.

		<p>In the NCSS reply mentioned in 3.2.5, it is stated specifically that training is based on material on the methodology of diagnostic assessment of the needs of children/families created by ICH and international organisation LUMOS, in cooperation with ICH and SKLE, as well as on international guidelines on deinstitutionalisation, CoE Rec (2005)5 of the Committee of Ministers on the Rights of Children Living in Residential Institutions, material from handbooks of WHO on child abuse, etc. – which are also sent to participants as training material.</p>
<p>3.2.8. Outline briefly the <u>main challenges and/ or gaps relating to human resources, qualification requirements and training</u> underlined the relevant authorities and/ or child protection civil society organisations.</p>		<p>The main challenges and gaps in human resources, qualifications and training pointed out by relevant actors<sup>192</sup> are related to the severe shortage/inadequacy of human resources in the vast majority of social services and other agencies involved in child protection, and the lack of provision of regular specialised training and supervision to professionals and other personnel working with children (in the public sector and many civil society organisations) to ensure their competence in dealing with child protection issues.</p>

### 3.3. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection capacities in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

In recent years, protocols and tools for recognition and management of child abuse/neglect have developed. Although their use is not mandatory to date, a growing number of professionals receive training and apply them in practice, as there is a growing awareness of their importance. NCSS' coordinating role has extended to several areas of child protection. Within this role, NCSS offers training, capacity building opportunities and guidance to professionals, when required, while various training activities are also implemented by other organisations, as part of their regular work or through specific EU-funded programmes.

MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>193</sup>, Article 13, introduced an obligation of child care units of civil society organisations to ensure provision of training to staff on a regular basis (at least once a year) on issues related to child protection, such as implementation of legislation, crisis management, implementation of the unit regulations and any other issues related to their duties. Vetting procedures and selection criteria for volunteers were also introduced (Article 14), as noted above. However, no

<sup>192</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *"From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"*, and Greek Ombudsman (2015). *"The rights of children living in institutions"*.

<sup>193</sup> Greece (2022), *MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)*, Art. 13, 11 May 2022.

similar obligation for regular provision of training to staff exists for residential institutions of the public sector, or for social services and other community services within the child protection system.

It should be noted that Law 4939/2022 (OG A' 111/10-06-2022), Article XXIII also introduces an obligation of the Institutional Protection Unit of the former SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection to establish and develop training and continuing education programmes for guardians, guardianship coordinators and authorised guardians, in collaboration with nonprofit public and private sector bodies, as well as international organisations and European agencies. The same obligation applies to the Guardianship Service Providers who should develop appropriate introductory training and continuous education programmes for their staff, in accordance with the European, international and national rules applicable to the guardianship of unaccompanied minors, the content of which shall relate among others to any legal and factual matter relating to the protection of childhood in general and the particular nature of the needs and best interests of unaccompanied minors, as well as the procedure for assessing their best interest<sup>194</sup>.

Persisting gaps and challenges are related to the chronic shortage of human and material resources in social services and residential care services, lack of specialisation - including special licencing and certification - of social workers and other professionals working in the area of child protection, and lack of provisions for systematic, specialised training and supervision, to ensure the competence of all staff working in the field.

Another problem is related to funding and sustainability of planning for service provisions. As noted by the Greek Ombudsman, in its Complementary Report on the implementation of UNCRC (Dec. 2021), *“a significant amount of the planning seems to be unsustainable since the resources targeted to address continuous long-lasting needs are provided through one-off or short-term funding programmes and not through the regular state budget (e.g. Recovery and Resilience Facility Fund until 2025 for early intervention for children with disabilities et al.)”*

### 3.4. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection capacities that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Despite the lack of systematic, mandatory training, there is a growing recognition of the importance of specialised training and capacity building. Within this framework, the Institute of Child Health, Department of Mental Health & Social Welfare<sup>195</sup>, developed a series of tools and information material for all professionals working in child protection, namely:

1. *“National Protocol for the Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of child abuse and neglect”* (ICH, 2015), to be followed by all professionals within the welfare, education, justice, law enforcement and health sectors<sup>196</sup>.
2. *Guide to the Implementation of the Protocol*<sup>197</sup> - basic training tool (practical guide) for professionals called to respond to incidents of child abuse-neglect and neglect.

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<sup>194</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 63-66, 11 June 2022.

<sup>195</sup> Ministry of Health Programme (2007-2013), *“Integrated Approach to Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of cases of Child Abuse & Neglect [MIS 372071]”*.

<sup>196</sup> Institute for Child Health, (2015), [National Protocol for the Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of child abuse and neglect](#)”.

<sup>197</sup> Institute for Child Health, (2007-2013), [Guide to the Implementation of the Protocol](#) [MIS 372071].

3. Legal Index of provisions related to child maltreatment <sup>198</sup>
4. Information pamphlet for “Step by step” action of professionals in cases of child abuse-neglect<sup>199</sup>
5. National index of Organisations and Services dealing with child abuse and neglect cases<sup>200</sup>

Other tools for the recognition and management of child abuse and neglect have also developed - E.g.: “*Guide for recognition and management of child abuse and neglect cases by teachers*”<sup>201</sup>, “*Child Abuse-Neglect: Assessment of risk factors and Intervention*” (Practical Guide for social workers working in the education sector)<sup>202</sup>.

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<sup>198</sup>Institute of Child Health (2015) <https://docplayer.gr/2065865-Eyretirio-ishyoyas-nomothias-gia-tin-kakopoiisi.html>

<sup>199</sup> Institute for Child Health, (MIS 372071) [Pamphlet for “Step by step” action of professionals in cases of child abuse-neglect.](#)

<sup>200</sup>Institute for Child Health, (2014) [MIS 372071] [National index of Organisations and Services dealing with child abuse and neglect cases.](#)

<sup>201</sup> National Centre For Social Research, (2011), [Guide for recognition and management of child abuse and neglect cases by teachers.](#)

<sup>202</sup> Kolliniati K., Kortomaniti P., Moulou T., Chatzidrosou D.,(2021), [Child Abuse-Neglect: Assessment of risk factors and Intervention.](#) Greece, Athens.

## 4. Care

### 4.1. Prevention measures and services

**4.1.1. Please provide information on the interaction between the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection system in place. Is there an inherent coordination of measures and interventions? Are responsible authorities and service providers the same or different?**

Child Protection Groups (OPA), consisting mainly of social workers from municipal social services, are responsible for child protection and, especially, for conducting a “social enquiry” into a child’s family environment and living conditions after an order by the public prosecutor. They are also responsible for follow up and monitoring families for child protection purposes. However - as mentioned above - the public prosecutor is the main authority responsible for child protection.

Municipal social services (often, the same social workers as in OPAs) are also responsible for provision of assistance and support to individuals and families in need. Their duties with regard to social protection are not clearly defined in legislation, and provisions vary according to the human and material resources available, ranging from basic assistance to very low-income individuals/families (e.g. access to social grocery stores, information about benefits) to provision of counselling, ongoing support, referral to specialist services, etc.

District social services are responsible for foster care and adoption, as well as for inspection and supervision of childcare units and other services of civil society organisations. Usually, there is no significant interaction between them and municipal social services, as their duties are distinct.

With regard to social welfare, the responsibility for dispensing welfare benefits was transferred from the municipalities to OPEKA (Organisation of Welfare Social Solidarity Benefits) with MD Δ13α/Γ.Π.οικ.68856/2202 (OG B’ 5855/28-12-18)<sup>203</sup>. OPEKA is not connected to the municipalities, but municipal Community Centres, among their other duties, provide information and assistance in relation to welfare benefits, acting as OPEKA contact points. Community Centres are distinct from social services, but operate under their supervision and in cooperation with them, as related service providers in each municipality.

**4.1.2. Is there evidence that families are supported in their role of primary caregivers? Is the primary position of families in child caregiving and protection recognised and supported through universal and targeted services and through every stage of the intervention, particularly through prevention? Which type of support (incl. financial, medical, psycho/social advice, legal advice, care staff, care equipment, guidance and training etc.) is available to families in need.**

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<sup>203</sup>Greece (2018), [MD Δ13α/Γ.Π.οικ.68856/2202 \(OG B’ 5855/28-12-18\)](#), 28 December 2018.



Despite a growing recognition, in recent years, of the importance of the role of families in caregiving and protection of children, in most cases, the shortage of human and material resources in municipal social services and other welfare agencies result in inability to support families effectively in their caregiving role. Targeted services for particular vulnerable categories (e.g. families with children with disabilities) are especially limited.

Provisions vary, to some extent, depending on resources available in each sector or municipality. In general, there is no funding available for provision of direct financial assistance to families in need or in crisis. Welfare benefits are the main source of financial support available, but many families in need do not meet eligibility criteria. Additional material support is available through municipal social grocery stores, social pharmacies, etc., local churches and community services of some civil society organisations (e.g. SOS Children's Villages, "Smile of the Child").

Free legal representation is provided to citizens with a very low income, via local courts. Legal advice is available via legal aid programmes for particular vulnerable groups (women victims of GBV, migrants, etc.)

Basic medical and mental health services are available to children and families but, often, there are long waiting lists. The capacity of public mental health services to provide psychotherapy or ongoing support is extremely limited. Specialised forms of therapy (e.g. occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.), special care equipment and other medical provisions are available to children (as dependent family members) via their parents' social security insurance and, therefore, children whose parents are not eligible for social security (unemployed, irregular migrants) are excluded.

4.1.3. When a child in need of care is identified, who coordinates support to the family and the child to ensure protection and prevent abuse and/ or placement of the child and how?

Municipal social services coordinate provision of support to children and families in cases that parents ask for help, or if a third party (individual or agency) refers the case to social services, after identifying a child in need, and parents agree to cooperate and follow the social service's instructions or recommendations, along with receiving support. In cases parents refuse to cooperate to ensure adequate care of their child(ren), or fail to recognise the problem, the case is referred to the public prosecutor, who usually orders investigation and makes emergency decisions about further action. If the prosecutor, after investigation, orders ongoing cooperation of the family with a social service as a measure to ensure protection and prevent removal of the child(ren), the competent social service undertakes an official responsibility to coordinate support, monitor progress, inform the prosecutor about developments and make further recommendations.

4.1.4. What are the crisis emergency responses in place?

Municipal social services provide emergency support, including material assistance, information about provisions, counselling and referral to specialised services. However, as noted above, resources are usually limited.

NCSS operates National Child Protection Line (“1107”) offering guidance to individuals and professionals and referral to appropriate services, nationwide. National Helpline “1056” of “Smile of the Child” also provides guidance and referral in emergency cases.

Upon provisions of the Presidential Decree 77/2023 (OG 130/27.06.2023) a new Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family was established (Article 1). The new Ministry includes, among others, the newly established General Secretariat of Equality and Human Rights and General Secretariat of Demography and Housing Policy. A helpline (“SOS Line 15900”) and emergency accommodation shelters operate for women victims of GBV and their children, under the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights

National Emergency Response Mechanism (NERM) – under the former SSPUAM and currently the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection - aims at identification and transfer to emergency accommodation of homeless or living in precarious conditions UAC. It includes a hotline for identifying and locating children in need.

All child protection issues are referred to the public prosecutor, who issues an order for investigation, emergency removal of the child(ren) from family, placement in alternative care, or any other action required.

## 4.2. Identification and reporting procedures

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.1. Is there an identification/reporting obligation foreseen in the legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the relevant provisions and indicate authorities and/or individuals that have identification/reporting obligations.</p>	X		<p>Law 3500/2006 (OG A’ 232/24-10-2006)<sup>204</sup>, Article 23, provides that teachers are obliged to report to competent authorities (public prosecutor) any incident of domestic violence against a pupil that they become aware of during performance of their duties.</p> <p>According to Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178/1-10-2021)<sup>205</sup>, Article 4, all agencies that provide welfare services to children are obliged to report, via an employee “responsible for child protection” (in accordance with Article 5) any actual or</p>

<sup>204</sup> Greece (2006), [Law 3500/2006 \(OG A’ 232/24-10-2006\)](#), 24 October 2006

<sup>205</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 4, 1 October 2021.

		<p>reported incident of child abuse or maltreatment that comes into their knowledge in any way.</p> <p>Code of Penal Procedure<sup>206</sup> provides that public sector employees are obliged to report to the public prosecutor any crime that is prosecuted ex officio which they have been informed about during performance of their duties (Article 38 para. 2). Private citizens are also obliged to report crimes (felonies) that are prosecuted ex officio (Article 40 para. 1).</p> <p>Doctors, psychologists and social workers are also bound by provisions related to the code of ethics of their profession (Law 3418/2005, OG A' 287/28-11-2005<sup>207</sup>, Law 991/1979, OG A' 278/20-12-1979<sup>208</sup> and PD 23/1992, OG A' 6/30-1-1992<sup>209</sup> respectively) to report crimes that demand prompt intervention due to life or physical integrity endangered<sup>210</sup>.</p>
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4.2.2. Please describe available national and/or sub-national reporting procedures for cases of abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment, discrimination, or neglect against children in all available reporting mechanisms, including, helplines and hotlines. Include the legislative and regulatory framework, actors involved (e.g. police, child protection centres, victims support organisations), and timeframe.

Please provide details such as if there a common or different procedures or helplines/hotlines for specific issues. What is the profession of the staff receiving the reporting? Is the staff competent and trained for the purpose?

Reports of abuse, neglect or other crimes against children are sent to the competent public prosecutor by all actors (police, child protection services, welfare services, schools, helplines, etc.). Reporting by professionals (see 4.2.1.) should be in writing and take place immediately/a.s.a.p. after receiving the information, but a specific timeframe is not defined.

National Centre for Social Solidarity-NCSS/EKKA, within its competence as the coordinator of the National Mechanism for Recording and Monitoring Minors' Abuse Incidents, receives notification on the reports made by the competent authorities, who are obliged to report to the public prosecutor

<sup>206</sup> Greece, Ministry of Justice (2019), Law 4620/2019 (OG A' 96/11-06-2019), <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-kodik-es-nomothesias/nomos-4620-2019-phek-96a-11-6-2019.html>.

<sup>207</sup> Greece (2005), [Law 3418/2005 \(OG A' 287/28-11-2005\)](#), 28 November 2005.

<sup>208</sup> Greece (1979), [Law 991/1979 \(OG A' 278/20-12-1979\)](#), 20 December 1979.

<sup>209</sup> Greece (1992), [PD 23/1992 \(OG A' 6/30-1-1992\)](#), 30 January 1992.

<sup>210</sup> Institute of Child Health (2015), *Legal Index of provisions related to child abuse & neglect*, pp. 33-35.

any child abuse incident that comes to their attention, within the child care unit they work, under the Law 4837/2021, articles 4,5,6 & 9.

The Children’s Rights Department of the Greek Ombudsman, Smile of the Child and other organisations operate helplines, via which they receive reports, which they forward to the prosecutor. The Department of Children’s Rights of the Greek Ombudsman asks callers to make a complaint in writing, including their name, but protects their anonymity with regard to third parties - including the prosecutor service - if they ask for it, in accordance with Law 3094/2003 (OG A’ 10/22-01-2003)<sup>211</sup> Article 4, para 2, which provides that “(The Greek Ombudsman) may ... not disclose the name or other personal data of the person who submitted a complaint, in accordance with the previous paragraph, if the interested person asks for it in writing and provided that investigation of the complaint is possible without disclosure of the name. If the investigation is de facto impossible without disclosure of the name, the interested person is informed that their case will be closed, unless they consent to disclosure of their name in writing”. It may also send to the prosecutor information reported orally, if it considers that this is required for a child’s protection, as provided in Article 4, para. 12 of the same Law.

The worker who is responsible for child protection in social welfare agencies (see 4.2.1.) or handles reports in other services, including helplines, is usually a social worker. Although this is considered as a core professional duty for social workers, not all of them have specialised or adequate training. In schools, reports are often received by teachers - as in most of them there are no social workers – and the principal is responsible for sending the information to the prosecutor. There are some training courses for professionals offered by NCSS, Institute of Child Health and other agencies, but no provisions for mandatory training to ensure competence for the purpose of all staff involved.

General public, parents, teachers and even teenagers or children have the ability to report illegal internet content. Especially, through SafeLine ([www.safeline.gr](http://www.safeline.gr)), they can report Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM). The report can be submitted even anonymously by filling in the online form of SafeLine’s website or by sending an email at [report@safeline.gr](mailto:report@safeline.gr). SafeLine operates since April 2023 and is an official member of INHOPE ([www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)) since October 2005.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.2.3. Do children have the right to report independently?  If <u>yes</u> , please provide information on the availability of <u>age-appropriate and child-</u>	X		Children have the right to report independently, but appropriate, child-friendly procedures enabling them to exercise this right are not always in place.  Children can report to the worker responsible for child protection - according to Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178/1-10-2021) <sup>212</sup> , Articles 4 and 5 - in

<sup>211</sup>Greece (2003), [Law 3094/2003 \(OG A’ 10/22-01-2003\)](http://www.safeline.gr), Art. 4, 22 January 2003.

<sup>212</sup>Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](http://www.inhope.org), Art. 4, 5, 1 October 2021.

<p><u>friendly</u> reporting procedures (to whom and how children can report child rights' violations and abuse). Is the anonymity and confidentiality of the child in the reporting protected? Please comment briefly.</p>		<p>residential and day care settings. However, this is not an external, independent mechanism and children, especially in residential institutions, may be reluctant or scared to report abuse or violations of their rights within the institution.</p> <p>The newly introduced legislation on the guardianship institution (L. 4960/2022)<sup>213</sup>, introduces the obligation of the Guardianship Service Providers to observe a procedure for lodging, reviewing and resolving complaints by unaccompanied minors placed under their guardianship.</p> <p>Children can also report to their teachers, who are obliged to report to the prosecutor, especially in cases of domestic violence, according to Law 3500/2006 (OG A' 232/24-10-2006)<sup>214</sup>, Article 23.</p> <p>The Greek Ombudsman (Children's Rights Department) receives and examines complaints from children about any violation of their rights<sup>215</sup>. Children can report in person, or via a special telephone line and website of the Department of Children's Rights, or submit a complaint, according to the general procedure.</p> <p>Calls and emails from children are answered and followed up by a psychologist or a social worker with training and experience in working with/talking to children, who also undertake the investigation of complaints submitted by children. The Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights normally meets personally with children coming into the Department to report a violation or discuss a concern. Procedures include giving priority to calls and complaints submitted by children and providing to them information in a child-friendly manner, about the Ombudsman's actions, any developments and the outcome of the case. The provisions and general principles of</p>
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<sup>213</sup> Greece (2022) [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-07-2022\)](#), 22 July 2022

<sup>214</sup> Greece (2006), [Law 3500/2006 \(OG A' 232/24-10-2006\)](#), 24 October 2006.

<sup>215</sup> Greece, The Greek Ombudsman (2003),, [Law 3094/2003 \(OG A' 10/22-01-2003\)](#), Art. 4, , *provides that complaints to the Ombudsman may be submitted by children, as well as by any third party (in addition to a parent) that has direct knowledge of a violation of a child's rights.* 22 January 2003.

		<p>the UNCRC guide all aspects of the operation of the Department, and all staff are familiar with them.</p> <p>Anonymity and confidentiality are protected. The bounds of confidentiality are explained and, if breaching confidentiality (e.g. notifying parents, reporting to the prosecutor) is necessary, the child is informed about it.</p>
4.2.4. Are children informed of their right to report and how they can do it? If yes, by whom and how?	X	<p>Joint MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>216</sup>, Article 12, para.2, provides that childcare units of civil society organisations are obliged to inform children, in an age-appropriate manner, about the right to report to the staff-member responsible for child protection, as well as to submit complaints to hierarchical or independent authorities. However, complaint mechanisms and procedures are not specified and, to date, it is not clear whether and how this provision is implemented.</p> <p>According to Article XXII of L. 4960/2022<sup>217</sup> which introduces the obligation of Guardianship Service Providers to establish a complaints mechanism, “the unaccompanied minor under guardianship shall be informed in plain and intelligible language by the guardianship mandated person of the right to lodge a complaint against the guardianship services he/she receives, the procedure for lodging and reviewing complaints, the procedure for his/her feedback and participation, as well as the ways of handling and resolution”.</p> <p>There are no other provisions on informing children of their right and of ways to report within the alternative care, social care or education system.</p> <p>The Children’s Rights Department of the Greek Ombudsman informs children of their right and of how to make a complaint during visits to childcare</p>

<sup>216</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 12, 11 May 2022.

<sup>217</sup> Greece (2022) [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-07-2022\)](#), 22 July 2022

institutions, schools and other settings, within its mission of promoting children’s interests<sup>218</sup>.

4.2.5. What are the main challenges and/or gaps relating to identification and reporting procedures underlined by relevant authorities and/or child protection civil society organisations?

Gaps relating to identification and reporting include the lack of training of front-line professionals in identifying signs and indications of child abuse/maltreatment, ambiguity about the roles of different actors and lack of clear procedures guaranteeing the protection and anonymity especially of non-professionals.

A survey carried out by the Greek Ombudsman on the operation of municipal social services with regard to child protection revealed lack of uniform practices and procedures for the reception and management of reports of child abuse/maltreatment. In many cases, social services refer anyone expressing a child protection concern to the public prosecutor, without recording or examining the report, due to their limited resources and ambiguity about their role, including the right to investigate without a prosecutor’s order<sup>219</sup>.

Law 3500/2006, (OG A’ 232/24-10-2006)<sup>220</sup> Article 23, on the duty of teachers to report “*crimes of domestic violence committed against children, that they become aware of during performance of their duties*”, raises uncertainty among teachers about reporting in cases they have a concern or indication of maltreatment, but cannot claim to be *aware* that a child has suffered domestic violence.<sup>221</sup>

Neighbours, relatives or other third parties who are aware or suspect that a child suffers or is at risk of abuse are often reluctant to report, because of fear that their anonymity will not be protected during investigation or judicial proceedings and, therefore, they may face retribution or legal action against them by abusing parents.<sup>222</sup>

### 4.3. Referral procedures(s) and investigation and protection

4.3.1. **Please describe the referral mechanisms in place following reporting and identification procedures.**

**In the answer please include the legislative and regulatory framework, interagency protocols and guidelines, the actors involved and their role and responsibilities, as well as the applicable timeline.**

<sup>218</sup> Greece, The Greek Ombudsman (2003),, [Law 3094/2003 \(OG A’ 10/22-01-2003\)](#), Art. 1 provides that *complaints to the Ombudsman may be submitted by children, as well as by any third party (in addition to a parent) that has direct knowledge of a violation of a child’s rights*. 22 January 2003.

<sup>219</sup> Greek Ombudsman (20230), [“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”](#) , pp. 17-18.

<sup>220</sup> Greece (2006), [Law 3500/2006 \(OG A’ 232/24-10-2006\)](#), 24 October 2006.

<sup>221</sup> The Greek Ombudsman (Department of Children’s Rights) receives many enquiries on the matter by telephone, or during seminars and meetings with education professionals.

<sup>222</sup> Information based on calls expressing child protection concerns received at the Greek Ombudsman’s telephone line for and about children.

**Please also specify the procedure, if different, for other groups of children (e.g. with disabilities, migrant, victim of a particular form of violence etc.)**

There are no specific referral mechanisms stated in legislation. Any case or issue related to child protection is referred to the competent prosecutor, who is responsible for further action, such as ordering investigation or assessment (by social services, police, medical or psychiatric services, etc.), or monitoring of the family by a social or mental health service, referral to other specialist services, or removal of the child from the family, as an emergency protection measure. In case the prosecutor judges that a child's physical or mental health is in immediate danger, they may order removal of the child, even without previous investigation, and placement in a hospital (due to lack of emergency accommodation facilities) until investigation is completed and further custodial arrangements can be made. There are no interagency protocols or guidelines, as the action of all actors involved is coordinated by the prosecutor. There is no applicable timeframe for investigation, further referral or any other action, unless specified by the prosecutor.

There are no different referral and investigation procedures for any particular group, but there are separate accommodation facilities for UAC, and former SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection is responsible for their protection, accommodation and guardianship. UAC over 14 identified in a situation of homelessness were often placed in protective custody, until this practice was abolished - with Law 4760/2020 (OG A' 247/11-12-2020)<sup>223</sup>, Article 43 - and replaced by provisions for emergency accommodation.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.2. Are there applicable standards in the form of legal provisions, guidelines, protocols, interagency agreements or regulatory frameworks regarding investigation and assessment procedures following reporting and identification procedures?		X	<p>Some social workers/services have adopted the use of the ICH National Protocol for Investigation, Diagnosis and Management of child abuse and neglect (see 3.4.) but this is not mandatory.</p> <p>There are no legal provisions or national guidelines on investigation and assessment procedures. Social, mental health and other services conduct an assessment within the framework of their duties, and inform the prosecutor in writing about their findings and proposals.</p> <p>The Greek Ombudsman has pointed out that the lack of national-scale standards and uniform practices constitutes a serious problem in the child protection system, recommending the introduction of a regulatory framework for</p>

<sup>223</sup> Greece (2020), [Law 4760/2020 \(OG A' 247/11-12-2020\)](#), Art. 43, 11 December 2020.



			investigation, including guidelines and protocols <sup>224</sup> .
4.3.3. Is the assessment carried out by a multidisciplinary team of professionals?		X	A social enquiry (i.e. assessment of the child's family environment/living conditions) is usually carried out by (a) social worker(s). In many cases, social workers recommend a further psychiatric assessment of the child, or of a parent. Assessment in child psychiatric services may be carried out by a child psychiatrist or by a multidisciplinary team, depending on the case and the capacity and manner of operation of the service.
4.3.4. Please provide information on who is responsible to investigate and assess the situation of the child and the family and how this is done. Please provide information and describe the role and responsibilities of judicial authorities in the reporting and referral procedure.			
<p>The public prosecutor has the primary responsibility for the investigation, coordination of the action of all actors involved in assessment, and emergency decision-making.</p> <p>After receiving a report about child abuse or neglect, the prosecutor usually issues an order for investigation by a social service, a child-psychiatric service, a medical service or the police (depending on the nature of reported problem). Social workers' investigation usually involves one or more home visits - prearranged or unannounced - and talking to parents, the child(ren) and other family members. Additional meetings with the parents and child(ren) may be arranged, at home or at the social service's office, and information may be collected from other sources (e.g. school, nursery, other services involved with the family). Child-psychiatric, psychological and medical assessments take place in a hospital or at the service's premises and the number of visits/meetings required is decided by the doctor(s) or other specialists conducting the assessment.</p> <p>After completing their assessment, the professionals involved inform the prosecutor, in writing, about their findings and recommendations. The prosecutor assesses the data and may decide to file the case, or order further investigation, or take any other measures required, including removal of the child from family, if there is evidence of danger to the child's physical or mental health (Provisions under Civil Code, Article 1532 foll.<sup>225</sup>). The prosecutor may also order a preliminary judicial enquiry - in case of suspicion of a crime committed against a child - and/or press criminal charges.</p>			
<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>

<sup>224</sup>Greek Ombudsman (2020) *"From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"*, pp. 12, 24.

<sup>225</sup> Greece (1984), *Civil Code*, Art. 1532 foll.

<p>4.3.5. Are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and professionals involved in these procedures (including civil society organisations) clearly stated in the legislative and regulatory framework?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The protection of minors in Greece is a guaranteed right which derives from the Constitution of Greece (article 2: “Respect of Human Dignity”, article 5: “Personality development, protection of life, honor and personal liberty”, article 7: “Prohibition of torture, impairment of health, psychological violence and any offence against human dignity” and article 21: “Protection of childhood and youth”).</p> <p>The role of the public prosecutor is stated, in a general manner, in the Civil Code, Article 1532<sup>226</sup>.</p> <p>The role and duties of the Police in relation to the protection of minors are described in detail in article 97 of Presidential Decree 141/1991<sup>227</sup>, while the responsibilities of the sub-Directorates for the protection of Minors of the Attica and Thessaloniki Security Directorates are outlined in article 6 of Presidential Decree 7/2017<sup>228</sup>.</p> <p>The role and duties in relation to child protection of social services and other actors involved in investigation and assessment (e.g. child-psychiatric services) are not stated clearly.</p> <p>Their involvement is based on their general roles and obligations, and the investigation order issued by the public prosecutor, who is responsible for assessment of data and decision-making.</p>
<p>4.3.6. Are there any inter-agency cooperation protocols and agreements in place to strengthen cooperation between actors with responsibility in the referral procedure and</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>There are no known inter-agency cooperation protocols and agreements with regard to referral procedures. In some cases, there may be informal cooperation agreements between agencies, based on individual initiatives.</p> <p>NCSS coordinates Child Protection Groups across the country – according to MD 49540/2011 (OG</p>

<sup>226</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1532, stipulates that *in extremely urgent cases*, provided there is malexercise of custody by parents and an imminent danger to the child’s physical or mental health, the public prosecutor *takes any appropriate measure for the child’s protection*, until a court order is issued.

<sup>227</sup> Greece (1991), [PD 141/1991 \(OG A’ 58/30-04-1991\)](#), Art. 97, 30 April 1991

<sup>228</sup> Greece (2017), [PD 7/2017 \(OG A’ 14/09-02-2017\)](#), 9 February 2017

<p>enhance the efficiency of their actions?</p>		<p>B'877/17-05-2011)- and offers guidance to social workers or other professionals, when needed.</p> <p>All actors ultimately report to the prosecutor who is responsible for decision-making.</p>
<p>4.3.7. Is it likely that procedures will differ, depending on the migration – residential status of the child concerned? <i>Please also consider potential divergences depending on main actors involved.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Procedures do not differ depending on the migration-residential status of children living in Greece with their families.</p> <p>With regard to unaccompanied -separated children, since 2015, due to the huge rise in the number of refugees, including UAC, a parallel care system developed to address the needs of this population, with separate accommodation and support services (set up with EU funding). This system was until recently under the responsibility of SSPUAM and currently under the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, to which all the responsibilities of the Special Secretariat have been transferred. (i.e. Ministry of Migration and Asylum rather than Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).</p> <p>The public prosecutor is responsible for coordinating investigation and decision making for unaccompanied-separated children as well, but special provisions apply for guardianship.</p>
<p>4.3.8. Are affected children heard as part of the procedures?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, are the hearings child-sensitive and designed age-appropriately and in child-friendly language? Do children receive information and support by competent and trained professionals?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Social workers carrying out an investigation hear and record the views of children and provide information to them, as a rule of good practice. No specialized training is provided to social workers dealing with child protection to ensure their competence in all cases.</p> <p>Children’s views and feelings are heard and recorded as part of the assessment procedure, in cases that the prosecutor refers the child to a child-psychiatric service for clinical evaluation, as this is dictated by the rules for child-psychiatric assessment</p> <p>Children also testify during preliminary enquiries (carried out by the prosecutor) for possible crimes</p>

		<p>committed against them. In such cases, children are interviewed by a specially trained psychologist at the Children’s House operating in Athens, or by a police psychologist (usually a police officer with a psychology degree) who has received some special training in interviewing children in an age-appropriate and child-friendly manner. MD 7320/2019 (OG B’ 2238/10-06-19)<sup>229</sup> regulates the manner of operation of Children’s Houses as well as the manner (protocol), conditions and setting for forensic interviewing and evaluation of child victims - to ensure the appropriateness and child-friendly character of the procedure.</p> <p>There are no specific legal provisions on hearing children’s views during this stage, except Article 12 of UN CRC [ratified by Law 2101/1992 (OG A’ 192/2-12-1992)<sup>230</sup>].</p> <p>There are no minimum age restrictions for hearing children, or any regional differences.</p> <p>In some cases, the law states explicitly that child’s consent is required (e.g. with regard to adoption if the child is over 12) or that the child <i>has to be heard</i> before the court decides (e.g. with regard to guardianship, foster care review, etc. Also, Law 4800/2021 (OG A’ 81/21-05-2021)<sup>231</sup>, Article 5, para. 4, provides that the child's opinion should be sought and taken into consideration before judicial decisions are made regarding parental responsibility and the child’s best interest. However, in cases that the law stipulates that the child should be heard/express their opinion (rather than <u>consent</u>), this is not binding for the court.</p> <p>In a similar manner, the child’s opinion is normally heard during the investigation phase, but is not binding with regard to decision making, and the extent to which it will be taken into consideration depends on the judgement of the professionals conducting the investigation.</p>
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<sup>229</sup> Greece (2019), MD 7320/2019 (OG B’ 2238/10-06-19), 10 June 2019.

<sup>230</sup> Greece (1992), [Law 2101/1992 \(OG A’ 192/2-12-1992\)](#), Art. 12, 2 December 1992.

<sup>231</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A’81/21-5-2021\)](#), Art. 5, 21 May 2021.

<p>4.3.9. Are there mental health support services available for affected children?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, how are services working together? How is it ensured that the child is informed and can make use of these services?</p>		X	<p>In most cases, mental health support is not available to children during the investigation phase, despite provisions in Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017)<sup>232</sup>, Articles 61 and 62, about victims' right of access to support, including mental health support (Articles 8 and 9 of Directive 2012/29/EU). If a child-psychiatric assessment aims at investigating possible abuse, protocol dictates that the same service cannot offer support at the same time, as this may affect the objectivity of the assessment. In principle, support should be provided by a different service. However, in most cases, children do not receive any formal support at this stage, as mental health services are sectorised and the service conducting the assessment is also the one responsible for provision of support.</p> <p>Children may be offered mental health support after placement in a residential care unit, although provision of psychotherapy/ongoing support in the public sector is extremely limited, due to shortage of child psychiatric services and resources. Provision of mental health support to children is mentioned in MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>233</sup>, Article 11, among the obligations of residential child-care units of civil society organizations.</p>
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4.3.10. What are the main challenges and gaps in the referral and investigation highlighted by relevant authorities, child protection, and civil society organisations? Briefly describe.

The main challenges and gaps in referral and investigation highlighted by the Greek Ombudsman<sup>234</sup> and other agencies are related to:

- Absence of clear, uniform procedures for referral and investigation
- Lack of provisions for multi-disciplinary assessment and for cooperation of different agencies involved in investigation (which is coordinated by the prosecutor)

<sup>232</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017\)](#), Articles 61, 62, 23 June 2017.

<sup>233</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 11, 11 May 2022.

<sup>234</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), ["From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"](#), and Greek Ombudsman (2015), ["The rights of children living in institutions"](#).

- Lack of provision for emergency accommodation or for direct placement of children removed from their family in foster care, resulting in them often spending long periods in hospitals, without appropriate care and support
- Lack of provisions to ensure that children are informed about their situation and heard during investigation and referral procedures
- Lack of an obligation to provide mental health support to affected children during the referral and investigation phase.
- Lack of adequate protection of children’s personal data, resulting in testimonies of child-victims systematically being publicised in the media.

#### 4.4. Placement decisions – care orders

##### 4.4.1. Following the investigation and assessment of the child’s situation, who is responsible to decide upon issuing a care order/decision and the placement of the child in alternative care?

The public prosecutor is responsible to decide upon issuing a care order and placement of the child in alternative care, if the child’s physical or mental health is in danger. An application to court has to follow within 30 days (Civil Code, Article 1532)<sup>235</sup>. The decision is usually based on the recommendations of a social service after investigation and/or other evidence that the child is in immediate danger.

The court may remove custody from parents permanently and place the child under the care of a third party (family member, foster carer or institution), only if other measures have been ineffective, or are inadequate to protect the child’s physical or mental health (Civil Code, Article 1533)<sup>236</sup>.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.4.2. Are there legislative and or regulatory provisions clearly stating the criteria that should be taken into consideration in the assessment of the situation and in the decision-making process?		X	There are no clear provisions. Ensuring the safety and the best interests of the child are the main considerations in social workers’ assessment and recommendations; however, the criteria for assessing risk or a child’s best interest are not specified in legislative or regulatory provisions.  The principle of the best interest of the child as the main criterion in decision-making is cited in provisions of the Civil Code, e.g. Article 1511 <sup>237</sup> , on

<sup>235</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1532.

<sup>236</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1533.

<sup>237</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1511.

<p>Are there provisions specifying the criteria that should be considered when deciding to remove the child from its family? Are the principles of necessity and appropriateness considered?</p>		<p>the best interest of the child regarding decisions that affect them, Article 1536<sup>238</sup>, on review of the decision to remove parental rights, Article 1557<sup>239</sup>, on the social enquiry before adoption, which should determine whether the adoption is in the best interests of the child, etc.</p> <p>The principles of necessity and appropriateness are considered in the Civil Code with regard to the jurisdiction of the prosecutor to order the removal of a child from the family - among other measures – and of the court to remove parental rights permanently. In particular, Article 1532<sup>240</sup> stipulates that <i>in extremely urgent cases</i>, provided there is malexercise of custody and an imminent danger to the child’s physical or mental health, the public prosecutor <i>takes any appropriate measure for the child’s protection</i>, until a court order is issued. Article 1533<sup>241</sup> states that the removal of parental rights from both parents and assignment of custody to a third party (relative, foster carer or institution) may be ordered by the court <i>only if other measures have been ineffective or are considered inadequate to prevent risk to the child’s physical or mental health</i>.</p>
<p>4.4.3. Are there provisions requiring that the views of the child should be taken into consideration in the decision-making process?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please specify if this is mandatory or left to the discretion of the responsible</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Civil Code, Article 1555<sup>242</sup>, provides that a child over 12 yrs. should consent to their adoption in person, in court – unless the child is in a state of mental disorder that affects the expression of their will - and that, in any case, the court is obliged to hear the child’s view, according to the child’s maturity. Article 1647, provides that the child has to be heard before a court decision on guardianship, and Article 1664 that the child has</p>

<sup>238</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1536.

<sup>239</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1557.

<sup>240</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1532.

<sup>241</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1533.

<sup>242</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1555.

<p>authorities, and if there are age-related requirements.</p>		<p>to be heard before a judicial decision for foster care review.</p> <p>Also, according to Law 4800/2021 (OG A' 81/21-05-2021)<sup>243</sup>, Article 5, para. 4, the child's opinion should be sought and taken into consideration, according to the child's maturity, before any judicial decision regarding parental responsibility and the child's best interest (as noted in 2.1.6.).</p> <p>The law does not specify the way in which the views of children should be sought and taken into consideration or any age limits. Ultimately the way in which a child's view will be heard and evaluated lies on the discretion of the judge. Often, judges have a meeting in person with the child(ren) and ask them directly about their views. This used to be the case mainly for children over 12, but is becoming increasingly common practice for younger children as well. The views of children are also presented in court via reports of social workers, child-psychiatrists or other experts that have interviewed the child during the investigation phase.</p> <p>Social workers investigating child protection issues and some prosecutors hear the child's views, but taking them into consideration is not mandatory.</p> <p>The decision about removal from family and placement in alternative care is left to the discretion of the responsible authorities, on the basis of the criteria cited in law (see 4.4.2.)</p>
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#### 4.5. Types of care with focus on alternative care

Types of care existing in the country	Yes	No	Who is offering such services? (State, regional, local authorities, civil society, religious institutions)	Please make differences between the different types of care explicit
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<sup>243</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4800/2021 \(OG A' 81/21-5-2021\)](#), Art. 5, 21 May 2021.



Foster care	X		Foster care is provided by approved foster carers, individuals or families. District social services are responsible for its implementation, in cooperation with the social services of residential institutions, with regard to placement in foster care of children living in them.
Residential – institutional care	X		Residential care for children of typical development or with minor disabilities is provided in residential institutions of the public sector (including some municipalities), civil society organisations and religious organisations.  Residential care for children with severe disabilities is provided in public institutions.
Other forms of family-based or family-like care placements	X		The best-known example of family-like care is SOS Children’s Villages. Its model of operation and similar models have been copied by other civil society organisations, which claim to provide family-like care although, often, they fail to recognise the institutional characteristics of their operation
Supervised independent living arrangements for children		X	Law 4837/2021 (OG A’ 178/1-10-2021) <sup>244</sup> , Article 52, provides for the possibility of supervised independent living arrangements for children over 15 living in residential institutions, as part of the national policy for deinstitutionalisation. However, the provision is not implemented yet.
<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4.5.1. Is there data available on the number of children in care (disaggregated by type of care, gender/age, length of placement, etc)?	X		NCSS keeps a National Registry of Minors, with data about children in residential institutions, and a National Registry of Foster Care Placements with data about children in foster care, as provided by Law 4538/2018 (OG A’ 85/16-05-2018) <sup>245</sup> , Articles 5, para. 1 and 7, para 1.  Data from the national registries on the number of children in care, disaggregated by type of care, gender, age and type of Individual Family Rehabilitation Plan (for children in residential care) are publicised in a special website of

<sup>244</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 52, 1 October 2021.

<sup>245</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A’ 85/16-05-2018\)](#), Art. 5, 7, 16 May 2018.

			<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for issues related to children.<sup>246</sup></p> <p>Data on UAC are kept in a separate National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors (<i>Εθνικό Μητρώο Προστασίας Ασυπόδευτων Ανηλίκων – ΕΜΠΑΑ</i>) under the Responsibility of former SSPUAM and currently General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, as provided in Law 4960/2022 (OG A' 145/22-07-2022)<sup>247</sup>, Article 38</p>
4.5.2. Is there data available on the number of children placed in alternative care that disappeared and/or went missing from residential care institutions?	X		<p>Residential care institutions and facilities for unaccompanied children report to the police if a child goes missing. The issue of missing children comes up especially with regard to UAC leaving hostels or other facilities; however, to present, there is no systematic data collection on these children<sup>248</sup>.</p> <p>Statistics of the Greek Police (publicised every year) include data on missing persons - divided into persons under and over 18<sup>249</sup>- but children that disappeared or went missing from residential care institutions are not listed as a separate category.</p>
4.5.3. Is there a <u>national</u> registry of foster care families?  How many children can be fostered in one family?	X		<p>NCSS keeps a National Registry of Prospective Foster Families (individuals or couples) and a National Registry of Foster Care Placements, according to Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>250</sup>, Article 6, para. 1, and Article 7, para.1.</p> <p>There is no legal limitation to the number of children that can be fostered in one family. Prospective foster carers state in their application the number of children they are able/willing to undertake. As a rule, siblings are placed in the same foster family, when possible, especially if they are young and of a similar age.</p>

<sup>246</sup> For more information see the special website on <https://paidi.gov.gr>.

<sup>247</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), Art. 38, 22 July 2022.

<sup>248</sup> Information from telephone contact with SSPUAM, February 2023.

<sup>249</sup> Police statistical data (2021), <https://www.astynomia.gr/file/2022/12/epetirida2021.pdf>, data on missing persons, pp. 135-138.

<sup>250</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), Art. 6,7, 16 May 2018.

4.5.4. How and by whom foster families are recruited, vetted, and trained? Provide information on the legal framework and responsible authorities, recruitment requirements, selection criteria, reimbursement of costs, etc.

According to Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>251</sup>, Articles 9 and 13, district social services, the Social Welfare Centre of each district, childcare units of municipalities and some agencies of the Ministry of Justice<sup>252</sup> are responsible for recruitment, vetting, training and supervision of foster families.

Prospective foster carers apply via a special platform<sup>253</sup> and are allocated to a social worker for assessment. Selection criteria are related to age, physical and mental health, lack of criminal convictions/charges for certain crimes, economic capacity to cover the basic needs of the child(ren) and personal motivation. After assessment, applicants attend a brief training programme and are placed on the National Registry of Prospective Foster Parents. A monthly allowance (foster care benefit) is paid for every child in foster care.

4.5.5. Are any types of care (foster homes, residential care, other form of care arrangements) monitored once children are placed therein? If so, provide information on the applicable legislative provisions on monitoring procedures. Please specify the difference between the monitoring of different types of care. How frequently are they monitored, how and by whom?

According to Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>254</sup>, Article 13, the services cited in sec. 4.5.4. are responsible for monitoring foster care. Monitoring procedures are not specified, but usually involve home visits and meetings with the child and foster parents. Foster parents can also contact the responsible social worker in case of any difficulties.

The Social Welfare Centre of each district is responsible for public residential institutions in its area. Social Welfare Centres belong to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is ultimately responsible for the operation of all public residential institutions. There are no legislative provisions for monitoring.

District social services, via Social Counsellors, inspect and monitor the operation of residential institutions of civil society organisations, according to Law 2345/1995 (OG A' 213/12-10-1995)<sup>255</sup> and MD Π3β/Φ.32/ΓΕΝ.31542/2002 (OG B' 577/9-05-2002). MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>256</sup>

<sup>251</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), Art. 9, 13, 16 May 2018.

<sup>252</sup> Greece, (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), [Art.13](#), cites the Societies for the Protection of Minors and Minors' Probation Services, with regard to placement in foster care of underage offenders as a reformative measure, in accordance with Art. 18 of the same law. In practice, these services are not involved in foster care, as Societies for the Protection of Minors are severely understaffed and foster care as a reformative measure is not implemented to date. 16 May 2018.

<sup>253</sup> For more information see "Information System for Foster care – Adoption" [www.anynet.gr](http://www.anynet.gr).

<sup>254</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), Art. 13, 16 May 2018.

<sup>255</sup> Greece (1995), [Law 2345/1995 \(OG A' 213/12-10-1995\)](#), 12 October 1995.

<sup>256</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), 11 May 2022.

introduced a legal framework for the operation of these units and, therefore, for monitoring, and states that Social Counsellors must carry out inspections at least twice a year.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.5.6. Are children placed in foster care homes geographically <u>close to their biological families</u>, school, friends, and/or community?</p>	X		<p>Geographic proximity to biological parents is a criterion for placing a child in a foster family, in cases of children that maintain contact with them, especially if contact has been regulated by a court decision. Siblings are placed in the same foster family, when possible.</p> <p>It is not usually possible for a child to remain in the same school after placement in foster care as, by law, children have to attend the nearest school to their place of residence.</p> <p>Geographic proximity to relatives other than parents, friends and the community are not considered decisive factors in relation to a child's placement. Issues of contact are examined on an individual basis.</p>
<p>4.5.7. Is there a <u>national registry</u> of residential institutions for children?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information regarding the existent number of residential institutions and their capacity (beds).</p>	X		<p>A National Registry of civil society organisations and of the services that belong to them, including residential institutions for children is kept in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (as noted in 2.2.1.)</p> <p>All residential institutions (of the public sector and civil society organisations) send to NCSS data about their operation and the children living in them (recorded in the registry of each unit) which are recorded in the National Registry of Minors (i.e. of children in alternative care).</p> <p>According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' website on issues related to children, in the 4th quarter of 2022, the National Registry of Minors included data about children living in 93 residential institutions under the responsibility of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (29 of the public sector and 52 of civil society organisations) 3 units belonging to the Ministry of Justice and 9 residential care units for unaccompanied children. The total number of children in the above-mentioned institutions was 1393 (on 3/1/2023).<sup>257</sup></p>

<sup>257</sup> For more information see data about the 4th quarter of 2022 in website: [https://paidi.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/entipo-JANUARY-2023\\_BB.pdf](https://paidi.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/entipo-JANUARY-2023_BB.pdf).

		<p>It is noted that, since the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, the inclusion of accommodation facilities for UAC into the system, as well as the inclusion of children living in them in the National System of Foster Care – Adoption, has been in progress. The process has not been completed.</p> <p>There is a separate registry of organisations (NGOs) providing accommodation to UAC, and a National Registry of UAC kept in the Ministry of Asylum and Migration under the responsibility of the former SSPUAM<sup>258</sup> and currently the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (as noted in 5.4.1.)</p>
<p>4.5.8. Are there <u>accreditation and licensing procedures</u> for residential institutions in place?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information on the legislative framework, the responsible authority and procedure.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>There is an accreditation and licencing procedure for agencies of civil society organisations that provide welfare services, including residential institutions.</p> <p>Accreditation is not mandatory, but is a requirement for organisations to participate in national or EU programmes and to receive funding. The legislative framework for accreditation is provided by Law 2646/1998 (OG A' 236/20-10-1998)<sup>259</sup> and JMD ΠΠ: Π (2) γ/οικ.34029/22-03-2012 (OG B' 1163/10-04-2012)<sup>260</sup>, that specifies the procedure and criteria.<sup>261</sup> Organisations apply and submit supporting documentation, NCSS examines the application and makes a recommendation, on the basis of which the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issues a decision for accreditation. Each accreditation decision is valid for 4 years and can be renewed, after an application from the organisation.</p> <p>Licensing is mandatory according to Law 2345/1995 (OG A' 213/12-10-1995)<sup>262</sup>, Article 1, and JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>263</sup>, Article 4. Organisations apply and submit supporting documentation to the relevant Region. After examination of the documents, the Region's Committee for the Appropriateness of Buildings examines whether the unit meets the standards and requirements</p>

<sup>258</sup> As provided in Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), Art. 38, 22 July 2022.

<sup>259</sup> Greece (1998), [Law 2646/1998 \(OG A' 236/20-10-1998\)](#), 20 October 1998.

<sup>260</sup> Greece (2012), [JMD ΠΠ: Π \(2\) γ/οικ.34029/22-03-2012 \(OG B' 1163/10-04-2012\)](#), 10 April 2012

<sup>261</sup> For more information see Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs' website <https://paidi.gov.gr/foreis-paidikis-prostasias/>.

<sup>262</sup> Greece (1995), [Law 2345/1995 \(OG A' 213/12-10-1995\)](#), Art. 1, 12 October 1995.

<sup>263</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 4, 11 May 2022.

		<p>provided in legislation and, upon approval by the Committee, the license is issued.</p> <p>There are no similar procedures for residential institutions of the public sector. There are no accreditation and licencing procedures for residential institutions of the public sector. The above-mentioned provisions apply to residential institutions operated by civil society organisations.</p>
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4.5.9. Are there <u>national applicable standards</u> relating to the operational framework of such institutions (requirements or quality standards related to the personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions, and daily care of children)?	X	<p>There are no national applicable standards relating to the operational framework of residential institutions of the public sector.</p> <p>National standards on the operation of residential institutions of civil society organisations were introduced with JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>264</sup>. Additionally, the JMD 49339/2023<sup>265</sup> includes amendments/additions to the JMD 40494/2022 as well as the obligation of public sector units to send the available positions by age group to the National Centre for Social Solidarity-NCSS, on the first 15 days of each month. They include requirements relating to personnel, infrastructures, education, living conditions and all aspects of care and welfare of the children living in them, with reference to their rights according to UN CRC. All units are required to ensure conformity to these standards within a year's period (i.e. by 11/05/2023).</p> <p>Moreover, with JMD 187634/2023<sup>266</sup> as amended by JMD 330659/2023<sup>267</sup> the operating framework of accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors was established, to ensure their best interests and provide them with quality services. Alongside, the ministerial decisions, which set the Standard Operating Procedures and Licensing Framework of the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors, the Standard Operating Procedures for Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living, and the Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Accommodation Facilities, are in their final stage of processing.</p>
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4.5.10. How is the residential care staff recruited, vetted, and trained?

<sup>264</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), 11 May 2022.

<sup>265</sup> Greece (2023), [JMD 49339/2023 \(OG B' 3289/18-05-2023\)](#), 18 May 2023

<sup>266</sup> Greece (2023), [JMD 187634/2023 \(OG B' 2125/31-03-2023\)](#), 31 March 2023

<sup>267</sup> Greece (2023), [JMD 330659/2023 \(OG B' 4154/24-06-2023\)](#), 24 June 2023

The Supreme Council for Selection of Personnel (*Ανώτατο Συμβούλιο Επιλογής Προσωπικού - ΑΣΕΠ*) is responsible for recruitment of residential care staff in public institutions, in accordance with the procedures applying to the recruitment of all public sector employees. Checking of criminal records takes place upon appointment. In most institutions there is no provision of initial or regular training.<sup>268</sup>

Until recently, recruitment in residential institutions of civil society organisations depended on internal policies and financial capacity of each organisation. JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>269</sup> introduced provisions for vetting, training, and numerical adequacy of staff in these units. Vetting criteria are related to mental and physical health and lack of convictions for certain crimes. The organisation is obliged to provide training to staff upon appointment and on a regular basis (at least once a year), as well as ongoing supervision and support to staff and volunteers.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.5.11. Are children placed in alternative care allowed to <u>lodge complaints</u> against the personnel /foster parents and care workers and report abuse or violations of their rights? Are these procedures child-friendly and respectful of confidentiality?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly describe to whom and how children can lodge complaints.</p>	X		<p>In principle, children are allowed to lodge complaints against the personnel or foster parents, about any form of abuse or violation of their rights.</p> <p>As noted in 4.2.3., children in residential care may approach the employee (usually a social worker) responsible for child protection - according to Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>270</sup>, Article 5 - to report any form of abuse or maltreatment, although no complaint procedure is defined. Joint MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>271</sup>, Article 12, para 2, provides that residential care units of civil society organisations should introduce effective procedures enabling children to submit complaints to supervising or independent authorities. It also states that residential care units are obliged to inform children about their right to lodge complaints, in a manner appropriate for the age and special characteristics of each child.</p> <p>To present, there are no clear, child-friendly procedures to ensure implementation of the right of children to lodge complaints and it is not clear whether and how children are informed about this right.</p> <p>Children in foster care can talk to the social worker responsible for their placement about any problems they are facing; there are no special procedures for lodging complaints.</p>

<sup>268</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *"From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families"*, pp.37, 42-43 and Greek Ombudsman (2015), *"The rights of children living in institutions"*, pp. 18, 41.

<sup>269</sup> Greece (2022), *MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)*, 11 May 2022.

<sup>270</sup> Greece (2021), *Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)*, Art. 5, 1 October 2021.

<sup>271</sup> Greece (2022), *MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)*, Art. 12, 11 May 2022.

		<p>The Greek Ombudsman (Department of Children’s Rights) during visits to residential institutions informs children about their right and ways to make a complaint to the Ombudsman about any problem they are facing. Confidentiality is respected. The Ombudsman has also pointed out to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs the need for appropriate, child friendly complaint mechanisms and procedures in alternative care settings<sup>272</sup>.</p>
<p>4.5.12. What is the <u>assistance available to adolescents that leave alternative care</u> to live independently?</p> <p>(e.g. financial, housing, vocational, educational, employment, life skills, mental health services, social or emotional)?</p> <p>Briefly describe who is responsible for such assistance?</p>		<p>There are no formal provisions for assistance to adolescents/young people that leave alternative care. Residential institutions are generally oriented towards supporting young people until they are able to live independently. Policies vary widely, especially in civil society organisations, depending on each organisation’s approach and resources.</p> <p>In general, young people can live in the unit – or in independent accommodation provided by it - and receive support from the unit’s social service, until the age of 24 if they are studying, or until they get a job and secure an income. Although some residential institutions support young people effectively in their transition to independent living and there are some examples of good practice, provision of support ultimately rests on the discretion of each institution. There is no legal framework on provision of after-care (i.e. no legal right of young care leavers to receive any assistance), which constitutes a serious gap in the alternative care system (as also noted below).</p> <p>No special assistance from community services is available to adolescents who choose to cut off or are expelled from the institutions after the age of 18. The same applies to adolescents leaving foster care, although in most cases foster families provide continued support due to the bonds developed between them and the child(ren).</p> <p>The Greek Ombudsman has pointed out the lack of formal provisions for after-care as a serious gap in the child protection system, recommending the introduction of such provisions<sup>273</sup>. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece, also, recommends that the State</p>

<sup>272</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), *“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”*, p. 40 and Greek Ombudsman’s letter to Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affair (ref.no 16525/28-03-22), with comments on draft Ministerial Decision on standards for the operation of child care units of civil society organisations.

<sup>273</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2015), *“The rights of children living in institutions”*, pp 35, 48.



			party “ensure adequate support for children leaving care” 274
<p>4.5.13. What assistance is provided to families - while the child is placed to alternative care - to support the return of the child in the family? By whom? Who coordinates the assistance? Please briefly describe.</p>			
<p>There is no legislative framework for provision of assistance to families while the child is in alternative care. Assistance may be available, depending on resources, if a family asks for it. Social workers of residential institutions cooperate with parents who maintain contact with their children after their placement in the institution. The framework and frequency of the cooperation depends on the policy of each institution, the workload of social workers and the motivation of parents.</p> <p>JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>275</sup>, Article 10, introduced an obligation of social services of residential institutions of civil society organisations to ensure continued contact of children with their parents and other family members (unless otherwise stated in the placement decision), as well as to cooperate with social services of the municipalities, to implement plans for addressing problems and malfunctions, in order to support the child(ren)'s return in the family. However, there is no similar obligation for municipal social services, or any protocol of cooperation, to ensure coordinated action.</p>			
<p>4.5.14. Is any <u>assistance</u> provided to children and families <u>upon return of the child in the family</u>? Briefly describe. Who is responsible for such assistance?</p> <p>Is there any monitoring and follow-up of such cases?</p> <p>Who is coordinating assistance and support?</p>		X	<p>There are no specific legal provisions regarding assistance to children and families upon the child's return in the family. Depending on the case, the prosecutor's or the court's order for the child's return may set conditions, usually in the form of an obligation of the parent(s) to cooperate with a social and/or mental health service.</p> <p>The prosecutor may order a competent social service (usually of the municipality) to monitor, follow-up and report back on cooperation and on any developments. Monitoring may include asking for information from the child's school, or from other professionals cooperating with the family, or visiting the family home to check on the child(ren)'s living conditions.</p> <p>If no conditions are set by judicial authorities for the child(ren)'s return, there is no further action or follow up, unless the family asks for support.</p>
<p>4.5.15. Are decisions of placement in</p>		X	<p>Law 4604/2019 (OG A' 50/26-03-2019)<sup>276</sup>, Article 117, para. 4, provides that, within 90 days of a child's placement in a residential institution, an Individual Family Rehabilitation</p>

<sup>274</sup> United Nations (UN), *Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC/C/GRC/CO/4-6, para 31 (h)*, 28 June 2022.

<sup>275</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), Art. 10, 11 May 2022.

<sup>276</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4604/2019 \(OG A' 50/26-03-2019\)](#), Art. 117, 26 March 2019.

<p>alternative care reviewed?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the applicable legislative provisions. How frequently is this done? By whom?</p> <p>Are the children's views taken into consideration?</p>		<p>Plan (IFRP) must be submitted in the unit's registry, including a suitable proposal for an alternative to institutional care, considering the child's individual needs and best interests. Data from the registry of each unit are sent to NCSS and recorded in the National Registry of children in alternative care. IFRPs should be updated every time there are significant changes in the child's situation, or at least a year after its last submission. Placement in residential care is therefore reviewed within 90 days with the child's IFRP, and every time there are significant changes, or at least once a year.</p> <p>Decisions of placement in alternative care may be reviewed after an application of the child's parent(s) to the public prosecutor or court. Children's views are supposed to be taken into consideration, according to their age and maturity, but other considerations often prevail, especially if there is concern about their safety in their family environment.</p>
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4.5.16. Is there a legal framework regarding adoption? Briefly describe the core elements and responsible authorities, also considering differences between within-country and between-country adoptions. Is private adoption permitted in the country?

Adoption is regulated by Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>277</sup>, Articles 20-25, provisions of the Civil Code<sup>278</sup> (Articles 1542-1588), PD 226/99 (OG A' 190/21-09-1999)<sup>279</sup> and Law 3765/2009 (OG A' 101/1-07-2009)<sup>280</sup>, with which Hague Convention 1993 was ratified.

Adoption by homosexual couples is not allowed to date.

District Social Services, Social Welfare Centres and municipal childcare units are the responsible authorities for within-country adoptions. Prospective adoptive parents apply via a special platform<sup>281</sup>, are assessed by a social worker, attend a training programme and are placed on the National Registry. After the child's placement and an initial trial period, a court decision is issued (Civil Code, Article 1549<sup>282</sup>). A child over 12 years has the right to be heard (Civil Code, Article 1555<sup>283</sup>).

<sup>277</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), Art. 20-25, 16 May 2018.

<sup>278</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1542-1588.

<sup>279</sup> Greece (1999), [PD 226/99 \(OG A' 190/21-09-1999\)](#), 21 September 1999.

<sup>280</sup> Greece (2009), [Law 3765/2009 \(OG A' 101/ 1-07-2009\)](#), 1 July 2009.

<sup>281</sup> For more information on "Information System for Foster care – Adoption" see the website [www.anynet.gr](http://www.anynet.gr).

<sup>282</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1549.

<sup>283</sup> Greece (1984), [Civil Code](#), Art. 1555.

The same services and the Hellenic Branch of International Social Service –ISS (*Διεθνής Κοινωνική Υπηρεσία – Ελληνικός Κλάδος*) are responsible for intercountry adoptions<sup>284</sup>. An application is submitted to one of the responsible services or the Central Intercountry Adoptions Authority of Greece - KADY (*Κεντρική Αρχή Διακρατικών Υιοθεσιών – ΚΑΔΥ*)<sup>285</sup>. ISS is required to prepare and submit the case file of prospective adoptive parents to the appropriate Central Intercountry Adoptions Authorities through KADY, in cases of countries that have ratified the Hague Convention, or send the file to the responsible adoption authorities of countries that have not ratified the Hague Convention, but legally allow intercountry adoption<sup>286</sup>.

Private adoption is permitted. The procedure is the same as described above but, after registration to the National Registry, prospective adoptive parents are matched specifically with the child they are planning to adopt.

4.5.17. What are the main challenges encountered and gaps at the policy and legislative level in relation to alternative care? *Please consider available studies reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.*

There are no national-scale quality standards for the operation of public residential institutions. Implementation of foster care remains poor. Direct placement of children in foster families (without previous placement in an institution) is very rare. There is still a widespread perception of foster care as a preamble or short-cut to adoption. Professional foster care is not implemented, although necessary for the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities, chronic illnesses and emotional/behavioural difficulties, as there are no foster care applications for these groups.

There are no provisions for emergency accommodation for children removed from their family, resulting in them remaining in hospitals until further care arrangements can be made.

There are no procedures in place to ensure the right of children in alternative care to express their views, or their access to appropriate complaint mechanisms.

There is no legal framework for provision of support to young people leaving alternative care.

The above have been pointed out repeatedly by the Greek Ombudsman<sup>287</sup>. Also, the CRC Committee expresses concern for:

- *the overinstitutionalisation of children deprived of parental care and lack of sufficient family-based care options*
- *the lack of standards for care provision and the insufficient review of placements*

<sup>284</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\), Article 22](#), 16 May 2018.

<sup>285</sup> For more information, see the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs webpage on <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/koinoniki-allilengyi/paidiki-prostasia/>.

<sup>286</sup> For more information, see International Social Service (Hellenic branch) webpage on <https://iss-greece.gr/en/intercountry-adoptions/>.

<sup>287</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2020), [“From the institution to the community: Alternative care of vulnerable children and support of families”](#) and Greek Ombudsman (2015) [“The rights of children living in institutions”](#).

- *insufficient efforts to ensure the right of children in care to have their views heard and to have contact with their parents,*
- *the hospitalisation of children not requiring care in the absence of emergency accommodation,*
- *the insufficient support for children leaving care.*<sup>288</sup>

#### 4.6. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection care system in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

In the past few years, Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>289</sup> and other legislative provisions have been introduced, promoting deinstitutionalisation of children in residential care. According to data publicised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs regarding the last quarter of 2022<sup>290</sup>, at the end of 2022, 1393 children (including 137 children with severe disabilities) were in the National Registry of Minors, i.e. in institutional care. This figure includes 182 children in the process of placement to a foster or adoptive family (adjustment period). According to the same data, since the onset of operation of platform "Anynet" (1/07/2020), 587 children have been adopted and 529 placed in foster care<sup>291</sup>. On the basis of these, about 30% of children in the alternative care system are in foster care (or in the process of placement) and the remaining 70% still in institutional care.

There are no data available on children in different forms of alternative care according to age-groups, as confirmed in the reply of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (13/04/2022) to a request for information on the matter. However, in general, new foster care and adoption placements concern younger children (under 8, and mostly under 5 years old). There is almost no expression of interest for foster-care or adoption of adolescents, who, therefore, usually remain in residential care until adulthood, unless their return to their family environment becomes possible.

Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>292</sup>, introduced obligations relating to protection of children from abuse and maltreatment for all residential and day-care services for children.

The introduction of a regulatory framework for the operation of childcare units of civil society organisations with JMD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>293</sup> has also been an important development.

Achievements include the development of an integrated system for the implementation of foster care and adoption, coordinated by NCSS, the establishment of National Council for Foster Care-Adoption (ESANY), as a national-scale policy-making body, the introduction of national registries for children in

<sup>288</sup> United Nations (UN), *Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC/C/GRC/CO/4-6, para 10*, 28 June 2022.

<sup>289</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018.

<sup>290</sup> [entipo JANUARY 2023 B&B \(paidi.gov.gr\)](#).

<sup>291</sup> These children are still included in the alternative care system, unlike adopted children, who are no longer under the protection of the state, once adoption procedures are completed.

<sup>292</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), 1 October 2021.

<sup>293</sup> For more information see the website <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-anilikoi/koine-upourgike-apophase-40494-2022.html>.

alternative care, and of an obligation of residential institutions to facilitate children’s contact with their families and to develop a Personal Family Rehabilitation Plan (PFRP) for each child, with a proposal for a suitable alternative to institutional care.

Challenges in implementation are related to the resistance of many institutions to submit PFRPs with proposals for foster care, adoption or return in the family, due to conflict of interests and persisting attitudes within some institutions that they constitute the best option for children.

Implementation of foster care also remains poor due to low interest, resulting in a very small number of applications (as noted in 4.5.17). Notably, according to the data publicised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs mentioned above<sup>294</sup>, at the end of 2022, there were 44 registrations in the National Registry of Prospective Foster Parents (i.e. applicants for whom the assessment procedure had been completed), as opposed to 1685 registrations in the National Registry of Prospective Adoptive Parents. Many foster care applicants express an interest in undertaking the care of young children, in hope that fostering will lead to adoption, as the law allows for registration both as a prospective foster and adoptive parent at the same time. There is no interest in foster care of older children, children with disabilities and children with emotional/ behavioural difficulties, which remain in institutions with no prospect of community-based alternatives.

There is still no legal framework for provision of support to young care leavers (as noted in 4.5.12).

#### 4.7. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in the child protection care system that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Despite persisting gaps and challenges in implementation, in recent years, there has been an important shift from an institutional to a community-based model of child care and protection, reflected both in policies and legislation. Promising policies and practices to date include:

- A growing recognition of the right of children in alternative care to maintain contact with their families, and the introduction of legislative provisions stating explicitly the obligation of residential institutions to ensure that right.
- The introduction of measures and provisions to reduce the length of children’s stay in institutions and to support the possibility of their return in their families,
- The introduction of a regulatory framework for the operation of residential childcare units of civil society organisations - with JMD 40494/2022 (OG B’ 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>295</sup> – meeting a long-standing request of all actors in the field of children’s rights.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs’ campaign and other initiatives to promote foster care, and provision of information to professionals and the public (including publication of data on alternative care) in the Ministry’ website on issues related to children<sup>296</sup> and
- The publication of information and material for professionals and the general public on a wide range of issues relating to children’s rights and child protection at [NCSS website](#)- i.e. information on the types and signs of abuse, legislation, services and resources, including material on prevention (e.g. campaign material of the Council of Europe, such as “[One in Five](#)” campaign to stop sexual violence against children and “[The Underwear Rule](#)”)

<sup>294</sup> For more information see the website [.paidi.gov.gr](https://paidi.gov.gr).

<sup>295</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B’ 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), 11 May 2022.

<sup>296</sup> For more information see on the website <https://paidi.gov.gr>.

## 5. Accountability, data collection and monitoring mechanisms

### 5.1. Accountability mechanisms

#### 5.1.1. Are there accountability mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system? Is there any independent monitoring or reporting mechanisms on the performance of the child protection system? What is the role of child’s ombudspersons, child commissioners or other independent national human rights institutions in monitoring child protection?

There are no specific accountability or monitoring mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system as a whole.

The [National Action Plan for “European Child Guarantee” \(September 2022\)](#) and the respective Monitoring Mechanism<sup>297</sup> could serve as a minimum practice in child protection accountability. NCSS, as the National Coordinator for the European Guarantee for Children<sup>298</sup>, has requested from civil society organisations active in the field of child protection (such as The Smile of the Child, SOS Children’s Villages, Metadrasi, the National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities etc.), state bodies, such as the Regional Social Welfare Centres or the Institute of Child Health, to nominate representatives to participate in the procedures for the preparation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the European Child Guarantee. During this procedure there are reports<sup>299</sup> about child protection system in Greece, which act as minimum practices for the accountability.

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights GNCHR (*Εθνική Επιτροπή Δικαιωμάτων του Ανθρώπου, ΕΕΔΑ*), where Greek Ombudsman is a participating member, is the institution responsible for independent monitoring. It also submits a complementary report to the UNCR. Additionally, the GNCHR participates with the right to vote in the *Mechanism for the Developing, Monitoring and Evaluation of a National Action Plan for Children’s Rights* as well as in the *Working Group for the social protection of children and their families* in the framework of the National Strategy for Social Integration and Poverty Reduction 2021 - 2027<sup>300</sup>.

The mission of the Greek Ombudsman includes combating maladministration and mediating between State Agencies and the public, in order to promote the effective exercise of people’s rights. Especially regarding children’s rights, monitoring is performed by the Greek Ombudsman, in the sense of monitoring on the implementation of legislation and its’ recommendations, reporting and publicising. More specifically, Children’s Ombudsman, est. by Law 3094/2003 (OG A’ 10/22-1-2003)<sup>301</sup> as a department of the Greek Ombudsman, can intervene in the private as well as the public sector in relation to violations of children’s rights, and has been assigned the mission of promoting, as well as

<sup>297</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4491/2017 \(OG A’ 152/13-10-17\)](#), 13 October 2017.

<sup>298</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A’ 178/1-10-2021\) Articles 4, 5 and 1.7.](#) 53, 1 October 2021.

<sup>299</sup> Eurochild Child Guarantee Taskforce (2022), [Country Report Greece](#)

<sup>300</sup> For more information please visit the website <https://www.nchr.gr/en/gnchr-as-a-nhri.html>

<sup>301</sup> Greece (2003), [Law 3094/2003 \(OG A’ 10/22-01-2003\)](#), Art. 4, 22 January 2003.

protecting and monitoring, children's rights. Children's Ombudsman handles complaints or intervenes at its' own initiative in cases of children's rights violations, conducts investigations and onsite inspections, visits schools, residential institutions and all other services for children. Ombudsman's findings and reports are submitted to the respective agencies, are published in Press releases, website and annual reports submitted to the Parliament and can be used at court. Its role is mediating i.e. implementation of its recommendations is not mandatory by law.

Recently UNICEF Greece also plays a gradually increasing monitoring and assessing role<sup>302</sup>. According to their reply to our letter from 15.5.2023: "*Based on the findings of the [Situation Analysis for children and youth in Greece](#) that UNICEF conducted, an evidence generation plan was developed to improve the availability of disaggregated data and address knowledge and data gaps on children in Greece in collaboration with key stakeholders.*

*This work includes a specific research plan and initiatives that strengthen the national system, such as support to authorities to establish policies and National Action Plans for children with clear targets and monitoring frameworks; establishing and improving databases, mechanisms and process related to data collection; and workshops that help build national evaluation capacities based on international practices.*

*For that purpose, UNICEF is working closely with Governmental partners (e.g. Ministries) and independent authorities (National Statistics Office-ELSTAT and Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights).*

Relevant links with public documents (to be updated soon): <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/research-and-reports>"

5.1.2. How is the implementation of national action plans and strategies or other policy actions on child protection monitored? Briefly describe the established procedures and mention the actors involved and their roles.

An interministerial National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child was completed quite recently in Greece, although there have been several attempts in the past. A National Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Action Plans for the Rights of the Child was established by Law 4491/2017 (OG A'152/13-10-2017)<sup>303</sup> Articles 8-12, but had not operated up to now. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for monitoring and coordination of the National Mechanism. The Children's Ombudsman is part of the mechanism and the participation of a committee of children is being planned.

NCSS has been appointed as coordinating mechanism of the National System for Recording and Monitoring Reported Incidents of Abuse of Minors, by Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>304</sup>, Article 9, as well as National Monitoring Mechanism for the implementation of Child Guarantee, with

<sup>302</sup> Unicef (United Nations-UN), [Child rights monitoring Protecting and fulfilling children's rights through monitoring, assessment and policy making.](#)

<sup>303</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4491/2017 \(OG A' 152/13-10-17\)](#), 13 October 2017. Article 9 was amended by Article 31 of Law 4990/2022 (OG A' 210/11-11-2022).

<sup>304</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

a responsibility of coordinating and monitor the implementation of Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 and the National Action Plan (Article 53 of the same law).

The former SSPUAM and currently the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection is responsible for drafting and monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection of UAC – according to Article 66 of Law 4939/2022 (OG A' 111/10-06-2022)<sup>305</sup>, as replaced by Article 6 of Law 4960/2022 (OG A' 145/22-07-2022)<sup>306</sup> – which, however, has not been adopted officially yet.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
5.1.3. Is there a child rights assessment existing or foreseen? Please note that child rights' assessment stands for the measurement of the impact of proposed or adopted legislation on children as a group. It is usually done at the parliamentary or ministerial level.		X	CRIA is not foreseen in Greek policies <sup>307</sup> . Children's Ombudsman worked on that thematic together with its' Young Advisors Panel <sup>308</sup> in parallel to the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children. The conclusions and recommendations of that consultation were incorporated into ENOC's Statement 2020 <sup>309</sup> , submitted to respective national and European Institutions. <sup>310</sup>
5.1.4. Are there quality standards for child protection services set in the legislation (including prevention programmes)? (e.g. number of cases per case workers, requirements regarding infrastructures of residential care and number of personnel, performance, and fiscal accountability mechanisms) Please describe.			

<sup>305</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4939/2022 \(OG A' 111/10-06-2022\)](#), Art. 66, 10 June 2022.

<sup>306</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), Art. 6, 22 July 2022.

<sup>307</sup> As noted in UNICEF's [Analysis of the Situation of Children and Youth in Greece 2021](#), p. 35 "A serious issue that has not been adopted so far by the Greek State is the Child Impact Assessments which are used to predict the impact of any proposed law, policy or budgetary allocation which affects children and the enjoyment of their rights, as per the guidance of General Comment 5 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child".

<sup>308</sup> For more information visit Children's Ombudsman webpage on <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/paidi/post/h-omada-efhbwn-symboylwn-toy-synhgoroy-a3iologei-thn-epidrash-twn-politikwn-apofasewn-sta-dikaiwmata-twn-paidiwn>

<sup>309</sup> For more information see ENOC's webpage on <https://enoc.eu/what-we-do/annual-advocacy-areas/child-rights-impact-assessment/>.

<sup>310</sup> Greek Ombudsman (2021), *Complementary Report to UNCRC*, pp. 6-7, December 2021.



There are no quality or other standards set in the legislation for social services or other child protection services in the community, e.g. with regard to number of cases per case worker, or criteria for assessing quality of service provision.

MD 40494/2022 (OG B' 2302/11-05-2022)<sup>311</sup> introduced standards for the operation of residential care units of civil society organisations, including requirements for infrastructure, number of personnel from various disciplines (staff/children ratio) obligations of the unit in terms of provisions to the children, etc. There are no similar standards applying to residential institutions of the public sector.

With JMD 187634/2023<sup>312</sup> as amended by JMD 330659/2023<sup>313</sup> the operating framework of accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors was established, to ensure their best interests and provide them with quality services. The JMD also provides in detail the formal qualifications that must be met by persons belonging to the staff of the accommodation facility and foresees the obligation to establish a Code of Conduct for the frontline staff of accommodation centres, as well as a comprehensive Child Protection Policy for the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors.

The new legal framework on Guardianship of unaccompanied minors (Law 4960/2022)<sup>314</sup> provides that the state holds a coordinating, guiding and supervising role, prosecutorial authorities constitute the impartial institutional guarantee for appointing the guardian, whereas public or private legal entities act as guardians. These legal entities are authorizing natural persons, i.e. professionals, to undertake the guardianship tasks and act as appointed guardians of the minors in practice; professionals employed by the guardian-legal entity are called "guardianship mandated persons". Each mandated person can be responsible for up to 15 children. The role of a coordinator is also foreseen supervising and guiding the role of the mandated persons. In this way, a multi-level monitoring is ensured. The law also sets the prerequisites and qualifications that must be met by the aforementioned legal and natural persons and the supervision and evaluation of the guardianship institution.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
5.1.5. Is consultation with children and families foreseen and/or taking place in the process of the evaluation of services and measures and in the development of child		X	Consultation with children and families is not foreseen in the process of evaluation of services and measures or in the development of policies and legislation.

<sup>311</sup> Greece (2022), [MD 40494/2022 \(OG B' 2302/11-05-2022\)](#), 11 May 2022.

<sup>312</sup> Greece (2023), [JMD 187634/2023 \(OG B' 2125/31-03-2023\)](#), 31 March 2023

<sup>313</sup> Greece (2023), [JMD 330659/2023 \(OG B' 4154/24-06-2023\)](#), 24 June 2023

<sup>314</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-07-2022\)](#), 22 July 2022

<p>protection policies and legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, at what level is this done? Please provide indicative examples.</p>		<p>In Spring 2022 questionnaires were distributed to children under the coordination of NCSS within the framework of consultation for the Child Guarantee<sup>315</sup>.</p> <p>Children are planned to participate in the National Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Action Plans for the Rights of the Child, the operation of which is just starting to shape.</p>
<p>5.1.6. Is the responsibility for data collection on child protection determined in the legislative framework?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Law 4837/2021, (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>316</sup> Article 9, establishes a National System for Recording and Monitoring reported incidents of Abuse of Minors, coordinated by NCSS, in which all reported incidents of child abuse-maltreatment should be recorded, on the basis of data sent to NCSS by all residential and community agencies working with children (in accordance with Articles 4 and 5 of the same law).</p> <p>Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-05-2018)<sup>317</sup>, provides that NCSS is responsible for keeping national registries with data on children in residential care, prospective foster families, prospective adoptive families, foster care placements and adoption placements. All child care institutions are obliged to keep "special registries", concerning children in their care (including those in foster care placements) which are forwarded to NCSS and transferred into the national registries (i.e the National Registry of Minors, with data about children in residential institutions, and the National Registry of Foster Care Placements with data about children in foster care,</p> <p>SSPUAM is responsible for data collection on UAC, and the operation of the National Registry for the Protection of UAC, according to Law 4960/2022, (OG A' 145/22-07-2022)<sup>318</sup>, Article 38.</p>
<p>5.1.7. Is there a single authority responsible for monitoring data collection and</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>NCSS is the responsible authority for monitoring and coordinating data collection on children in alternative care, and incidents of child abuse/maltreatment</p>

<sup>315</sup> For more information, see NCSS webpage on <https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/nea-enimeroseis/deltia-typou-anakoinoseis/erotimatologia-sto-plaisio-tis-diavoylefsis-gia-tin-evropaiki-eggyisi-gia-ta-paidia>.

<sup>316</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 9, 1 October 2021.

<sup>317</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018

<sup>318</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), Art. 38, 22 July 2022

<p>centralised coordination and data sharing at national level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, Is there a national database (a joint database for monitoring and tracking children) for collecting data in the child protection area at the national, regional, or local level?</p>		<p>reported by community and residential care services working with children, nationwide.<sup>319</sup> The former SSPUAM and currently the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection is responsible for coordinating and monitoring data collection on UAC (as noted in 5.1.6.).</p> <p>NCSS is also the National Coordinator for National Action Plan for Child Guarantee, according to Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>320</sup>, Article 53. The mandate is allocated to the organization itself rather than a particular person or mechanism within it.</p> <p>With regard to the National Action Plan for Child Guarantee, <i>"The National Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of the actions, policies and services of all the above-mentioned bodies related to the Recommendation and for the collection of the necessary data for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of its implementation. This task is considered particularly important given the complexity of the existing framework, the lack of consolidation of existing policies and services in such a way as to effectively address the shortcomings regarding the access to services falling within the scope of the Recommendation, but also <u>the lack of a single mechanism for the collection of data and information on all categories of children in need in Greece</u>"</i><sup>321</sup></p>
<p>5.1.8. Are there common indicators in place to monitor the performance of the child protection system?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>There are no common indicators monitoring the performance of the child protection system.</p> <p>The NAP for Child Guarantee included indicators structured at three levels: 1) "target monitoring indicators", 2) "additional monitoring indicators," and 3) "program monitoring indicators"<sup>322</sup>. In particular, according to Child Guarantee, the progress in reducing child poverty and social exclusion is monitored on the basis of indicators, which are already part of or have been proposed to be</p>

<sup>319</sup>National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), [National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee](#), pp.24-25.

<sup>320</sup>Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), Art. 53, 1 October 2021.

<sup>321</sup>National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), [National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee](#), p. 56

<sup>322</sup>National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), [National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee](#), p. 58

			integrated into European or national monitoring frameworks. (Target monitored by the AROP Indicator). Target of access to early childhood education is monitored by quantitative indicators, as set in the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the NAP for the Social Integration of Roma. Targets of access to education are based in OECD's PISA program <sup>323</sup> . However, these have not been implemented, to date.
5.1.9. Are there data protection protocols in place and adhered to?		X	All child protection services are aligned with the GDPR, but there are no uniform protocols and procedures in all services.
5.1.10. Are there any gaps in the data collection system related to child protection in the country, which have been identified by relevant child protection authorities/institutions, civil society organisations or other institutions active in the child protection field? Is there a systematic and consistent collection of data related to child protection at national, regional, or local level? Please mention if efforts are made to address these gaps.			
<p>There are provisions for systematic data collection in relation to children in alternative care and UAC. However, there is no data collection related to child protection in the community (children at risk, families with severe psychosocial difficulties, etc.) or to the child protection system as a whole.</p> <p>The lack of systematic data collection is data is pointed out in the NAP for Child Guarantee: <i>"The lack of systematic data collection and the absence of targeted surveys by case and geographical location make it difficult to identify actual needs, accessibility problems and ultimately, to develop proposals for the adoption of specific measures for each vulnerable category of children and for all children in need"</i><sup>324</sup>, in UNICEF's report (2021),<sup>325</sup> as well as in the CRC Committee Concluding Observations: <i>"Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) and its previous recommendations, the Committee recommends that the State party establish a central database on children with disaggregated data on all areas of the Convention and its Optional Protocols and develop indicators consistent with the Convention"</i><sup>326</sup>.</p>			

<sup>323</sup>National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), [National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee](#), Chapter 7, pp.26-33.

<sup>324</sup> National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) (2022), [National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee](#), p. 58

<sup>325</sup> UNICEF (UN) (2021), [Analysis of the Situation of Children and Youth in Greece 2021](#), p. 13

<sup>326</sup> For more information see on website [UNCRC Concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece](#).

## 5.2. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of child protection accountability in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

Since 2018, national registries and systematic data collection have been introduced in relation to children in alternative care [provisions of Law 4538/2018 (OG A' 85/16-5-2018)<sup>327</sup> cited above] and unaccompanied-separated children (Law 4960/2022, OG A' 145/22-7-2022<sup>328</sup>, Article 38).

According to information from the Directorate of Child and Family Protection (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), the data about children in the alternative care system recorded in the National Registry of Minors and the National Registry of Foster Care Placements (about children in residential and foster care, respectively) include: the institution in which the child lives (or was living before placement in foster care), personal data of the child (name, gender, date of birth, names of parents, siblings, etc.) a summary of their social/family history, their Individual Family Rehabilitation Plan (IFRP) in accordance with Law 4604/2019 (OG A' 50/26-03-2019)<sup>329</sup>, Article 117, para. 4 (for children in residential care), relevant documents (social services reports, custody decisions, medical certificates, etc.), and, for children in foster care, data about the foster cares (including assessment reports, medical certificates and other relevant documents)

The Registries serve for the Ministry to have a comprehensive overall picture of children in alternative care and their situation, and for monitoring the implementation of the national action plan and legislation on deinstitutionalization (e.g. the Ministry may address instructions or impose sanctions on institutions not pursuing children's IFRPs, as required). Although the data collected may inform further policy, there is no obligation to draft legislation or policy based on them.

According to information from SSPUAM (email dated 12/05/2023) the data kept in the registry of unaccompanied-separated children include: the child's name, gender, date and place of birth, nationality/national origin, mother tongue or other language of communication, photo, passport (or other travel document) number, social security number (if available), name of parent(s) or guardian(s) in country of origin, date of entry to the country, date of expected departure from the country and destination (if applicable), documents related to their migration status (e.g. residence permit, asylum application, data concerning the status of application, court or administrative decisions, age assessment documents, etc.), date of referral for accommodation, place of residence and contact details (hostel or other facility, foster family, etc.), documents and other details related to the child's custody and their placement in hostel or other accommodation facility, educational level in country of origin and school enrolment in Greece, health information (including any illness, disability, treatment or medication received, if applicable), brief social history and special issues of vulnerability, documents related to assessment of the child by any services (reports, notes, action plans, etc.) including Best Interest Assessment.

It is noted that these data are kept for the protection, management and planning for provision of accommodation to unaccompanied-separated children. There is no obligation to draft legislation or policy based on them, although they may be used as guidance for this purpose.

Law 4837/2021 (OG A' 178/1-10-2021)<sup>330</sup> introduced an obligation of residential and community services for children to record and report any incident or alleged incident of child abuse/maltreatment

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<sup>327</sup> Greece (2018), [Law 4538/2018 \(OG A' 85/16-05-2018\)](#), 16 May 2018.

<sup>328</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4960/2022 \(OG A' 145/22-7-2022\)](#), Art. 38, 22 July 2022.

<sup>329</sup> Greece (2019), [Law 4604/2019 \(OG A' 50/26-03-2019\)](#), Art. 117, 26 March 2019.

<sup>330</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4837/2021 \(OG A' 178/1-10-2021\)](#), 1 October 2021.

within their operation, thus providing a basis for accountability, and established a National System for Recording and Monitoring Reported Incidents of Abuse of Minors, centrally coordinated by NCSS.

The National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee has also been drafted, evidence based on the in-depth analysis provided by UNICEF Greece<sup>331</sup>.

However, a number of gaps and challenges with regard to child protection accountability remain, namely:

- There are no accountability mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system as a whole.
- There are no quality standards or criteria set in legislation for residential care institutions of the public sector, social services or other community services involved in child protection.
- There are no common indicators monitoring the performance of the child protection system.
- Consultation with children and families is not foreseen in relation to the evaluation of services and measures, or in the development of policies and legislation.
- CRIA is not foreseen in policies.
- There is no data collection related to the child protection system as a whole.
- Child protection is fragmented in all levels, including organisational, functional, legislative, financial, which makes accountability more difficult.

### 5.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection accountability that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

As previously noted, the National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee, the respective Monitoring Mechanism, along with the follow up on recommendations, interventions and reports on behalf of the Greek Ombudsman can serve as minimum practices in child protection accountability.

NCSS, as the National Coordinator for the European Guarantee for Children, has requested from civil society organisations active in the field of child protection (such as The Smile of the Child, SOS Children's Villages, Metadrasi, the National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities etc.), State bodies such as the Regional Social Welfare Centres, the Institute of Child Health but also the Child Counsel, to nominate representatives to participate in the procedures for the preparation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the European Child Guarantee. During this procedure there are reports about child protection system in Greece, which act as minimum practices for the accountability<sup>332</sup>

Another example worth mentioning is the complementary/alternative/parallel reports which various agencies (NGOs<sup>333</sup> NHRI, Greek Ombudsman)<sup>334</sup> submit to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

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<sup>331</sup> For more information please see UNICEF's website on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/reports/deep-dive-european-child-guarantee-greece>.

<sup>332</sup> Eurochild Child Guarantee Taskforce (2022), [Country Report Greece](#)

<sup>333</sup> [Child Rights Connect Report](#) (2022), Greece

<sup>334</sup> More specifically the NGOs are: Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) and ECPAT International • Defence for Children International Greece • European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) • Greek Helsinki Monitor, Refugee Rights Europe • Intersex Greece & NNID Foundation • World Policy Analysis Center • Still I Rise and I HAVE RIGHTS •

in addition to the State report regarding the periodic reports on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>335</sup> For the drafting of its parallel report, the Greek Ombudsman has, among others, consultation meetings with the two networks that it coordinates (for Children on the Move and for De-Institutionalisation).

However, on the whole, there are no good practices in this field.

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Juvenile Justice Advocates International • Greek Council for Refugees, HumanRights360, Lighthouse Relief, Safe Passage Team Greece and Center for Artistic and Educational Training “Schedia” • SOS Children's Villages Greece • METAdrasi • Halit Habip Oğlu • Border Violence Monitoring Network. NHRI: Greek National Commission for Human Rights. The Greek Ombudsman

<sup>335</sup> For more information please visit UNCRC webpage on [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2502&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2502&Lang=en)

## 6. General education, promotion, and awareness raising

### 6.1. Education on child rights

6.1.1. Does education on child rights form part of the (national) formal school curricula? If yes, please provide details such as in which types of school and targeting which grade(s) (age group), as part of which school subject and for how many periods in a pupil's school career.

Elements of children's rights thematic are fragmented in Primary and Secondary Education school books. Children's rights are mostly mentioned fragmented in parts of the texts included in Greek Language / Literature courses. Mainly children's rights as a thematic are included in books at the Fifth grade of primary school as part of the Socio- Political Education course (11 yrs) and in Gymnasium, as part of the Domestic Economy course (14 yrs). In that sense, children get acquainted with those issues at least twice during their school career. Socio-Political Education is being taught for one hour per week in the school curriculum programme of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade of Primary school and three hours per week in the 3<sup>d</sup> Grade of Gymnasium. Domestic Economy course is being taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Gymnasium for 1 hour/week. The courses include main knowledge about citizen's and human rights, state organisation and public administration, environmental issues, consuming, economy, etc.

6.1.2. Please provide an overview of the most important national and/or sub-national implemented programmes and activities aiming at educating children, parents, teachers, and/or society at large about child rights and/or child protection at national or sub-national level. By which actors were those commissioned, funded, and implemented?

The Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education (decentralised services of the Ministry of Education at local level) and the Institute of Educational Policy - IEP (*Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής - ΙΕΠ*) often organise respective seminars, trainings and programmes mainly for professionals (teachers), but also for pupils<sup>336</sup>.

Furthermore, schools, municipalities and parents' associations organise seminars, workshops, discussions for children, parents and teachers. Civil society – NGOs – also engage in this task by organising educational activities in and - mostly - outside schools. Skills workshops<sup>337</sup>, implemented in primary and secondary education (Gymnasium), as planned by IEP<sup>338</sup> also include children's rights topics.

<sup>336</sup> For more information see indicatively seminar in [https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/373615\\_dikaiomata-toy-paidioy-kai-sholeio-diadiktyaki-ekdilosi-apo-tin-pde-attikis](https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/373615_dikaiomata-toy-paidioy-kai-sholeio-diadiktyaki-ekdilosi-apo-tin-pde-attikis).

<sup>337</sup> Greece (2021), [JMD 94236/GD4 \(OG B' 3567/4-8-2021\)](#), 4 August 2021, on the *Curriculum Framework for Skills Workshops of all types of school units, Kindergartens, Elementary and High Schools*, from the Deputy Minister of Education and Religion.

<sup>338</sup> For more information, see IEP webpage on <http://www.iep.edu.gr/el/psifiako-apothetirio/skill-labs>.



## 6.2. Promotion and awareness raising

6.2.1. Please provide information on awareness raising and/or promotion campaigns or relevant activities on child rights (possibly including on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) and/or protection issues targeting the general public or children in general at national or sub-national level. Please provide information on the most recent and representative awareness raising campaigns, including information on the target groups, the thematic areas covered, the actors involved, funding, the method of dissemination chosen and the impact of the campaign, if assessed.

UNICEF, in cooperation with NGO “Network for Children’s Rights” runs the U-Report campaign<sup>339</sup>, aiming at empowering young people and promoting their participation in matters that concern them and their communities. Children and young people express their opinion on particular thematics, which are updated every couple of months. In the last 12 months of its’ establishment in Greece, it gathered 1.943 reporters, mainly 15-19 years old (66%)<sup>340</sup>

According to UNICEF’s Greece reply to our letter (12.4.2023):

- From April to December 2022, UNICEF Greece Country Office launched the following campaigns through the [U-Report](#) platform, always combined with social media dissemination through [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and often with a series of face-to-face workshops with adolescents and youth 14-24 years old to discuss the topics of each campaign. The most relevant campaigns are highlighted below and were funded by UNICEF Greece Country Office and implemented in partnership with the Network for Children’s Rights.
  - In the context of the European Year of Youth 2022, UNICEF joined forces with the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth to conduct a campaign on the **mental health of youth in the post-COVID era** through U-Report. A total of 388 U-Reporters participated in the poll, out of whom 62% were between 15-19 years old and 62% were female. In addition, 12% of respondents were young refugees and migrants living in Greece. More specifically, among other things, young people provided their opinions about the main reasons preventing them from receiving mental health services; their awareness about specialized mental health programs and services available in Greece; and where they would prefer to receive mental health services. In addition to dissemination through UNICEF and U-Report social media channels and websites, the results of the poll were presented by UNICEF in front of policy-makers during the Closing Events of the European Year of Youth 2022 organized by the **General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth**. The full report can be found here: <https://greece-en.ureport.in/story/1033/>
  - On the occasion of the **World Children’s Day** commemorated on 20 November, a campaign for the sensitization and awareness-raising on children’s rights and their protection was carried out through U-Report. A total of 384 adolescents and youth participated in the poll,

<sup>339</sup>For more information, see UNICEF webpage on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/press-releases/u-report-celebrates-its-first-year-operation-greece>.

<sup>340</sup>For more information, see UNICEF webpage on <https://greece.ureport.in/engagement/>.

contributing their views about the rights included in the International Convention for Children’s Rights and the extent to which the fundamental principles of the CRC are in practice respected in Greece. The full results of the U-Report poll can be found here: <https://greece-en.ureport.in/opinion/3165/>

- **Child Friendly Cities Initiative**<sup>341</sup>: The U-Report Greece platform was used from April 2022 to March 2023 in consultations with adolescents and youth for the elaboration of Action Plans in 7 municipalities. A total of 619 adolescents and youth provided their views on “*What can local authorities do to make your city more friendly to children and youth?*”. In particular, adolescents identified the main challenges in their cities and contributed their ideas about participation in decision-making; their right to a safe, secure and clean environment; their right to rest, play and recreation; their access to quality childcare and education services; their protection from violence and abuse; and their access to adequate healthcare and nutrition. The vast majority of respondents (61%) were between 15 and 19 years old, while 18% were below 14 years old. Girls were more active than boys, representing more than half (54%) of the respondents. The results of the consultation were shared with municipal authorities and informed the development of action plans by "Child Friendly Cities Initiative" candidate **municipalities**, including Athens, Larisa, Trikala, Pilea-Chortiatis, Eastern Samos, Limnos and Katerini. The full report can be found here: <https://greece-en.ureport.in/story/956/>
- In Q1/2023, U-Report Greece has also been used as the main platform for the consultation with adolescents and youth to inform the development of the **2024-2027 National Action Plan for Children's Rights**. 331 young people participated in the consultation. Most of the respondents (58%) were between 15-18 years old, while 24% belonged to the age group up to 14 years and 18% 19-24 years. Girls participated more actively, representing more than half (69%) of respondents. In addition, 18% were young refugees and migrants living in Greece. In particular, young people were asked to contribute their views about the topics they consider most important to be included in the National Action Plan. They also suggested measures the government could take to combat child poverty; ensure children's access to cultural activities, leisure and entertainment opportunities; ensure children can live in a safe and healthy family environment; ensure children’s right to mental and physical health; protect children from violence and abuse; safeguard children’s access to education; encourage their civic and political participation; take actions for the protection and inclusion of children with disabilities; and guarantee that children have safe access to the internet. The questionnaire was disseminated by the Members of the **National Mechanism for the Elaboration, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Action Plans for the Rights of the Child**, in collaboration with the **Deputy Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights**. The full report can be found here: <https://greece-en.ureport.in/story/1074/>.
- In 2021, UNICEF jointly with the **Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings** implemented an awareness-raising campaign against trafficking in human beings titled “*No Child is for Sale*”. In this framework, UNICEF in collaboration with the **National Centre for Social Solidarity – EKKA** delivered an orientation training to 83 professionals working with refugees and asylum seekers on how to facilitate discussions among their beneficiaries with the aim to raise awareness against human trafficking. These discussions culminated in the creation of 176 original paintings produced by children and young refugees and asylum seekers living in shelters and accommodation sites across the country. In continuation, 54 paintings were pre-

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<sup>341</sup> For more information, see UNICEF webpage on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/what-we-do/child-friendly-cities-initiative>.

selected and presented in an online exhibition which was viewed by more than 11,000 people. The 5 paintings that received the highest number of votes by the public inspired the design of 800 posters and 4000 cards that were distributed to refugee accommodation sites providing information about the anti-trafficking helpline and containing messages against trafficking in human beings in Arabic, Farsi, French, Ukrainian, Russian, English and Greek. See more here: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/node/571>

Further data on the exact cost of the campaigns was asked but not received.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has launched various campaigns, such as:

-In cooperation with the National Council for Foster Care-Adoption (ESANY) it launched a campaign for awareness-raising and sensitization of the public about foster care, with a series of tv spots and provision of relevant information in the Ministry's website for issues related to children.<sup>342</sup>

-Informing and raising awareness of the general population about gender equality and the prevention and fight violence against women, General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)<sup>343</sup>

- In collaboration with the Regional General-Maternity Hospital "Elena Venizelos" and Athens' Health Education Office for Secondary Education, an ongoing initiative of the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality has been developed in order to conduct the "Awareness of secondary school students on sexual and reproductive health issues" programme in schools<sup>344</sup>

-Preventing and combating gender-based violence and abuse of women and girls with disabilities, in particular domestic violence and sexual exploitation, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs- General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality / Ministry of Migration and Asylum / Ministry of the Interior / Ministry of Citizen Protection / Ministry of Justice / NCSS

– In collaboration with UNICEF, the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)<sup>345</sup> created educative material that has been approved to be used at schools, such as:

- A publication entitled "*A World Anew*" that narrates the stories of 3 teenage girls who faced different forms of gender-based violence in 4 languages (Greek, English, Arabic and Farsi)<sup>346</sup>
- A publication entitled "*Everything from scratch*", a book putting emphasis on boys' experiences in an attempt to highlight the need to change traditional gender stereotypes as the basis and beginning of a world where boys and girls will participate equally<sup>347</sup>.

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<sup>342</sup>For more information, see the Ministry's webpage on <https://paidi.gov.gr/thematikes/anadoxi/>.

<sup>343</sup>For more information, see the General Secretariat webpage on <https://isotita.gr/dt-msyrenghella-parousiasineas-kampanias-sexismou/>.

<sup>344</sup>Since 2018, more than 5.000 students have attended this programme in schools.

<sup>345</sup>The Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) is a Legal Entity under Private Law of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that was founded in 1994 and is supervised by the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality.

<sup>346</sup>For more information, see KETHI's website on <https://www.kethi.gr/ekdoseis/o-kosmos-apo-tin-arhi>.

<sup>347</sup>For more information, see KETHI's website on <https://www.kethi.gr/ekdoseis/ola-apo-tin-arhi>.

- A manual addressed to secondary school teachers on the educational use of the book “*The World Anew*” - Creation of an e-book version of the book “*The World Anew*”, which is available free of charge on various relevant platforms<sup>348</sup>.

DIOTIMA Centre for gender rights and equality planned a campaign for an inclusive sexual education at schools along with 26 civil society organizations in December 2022<sup>349</sup>.

There are various campaigns and awareness raising initiatives by NGOs. Indicative examples:

- “Network for Children’s Rights” organises yearly campaigns for the Rights of the Child
- “Arsis- Organisation for the Social Support of Youth” launches campaigns, such as “No more Poor” as part of the European Antipoverty Network – EAPN (2019) or ‘Destination Unknown’ Campaign<sup>350</sup> for children on the move (2021), in cooperation with Terre des Hommes
- “Eliza” recently launched a campaign<sup>351</sup> aiming to combat violence against children, including trainings of professionals, tv and social media campaign, information to parents and carers, etc.

Awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the area of children’s rights does not exist, as the main tool for children’s rights is considered to be the UN CRC.

6.2.2. Are there any awareness raising activities regarding complaint mechanisms at national or sub-national level, e.g. for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on a communications procedure<sup>352</sup>? Please briefly describe.

No such activities are known. The Optional Protocol is not ratified by Greece.

6.2.3. Are there any awareness raising or training activities at national or sub-national level on digital literacy, privacy and online safety for children, parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals?

Saferinternet4kids and Safer Internet implement awareness-raising programmes<sup>353</sup> through competitions, seminars, Youth Panels, questionnaires and researches, [publications](#), Day of Safe Internet (& February), campaigns through training events in cooperation with the Cybersecurity

<sup>348</sup> For more information, see KETHI’s website on <https://www.kethi.gr/ekdoseis/odigos-gia-tin-ekpaideytiki-axiopoisi-toy-biblioy-o-kosmos-apo-tin-arhi>.

<sup>349</sup> For more information, see the organisation’s webpage on <https://diotima.org.gr/kampania-pro-chorao-gia-ena-scholeio-poy-tha-choraei-ola-ta-paidia/>.

<sup>350</sup> For more information, see the organisation’s webpage on <https://arsis.gr/kampania-destination-unknown/>.

<sup>351</sup> For more information, see the organisation’s webpage on <https://eliza.org.gr/xekina-to-ethniko-ergo-kyklos-yperaspiston-ton-dikaiomaton-ton-paidion/>.

<sup>352</sup> United Nations (UN), (2011), *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure*, 19 December 2011.

<sup>353</sup> For more information see the website on [Saferinternet4kids Annual Report 2022](#).

Authority of the Digital Governance Ministry or the Cybercrime Unit of the Greek Police. There is also the 'cyberkid' application, which provides useful advice on safe navigation<sup>354</sup>.

Audiovisual, Digital Education and Media literacy programmes and policies are mainly implemented by the National Centre for Audiovisual Media and Communication (*Εθνικό Κέντρο Οπτικοακουστικών Μέσων και Επικοινωνίας- ΕΚΟΜΕ*), which also drafted a White Paper on Media Literacy<sup>355</sup>

In Greece, Law 4779/2021<sup>356</sup>, that transposed the EU AVMSD 2018/1808, has provision for the protection of minors from audiovisual media services' harmful content as well as media literacy actions through awareness raising. According to Art. 35, the Secretariat General for Communication and Media, is the legal entity assigned with monitoring of actions on public and private sector as well as taking initiatives to empower citizens with media literacy.

In this context, it organised three conferences in Athens (5.12.2023)<sup>357</sup>, Lamia (30.1.2023)<sup>358</sup> and Thessaloniki (28.2.2023)<sup>359</sup> on Media Literacy, for citizens, educators, parents and youth on the current trends on media literacy and disinformation in the digital world. In the same concept, the Secretariat held a hands-on workshop on disinformation addressed to youth in the Experimental School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

With regards to typical education setting, on 20.9.2021 the "National Network on Media Literacy: Film, Television, Internet" was established, as a thematic network approved by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The Secretariat General for Communication and Media is among the main bodies that support and cooperate with the network.

The International Student Competition of Short Films "Have you Studied Cinema?" has been taking place for the last 13 years, in cooperation with Drama Short Film Festival, the Secretariat General for Communication and Media, the Department of Educational Radio and Television of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, ERT SA, ΕΚΟΜΕ and the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Greece (House of Cyprus). The aim of the competition is to acquaint students of all school levels with the digital language of cinematic storytelling and production stages through *learn by doing*, such as creating short films (fiction, documentary and animation).

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<sup>354</sup> For more information please see the website on <https://www.cyberkid.gov.gr/en/>

<sup>355</sup> National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication – ΕΚΟΜΕ (2019), [White Paper on Media Literacy](#), Athens, Greece.

<sup>356</sup> Greece (2021), [Law 4779/2021 \(OG A' 27/20-02-2021\)](#), 20 February 2021

<sup>357</sup> <https://www.media.gov.gr/imerida-tis-genikis-grammateias-epikoinonias-kai-enimerosis-i-paideia-sta-mesa/>

<sup>358</sup> <https://www.media.gov.gr/me-megali-epitychia-i-imerida-tis-genikis-grammateias-epikoinonias-kai-enimerosis-sti-lamia-i-paideia-sta-mesa/>

<sup>359</sup> <https://www.media.gov.gr/draseis-tis-genikis-grammateias-epikoinonias-kai-enimerosis-sti-thessaloniki-tin-triti-28-fevrouariou/>

### 6.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child rights and/or child protection outreach activities/measure targeting relevant groups of society or society at large that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Civil Society organisations are mainly implementing programmes and interventions, however within their limited means. The campaigns announced by mainly state agencies, ministries etc usually are extremely short term, do not have a continuity and are not followed by impact assessment. UNICEF Greece's campaigns, initiatives and its' involvement in the NAP seems to be a promising practice.

## 7. Child participation and community engagement

### 7.1. Complaint procedures

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.1.1. Are there independent child complaints procedures (e.g. an ombuds institution) that are fully compliant with the Paris Principles <sup>360</sup> in place, with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children?	X		<p>The Department of Children’s Rights of the Greek Ombudsman receives and investigates complaints about violations of children’s rights. Complaints may be submitted by <u>any</u> concerned party, or anyone directly aware of a violation, including children themselves<sup>361</sup>.</p> <p>The Department follows the Paris Principles minimum standards and is a full member of the <a href="#">European Network of Ombudspersons for Children</a> (ENOC) as an independent children’s rights institution.</p>
7.1.2. Are there specialised Courts and compliant procedures with international standards in place for children in contact with the law and for children to access justice and seek redress and remedies for violations of the child protection rights?	X		<p>There are special courts and judges for minors (as offenders), as well as probation services for minors (located at First Instance Courts and operating in close cooperation with the Courts for Minors), to which children may be referred by the prosecutor or the Court (as part of implementation of reformative measures).</p> <p>First Instance Courts and Courts of Appeal operate throughout the country, each covering a particular geographic area. Courts for Minors operate in them, but do not constitute separate departments within the administrative structure of Courts<sup>362</sup>.</p> <p>According to Law 4947/2022 (OG A’ 124/23-06-2022), Article 43<sup>363</sup>, on Courts for Minors: The Single-member Court for Minors is composed of a judge (preferably of a higher grade) in each Court of First Instance, who is appointed as Judge for Minors, in accordance with the provisions of the Code on the organisation of courts and the state of judicial officials<sup>364</sup>.</p> <p>The Three-member Court for Minors is composed of the above-mentioned Judge for Minors as president, and 2 other judges of the First Instance Court.</p>

<sup>360</sup> For more information see the website on [https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20\(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness.](https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness.)

<sup>361</sup> Greece (2003), [Law 3094/2003 \(OG A’ 10/22-01-2003\)](#), 22 January 2003

<sup>362</sup> See: [ORGANIZATION CHART OF COURTS IN GREECE – Ministry of Justice – Υπουργείο Δικαιοσύνης](#)

<sup>363</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4947/2022 \(OG A’ 124/23-06-2022\)](#), Article 43, 23 June 2022

<sup>364</sup> Greece (2022), [Law 4938/2022 \(OG A’ 109/6-06-2022\)](#), 6 June 2022

		<p>The Minors' Court of Appeal is composed of the Judge for Minors of the Court of Appeal and 2 other judges, appointed as Judges for Minors. Appointment of Judges for Minors is for a term of 3 years and relevant experience and studies are taken into consideration for their selection.</p> <p>Separate sections for minors exist in the public prosecutor's offices in the First Instance Courts of Athens, Thessaloniki and Piraeus. In other areas, duties related to child protection as well as children in contact/conflict with the law are usually assigned to a particular prosecutor within the general prosecutor's office.</p> <p>There are no Family Courts, nor specialised courts and procedures in place for children to access justice and seek redress and remedies for violations of their rights. Children are usually represented by a parent or guardian in proceedings related to their access to justice, or by the public prosecutor (who is responsible for all issues related to child protection), in cases of absence of a parent/guardian, and of crimes committed against them that are prosecuted ex officio.</p> <p>Provisions of Law 4478/2017 (OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017)<sup>365</sup> on "Integration of Directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime" as well as of Law 4689/2020 (OG A' 103/27-05-20)<sup>366</sup> on "Integration into national legislation Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings" apply, with regard to child-victims and children as suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings.</p>
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## 7.2. Feedback mechanisms

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.2.1. Are there government support fora such as children's groups		X	Municipal Youth Councils in some cities may include vulnerable children who are issuing

<sup>365</sup> Greece (2017), [Law 4478/2017 \(OG A' 91/ 23-06-2017\)](#), 23 June 2017.

<sup>366</sup> Greece (2020), [Law 4689/2020 \(OG A' 103/27-05-20\)](#), 27 May 2020.



<p>established at local/community level, and is a formal mechanism in place through which national/sub-national/local government receive and respond to the feedback and ideas from children and children's groups who have received child protection services?</p>		<p>recommendations and proposals<sup>367</sup>. Apart from that, children - including children from vulnerable groups (children in care, children with disabilities, refugee children) - participate in consultation meetings and surveys ran by UNICEF Greece, NCSS and Children's Ombudsman. Children's Ombudsman operates an inclusive Youth Council on a yearly term, where also children from care institutions, refugee shelters and children with disabilities take part. Their work is part of the European Network of Young Advisors, ENYA which in turn, is part of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, ENOC. Their recommendations become part of ENOC's Statements addressed to European institutions and Parliament and they are publicised. However, there is <u>no</u> formal mechanism for impact assessment and the response of the government towards them.</p>
<p>7.2.2. Are community-based mechanisms functional across the country where necessary and per applicability and per protocols and procedures? Is their effectiveness monitored by independent accountability mechanisms?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>In the past five years, Youth Councils were established through municipalities in some Greek cities, such as Larisa, Thessaloniki, Themi, etc. Each city applies its own procedures and protocols.</p> <p>Some efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education and the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), to coordinate and further develop such initiatives, but they finally did not result anywhere.</p>

### 7.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child participation and community engagement that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

<sup>367</sup> A general legal framework for Youth councils is provided in Greece (2006), [Law 3443/2006 \(OG A' 41/27-2-2006\)](#), which introduced local youth councils aimed at strengthening the participation of young people above 15 years old in local issues management. 27 February 2006

Youth Councils established in some cities within the municipalities<sup>368</sup> are a step towards promoting participation, involvement of young people in policies and their engagement locally.

Children were asked to participate through consultation with focus groups and by survey via structured questionnaires in the drafting of the National Action Plan to the European Child Guarantee by NCSS in March 2022<sup>369</sup>. A questionnaire was completed anonymously via a web-based platform Survey Monkey. The questionnaire was distributed to general secondary and upper secondary vocational schools throughout the country, upon approval by the Ministry of Education and acquiring consent from their guardians. The questionnaire was developed in cooperation with UNICEF and the Child's Ombudsman. Parallel, short term focus groups were organised with children 12-17.

The launch of U-Report Greece<sup>370</sup> in March 2022, a platform aiming to enhance youth participation in democratic life and empower youth 14-25 years old to share their opinions on matters that affect them and their communities, is also a promising practice.

The Children's Ombudsman Youth Advisory Panel, working on annual basis on various thematics aligned with the European Network of Young Advisors and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, is promoting children's participation and engagement on issues concerning and affecting their rights<sup>371</sup>. Moreover children from the Panel 2020 participated in the online consultation meetings on behalf of the EU for the drafting of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child<sup>372</sup>. Children from the Panel 2021 participated in FRA Rights Forum, Vienna, October 2021.

Action Aid Hellas Youth (Hub) in Thessaloniki <https://www.facebook.com/actionaidhellasyouth/> is also a youth network aiming at local or broader engagement and participation of children and young people.

It should also be noted that the voting age has lowered from 18 to 17 years (Law 4406/2016, OG A' 133/26-07-2016)<sup>373</sup>. According to the exit polls, young people 17-25 voted for European Parliamentary elections (May 2019) as for 30,5% ND, 25,6% SYRIZA, 13,3% Golden Dawn, 3,1% KINAL, 3,7% KKE και 23,7% other parties<sup>374</sup>. In national parliamentary elections (July 2019) young people 17-24 voted 38% SYRIZA, 30% ND, 5,7% Diem25, 4,9% KINAL and 4,9 Golden Dawn<sup>375</sup>. The number of new voters of 17yrs in 2019 elections was 106.852. It is interesting that the majority of the society disagreed to that amendment<sup>376</sup>. Other than that, no further impact assessment is known.

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<sup>368</sup> For some examples you may visit the municipality of Larissa webpage on <https://www.larissa-dimos.gr/el/dimotiko-symvoylio-neolaiais>, <https://kedith.gr/symvoulion-neon/>).

<sup>369</sup> For more information, see the organisation's webpage on <https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/nea-enimeroseis/deltia-typou-anakoinoseis/erotimatologia-sto-plaisio-tis-diavoylefsis-gia-tin-evropaiki-eggyisia-gia-ta-paidia>.

<sup>370</sup> For more information, see the organisation's webpage on <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/press-releases/u-report-rolling-out-greece>.

<sup>371</sup> Youth Panel 2022 recommendations on climate justice <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/paidi/post/homada-efhbwn-symboylwn-toy-synhgoroy-diatypwnei-systaseis-gia-thn-klimatikh-krish>.

<sup>372</sup> For more information, see EU webpage on [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12454-EU-strategy-on-the-rights-of-the-child-2021-24-/public-consultation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12454-EU-strategy-on-the-rights-of-the-child-2021-24-/public-consultation_en).

<sup>373</sup> Greece (2016), [Law 4406/2016, OG A' 133/26-07-2016](#), 26 July 2016.

<sup>374</sup> For more information, see the webpage <https://www.aftodioikisi.gr/politiki/exit-poll-pos-psifisan-oi-neoi-apo-17-24-eton/>.

<sup>375</sup> For more information, see the webpage <https://www.in.gr/2023/03/31/politics/dimoskopisi-pos-tha-psifisoun-oi-ellines-stis-ekloges-poia-ta-provlimata-tous-ti-tha-kanei-gkriza-zoni/>.

<sup>376</sup> For more information, see the webpage <https://www.tovima.gr/print/politics/i-proti-If-fora-crton-17aridon/>, <https://koinoniki.gr/2016/07/ne-stin-apli-analogiki-ochi-stin-psifo-apo-ta-17-lene-i-polites/>.