

# Mapping child protection systems in the EU (27)

Slovenia

May 2023

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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.

In Slovenia, the Constitution guarantees special protection of children from economic, social, physical, mental or other exploitation and abuse. According to the Constitution, the state shall provide for special protection of children and minors who are not cared for by their parents, who have no parents or who are without proper family care. The parents have the right and duty to maintain, educate and raise their children, but this right and duty may be revoked or restricted only for such reasons as are provided by law in order to protect the child's interests.

Constitutional provisions have not been translated into a single children-related act, but their protection is set out in various pieces of legislation, most notably in the Family Code. The act in question, applicable from 2019, determines conditions for state intervention in family life when the child is at risk and stipulates measures for the child protection, including with the placement of a child. It also envisages measures aimed at children without parents. In parallel, the new Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act was adopted. It governs judicial proceedings relating to family matters and the protection of the best interests of the child. This legislation practically completely shifted the decision-making power from social work centres to courts in proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child (e.g. measures for the protection of the best interests of the child, including removal of a child from the parents, custody, foster care, guardianship and adoption). The social work centres, however, remain a cornerstone of the national child protection system. In specific cases, they still have the power to remove a child from the parents. They further serve as mediators in family matters, amongst others, and produces expert opinions for the court in matters relating to families and the protection of children. Under the Social Assistance Act, they provide social protection services to families. The centres and, notably, non-governmental organisations implement social protection programmes supplementing existing social protection services (e.g. day centres for children and youth, counselling, telephone helplines, crisis accommodation and safe houses for victims of domestic violence, including women with children).

In Slovenia, alternative care includes foster care, residential institutions for children with special needs and crisis centres. The latter are intended both as a place of counselling to any children in need, as well as for short-term accommodation of children in emergency cases. While the Social Assistance Act provides for such a possibility, there are no orphanage-like institutions in the country.

There is no single all-inclusive children-related budget line in the national budget. However, the budget allocated on social protection is a separate item in the state budget. This budget line includes, for example, separate budget on foster care, on institutional care for children and persons up to 26 years of age with moderate, severe and profound disabilities, on family benefits and parental protection allowances, as well as on programmes of family support. These, however, do not exhaust all resources allocated for children protection, such as for services provided by social work centres or social security programmes performed by various organisations, as well as resources provided in fields outside social protection (e.g. education, healthcare). In 2021, the state allocated € 1,465,569,245 (10.3 %) of the total € 14,253,920,256 for social protection. Because of Covid-19 pandemics, the state allocated additional € 919,421,632 (6.5 %) for family benefits, social protection and assistance to unemployed persons.

In the recent period, apart from the above-mentioned Family Code, legislation regulating the comprehensive early treatment of children with special needs and children with risk factors in the preschool period, the comprehensive treatment of children with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders, and the protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in the Children's House has been adopted. The field of the prevention of and addressing domestic violence remains the area that is most comprehensively regulated in terms of timeframes for reporting and inter-agency cooperation. In November 2020, the government adopted the Programme for children 2020-2025, the major national child-related policy documents. It sets out equal opportunities for all children, participation of children, life without violence and child-friendly procedures as priority areas to be addressed in the period covered by the programme.

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		<p>Central provision of the Constitution providing for children's protection is Article 56. It reads as follows:</p> <p>Children shall enjoy special protection and care. Children shall enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with their age and maturity.</p> <p>Children shall be guaranteed special protection from economic, social, physical, mental or other exploitation and abuse. Such protection shall be regulated by law.</p> <p>Children and minors who are not cared for by their parents, who have no parents or who are without proper family care shall enjoy the special protection of the state. Their position shall be regulated by law.</p> <p>Article 54 further stipulates, among other things, that parents have the right and duty to maintain, educate and raise their children, but that this right and duty may be revoked or restricted only for such reasons as are provided by law in order to protect the child's interests. Children born out of wedlock have the same rights as children born within it.</p> <p>According to Article 53, the state shall protect the family, motherhood, fatherhood, children, and</p>

			<p>young people and shall create the necessary conditions for such protection.</p> <p>Article 52 sets out that children with physical and mental disabilities have the right to education and training for an active life in society, whereas such education and training shall be financed from the public funds.<sup>1</sup></p>
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 such an act in Slovenia.

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
Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Ustava Republike Slovenije</i> ) <sup>2</sup>	23 December 1991, and subsequent modifications	Please see Point 1.2.1. above.
Family Code ( <i>Družinski zakonik</i> ) <sup>3</sup>	21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications	Definition of the child (i.e. a person under the age of 18 unless they have obtained full capacity to contract before that age (Art. 5)); principle of the best interest of the child (i.e. in all activities and procedures affecting a child, parents, state authorities and bearers of public authority, local authorities, other legal and natural persons must act in the best interest of the child (Art. 7); special protection of children, namely children enjoy special protection by the state whenever their healthy development is at risk and whenever this is required by other interests of children (Art. 8); relations between parents and

<sup>1</sup> Slovenia, [The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Ustava Republike Slovenije*), 23 December 1991, and subsequent modifications. If not otherwise stated, all hyperlinks were accessed on 12 May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Slovenia, [The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Ustava Republike Slovenije*), 23 December 1991, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>3</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

		children (Art. 112-134); obligations and rights of parents and children (Art. 135-150); measures to protect the best interests of the child – interim injunctions (e.g. an injunction to remove a child from the parents and place them in the care of another person, a crisis centre, a foster carer or an institution, injunction prohibiting or restricting contacts, injunction prohibiting persons that endanger the child from approaching the child), emergency removal of a child, measures of a more permanent nature (e.g. restriction of parental responsibility, removal of a child from parents for up to three years, withdrawal of parental responsibility) (Art. 153-182.a); the court may prolong the application of measures (Art. 160, para 3); adoption (Art. 212-230); foster care (Art. 232-238); guardianship (Art. 239-261, 272-279).
Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act ( <i>Zakon o nepravdnem postopku</i> ) <sup>4</sup>	6 March 2019	Procedural rules under which courts shall deal including with family relations (Art. 1); <i>ex officio</i> , the court shall undertake what is necessary to protect the rights and legal interest of children (i.e. persons who have not reached 18 years of age unless they have obtained full capacity to contract before that age) (Art. 6); proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child (e.g. proceedings related to the care and upbringing of a child, contacts between children and their parents, measures for the protection of the best interests of the child, to the placement of a child under guardianship, and to the placement of a child in foster care, to the adoption of a child (Art. 93-122); proceedings for deciding on measures to protect the best interests of a child shall be urgent (Art. 105).
Social Assistance Act ( <i>Zakon o socialnem varstvu</i> ) <sup>5</sup>	4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications	Social assistance rights under this act include services and measures aimed at preventing and eliminating social hardship and problems of individuals, families and population groups (Art. 3); types of social assistance services, including family assistance, support to victims of crime and institutional care (Art. 11); role of social care institutions - institutional care for children deprived of normal family life, institutional care for children with minor, moderate or serious mental disabilities (Art. 16); types of social assistance programmes (i.e. programmes aimed at

<sup>4</sup> Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

		preventing and addressing the social hardship of vulnerable population groups, which are implemented in accordance with the social work doctrine as a supplement or alternative to social assistance services and measures (Art. 18.s); qualifications of professionals in the field of social care (Art. 69-75); obligation on the part of authorities, institutions and other organisations to report cases of children and minors at risk to the local social work centres (Art. 91).
Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act ( <i>Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih</i> ) <sup>6</sup>	3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications	Parental insurance and related rights (e.g. maternity (Art. 19-24), paternity (Art. 25-28) and parental leave (Art. 29-39), maternity, paternity and parental benefits (Art. 40-49)); family benefits (parental allowance (Art. 63-67), childbirth allowance (Art. 68-69), child benefit (Art. 70-76), large family allowance (Art. 77-78.a), special childcare allowance (Art. 79-82), partial payment for lost income (Art. 83-86).
Social Assistance Payments Act ( <i>Zakon o socialno varstvenih prejemkih</i> ) <sup>7</sup>	13 July 2010, and subsequent modifications	The act governs allocation of social allowances for persons without means of subsistence.
Provision of Foster Care Act ( <i>Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti</i> ) <sup>8</sup>	27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications	Foster care as a special form of care for and upbringing of children who temporarily cannot live in their biological family (Art. 2); conditions to be fulfilled by persons who wishes to provide foster care (Art. 5-7); procedure governing the issuance of foster care licence (Art. 8-17); conditions and procedure for providing foster care as a profession (Art. 18-22); standards for providing foster care (Art. 23-24); responsibilities of foster care provider (Art. 25-28); tasks of social work centres related to foster care (Art. 29-43); funding (Art. 50-60).

<sup>6</sup> Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>7</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance payments act](#) (*Zakon o socialno varstvenih prejemkih*), 13 July 2010, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>8</sup> Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications.

Domestic Violence Prevention Act ( <i>Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini</i> ) <sup>9</sup>	1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications	Definition of family (i.e. domestic) violence (Art. 3); prohibition of corporal punishment of children (Art. 3.a); children enjoys special protection from violence (Art. 4); obligation to report instances of violence to social work centres (Art. 6); roles and tasks of authorities, organisations and NGOs (Art. 10-17.a); measures for the protection of victims of family violence (Art. 18-28).
Criminal Code ( <i>Kazenski zakonik</i> ) <sup>10</sup>	20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications	Definition of criminal offences, including certain specific offences against children (e.g. sexual assault on a person below fifteen years of age (Art. 173), grooming (Art. 173.a), presentation, manufacture, possession and distribution of pornographic material (Art. 176), abduction of minors (Art. 190); neglect and maltreatment of a child (Art.192)); range of criminal penalties, including qualified penalties for criminal offences when the victims are children (e.g. trafficking in human beings (Art. 113, para 2), forced marriage (Art. 132.a, para 2), exploitation through prostitution (Art. 175, para 2), undeclared work (Art. 199, para 3). Penal provisions concerning underage offenders (e.g. educational measures: reprimand, supervision by social services, placement in educational institution ( <i>vzgojni zavod</i> ) and re-educational institution ( <i>prevzgojni zavod</i> ), fine, juvenile imprisonment (Art. 70-94); until the adoption of the special criminal code concerning underage offenders, provisions of the pre-2008 Criminal Code are valid). <sup>11</sup>
Criminal Procedure Act ( <i>Zakon o kazenskem postopku</i> ) <sup>12</sup>	29 September 1994, and subsequent modifications	Definition of injured parties (i.e. victims) (Art. 144); involvement of children in criminal procedures: when the injured party (i.e. the victim) is a minor, their legal representative ( <i>zakoniti zastopnik</i> , e.g. parents, guardian, guardian for special case) shall be entitled to make all statements and perform all acts which the injured party is entitled to make or perform under the act in question, but a child who has attained 16 years of age shall be entitled to make statements and perform procedural acts by themselves (Art. 64, para 1&2); application of certain general (e.g. deletion of

<sup>9</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>10</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>11</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 6 October 1994, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>12</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal procedure act](#) (*Zakon o kazenskem postopku*), 29 September 1994, and subsequent modifications.



		<p>some or all personal data from the criminal file, taking of their testimony using technical devices (Art. 240a, para 1), inclusion in witness protection programme (Art. 141a, para 3)) as well as children-specific measures providing for their protection (e.g. mandatory recording of the testimony of a witness under 15 years of age who was a victim of certain types of crime (Art. 84), considerate examination of minors – if required, in presence of a pedagogue or a similar expert (Art. 240, para 4), prohibition, for certain crimes, of the direct hearing of a minor below the age of 15 and instead the reading of the minutes from the investigation phase (Art 331, para 5), continuous presence of an attorney for children victims of certain types of crimes (Art. 65, para 3), the presence of trusted person during procedures (Art. 65, para 4)); the competent authority in pre-trial or criminal proceedings shall, if possible, during the first contact with the injured person assess the degree of the injured person's exposure to secondary and repeated victimisation, intimidation and retaliation (i.e. the individual assessment) with a view to establish the existence of special needs for protection, but an underage victim shall always be considered as having special needs for protection (Art. 143.č, para 1&amp;3); provisions governing proceedings involving persons who have committed a criminal offence as minors and have not attained the age of 21 at the time of institution or conducting of proceedings (Art. 451-490).</p>
<p>Crime Victims Compensation Act (<i>Zakon o odškodnini žrtvam kaznivih dejanj</i>)<sup>13</sup></p>	<p>28 October 2005, and subsequent modifications</p>	<p>State compensation scheme for victims of crime, applicable to cases of intentional violent criminal acts for which a penalty of at least one year may be imposed (Art 1&amp;2), and when it is likely that the victim cannot obtain compensation from the perpetrator (Art. 6); children are immediately regarded as a population group which cannot obtain compensation from the perpetrator and may claim compensation directly on the basis of this act, that is – without claiming compensation from the perpetrator in other proceedings (Art. 7); when compensation is awarded to a child, the responsible commission forwards the part of the decision relating to the protection of the child's interests to the competent Social work centre which ensures that the compensation is used for the benefit of the child (Art. 32, para 5); only applies to EU nationals (Art. 5).</p>

<sup>13</sup> Slovenia, The [Crime victims compensation act](#) (*Zakon o odškodnini žrtvam kaznivih dejanj*), 28 October 2005, and subsequent modifications.

<p>Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act (<i>Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke</i>)<sup>14</sup></p>	<p>26 March 2021</p>	<p>Manners of and conditions for the comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings concerning specific criminal offences (e.g. crimes against humanity, against life and limb, against sexual integrity and against marriage, family and children) in the Children's House, as well for comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses of other crimes and minors against whom pre-trial or criminal proceedings are conducted (Art. 1&amp;2); principles of comprehensive treatment (e.g. the child receives the necessary information and explanations, their protection and personal safety of the child are ensured in order to prevent secondary victimisation, revictimisation, intimidation and revenge, the interviews and physical examinations of the child are only carried out when this is absolutely necessary, while their number is kept to the minimum, the child is allowed to be heard, the proceedings are carried out without undue delay (Art. 3); tasks performed by Children's House (e.g. organising the interview or physical examination, and providing support to the child, as well as technical and spatial capacities for these proceedings, providing psychological, social and practical support to the child and their family members (Art. 7); conditions for treatment in the Children's House (Art. 14); interviewing a child (Art. 16-28); physical examination of a child (Art. 29-32); crisis and psychosocial support (Art. 33-37).</p>
<p>Public Guarantee, Maintenance and Disability Fund of the Republic of Slovenia Act (<i>Zakon o Javnem štipendijskem, razvojnem, invalidskem in preživninskem skladu Republike Slovenije</i>)<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>24 April 1997, and subsequent modifications</p>	<p>Establishment of public fund providing, under conditions stipulated by the law in question, maintenance allowance to children to whom maintenance has been granted by a court temporary order or ruling, or by agreement reached at social work centres, but is not paid by the person liable; rights of children in case of non-payment of child maintenance (Art. 21.a-21.f).</p>

<sup>14</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Slovenia, [The Public guarantee, maintenance and disability fund of the Republic of Slovenia act](#) (*Zakon o Javnem štipendijskem, razvojnem, invalidskem in preživninskem skladu Republike Slovenije*), 24 April 1997, and subsequent modifications.

Enforcement and Security Act ( <i>Zakon o izvršbi in zavarovanju</i> ) <sup>16</sup>	30 June 1998, and subsequent modifications	Rules of the procedure to be followed by the courts in enforcing claims based on enforceable instruments and authentic instruments; the rules for providing security for claims; maintenance allowance benefit receipts, compensation for lost child maintenance due to the death of the maintenance payer, foster care allowance and one-off payment for the first placement of the child in a foster family shall be exempt from enforcement (Art. 101); claims arising from statutory maintenance shall have priority in repayment (Art. 110, para 4); enforcement in matters concerning child custody and contacts (Art. 238.a-238.g).
Organisation and Financing of Education Act ( <i>Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja</i> ) <sup>17</sup>	6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications	Conditions of organising, funding and providing of education, including education of children with special needs; educational institutions as safe and stimulating learning environment (in kindergartens, schools and educational institutions for children and youth with special needs, a safe and stimulating learning environment shall be provided, where corporal punishment of children, any other form of violence against and among children and discrimination shall be prohibited) (Art. 2.a); qualification of professionals in the field of education (Art. 92-104); additional funding for Roma pupils (Art 81, para 7).
Placement of Children with Special Needs Act ( <i>Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami</i> ) <sup>18</sup>	12 July 2011, and subsequent modifications	Definition of children with special needs (Art. 2); manners and forms of their education; procedure for the placement of children with special needs in specific educational programmes (Art. 22-40).
Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs ( <i>Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami</i> ) <sup>19</sup>	14 July 2017	Regulation of the comprehensive early treatment of children with special needs and children with risk factors in the preschool period; definition of children with special needs (Art. 3); definition of children with risk factors (Art. 4); early treatment services (e.g. medical services necessary for diagnosis, condition

<sup>16</sup> Slovenia, The [Enforcement and security act](#) (*Zakon o izvršbi in zavarovanju*), 30 June 1998, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>17</sup> Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act](#) (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>18</sup> Slovenia, [The Placement of children with special needs act](#) (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 12 July 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>19</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.

		assessment and medical care, family training and counselling, physiotherapy, psychosocial assistance, provision of equipment and assistance with movement and communication, social protection services (Art. 7)); role of early treatment centres (Art. 8-13); early treatment in educational and social welfare institutions (Art. 14-17).
Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education ( <i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i> ) <sup>20</sup>	17 December 2020	Regulation of the comprehensive treatment of children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems attending kindergartens and schools or placed in professional centres for children with emotional and behavioural problems; definition of children and youth treated by professional centres (Art. 1); tasks performed by professional centres (Art. 8); accommodation and care in professional centres (Art. 8-26); inclusion in independent life and work (Art. 27-28).
Employment Relationships Act ( <i>Zakon o delovnih razmerjih</i> ) <sup>21</sup>	5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications	Employment relationships; general prohibition of work of children below 15 years of age with certain exception (e.g. carrying out light work during school holidays, but not for more than 30 days in a calendar year, provided that the work to be carried out does not pose a risk to the child's safety, health, morals, education or development, and that the labour inspection has issued the relevant permit) (Art. 211); measures for the protection of workers below 18 years of age (e.g. prohibition of underground or underwater work, prohibition of work involving risk of accidents which a young person may not be able to recognise or avoid because of their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training (Art. 191); prohibition of night work except in the event of force majeure (Art. 193)); measure protecting workers because of pregnancy and parenthood (Art. 182-189).
Health Care and Health Insurance Act ( <i>Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju</i> ) <sup>22</sup>	12 February 1992, and subsequent	Healthcare insurance scheme and rights of the insured persons.

<sup>20</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Slovenia, [The Employment relationships act](#) (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>22</sup> Slovenia, [The Healthcare and health insurance act](#) (*Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju*), 12 February 1992, and subsequent modifications.

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Patient Rights Act ( <i>Zakon o pacientovih pravicah</i> ) <sup>23</sup>	29 January 2008, and subsequent modifications	Protection of patients' rights; best health interest of patients, particularly children (Art. 3), prohibition of discrimination in access to health care services (Art. 7); additional protection of children (e.g. adequate medical treatment in accordance with their health condition and age, which is carried out in children's wards unless this is not possible for justified reasons, and without unnecessary medical intervention that could result in physical or mental distress of children, hospitalised child has the right to have present one of the parents or another person that provides for the child if there no justified reason indicating that this would not be in the child's interest (Art. 8)); the right to informed consent (a child below 15 years of age is regarded as not capable to give consent, and any medical intervention on such children shall be subject to parental consent, unless, upon the assessment of the child's maturity, the specific circumstances and upon the consultation with the parents, it may be concluded that the child is able to make their own decisions; on the other hand, a child above 15 years of age is, generally, seen as competent to provide their informed consent. However, upon the assessment of the child's maturity, the specific circumstances and upon consultation with the parents, a child may be deemed as lacking capacity to adopt their own decision); when other persons decide on a child's medical treatment, the child's opinion shall be respected to the extent possible, if they are able to express it and understand its significance and consequences (Art. 35).
Electronic Communications Act ( <i>Zakon o elektronskih komunikacijah</i> ) <sup>24</sup>	28 September 2022, and subsequent modifications	Electronic communications; in cases of breach of contracts on the part of users, the service providers may not restrict access to the missing children hotline number 116000 (Art. 178, para 4); access to, the use of this number and the transfer of the call to the most appropriate centre for receiving emergency communication shall be free of charge; in case of a call to the missing children hotline number, an operator shall immediately inform such a centre about the caller's number and location; an operator

<sup>23</sup> Slovenia, [The Patient rights act](#) (*Zakon o pacientovih pravicah*), 29 January 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>24</sup> Slovenia, [The Electronic communications act](#) (*Zakon o elektronskih komunikacijah*), 28 September 2022, and subsequent modifications.

		is obliged to inform users about the existence of the mentioned hotline number in a visible place on its website and in the directory (Art. 200); an operator shall supply the police, at their written request, with the traffic and location data if these are required to locate a child whom parents or legal representatives have reported missing and who has with them or is presumed to have on them a mobile communications device (Art. 220, para 1); the police, however, shall not send the obtained data to the persons reporting a missing child if provision of such data would threaten the personal safety or dignity of the child, with particular regard to the regulations governing the protection of witnesses, restraining orders or the prevention of domestic violence (Art. 220, para 9).
Promotion of Digital Inclusion Act ( <i>Zakon o spodbujanju digitalne vključenosti</i> ) <sup>25</sup>		Promotion of digital inclusion: the establishment of a mechanism to ensure access to computer equipment is envisaged. Beneficiaries, including children with disabilities and beneficiaries of state scholarships, can borrow the computer equipment they need to fully integrate into society.
Media Act ( <i>Zakon o medijih</i> ) <sup>26</sup>	25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications	Field of media, not applicable to audiovisual media services; protection of children against harmful advertising practices (e.g. advertisements that are targeted primarily at children or in which children appear may not contain scenes of violence, pornography or any other content that could damage their health or mental and physical development or otherwise have a negative effect on children; advertisements shall not encourage children to purchase products or services by exploiting their inexperience or credulity, or encourage children to convince their parents or any other person to purchase products or services, or unreasonably show children in dangerous situations (Art. 49).
Audiovisual Media Services Act ( <i>Zakon o avdiovizualnih medijskih storitvah</i> ) <sup>27</sup>	19 October 2011, and subsequent modifications	Field of audiovisual media services; general protection of minors (e.g. interests of children and minor prevails over all other rights and assessments, a child or a minor shall not be through audiovisual media services subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family or home, nor

<sup>25</sup> Slovenia, [The Promotion of digital inclusion act](#) (*Zakon o spodbujanju digitalne vključenosti*), 28 February 2022, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>26</sup> Slovenia, [The Media act](#) (*Zakon o medijih*), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>27</sup> Slovenia, [The Audiovisual media services act](#) (*Zakon o avdiovizualnih medijskih storitvah*), 19 October 2011, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>to unlawful attacks against their honour and reputation) (Art. 10); protection of children and minors in television broadcasting: classification of programming that could harm the physical, mental or moral development of children (i.e. appropriate for all children with parental guidance, inappropriate for children under the age of 12, 15 and 18, respectively, and adult content involving the most harmful programming content, especially gratuitous violence and pornography) whereas only the programming content falling into two first categories can be provided without restriction by providers of both linear and non-linear audiovisual media services, and the rest of such programming is subject to restrictions (e.g. specific time slots, coding) (Art. 14); protection of children and minors in relation to audiovisual commercial communications (e.g. advertisements shall not encourage children to purchase products or services by exploiting their inexperience or credulity, or encourage children to convince their parents or any other person to purchase products or services, or unreasonably show children in dangerous situations (Art. 21); specific provisions on audiovisual commercial communications of foods and beverages in programmes intended for children, including obligation on the part of service providers to develop rules of conducts in this respect (Art. 23).</p>
<p>Police Tasks and Powers Act (<i>Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije</i>)<sup>28</sup></p>	<p>30 January 2013, and subsequent modifications</p>	<p>Police tasks and powers; general provisions (e.g. police officers shall be particularly considerate in treating victims and persons who need additional attention, assistance and care, such as, for example, children and minors (Art. 13, para 2); specific children-related provisions (e.g. during procedures involving children and minors, police officers shall consider their age, the level of their physical and mental development, their sensitivity and other potential characteristics that can be observed; when exercising police powers in respect of a child, police officers shall accordingly notify the parents or guardian when so required by the best interests of the child, and do so always when instruments of restraint have been used against the child in question; when exercising police powers in respect of a minor, police officers shall acquaint them with the parents' and guardian's right to be informed; when instruments of restraint have been used or detention</p>

<sup>28</sup> Slovenia, [The Police tasks and powers act](#) (*Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije*), 30 January 2013, and subsequent modifications.

	<p>ordered against a minor, they shall always inform the parents or guardian accordingly; when in view of the circumstances police officers consider that the competent social work centre should also be informed about the exercising of police powers, they shall do so accordingly) (Art. 18); further provisions (e.g. police officers may only summon a child through his parents or guardian; when summoning a minor, police officers shall at the same time also inform his parents or guardian; when summoning or informing parents or a guardian would be contrary to the best interests of a child or a minor, police officers shall notify the competent social work centre of the procedure) (Art. 36); amongst others, police officers may establish the identity of a person who by his behaviour, actions and loitering at a particular location or at a particular time gives reason to suspect that they are a child or a minor fleeing from home or an educational and social care institution, rehabilitation centre or health institution or that he is lost (Art. 40, para 1); provision of assistance (when it is necessary to protect a person's health or ensure their safety, including of children and minors, police officers may bring the person to the nearest health institution or the competent social work centre and, exceptionally, to police premises) (Art. 58, para 1&amp;2); specific requirements when a child or a minor is brought to police premises (e.g. if the person brought to police premises is a child or a minor, police officers shall within the shortest time possible inform their parents or guardian, but if they establish that this would be contrary to the best interests of the child or minor, police officers shall notify the competent social work centre accordingly) (Art.59); issuance of restraining orders (Art. 60); specific requirements for using instruments of restraint (police officers may not use instruments of restraint against children, unless their movement has been temporarily restricted or they must be produced or detained and police officers are unable to control their resistance or assault in any other manner, or if they threaten their own life or the life of other people and property or if due to other circumstances, their life or health is directly threatened) (Art. 76); provisions governing the use of electrical incapacitation devices (police officers may deploy an electrical incapacitation device on children only if the conditions for the application of firearms have been satisfied) (Art. 86.a, para 2); complaints against the work of police officers (e.g. if a police procedure involves a child or a minor,</p>
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		a complaint shall be considered directly before a panel (Art. 148, para 4).
Protection against Discrimination Act ( <i>Zakon o varstvu pred diskriminacijo</i> ) <sup>29</sup>	21 April 2016, and subsequent modifications	Prohibition of discrimination on various grounds and in different walks of life (i.e. horizontal approach) (Art. 1&2); discrimination which has or might have consequences for the discriminated person that would be hard to remedy in terms of damage to the person's legal status, rights or obligations, particularly if it affects children shall be considered a severe form of discrimination (Art. 12); functioning of the national equality body (Art. 19-32); complaining procedure (Art. 33-38).
Human Rights Ombudsman Act ( <i>Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic</i> ) <sup>30</sup>	20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications	The role of the Ombudsman (protection of human rights and basic freedoms in matters involving state bodies, local government bodies and statutory authorities) (Art. 1); complaining procedure (Art. 26-46); provisions on child advocacy (e.g. the purpose of advocacy is the provision of professional assistance to the child to express their opinion in all procedures and matters in which they are involved, and to forward the child's opinion to the competent authorities and institutions that decide on their rights and benefits. Professional assistance includes psychosocial support to the child, conversations about their wishes, feelings and opinions, familiarising the child with procedures and activities in a child-appropriate manner, seeking the most adequate solution together with the child, and accompanying the child before the authorities and institutions that decide on his rights and benefits (Art. 25.a-25.d).
International Protection Act ( <i>Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti</i> ) <sup>31</sup>	4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications	Field of international protection (i.e. asylum) – reception of applicants for international protection, international protection procedure, qualification of applicants for refugee or subsidiary protection status; rights and obligations of applicants and persons to whom international protection has been granted; protection of children/minors (e.g. children, including unaccompanied children, are regarded as vulnerable persons with special needs (Art. 2);

<sup>29</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection against discrimination act](#) (*Zakon o varstvu pred diskriminacijo*), 21 April 2016, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>30</sup> Slovenia, [The Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>31</sup> Slovenia, [The International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>principle of the best interests of the child (e.g. the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in the treatment of children; they shall be ensured a standard of living adequate to their psychological, mental, spiritual, ethical and social development; children identified as victims of abuse of any kind, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict shall be provided access to rehabilitation and, where necessary, appropriate psychological treatment and professional counselling) (Art. 15); unaccompanied children and their legal representatives (<i>zakoniti zastopniki</i>) (Art. 16-18); regular training of officials including with regard to the treatment of children and assistance to them in accordance with this act and the consideration of applications lodged by vulnerable persons with special needs (Art. 8).</p>
<p>Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act (<i>Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb</i>)<sup>32</sup></p>	<p>22 June 2005, and subsequent modifications</p>	<p>Introduction, duration and termination of the temporary protection of displaced persons, and related issues, in accordance with the Temporary Protection Directive; unaccompanied children and single parents with children are regarded as vulnerable groups (Art. 3); a parent or guardian submits application on behalf of the child (Art. 16, para 6); unaccompanied children as applicant (e.g. appointment of a legal representative, consideration of the child's opinion, prioritised examination of application (Art. 22)); criteria for calculating financial assistance, including to families with children and unaccompanied children (Art. 32); unaccompanied children as recipients of temporary protection (e.g. appointment of a guardian, accommodation (Art. 41)); extended stay of families with children and unaccompanied children upon expiry of temporary protection (Art. 46, para 2).</p>
<p>Foreigners Act (<i>Zakon o tujcih</i>)<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications</p>	<p>Entry, residence and departure from Slovenia of persons who are not Slovenian citizens; family reunification rights of EU (Art. 123) and non-EU nationals (Art. 47 and Art. 128) as well as persons to whom refugee status (Art. 47a) or subsidiary protection (Art. 47b) has been granted; provisions concerning victims of trafficking in human beings and of illegal employment (Art. 50), including specific</p>

<sup>32</sup> Slovenia, [The Temporary protection of displaced persons act](#) (*Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb*), 22 June 2005, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>33</sup> Slovenia, [The Foreigners act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications.

	<p>provision on unaccompanied children stipulating that the police and nongovernmental organisations shall inform a victim of the trafficking of human beings or a victim of illegal employment who is an unaccompanied child of the possibility of obtaining a residence permit and the requirements related to it, and shall make every effort to establish contact with his family (Art. 50, para 3); children in return procedures (e.g. in the case of removal of an unaccompanied child who resides in Slovenia in an unauthorised manner, the police immediately inform a Social work centre which shall immediately appoint a guardian for special case (<i>skrbnik za poseben primer</i>) (Art. 82, para 1); the police shall issue decision on the return of the child when the guardian for special case, after carefully examining all circumstances, establishes that this is in the best interest of the child (Art 82, para 1); a minor may not be deported to their country of origin or to a third country which is willing to accept them, until their reception is guaranteed there; removal of a child in contravention of the relevant international treaties shall not be allowed (Art. 82, para 2); an unaccompanied child or a family with children shall be accommodated, in agreement with a guardian for special case, at adequate accommodation facilities for children, but, if this is not possible, they shall be accommodated at the Centre for foreigners (Art. 82, para 3), when a child is staying in the Centre for foreigners, their involvement, in their free time, in activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to their age, shall be facilitated (Art 82, para 4); strict police supervision may be imposed on a child only in exceptional cases and only if they are accompanied by both or one of their parents, while strict police supervision may not be imposed on an unaccompanied child (Art. 82, para 6).</p>
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### 1.3. Policy framework

Question	YES	NO	Comments
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?	x		In November 2020, the government adopted the Programme for children 2020-2025 ( <i>Program za otroke 2020-2025</i> ), which is the principal national policy document targeting the needs of children. Apart from the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), it is

<p>If <u>yes</u>, does it require an integrated approach to child protection?</p>	<p>based on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021).<sup>34</sup> The document sets out various objectives in the following priority areas: equal opportunities for all children (covering domestic environment and housing deprivation, health, inclusive preschool and school education, culture and cultural and artistic education, the most vulnerable groups of children – e.g. children from socially and financially disadvantaged backgrounds, children with special needs, children from minority ethnic communities, refugee and migrant children), participation of all children, life without violence and the safety of children in the digital environment, and child-friendly procedures. The implementation of the programme shall be monitored by the Interdepartmental working group (<i>Medresorska delovna skupina</i>), which has drafted the document. It shall produce annual report and submit it to the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family (<i>Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino</i>).<sup>35</sup> The Council is a permanent expert consultative body of the government. It is composed of members of non-governmental organisations, professional institutions in the area of children and family and members of the government. Amongst others, the body monitors and assesses the situation of children and families, with emphasis on the exercise of the rights of children, and formulates basic positions for the adoption of legislation and strategic documents relating to children and families.<sup>36</sup> In May 2021, the government adopted an action plan for the programme implementation for the period 2020-2022, setting out measures, responsible</p>
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<sup>34</sup> Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2016), [Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#), 2 March 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>36</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code \(Družinski zakonik\)](#), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>bodies and related funds.<sup>37</sup> New action plan for the period 2023-2025 is in progress.</p> <p>The Resolution on the Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families” (<i>Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”</i>) is another document that prominently addresses well-being of children. Adopted in February 2018 by the National Assembly (<i>Državni zbor</i>), the purpose of the document is to determine the basic goals and measures in the field of family policy in the period 2018-2028 for improving the quality of family life, and for ensuring a high quality of life for children in particular. The document covers the following areas: family support programmes and other programmes and projects aimed at children and families, parental care and family benefits, alternative care for children, adoption, social protection of families, labour market and employment, balancing professional and family life, health, upbringing, care and education, and housing. Monitoring the implementation of the resolution is the duty of all departments that are responsible for individual measures. Government adopted two action plans for the resolution implementation for the period 2018-2020 and 2021-2023, the first in 2020<sup>38</sup> and the second in 2021.<sup>39</sup> Once a year, the departments submit a report on the realisation of the goals of the resolution and the implementation of measures to the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family. As part of the regular annual reporting to the government, the</p>
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<sup>37</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>38</sup> Medresorska delovna skupina za aktivnosti pri pripravi in izvajanju Akcijskega načrta za izvajanje Resolucije o družinski politiki 2018-2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba” (2020), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Resolucije o družinski politiki 2018-2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”, s pregledom izvajanja za obdobje 2018–2020 \(AnReDP18–20\)](#), Ljubljana.

<sup>39</sup> Medresorska delovna skupina za aktivnosti pri pripravi in izvajanju Akcijskega načrta za izvajanje Resolucije o družinski politiki 2018-2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba” (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Resolucije o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”, za obdobje 2021–2023 \(AnReDP21–23\)](#), Ljubljana.

			Council also includes a report on the implementation of the resolution. <sup>40</sup>
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?	x		<p>In 2023, Child Guarantee National Action Plan of the Republic of Slovenia 2022-2030 (<i>Nacionalni akcijski načrt Republike Slovenije za jamstvo za otroke 2022-2030</i>) was adopted. The Action Plan aims to raise the level of children's well-being, ensure equal opportunities and rights for all children, strengthen protection and safeguarding, and improve opportunities for children's inclusion and participation. In this context, particular attention is paid to universal access to early childhood care and education services (including school activities), at least one healthy meal every school day for all children, widely accessible health care, and effective access to healthy food and adequate housing. In designing the targeted measures, particular attention has been paid to migrant children, children with a migrant background or from ethnic minorities (especially Roma children), children with special needs, children with mental health problems and/or mental disorders, and children living in dysfunctional, insecure family situations and/or in socially and financially disadvantaged environments, as well as children in alternative (especially institutional) care. The European Child Guarantee is together with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child major policy initiatives put forward by the European Commission to better protect all children, to help them fulfil their rights and to place them right at the centre of EU policy making.<sup>41</sup></p> <p>Following 2004 and 2011 strategies, the year 2021 saw the adoption of a new Strategy of Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji</i>). The strategy covers the period from 2021 until 2030. It sets out measures relating to education of Roma across different parts of the national education system: preschool education (e.g. promoting inclusion of Roma children in public kindergartens that operate in immediate vicinity of Roma</p>

<sup>40</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the family policy 2018–2028: “A Society friendly to all families”](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”*), 20 February 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2023), [Nacionalni akcijski načrt Republike Slovenije za jamstvo za otroke 2022–2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

		<p>settlements; for Roma settlements, which are less embedded in the external environment and which face very complex issues, a department of regular kindergarten should be organised in the settlement with the possibility of multi-level inclusion of Roma children in urban and suburban kindergartens and departments; organisation of activities aimed at building and increasing the trust of Roma parents in institutional forms of care or education), primary education (e.g. implementation of measures for greater inclusion of children in the preschool education system, so that upon entering elementary school, children will be better equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills for fairer and more equal access to knowledge; the greatest possible inclusion of Roma assistants in the work of primary schools with the aim of reducing discrimination and building Roma trust in education institutions and self-esteem in children; better inclusion of primary school workers in educational programmes relating to work in multicultural environments; work with Roma families), secondary education, higher-level education and adult education (e.g. recommended additional learning assistance and specific scholarship fund for Roma attending secondary schooling).<sup>42</sup> A commission is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Once a year, it is obliged to report to the minister responsible for education. Upon expiry of its four-year mandate, the commission produces a report on its work.<sup>43</sup></p> <p>In 2021, Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities (<i>Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za narodnosti</i>) launched the Handbook on identifying early and forced marriages in the Roma community and on how to act in these cases (<i>Priročnik o prepoznavanju</i></p>
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<sup>42</sup> Klepac, A., Komac, M. (2021), *Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji 2021-2030*, Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport.

<sup>43</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

		<p><i>zgodnjih in prisilnih porok v romski skupnosti in o ukrepanju v teh primerih</i>). The handbook targets institutions and organisations working with Roma communities. It contains information on the identification of the problem (e.g. recognising early signs that indicate that an escape of a child to a threatening environment or a forced marriage could occur), as well as legal bases for dealing with early and forced marriages. The handbook also includes examples of practical experiences and actions by institutions (e.g. social work centres, the police and state prosecutors) when dealing with such cases. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities reported that the handbook was produced in cooperation with representatives of different organisations, including representatives of the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Svet romske skupnosti Republike Slovenije</i>). Several trainings for professional workers (civil servants) in the social protection sector, education, police, healthcare, justice, and non-governmental organisations were held in 2022 and 2023 to enable them to deal properly with instances of early and forced marriages in Roma communities. Activities will further focus also on awareness-raising within the Roma community.<sup>44</sup></p> <p>There are also other general documents covering specific fields with certain provisions aimed at children, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030 (<i>Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022–2030</i>),<sup>45</sup></li> <li>- Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028 (<i>Resolucija o</i></li> </ul>
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<sup>44</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities related to the [handbook](#) and the main web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities with listed [news items](#), including on this topic.

<sup>45</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022–2030*), 23 March 2022.



			<p><i>nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028</i>),<sup>46</sup></p> <p>- Action programme for persons with disabilities 2022-2030 (<i>Akcijski program za invalide 2022 – 2030</i>),<sup>47</sup></p> <p>- Resolution on the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime 2019–2023 (<i>Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečevanja in zatiranja kriminalitete za obdobje 2019–2023</i>),<sup>48</sup></p> <p>- National programme of measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2021-2030 (<i>Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030</i>),<sup>49</sup></p> <p>- Action plan for combating trafficking in human beings for the period 2023-2024 (<i>Akcijski načrt za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi za obdobje 2023-2024</i>).<sup>50</sup></p>
1.3.3. Are there national or sub-national child protection policies regarding children in the digital space and when using online media?	?	?	<p>No specific strategies related to protection of children in the digital space and when using online media could be identified.</p> <p>The Programme for children 2020-2025 lists the life of children without violence including the safety of children in the digital environment</p>

<sup>46</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national mental health programme 2018–2028](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028*), 27 March 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski program za invalide 2022 – 2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>48</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime 2019–2023](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečevanja in zatiranja kriminalitete za obdobje 2019–2023*), 20 June 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>50</sup> Medresorska delovna skupina za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi (year of publication not specified), [Akcijski načrt za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi za obdobje 2023-2024](#), Ljubljana, Medresorska delovna skupina za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi.

		<p>among priority areas. The programme objectives in this area are as follows: all children are subject to prevention and protection against any type of ICT abuse; professional assistance is provided to children who are addicted to digital technology; provision of quality online content that enables children to develop ICT skills (digital literacy) and other skills needed for their safety in the digital environment. According to the programme, special attention should be paid to the abuse of children in virtual environment. This applies to instances of e.g. sexting, grooming and recordings of sexual abuse of children. In addition, special attention should be given to media and digital literacy. According to the programme, activities relating to the education on the safe use of information and communication technology are carried out in Slovenia but are subject to project-based funding. In this respect, the state should systematically regulate this area, because ICT is a field that is developing extremely quickly, as both parents and children need support regarding safety in digital environment.<sup>51</sup></p> <p>In 2022, the then Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (<i>Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport</i>), and the current Ministry of Education, approved DEAP 2027: Digital education action plan (<i>ANDI 2027: Akcijski načrt digitalnega izobraževanja</i>). Overhaul of the current education programmes is one of the key areas set out in the action plan. This should allow for inclusion of basic contents of computer sciences and informatics, including artificial intelligence and cyber security in curricula, catalogues of knowledge and study programmes at all levels of education. Ecosystem of digital education, another key area set out in the plan, includes the following objectives, amongst others: ensuring equality and equal opportunities (e.g. reducing inaccessibility of digital technologies, promoting involvement of girls and women in STEM), involvement of parents (e.g. regularly informing</p>
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<sup>51</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), *Program za otroke 2020-2025*, Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

		<p>parents about the digital strategy and priorities of educational institutions for each school year; trainings for parents on current topics of digital education), and cyber security (e.g. lifting the competences of all in the field of safe and ethical use of digital technologies, implementing security policy and ensuring a safe environment).<sup>52</sup></p> <p>Digital Slovenia 2020 - Development strategy for the information society until 2020 (<i>Digitalna Slovenija 2020 - Strategija razvoja informacijske družbe do leta 2020</i>), an umbrella document in the field of information society was launched in 2016. The strategy acknowledges that when dealing with online content, the state plays a role in protecting children. In the field of cyber security, one of the priority areas of intervention, the strategy envisages funding of the Safer Internet Centre (<i>Center za varnejši internet</i>). The centre acts as the national point for raising awareness among children and adolescents, parents and teachers about the safe use of the internet and mobile devices. It also consists of a hotline for reporting instances of sexual abuse of children on the internet.<sup>53</sup> Apart from the mentioned funding of the Safer Internet Centre, other specific prevention measures are not set out in the Digital Slovenia 2020.</p> <p>Recently, the government passed the new strategy in the field of information society. This strategy covers the period until 2030. The Digital Slovenia 2030 – The umbrella strategy for the digital transformation of Slovenia until 2030 (<i>Digitalna Slovenija 2030 – Krovna strategija digitalne preobrazbe Slovenije do leta 2030</i>) sets out, amongst others, that in accordance with the possibilities from the Digital Services Act, the possibility to sign agreements with online platforms on offering services in the Slovenian language should be legislated, with special attention to the accessibility of user interfaces and terms of use of services aimed</p>
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<sup>52</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Finance et al. (2016), [\*Digital Slovenia 2020 - Development strategy for the information society until 2020\*](#), Ljubljana.

			<p>at children. In addition, in the context of rapid technological changes, special care should be given to the evaluation of the impact of the digital transformation on children and youth, including with regard to the safe and responsible use of the internet by children and youth. Thus, it shall be important to regularly educate children and youth about the safe and responsible use of the internet. Apart from these, the strategy does not specify other measures.<sup>54</sup></p> <p>Another strategy passed in 2016, the Cyber Security Strategy (<i>Strategija kibernetne varnosti</i>), envisages that for children and adolescents, cyber security topics are included in the curriculum at different levels of education. Initiatives raising awareness about the importance of cyber security, including those targeting children and adolescents should be encouraged.<sup>55</sup></p>
<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 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? If <u>yes</u>, are appropriate child protection and safety measures in place?</p>	?	X(?)	<p>The Programme for children 2020-2025 lays down child participation as a priority area of intervention. According to the programme, the inclusion or participation of children shall mean their participation in all areas of social life, as well as their participation in legal and other procedures relating to them, which means exercising the right to be heard or the right to freely express an opinion in all matters affecting them.<sup>56</sup> Its accompanying document, the Action plan for the implementation of the Programme for children 2020-2025 for the period 2020-2022 sets out the following measures in the area of child participation, amongst others: enabling participatory programmes at the local level (primary schools, local communities) and the provision of information about the manners of inclusion in such programmes; and inclusion of</p>

<sup>54</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2023), [Digitalna Slovenija 2030 – Krovna strategija digitalne preobrazbe Slovenije do leta 2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>55</sup> Energy Agency, Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia et al. (2016), [Cyber security strategy](#), Ljubljana.

<sup>56</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

		<p>the concept of child participation in legal acts affecting the children.<sup>57</sup></p> <p>In practice, there are attempts to encourage child participation, but often this only includes initiatives by individual stakeholders, including at the local level. Most notably, however, such initiatives are implemented by non-governmental organisations. The child participation in the field of policymaking is not systematically regulated. Child participation, including as regards monitoring of the implementation of instruments relating to the children's rights and other strategic documents is part of the political process almost completely neglected by policy makers. In Slovenia, the participation of children in the preparation of documents and monitoring of its implementation is hardly an established and generally accepted practice.<sup>58</sup></p> <p>The Children's Parliament (<i>Otroški parlament</i>) is the country's most notable example in this respect. The Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (<i>Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije</i>), an NGO, has been implementing this project from 1990. It is a programme aimed at educating children for active citizenship and democracy, encouraging them to participate in social life. As forms of democratic dialogue, the parliaments are implemented in elementary schools in Slovenia. Children's parliaments function in the form of sessions, which enable the participation of all primary school children. Sessions are held in in class communities and at the school parliament. In each school, pupils select a delegation for the municipal children's parliament. From the municipal children's parliament, a delegation is to the regional children's parliaments that represent their peers at the National Children's Parliament. It takes</p>
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<sup>57</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>58</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, pp. 92-94.

		<p>place once a year, in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. The topic of its 2023 edition includes the mental health of children and youth.<sup>59</sup> As a part of an Erasmus+ project, the NGO also organised a conference on the child participation entitled Citizens of the Future (<i>Državljeni prihodnosti</i>) in 2020. The conference was organised to mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children’s Parliament programme, respectively. The objectives of the conference included: enabling children to express their opinions about what participation means to them and what should be included in a national strategy on children's participation; enabling discussion between children and decision-makers on the child participation and on the national strategy; by signing a letter of intent, oblige the authorities to prepare and adopt the strategy as soon as possible; contributing to better cooperation between the authorities involved in the preparation of key documents; connecting key stakeholders, namely children, decision-makers and experts; and improving awareness of children's participation in Slovenia and at the EU level.<sup>60</sup></p> <p>Another example is the World café with children (<i>Svetovna kavarna z otroki</i>), an event organised by non-governmental organisations in 2019. The event involved, amongst others, 40 children who came to discuss and identify key issues and challenges that should be included and addressed in the new national programme for children that was drafted at the time. The participating children were selected from amongst the children participating in other NGO projects (e.g. UNICEF junior ambassadors, children involved with the Children’s Parliament). The group also involved three refugee children. The identified shortcomings of</p>
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<sup>59</sup> For more information, see the webpage of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth related to the [Children’s Parliament](#).

<sup>60</sup> For more information, see the webpage of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth related to the [projects implemented by this organisation](#).

		such an approach, however, included the limited number of children involved, lack of regional coverage, small number of younger children and vulnerable children involved, but notably a lack of commitment on the part of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities that the finding would made to the national programme, and that the authorities would provide some feedback. <sup>61</sup>
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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 bullying; neglect and children at risk of abuse and neglect, including street children (begging or selling things)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
The Programme for children 2020-2025, adopted in 2020, sets out the life of children without violence including the safety of children in the digital environment among priority areas. The programme objectives in these areas include the following: all children fully enjoy their rights in terms of protection against violence of all kinds, regardless of personal or other circumstances; all children are subject to prevention and protection against any type of ICT abuse; professional assistance is provided to children who are addicted to digital technology; provision of quality online content that enables children to develop ICT skills (digital literacy) and other skills needed for their	In 2015, the National assembly adopted amendments to the Criminal Code stipulating that in cases concerning certain criminal offences from chapters relating to criminal offences committed against life and limb, against human rights and freedoms, or against sexual integrity, or other criminal offences with elements of violence committed against minors, the perpetrator shall be prosecuted <i>ex officio</i> . Provisions of this Code relating to the filing of a motion or bringing a private action shall not apply in such cases (Art. 15.a). The amended law also criminalised forced marriages (i.e. entry into a forced marriage or establishing a similar community) (Art. 132.a) and

<sup>61</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 94.

safety in the digital environment.<sup>62</sup> In May 2021, the government adopted an action plan for the programme implementation for the period 2020–2022, setting out measures, responsible bodies and related funds.<sup>63</sup>

In 2015, the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) issued the Professional guidelines for dealing with domestic violence in healthcare services (*Strokovne smernice za obravnavo nasilja v družini pri izvajanju zdravstvene dejavnosti*). The guidelines include a special chapter relating to children. Amongst others, the chapter covers the following: basic principles in working with children at risk, definitions of violence, abuse and ill-treatment of children, guidelines for detecting and identifying child victims of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, procedure when a child is perceived as victim, protocol governing examination of a child in case of suspicion that they experienced sexual abuse, and documenting the treatment of a child in cases of suspicion of violence and abuse.<sup>64</sup>

In 2019, the National Assembly adopted the Resolution on the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime 2019–2023. In the chapter on violence, the resolution sets out the following objectives, amongst others: with regard to all forms of violence, the inclusion of relevant topics dealing with violence prevention in the primary and secondary education programmes; improving legal protection of children and young victims of sexual abuse; ensuring the professional (specialist) qualification of all experts who are involved in the treatment of children and young people who have experienced violence; setting up groups of police detectives to carry out identification of underage victims of violence of

stalking (Art. 134.a). Both crimes carry heavier penalties if committed against children.<sup>74</sup>

In 2016, the National Assembly passed amendments to the Organisation and Financing of Education Act with a new provision on a safe and stimulating learning environment. In kindergartens, schools and educational institutions for children and youth with special needs, corporal punishment of children, any other form of violence against and among children and discrimination shall be prohibited) (Art. 2.a).<sup>75</sup>

In the same year, amendments to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act set out the prohibition of corporal punishment of children. Corporal punishment of children is any physical, cruel or humiliating punishment of children or any act intended to punish children that has elements of physical, psychological or sexual violence or neglect as a method of upbringing (Art. 3.a). According to amended act, authorities, organisations and non-governmental organisations shall protect information about the accommodation of the victim and their children or other measures for their protection as a professional secret (Art. 9.a). Social work centres shall deal particularly carefully with cases of violence where the victim of violence is a child, especially when there is suspicion of suspected sexual abuse of a child (Art. 12, para 2). The amended act also stipulated additional measures for the protection of children that may be imposed by courts: the prohibition of the crossing of the state border by a child, unless they are accompanied by a specially designated person, body or organisation; the confiscation of the child's identity document; the prohibition of the issuance or delivery of an identity document to a child; and urgent medical examination or treatment of the

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<sup>62</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>63</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije

<sup>64</sup> Ministrstvo za zdravje (2015), [Strokovne smernice za obravnavo nasilja v družini pri izvajanju zdravstvene dejavnosti](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za zdravje.

<sup>74</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code \(Kazenski zakonik\)](#), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>75</sup> Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act \(Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja\)](#), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications.



sexual abuse, as well as perpetrators of such crimes; strengthening cooperation with international organisations and institutions dealing with detection, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against the sexual integrity of children.<sup>65</sup>

Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028, adopted in 2018, stipulates that the increasing problem of peer violence in schools should be addressed. According to the resolution, the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health problems in children and adolescents in educational institutions and local environments shall include pilot testing and gradual systematic introduction of proven effective programmes to reduce peer violence. Such programmes should increase children's sensitivity to this issue and address identified cases of peer and online peer violence. Programmes that successfully work to establish a safe and stimulating school environment should also be introduced.<sup>66</sup>

In 2022, the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo*) issued amended Protocol for the detection and treatment of peer violence in educational institutions (*Protokol ob zaznavi in obravnavi medvrstniškega nasilja v vzgojno-izobraževalnih zavodih*). It includes instructions for employees in public and private educational institutions that implement publicly valid programmes when detecting and dealing with peer violence. The instructions lists the tasks of relevant stakeholders in terms of immediate intervention (e.g. the employee who has spotted violence or has been informed about it immediately implements all necessary measures to protect the victim, talks to them and offer them emotional support; if necessary, the school counselling service the same day or no later than the next working day develops

child or other medical interventions (Art. 20). Amongst others, the law further stipulates that the court shall observe the child's opinion in proceedings under this act, if the child has expressed it themselves or through a person they trust and have chosen themselves, and if they are able to understand its meaning and consequences. Social work centres shall monitor the implementation of measures for the protection of children under this act. Centres shall also implement all other necessary measures for the protection of children under the act governing family relations (Art. 22.g).<sup>76</sup>

The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), an implementing regulation adopted on the basis of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, was subject to modification in 2017. As part of the victim assistance plan, a risk assessment shall be made specifically for the child and appropriate measures for working with the family and measures for working with the child shall be planned, whereas the child's safety shall be prioritised. The plan shall determine how to permanently protect the child, amongst others. As part of the assistance plan, it shall also be inspected whether there is a need for the social work centre to submit a proposal for the initiation of the procedure for the imposition of measures under the law regulating the prevention of domestic violence when the victim is a child,

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<sup>65</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime 2019–2023](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečevanja in zatiranja kriminalitete za obdobje 2019–2023*), 20 June 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national mental health programme 2018–2028](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028*), 27 March 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications.

plan to prevent further violence), as well as procedural intervention (e.g. based on the information obtained, the school counseling service starts counseling work with the victim and perpetrator, which also involves the parents; the counselling service also convenes a team, which, for example, produces an assistance plan for the victim, plans work with the parents, as well as with classes attended by the victim and the perpetrator, and cooperates with external institutions). A handbook on detecting and dealing with instances of peer violence in educational settings is also attached to the Protocol.<sup>67</sup>

In 2017, the Association of Centres for Social Work (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo*) produced Guidelines and recommendations for the work of experts at social work centres in the case of escapes of minors into harmful environments (*Usmeritve in priporočila za delo strokovnih delavcev CSD v primerih begov mladoletnic in mladoletnikov v škodljiva okolja*). The document applies in cases when a minor is in environment where the parents are prevented from exercising parental rights. The intervention consists of three phases. In the first phase, the social worker e.g. cooperates with the police, collects information to e.g. establish whether the environment is harmful for the minor, and produces a risk assessment. On the police request, they provide an opinion on the case and participates in intervention at the scene. In the second phase, on the police request, the social worker is present at the police station. They interview the minor, their parents and persons from the alleged harmful environment, and hands over the minor to the parents or place the minor in safe environment. In the last phase, the social worker drafts a plan of assistance to the minor and the family, a safety plan together with the minor,

regardless of whether the child provided their consent (Art. 10, para 3).<sup>77</sup>

In 2017, the parliament adopted the Family Code, the new act governing family relations, including the measures for protection of children. According to the law, courts and social work centres shall be obliged to take the necessary actions and measures required by the upbringing of a child and their protection or the protection of their property and other rights and benefits (Art. 153). The court shall impose the measures for protecting the best interests of the child (Art. 155). The court imposes a measure if it finds that the child is at risk. A child is deemed to be at risk if they have suffered or is very likely to suffer damage, and this damage or the likelihood that damage will occur is the result of the action or neglect of the parents or the result of the child's psychosocial problems, which are manifested as behavioural, emotional, learning or other difficulties in their upbringing. The damage shall include damage to the physical or mental health and development of the child or to the child's property (Art. 157). Amongst others, the law further stipulates that the court shall observe the child's opinion when deciding on a measure, if the child has expressed it themselves or through a person they trust and have chosen themselves, and if they are able to understand its meaning and consequences (Art. 158). Measures to protect the best interests of the child shall include interim injunctions, emergency removal of a child and measures of a more permanent nature (Art. 159). The court issues an interim injunction if it is likely that the child is at risk (Art. 161). Amongst others, interim injunctions include an injunction to remove a child from the parents and place them in the care of another person, a crisis centre, a foster carer or an institution, an injunction allowing access to the dwelling or other premises where the child is, against the will of the parents, an injunction prohibiting or restricting contacts, and an injunction

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<sup>67</sup> Novakovič, T. et al. (2022), [Protokol ob zaznavi in obravnavi medvrstniškega nasilja v vzgojno-izobraževalnih zavodih](#), Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

<sup>77</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.

stays in contact with the minor and the family and monitors the situation.<sup>68</sup>

The last in the series of action plans produced by the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (*Medresorska delovna skupina za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi*) covers the 2023-2024 period. The plan, among other things, envisages raising awareness activities of the risk of trafficking targeting children, with particular focus on older primary school children and secondary school students and the provision of short- and long-term accommodation and assistance to victims, including children. Its objectives also include seeking improvements as regards assistance and support for children with experience of human trafficking, including with regard to the provision of special accommodation for them. Dealing with the phenomenon of forced and early marriages in the Roma community with the aim of reducing its number and raising awareness among members of the Roma community and all competent institutions about these phenomena is also envisaged.<sup>69</sup>

In late 2015, the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings adopted the Handbook on the identification, assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking of human beings (*Priročnik o identifikaciji, pomoči in zaščiti žrtev trgovine z ljudmi*). The handbook provides information and guidelines regarding different topics, including about the identification of victims, placement of victims in crisis and safe accommodation, respectively, as well as about the multidisciplinary team, which deals with every person placed in safe accommodation. According to the handbook, everyone, especially healthcare professionals and staff in care and educational institutions, shall immediately notify the police, the state prosecutor's office or the social work centre when they suspect that a child is a victim of

prohibiting persons that endanger the child from approaching the child (Art. 162). Emergency removal of a child shall be carried out by social work centres if it is likely that the child is in such serious danger that their best interests may only be protected by immediate removal of the child from the parents (Art. 167, para 1). The police assist the social work centre with the emergency removal of the child in accordance with the regulations governing the tasks and powers of the police (Art. 167, para 2). Measures of a more permanent nature include the restriction of parental responsibility for up to one year, whereby the court prohibits one or both parents from exercising individual entitlements from parental care, if the child is at risk and, considering the circumstances of the case, the best interests of the child will be sufficiently secured by this measure (Art. 171). The court may further decide on the medical examination or treatment of the child without the consent of the parents or contrary to their decision, when this is necessary because the child's life is endangered, or their health is at serious risk (Art. 172). It is also possible that the court provides for restriction or withdrawal of the right to contacts (Art. 173). The court may also remove a child from parents for up to three years, if the child is at risk and it is only possible to sufficiently protect their best interests by removing them, and if the circumstances of the case show that the parents will be able to provide for the child again after a certain period of time (Art. 174). The court may also issue a decision on the placement of a child in an institution because of their psychosocial problems, which manifest themselves as behavioural, emotional, learning or other problems in their growing up, if they themselves or other children in the family are at risk and only by placing the child in an institution is it possible to a sufficient extent protect their best interests or those of other children in the family (Art. 175). The court may, eventually, deprive one or both parents of parental responsibility if the child

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<sup>68</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo (2017), *Usmeritve in priporočila za delo strokovnih delavcev CSD v primerih begov mladoletnic in mladoletnikov v škodljiva okolja*, Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo.

<sup>69</sup> Medresorska delovna skupina za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi (year of publication not specified), [Akcijski načrt za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi za obdobje 2023-2024](#), Ljubljana, Medresorska delovna skupina za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi.

trafficking in human beings (THB). The conduct of all authorities and organisations in procedures with children who are victims of THB must be consistent with the best interests of the child, which must prevail over issues of migration or prevention of criminal acts. Their opinions and wishes should be sought and considered. Child victims have the right to help and support, considering their particular circumstances. Indicators for identifying victims of THB, including children are also attached to the document.<sup>70</sup>

In 2020, stakeholders, including the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*), several ministries, UNHCR and a number of NGOs signed the protocol for Standard operating procedures for preventing and responding to cases of sexual and gender-based violence (*Standardni operativni postopki za preprečevanje in ukrepanje v primerih spolnega nasilja in nasilja na podlagi spola*). The document targets asylum seekers (i.e. applicants for international protection). It regards unaccompanied children and families with children as vulnerable groups. Amongst others, the document stipulates that in cases of treatment of children, the procedure must be carried out in a child-friendly manner, and the best interests of the child must be pursued throughout. Unaccompanied children, for example, shall be placed in accommodation facilities for children or other forms of care, in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child. The legal representative and the competent center for social work must be informed immediately about their accommodation, and the latter must be involved in the planning of assistance. When an unaccompanied child minor is subject to sexual or gender-based violence, additional types of placement can be considered (e.g. crisis centres for

is at risk and the circumstances of the case point to the fact that there is little likelihood that they will be able to provide for the child's upbringing and protection, especially if they have severely violated their obligations or abused their rights related to parental responsibility, or if they abandoned the child or their conduct has manifestly shown that they will not provide for the child (Art. 176). State bodies, bodies of self-governing local communities, holders of public authority, public service providers and non-governmental organisations that in the course of their work become aware of circumstances based on which it is possible to conclude that a child is at risk, are obliged to immediately inform the competent social work centre or court about this fact. Everyone, especially healthcare professionals and staff of educational and social care institutions, as well as providers of activities for children in sports and cultural associations, must, regardless of the provisions on professional secrecy, immediately notify the social work centre, if in the course of their work they learn of circumstances on the basis of which it is possible to conclude that the child is at risk (Art. 180).<sup>78</sup>

In 2016, the National Assembly passed the new umbrella act providing for the prohibition of discrimination in Slovenia, the Protection against Discrimination Act. The act bans different forms of discrimination (e.g. direct and indirect discrimination, multiple discrimination, harassment and victimisation). It is a horizontal act prohibiting discrimination on a variety of grounds and in a variety of fields of life. According to the act, discrimination which has or might have consequences for the discriminated person that would be hard to remedy in terms of damage to the person's legal status, rights or obligations, particularly if it affects children shall be considered a severe form of discrimination (Art. 12). The act also includes provisions on the functioning of the

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<sup>70</sup> Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve (2016), *Priročnik o identifikaciji, pomoči in zaščiti žrtev trgovine z ljudmi*, Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve

<sup>78</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

children and youth, student dormitories, foster care).<sup>71</sup>

In 2021, Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities launched the Handbook on identifying early and forced marriages in the Roma community and on how to act in these cases. As noted, the handbook targets institutions and organisations working with Roma communities. It contains information on the identification of the problem (e.g. recognising early signs that indicate that an escape of a child to a threatening environment or a forced marriage could occur), as well as legal bases for dealing with early and forced marriages. The handbook also includes examples of practical experiences and actions by institutions (e.g. social work centres, the police and state prosecutors) when dealing with such cases. Also, several trainings for professional workers (civil servants) in the social protection sector, education, police, healthcare, justice, and non-governmental organisations were held in 2022 and 2023 to enable them to deal properly with instances of early and forced marriages in Roma communities. Activities will further focus on awareness-raising within the Roma community as well.<sup>72</sup>

The Safer Internet Centre, which acts as the national point for raising awareness among children and adolescents about the safe use of the internet and mobile devices published various guidelines, recommendations and handbooks aimed at children, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the monitoring period. Examples include:

- "Education for the internet: Handbook for parents" (*Vzgoja za internet: Priročnik za starše*) with advices regarding the safe use of the internet and acting in cases of online violence;
- "Online violence and online abuses of children and youth: Handbook for professionals in social work centres and for other professionals" (*Spletno nasilje*

national equality body (Art. 19-32) and the complaining procedure (Art. 33-38).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> For more information, see the government web page with the news item on [the signing ceremony](#).

<sup>72</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities related to the [handbook](#) and the main web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities with listed [news items](#), including on this topic.

<sup>79</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection against discrimination act](#) (*Zakon o varstvu pred diskriminacijo*), 21 April 2016, and subsequent modifications.

*in spletne zlorabe otrok in mladostnikov: Priročnik za strokovne delavke in delavce centrov za socialno delo in druge strokovnjake*) with guidelines for dealing with online violence and online abuse of children and youth (relating to e.g. typical examples of violence, such as sex-related violence, offensive and hate speech, and abuse of privacy.<sup>73</sup>

#### 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

In October 2021, the government adopted the Action programme for persons with disabilities 2022-2030 (*Akcijski načrt za invalide 2022-2030*), which is the most important national policy document relating to person with disabilities. The document covers 13 fields of live and includes a variety of measures for improving the situation of this group of population. The field of upbringing and education tends to be one of the most elaborate fields in terms of measures aimed at children with disabilities. The document sets out the following measures, amongst others: ensuring equal opportunities in enrolment in all educational programmes and promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in regular programmes of education and training; ensuring a network of expert institutions providing support for the education of persons with disabilities in specialised and regular programmes of education and training; ensuring an adequate number of experts and the dissemination of knowledge through educational programmes for preschool teachers, teachers and education counsellors; providing textbooks and other teaching aids in adequate forms considering the type of disability, including the provision of textbooks for children attending a programme with a lower standard of knowledge; ensuring spatial and technical conditions for carrying out educational and training programmes and adjusted transport (ensuring the accessibility of the built environment in educational institutions must also

##### Legislative developments

In 2017, the parliament adopted the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs. Integrated early treatment of children with special needs and children with risk factors in the preschool period includes treatment of the child and their family in the preschool period with the aim of ensuring and stimulating the child's development, strengthening the family's capacity, and encouraging the social inclusion of the family and the child (Art. 1, para 2). Children with special needs in the preschool period are children with physical, cognitive, perceptual, social-emotional or communication developmental delays, deficits, obstacles or disorders or with long-term illnesses (Art. 3). Children with risk factors in the preschool period are children with risk factors for developmental deficits, delays, obstacles or disorders. Risk factors are factors that arise during pregnancy, during childbirth or immediately after birth, and could affect the subsequent development of the child. Risk factors can also appear later due to illness or poor socio-economic status of the family (Art. 4). Early treatment centres (*centri za zgodnjo obravnavo*) shall carry out early treatment. Upon proposal of these centres, early treatment services can also be provided within the public network by e.g. public kindergartens and other educational institutions, social welfare institutions and mental health centres (Art. 6). Early treatment services include e.g. medical services necessary for diagnosis, condition

<sup>73</sup> For more information on the relevant materials, see the web page of the Safer Internet Centre on <https://safe.si/>.

include the accessibility of premises such as toilets, including the installation of facilities for moving persons with disabilities, such as ceiling lifts); ensuring the right to additional communication equipment necessary owing to a functional impairment; ensuring physical assistance to all pupils and students who need such assistance; providing a system of education for children with intellectual disabilities, which will enable more flexible adaptation to educational needs and better conditions for further education (transition between programmes, inclusion in educational programmes, etc.). In the field of health and provision of medical care, the following measures are envisaged, for example: ensuring early detection and comprehensive early treatment of children with special needs and their families, with a special emphasis on mobile forms of assistance allowing children to stay with their families. Alerting the public to the instances of violence and abuse, especially violence against children with disabilities, and the importance of the principle of non-discrimination is listed among the measures relating to the fight against violence and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities.<sup>80</sup> The Resolution on the Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families”, passed in 2018, determines the basic goals and measures in the field of family policy in the period 2018-2028 for improving the quality of family life, and for ensuring a high quality of life for children in particular. It sets out the following measures that are relevant for children with disabilities: provision of a certain number of hours of care for children with special needs on a monthly basis; increasing the amount of partial payment for lost income (i.e. personal benefit granted to one of the parents or another person when leaving the labour market or starting to work part-time in order to care for a child with profound intellectual or physical disability, or with a particular disease from the severe diseases list, or to care for two or more children with moderate or severe intellectual or physical disabilities) to the amount of the minimum wage according to the regulation governing the minimum wage; ensuring

assessment and medical care, early screening, detection, assessment and monitoring services, family training and counselling, physiotherapy, psychosocial assistance, provision of equipment and assistance with movement and communication and social protection services (Art. 7). The early treatment center is staffed by a paediatrician specialist, a registered nurse, a mid-level nurse or an administrator, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, specialists in the field of special and rehabilitation pedagogy and social workers and, if necessary, other specialists (Art. 8). The services are provided based on an individual family assistance plan (Art. 7, para 2). For children for whom the doctor decides not to draw up an individual family assistance plan, the necessary treatments and assistance for the family are determined in agreement with the parents. A record of the agreement with the parents shall be produced (Art. 12, para 6). Parents are involved in the work of multidisciplinary team. For example, the team’s tasks include the child’s diagnosis, preparation and monitoring of an individual family assistance plan, and creation of a plan for the transition to kindergarten, institution for the upbringing and education of children and adolescents with special needs, social welfare institution or elementary school (Art. 10, para 2&3). Family representatives (*predstavniki družine*) or non-governmental organisations may provide support to families (Art. 11). A member of the multidisciplinary team acts as family assistance coordinator. They monitor the implementation of early treatment services, cooperate with the social work center, provide information to the family about social protection services (Art. 13, para 1).<sup>84</sup>

In late 2020, the National Assembly passed the Act on the Treatment of Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural problems and Disorders in Upbringing and Education. The law regulates the treatment of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems who are enrolled in kindergartens and schools, as well as children with emotional and behavioural disorders

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<sup>80</sup> Government of the Republic of Slovenia, [Action programme for persons with disabilities 2022-2030](#), Ljubljana, Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>84</sup> Slovenia, The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.

that the spouse or common-law partner of the child's mother or father, who lives with them and cares for and protects the child of his or her spouse or common-law partner, is also entitled to partial payment for lost income (if this right is not exercised by the child's mother or father); establishment and strengthening of services to facilitate the reconciliation of family and professional life of parents who have a child with special needs; provision of appropriate services to remove barriers to entry into the labour market for those who care for a person with special needs; providing comprehensive early treatment of children with special needs and coordinated assistance to the child and family.<sup>81</sup>

In 2022, the new Educational programme for education of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders and implementing recommendations for the application of the educational programme (*Vzgojni program za vzgojo in izobraževanje otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami in izvedbena priporočila za izvajanje vzgojnega programa*) was adopted. The document lists principles and goals of the educational programme, as well as forms of work with placed children and adolescents. The implementing recommendations for the application of the educational programme further include recommended forms of work and assistance in professional centres (*strokovni centri*), criteria for reception in youth housing, definitions of crisis situations and standards of behaviour of professional workers in such situations (e.g. cases of auto- or hetero-aggressive behaviour of residents), as well as guidelines for developing personalised plans for children and adolescents. The revised programme places specific emphasis on preventive activities enabling early detection of issues, a continuum of support and assistance for the child, adolescents, family and school, which should result in fewer placements.<sup>82</sup>

who are placed in professional centres (*strokovni centri*) for children with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders. Professional centres deal with the following groups: children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems who were included in the treatment by the professional centre before the age of 21 and have psychosocial problems that manifest as behavioural, emotional, learning or other problems in their growing up, but are not yet placed as children with emotional and behavioural disorders in accordance with the law governing the placement of children with special needs, nor are they regarded as children and adolescents who would need accommodation in accordance with the law governing family relations; children and adolescents placed in accordance with the law governing placement of children with special needs; children and adolescents with social-emotional problems, treated in accordance with the law regulating the comprehensive early treatment of preschool children with special needs, children and adolescents placed in accordance with the law governing family relations, children with acquired full business capacity and adults who, in accordance with the law governing family relations, were placed in the professional centre before reaching 18 years of age, with their written consent, underage persons and young adults who have been sentenced in accordance with the law governing the treatment of juvenile offenders (Art. 1, para 1&2). Amongst others, professional centres perform the following tasks: provide assistance to children and young people with emotional and behavioural problems; provide assistance and support to kindergartens, schools and institutions for the upbringing and education of children and adolescents with special needs in dealing with children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders, provide professional support to parents, legal representatives or foster parents; involve children and young people in various daily forms of work; provide accommodation; implement educational

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<sup>81</sup> Slovenia, The Resolution on the family policy 2018–2028: “A Society friendly to all families” (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”*), 20 February 2018.

<sup>82</sup> Košnik, P., Plavčak, D. (2022), [\*Vzgojni program za vzgojo in izobraževanje otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami in izvedbena priporočila za izvajanje vzgojnega programa\*](#), Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.



In the same year, the new Special programme of education (*Posebni program vzgoje in izobraževanja*) was adopted. It is aimed at pupils and students with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities, as well as persons up to 26 years of age who still receive education. Compared to the past programmes, it allows more flexible and individualised work with children, allowing for their easier transition across levels of education, based on their personal characteristics.<sup>83</sup>

programmes; and provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary treatment in cooperation with other services that deal with children or adolescents (Art. 4). Professional group (*strokovna grupa*), consisting of representatives of the professional centre, a representative of the competent social work centre and a representative of the school, in which the child or adolescent is enrolled, produces an individualised programme in cooperation with the child and their parents. The professional group, in cooperation with the child or adolescent and his parents, modifies the programme as necessary, but evaluates it at least twice a year and informs the competent court and center for social work about the evaluation. If the child or adolescent is placed in accordance with the law relating juvenile offenders, the group also informs the competent state prosecutor (Art. 11). A child or young person can permanently return to their domestic environment after the expiry of the court measure. The professional centre submits the initiative for the early termination of the measure or for the replacement of the measure to the court that imposed the measure and informs the competent centre for social work or the state prosecutor about the initiative. No later than in the last month of the duration of the court measure, the professional group, together with the adolescent and their parents, prepares a plan for the young person's integration into independent life and work (Art. 27).<sup>85</sup>

The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act has been modified on several occasions since its adoption in 2014. The amendments have brought about an increase in partial payment for lost income from a fixed sum of € 734.15 to gross minimum wage multiplied by 1.2 (Art. 83, para 7).<sup>86</sup> In 2023, the gross minimum wage is set at € 1,203.36.<sup>87</sup> The

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<sup>83</sup> Plavčak, D., Zupanc Grom, R., Košnik, P. (2022), [Posebni program vzgoje in izobraževanja](#), Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

<sup>85</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on the treatment of children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders in upbringing and education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>86</sup> Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>87</sup> Slovenia, [The Minimum wage amount](#) (*Znesek minimalne plače*), 5 January 2023.

	<p>partial payment for lost income is personal benefit granted to one of the parents or another person when leaving the labour market or starting to work part-time in order to care for a child with profound intellectual or physical disability, or with a particular disease from the severe diseases list (e.g. chronic encephalopathy, severe forms of autoimmune diseases), or to care for two or more children with moderate or severe intellectual or physical disability (Art. 83, para 1&amp;2). The partial payment increases by 30 % if a person care for two or more children with profound intellectual or physical disability, or with a particular disease from the severe diseases list (Art. 83, para 7). The right to partial payment for lost income has also been extended to spouse or common-law partner of the child's mother or father who actually cares for the child of their spouse or common-law partner, if the child's mother or father has not exercised this right (Art. 83, para 1).<sup>88</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>
<p>The Programme for children 2020-2025 regards migrant and refugee children, in particular unaccompanied children as a vulnerable group of children. According to the programme, these children need comprehensive treatment and care. With the aim of providing for full realisation of the rights of all children, the state shall refrain from detaining migrant children. During the preparation of the programme in question, unaccompanied children were mainly accommodated in a student dormitory or other adequate institutions. According to the programme, by establishing a systemic solution for the accommodation and care of unaccompanied children, a multi-tier system of care will be created, allowing for individual treatment and consideration of diverse personal circumstances and vulnerabilities of individual child. The programme further stipulates that the placement of unaccompanied children in foster</p>	<p>Adopted in 2016, and lastly amended in 2021, the International Protection Act regulates asylum proceedings in Slovenia. Amongst others, the law stipulates that a child/minor, an unaccompanied child and a single parent with a child shall be deemed vulnerable groups with special needs (Art. 2). They shall be granted special care and treatment in the asylum procedures (Art. 12-14). The law further stipulates that the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration in the treatment of minors. The assessment of the best interests of the child shall in particular consider the possibility of family reunification, the child's well-being and social development, safety and security issues, especially when there is a risk of the minor being a victim of trafficking in human beings, and the child's opinion with a view to their age and maturity (Art. 15, para 1&amp;2). Child victims of abuse of any kind, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruelty,</p>

<sup>88</sup> Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications.

families should be strengthened. Accredited foster carers should receive specialised training in this respect. For the successful integration of unaccompanied, it shall be necessary to create an individual development and inclusion plan for each child. When designing systemic solutions targeting unaccompanied children, it shall be necessary to plan for the gradual transition of unaccompanied youth into adulthood and to ensure adequate care. As Slovenia faces a high proportion of voluntary departures, adequate response mechanisms to the disappearance of children must be planned and the causes of departures must be properly addressed, including with a view to the risks of trafficking in children.<sup>89</sup>

In 2019, the Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Strategija Vlade RS na področju migracij*) was adopted. It is based on six pillars. According to the strategy, when dealing with migration-related issues, Slovenia shall pay special attention to vulnerable groups, including children. In this context, special attention shall be given to unaccompanied children. According to the integration pillar of the strategy, refugee children are entitled to the same level of healthcare as Slovenian children. Ministry responsible for education shall undertake to amend legislation on the beginning Slovenian language classes in elementary education. Within its possibility, the ministry shall make financial and organisational efforts to provide sufficiently extensive and high-quality lessons of Slovenian as a second language. As noted, the strategy grants particular attention to unaccompanied children. In relation to this group of children, the strategy stipulates the following, amongst others: in accordance with the decision of the government, it shall be necessary to establish a separate systematic solution regarding accommodation and treatment of unaccompanied children; when drawing up relevant documents, the principle of the best interests of the child shall be observed; special attention and treatment should be given to children who are victims of trafficking in human beings; in addition to adequate accommodation, it shall also be necessary to provide qualified staff who can deliver professional assistance and support; for younger children, foster care may be the most appropriate form of

inhuman or degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict shall be provided access to rehabilitation and, where necessary, appropriate psychological treatment and qualified counselling (Art. 15, para 4). An asylum-seeking child shall be accommodated with their parents, their unmarried minor siblings or with the adult responsible for them, if this is in their best interests (Art. 15, para 5). In procedure involving an unaccompanied child applicant, a legal representative (zakoniti zastopnik) shall be assigned to the child (Art. 16, para 1). The legal representative represents the child in the procedure for granting international protection, and in the fields of healthcare, education, protection of property rights and benefits, and in relation to the exercise of reception rights (Art. 16, para 3). The unaccompanied child shall be accommodated in an institution for children, where they shall be provided with appropriate treatment and care, after obtaining the opinion of the competent social work centre regarding the adequacy of the accommodation (Art. 16, para 7). Legal representative may be any person who meets the condition for a guardian in accordance with the law governing marriage and family relations and has participated in training. They shall further participate in periodic training every three years (Art. 18, para 2&3). The legal representative reports on their work to the social work centre upon the enforceability of a decision in a procedure for granting international protection, but at least once a year and, at the request of the social work centre, also in the interim period. The social work centre shall review the report and, if necessary, take all necessary measures to protect the interests of the unaccompanied child (Art. 18, para 6). The competent authority shall consider the application as a matter of priority in the case of vulnerable persons with special needs (e.g. children, unaccompanied children, pregnant women and single parents with minor children (Art. 48). Children and unaccompanied children have the same rights as Slovenian children regarding access to healthcare (Art. 86, para 3) and primary and secondary education (Art. 88, para 1&2). For specific reasons, their movement may be restricted to an area of the Asylum Home (Art. 84, para 1). Asylum applicants have the right of movement

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<sup>89</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), *Program za otroke 2020-2025*, Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

placement, thus additional training for existing foster parents should be provided; it is necessary to provide tailored support to those who reached the age of majority but are not yet sufficiently independent, thus enabling their easier transition from full care to an independent life.<sup>90</sup>

In 2022, National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia issued the Guidelines for the integration of children and adolescents with temporary protection to educational institutions (*Smernice za vključevanje otrok in mladostnikov z začasno zaščito v vzgojno-izobraževalne zavode*). The guidelines are intended for professionals in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and serve to support the integration and work with children and adolescents who arrive from war zones and need support with the integration in educational institutions. Amongst others, the work with children and adolescents and their families in education institutions should be based on: flexible inclusion of children and adolescents with an emphasis on the best interest of the child; team work of all professionals involved in the education process; an inclusive, stimulating and diverse learning environment, which takes into account their different prior knowledge and abilities; integration as a two-way process; assistance in involving children and young people in leisure activities at school and in the local environment; constant and continuous professional support to all professional workers in education; provision of information to parents about the possibilities and manners of integration into the local environment.<sup>91</sup>

within the municipality in which they have a temporary residence address, unless they are unaccompanied children who may move freely throughout the territory of Slovenia (Art. 78, para 1&7).<sup>92</sup>

Based on the International Protection Act, the Decree on the implementation of the statutory representation of unaccompanied minors and the method of providing adequate accommodation, care and treatment of unaccompanied minors (*Uredba o načinu izvajanja zakonitega zastopanja mladoletnikov brez spremstva ter načinu zagotavljanja ustrezne nastanitve, oskrbe in obravnave mladoletnikov brez spremstva*) was adopted. It further details the tasks of legal representatives of unaccompanied children, their training and cooperation with relevant public bodies. Among other things, in every important task and decision concerning the child, the legal representative shall consult with them, considering their opinion in accordance with their age, maturity and developmental capacities, and shall regularly inform the child in an appropriate manner on undertaken actions (Art. 2, para 2&3). A legal representative shall, at a time, represent a maximum of three children, but, exceptionally, if it is not possible to provide legal representation for each minor who needs representation, a legal representative may represent a maximum of five children (Art. 2, para 5). If a minor needs representation in other fields, which are not covered by legal representative, they shall be assign a guardian (*skrbnik*) in accordance with the law governing family relationships (Art. 2, para 4). The cooperation between the legal representative, Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*), the Ministry of the Interior, the social work centre and the institution, which accommodates the child shall be carried out

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<sup>90</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2019), [Strategija Vlade RS na področju migracij](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>91</sup> Cotič Pajntar, j., Klobasa, H. et al. (2022), [Smernice za vključevanje otrok in mladostnikov z začasno zaščito v vzgojno-izobraževalne zavode](#), Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

<sup>92</sup> Slovenia, [The International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications.

as to ensure the best interest of a child (Art. 3, para 1). The training of candidates for legal representatives shall include 40-hour training on topics, such as family law (e.g. foster care, guardianship, protection of children's rights), social work (e.g. legislation governing social work, skills in social work with a view to the principle of the best interest of the child, development of intercultural competencies in child advocacy), psychology, human rights and asylum law) (Art. 7).<sup>93</sup>

In March 2021, the National Assembly passed amendments to the Foreigners Act. The amended act introduces the notion of "complex crisis in the field of migration". According to amended act, if based on information from the bodies and institutions (i.e. state bodies, EU Member States or third countries, EU institutions, and international and intergovernmental organisations working in the field of migration), the ministry responsible for the interior assesses that in the Republic of Slovenia due to changed situation in the field of migration or other circumstances referred to in the Government Act (*Zakon o vladi*) a complex crisis has arisen, it shall propose to the government to take a decision on the implementation of crisis management and governance in a complex crisis. Within the framework of the crisis management and leadership in a complex crisis, the government may, based on a substantiated and reasoned proposal of the ministry responsible for the interior, propose to the National Assembly to decide on the use of measures for a maximum period of six months, and to determine the area of implementation of measures. The National Assembly may, on the proposal of the government, extend the application of measures each time for a maximum of six months, if the reasons still exist (Art. 10.a, para 2&3). If the National Assembly adopts the relevant decision, the police shall not allow entry to a foreigner who does not meet the conditions for entry. A foreigner, who entered the country in an irregular manner and is present in the area of application of the measures, shall be brought to the

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<sup>93</sup> Slovenia, Decree on the implementation of the statutory representation of unaccompanied minors and the method of ensuring adequate accommodation, care and treatment of unaccompanied minors (*Uredba o načinu izvajanja zakonitega zastopanja mladoletnikov brez spremstva ter načinu zagotavljanja ustrezne nastanitve, oskrbe in obravnave mladoletnikov brez spremstva*), 14 October 2021.

state border by the police and sent to the country from which they entered in an irregular manner. If a foreigner attempts to enter the country in an irregular manner at the border crossing or has already entered the country from a neighbouring country in an irregular manner, and is located in the area where the measures are implemented after the decision of the National Assembly, and they express the intention to apply for international protection, the police shall establish the identity of the foreigner in accordance with the law governing the tasks and powers of the police and, notwithstanding the provisions of the law governing international protection, check whether:

- it has been established that there are systemic weaknesses in the neighbouring country from which the foreigner has entered in relation to the international protection procedure and the conditions for the reception of applicants, which could cause danger of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- the foreigner has, in the individual proceedings, plausibly and validly demonstrated that they are personally in real danger of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment in a neighbouring country and that they could not apply for international protection in that country for justified reasons;
- the individual medical condition of the foreigner or their family member clearly prevents them from being sent to a neighbouring country;
- they are an unaccompanied minor by appearance, behaviour or other circumstances.

If the police establish after the procedure that the checked circumstances are not given, they shall reject the intention to apply for international protection by an order. An appeal is allowed against the order, which does not suspend its enforcement. The appeal is decided by the ministry responsible for the interior. In the event of the existence of any one of the checked circumstances, the police shall allow the foreigner to file an application for international protection and shall act in accordance with the provisions of the law governing international protection related to the preliminary proceedings.

Based on the enforceable order, the police shall bring the foreigner to the state border and send them to the neighbouring safe state from which they entered. If the neighbouring safe country from which the foreigner entered does not accept the foreigner into its territory, the order shall be

revoked, and the foreigner shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the law governing international protection (Art. 10.b)<sup>94</sup>

In Slovenia, based on the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act,<sup>95</sup> the government adopted the Decision establishing temporary protection for persons displaced from Ukraine (*Sklep o uvedbi začasne zaščite za razseljene osebe iz Ukrajine*),<sup>96</sup> applicable from 10 March 2022. According to this decision, the following groups of population shall be entitled to temporary protection in Slovenia, provided that they resided in Ukraine before or on 24 February 2022: citizens of Ukraine and their family members, stateless persons and third-country nationals who are not citizens of Ukraine and who were granted international protection or other equivalent national protection in Ukraine and their family members, stateless persons and third-country nationals who are not citizens of Ukraine and who resided in Ukraine on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit and who are unable to return to their country or region of origin in a safe and sustainable or lasting manner. Other persons who do not meet the mentioned criteria may apply for international protection (i.e. asylum) in accordance with the International Protection Act.

With the adoption of the above-mentioned decision, provisions of the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act have been put into practice for the first time. The law itself was lastly modified in 2017. The principal change involved the transfer of responsibilities for e.g. transportation of persons affected, management of accommodation facilities, financial assistance payment from the Ministry of the Interior to the newly established Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants. The Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act governs the introduction, duration and termination of the temporary protection of displaced persons, and the rights and obligations of the persons

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<sup>94</sup> Slovenia, [The Foreigners act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>95</sup> Slovenia, [The Temporary protection of displaced persons act](#) (*Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb*), 22 June 2005, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>96</sup> Slovenia, [The Decision establishing temporary protection for persons displaced from Ukraine](#) (*Sklep o uvedbi začasne zaščite za razseljene osebe iz Ukrajine*), 9 March 2022.

affected, amongst others. According to the provisions adopted in 2005, unaccompanied children and single parents with children are regarded as vulnerable groups (Art. 3). Amongst others, a parent or guardian submits application on behalf of the child (Art. 16, para 6). An applicant who is an unaccompanied child shall be assigned a legal representative. During the procedure, the competent authority shall take into consideration the child's opinion according to their age and maturity, while the examination of the application shall be prioritised (Art. 22). Children shall have the same rights as nationals as regards access to primary and secondary education (Art. 29, para 1). The law further stipulates criteria for calculating financial assistance, including to families with children and unaccompanied children (Art. 32). According to the law, a guardian shall be assigned to a recipient of temporary protection who is an unaccompanied child (Art. 41, para 1). Upon expiry of temporary protection, the authorities may grant unaccompanied children attending school in Slovenia and families whose underage children attend school extended stay until the completion of the school year (Art. 46, para 2).<sup>97</sup>

Based on the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act, the Decree on the methods for ensuring rights of persons enjoying temporary protection (*Uredba o načinu zagotavljanja pravic osebam z začasno zaščito*) was adopted in 2022. This implementing act, amongst others, stipulates that children shall have a diet adapted to their age and needs. In addition to three meals per day, they shall have the right to a morning and afternoon snack, which is also adapted to their age and needs (Art. 3). Vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children and single parents with children, shall be accommodated in accommodation centres separately from other persons with temporary protection (Art. 4). Based on the approval of the health commission, children with temporary protection shall have the same rights as regards access to healthcare as Slovenian children (Art. 13, para 5). The decree also provides for kindergarten subsidies. When the parents receive social allowance or monthly allowance (i.e.

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<sup>97</sup> Slovenia, [The Temporary protection of displaced persons act](#) (*Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb*), 22 June 2005, and subsequent modifications.



the allowance in the amount of 30 % of social allowance received by persons staying in accommodation centres), they shall be exempt from paying for kindergarten for the duration of this right (Art. 16). Children enrolled in primary education have the right to a free snack and lunch, while children enrolled in secondary education shall have the right to a free snack (Art. 19, para 1&2). The decree further sets out free transportation for pupils with temporary protection (Art. 20, para 1).<sup>98</sup>

In December 2022, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants coordinated the accommodation of 244 children from Ukraine. Of them, 20 children came to Slovenia from a Luhansk regional Children's Home together with accompanying staff. Other children, together with their families or adults who care for them, were accommodated in different facilities, including e.g. Asylum Home Logatec branch, accommodation centre Debeli Rtič and accommodation centre Postojna, flats owned by public bodies such as Ministry of Defence, Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, local communities, as well as flats obtained via public call. Data on children and families in private accommodation are not available.<sup>99</sup> Statistical data on unaccompanied children are also not available.<sup>100</sup> According to the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants, unaccompanied children are

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<sup>98</sup> Slovenia, [The Decree on the methods for ensuring rights of persons enjoying temporary protection](#) (*Uredba o načinu zagotavljanja pravic osebam z začasno zaščito*), 24 March 2022, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>99</sup> Information was provided by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*) upon request (emails, 13 April 2023, response dated 12 April 2023, and 14 April 2023).

<sup>100</sup> Information was provided by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*) upon request (emails, 13 April 2023, response dated 12 April 2023, and 14 April 2023). Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 14 April 2023).

accommodated by social work centres in crisis accommodation centres for children and youth.<sup>101</sup>

Some of the principal measures include the programme of assistance to families from Ukraine “Small glove” (“Rokavička”). The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants concluded an agreement with the Social work centre Primorska – Notranjska on the implementation of the programme. It is intended for families from Ukraine, both children and adults, who are accommodated in the Postojna accommodation centre, providing them support regarding integration into the local environment. Amongst others, the programme includes assistance with learning the Slovenian language, creative workshops and games, provision of information, guidance and counseling.

Within the framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the Office concluded the contract with the Project Ambient enterprise on the implementation of basic integration support for displaced persons from Ukraine. The project is implemented at all locations where the Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants secures accommodation for displaced persons from Ukraine. The contractor provides psychosocial assistance, both the individual and group assistance. The activities are aimed at different target groups, one of them being children and young people. For example, if necessary, the contractor, based on the consent of parents or guardians, establishes contacts with competent service providers, such as e.g. counseling services at schools or kindergartens.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Information was provided by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*) upon request (emails, 13 April 2023, response dated 12 April 2023, and 14 April 2023).

<sup>102</sup> Information was provided by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*) upon request (emails, 13 April 2023, response dated 12 April 2023).

#### 1.4.4. Children in alternative care

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

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Resolution on the Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families” sets out objectives and measures relating to the alternative care of children. With regard to foster care, the resolution lays down the following objectives: ensuring a sufficient number of qualified foster families; increasing alertness with regard to the qualifications of foster parents, professional workers with social work centres and the judiciary; the provision of adequate support to foster parents. The resolution further specifies objectives with regard to the institutional care of children with behavioural, emotional and learning issues. These shall be the following: identification of problems in the field of institutional care; develop activities for enhancing the system of institutional care; strengthening professional assistance to children in the institutions. With regard to adoption, the following objectives shall be pursued: providing children with the most adequate adoptive parents; strengthening professional work in the field of adoptions and support for candidates for adoption; establishing a more harmonised practice in the field of adoptions and improve the transparency of the field.<sup>103</sup></p> <p>Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia issued Guidelines for work in the field of adoptions (<i>Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve</i>) in 2019. The guidelines are aimed at the professional workers with social work centres. The document covers the work with adoptive parents during the adoption procedure, including in case of a single parent adoption. The guidelines further capture the work with biological, as well as with the child. Transition of a child from a foster to an</p>	<p>In 2017, the National Assembly passed the Family Code, the new principal act governing family relations. The act, amongst others, provides for forms of child protection. The law defines adoption as a special form of child protection that creates the same relationship between the adoptive parent and the child as there is between parents and their children (Art. 9). Foster care is defined as a special form of protection of children who need care and upbringing by persons other than their parents (Art. 10). These definitions remained the same as in the past. The new law shifted the decision-making regarding measures to protect the best interests of the child (interim injunctions, measures of a more permanent nature through which the placement of a child in crisis centre, foster care, institution or with other person is possible), foster care and adoption from social work centres to courts. It stipulates that cases involving measures to protect the best interests of the child adoption and foster care shall be dealt with as a matter of priority (Art. 14, para 2). The court may place a child in foster care as a general form of child protection, but foster care may also function as a part of the measure for the protection of interests of the child (<i>ukrep za varstvo koristi otrok</i>). For example, the court may, with an interim injunction, remove a child from the parents and place them in the care of another person, a crisis centre, in foster care or in an institution, if it is likely that a child is at risk (Art. 162, para 1 in conj. with Art. 161). Foster care may also be a part of measures of a more permanent nature. For instance, the court may also remove a child from parents for up to three years. In such a case, the court places the child in the care of another person, in foster care or in an institution (Art. 174, para 1). The court may, eventually, place the child in the care of another person, in foster care or in an institution, if it deprives one or both parents of parental responsibility (Art. 176, para 4). Exceptionally, emergency removal of a child shall be carried out by social work centres, if it is likely that the child is in such serious danger that their best interests may only be</p>

<sup>103</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the family policy 2018–2028: “A Society friendly to all families”](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”*), 20 February 2018.

adoptive family is also covered. The guidelines also deal with international adoptions. They also cover work with parents after completion of an adoption procedure and the monitoring.<sup>104</sup>

protected by immediate removal of the child from the parents. The social work centre shall place the child in the care of another person, a crisis centre, in foster care or an institution (Art. 167, para 1). Regarding adoption, the new law introduces additional criteria preventing an individual from becoming an adoptive parent. A person cannot adopt a child, if they live with a person whose parental responsibility was withdrawn or has been convicted in a final judgment for an intentional criminal offence prosecuted *ex officio*, or for a criminal offence against life and limb, or a criminal offence against sexual inviolability prosecuted upon a motion (Art. 216). In the past, adoption was possible after one year from the fulfilment of the conditions on the part of the child, while the Family Code shortened the specified period to six months (Art. 218, para 3). The new act also introduced the possibility that parental responsibility is granted to the child's relatives. According to the law, the court may grant parental responsibility for a child whose parents are dead to a relative if this is in the best interests of the child, if the relative is ready to assume custody of the child and meets the legal conditions for adoption of the child. A relative shall be a person who is related to the child in the direct line of descent up to the second generation or in a lateral line up to the fourth generation. The court may only grant joint parental responsibility to relatives who are in a marriage or common-law relationship, or a relative and his spouse or common-law partner. The person to whom parental responsibility for a child shall acquire the rights and obligations that the child's parents would have had and shall become the child's legal representative (Art. 231, para 1-3).<sup>105</sup>

In 2019, the Provision of Foster Care Act was amended to reflect the changed roles of the institutions. In addition, to speed up the procedure, the amended act abolished the issuance of the foster care licence in the so-called extraordinary procedure, whereby the ministry issued this licence to a relative of a child, or to another person who is not a relative, if this was in the best interest of the child. The ministry's decision could also be the subject of judicial review. Now, when deciding on the child's placement, the court directly appoints a relative or another person, if this is in the best interest of the child, provided that they meet the conditions for

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<sup>104</sup> Dremelj, P., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), *Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve*, Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

<sup>105</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code \(Družinski zakonik\)](#), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

	<p>foster carers and agree to the task (Art. 14). The amended act further stipulates an additional reason for extending a foster care contract after the child placed in foster care has reached the age of majority. The child's social work centre may extend the foster care contract when the person concerned has no other possibility of accommodation after completing secondary education and proves within 30 days that they are kept in the register of unemployed persons. The foster care contract may be extended on these grounds for a maximum of 12 months immediately after the completion of secondary education, but only until the person reaches the age of 26 (Art. 46, para 3).<sup>106</sup></p>
<p>1.4.5. Children affected by custody disputes, including parental abduction</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>No document in this respect reported.<sup>107</sup></p>	<p>The Family Code, passed in 2017, applicable from 2019, stipulates that courts shall resolve cases concerning relations between parents and children, adoption, granting of parental responsibility to a relative, foster care and guardianship as a matter of priority (Art. 14, para 2). Administrative matters under the Family Code shall also be resolved by social work centres, and the responsible ministry as appellate body, as a priority (Art. 15, para 3). Before submitting a proposal with a court to decide on the child's custody, maintenance and contacts with them or other persons or on issues concerning the exercise of parental responsibility that significantly affect the child's development, the parents attend preliminary consultation at the social work centre. The aim of preliminary consultation is to warn the parent or other person that the best interests of the child shall be protected when relations with the child are being arranged, to warn them about the positive impact of the consensual agreement regarding these relations has on the child, and to explain to them the aim of mediation (Art. 203, para 1 and 3). Mediation can be carried out before the start of court proceedings, during it or after the end of court proceedings, and includes assistance in</p>

<sup>106</sup> Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>107</sup> The information was provided, upon request, by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) (email, 6 March 2023) and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

regulating personal and property relationships. Mediation is primarily carried out before the start of court proceedings with the aim of formulating a proposal for amicable divorce or a proposal for concluding a court settlement on the custody of the child, on their maintenance and on their contacts with parents or other persons or on issues concerning the exercise of parental responsibility that significantly affect the child's development (Art. 205, para 1 and 2). Amongst others, the mediator can also include in mediation a child who is able to understand the meaning and consequences of the mediation, if they assess that this is in the best interest of the child. During mediation, the mediator must always consider the principle of the best interest of the child. In cases of suspected domestic violence, mediation between the parties is not carried out. A mediator who learns during mediation that a child is at risk is obliged to inform the social work centre about this fact (Art. 210, para 1-4).<sup>108</sup>

In 2019, the new Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act was adopted. It governs judicial proceedings relating to family matters and the protection of the best interests of the child. Amongst others, the law stipulates that the court, participants and other persons participating in the proceedings must strive throughout the proceedings that the rights and legal interests of the participants are established and protected as soon as possible. *Ex officio*, the court shall undertake what is necessary to protect the rights and legal interest of children (i.e. persons who have not reached 18 years of age unless they have obtained full capacity to contract before that age) (Art. 6). In proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child, the court shall schedule the first hearing within 45 days of receipt of a complete proposal for the initiation of proceedings, or within eight days of receipt of the opinion of the social work centre. In proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child, the expert, if appointed, must produce an opinion within 60 days of receiving the decision on the appointment of the expert, and the supplementary expert opinion within 15 days of receiving the decision on supplementing the expert opinion (Art. 99). Additionally, temporary orders for the protection of the best interests of the child shall be issued under the conditions set out in the Family Code, and under the procedure laid down in the Enforcement and Security Act (Art. 100).<sup>109</sup> The

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<sup>108</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>109</sup> Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

	<p>procedure under the latter act is the fastest procedure. Under the Courts Act (<i>Zakon o sodiščih</i>), the issuance of a temporary order shall be an urgent matter. According to the law, in the period between 15 July and 15 August (summer operation, i.e. the so-called judicial vacation), courts shall only hold hearings and take decisions in urgent matters (Art. 83, para 1-3).<sup>110</sup></p> <p>Based on the Courts Act, which, amongst others, stipulates that the Supreme Court determines the anticipated time limit for the performance of typical procedural actions and the resolution of cases by individual types of courts and court instances (Art. 60.c), the Supreme Court set, in December 2022, the relevant timeframes applicable in 2023. According to the document, district courts should resolve 75 % of cases involving family matters in six months. For example, 75 % of criminal cases should be resolved in 18 months, 75 % of commercial disputes in 12 months and 75 % of civil matters in 21 months.<sup>111</sup></p>
1.4.6. Missing children	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>No documents reported.<sup>112</sup></p> <p>In Slovenia, the police report that between 400 and 600 people go missing every year, of which a smaller proportion are children up to 14 years of age and minors, namely around 30 % annually. The number fluctuates annually, in some years it is 35 %, but it can also be 20 % depending on the number of all missing persons. In more than half of the cases, missing children are reported within one hour and almost 90% of missing children are reported within eight hours after the disappearance. More than 90% of all missing children up to 14 years of age are found within</p>	<p>In 2022, the national parliament passed the new Electronic Communications Act. Amongst others, the law governs the conditions for the provision of electronic communications networks and electronic communications services. The law stipulates that in cases of breach of contracts on the part of users, the service providers may not restrict access to the missing children hotline number 116000 (Art. 178, para 4). Access to, the use of this number and the transfer of the call to the most appropriate centre for receiving emergency communication shall be free of charge. In case of a call to the missing children hotline number, an operator shall immediately inform such a centre about the caller's number and location. An operator shall be obliged to inform users about the existence of the</p>

<sup>110</sup> Slovenia, [The Courts act](#) (*Zakon o sodiščih*), 24 March 1994, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>111</sup> Vrhovno sodišče Republike Slovenije (2022), [Pričakovani časi opravljanja tipičnih procesnih ejanj in reševanja zadev na sodiščih – Časovni standardi po 60. c členu ZS za leto 2023](#), Ljubljana, Vrhovno sodišče Republike Slovenije.

<sup>112</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

four hours of reporting. All the children have so far been found alive and unharmed. In Slovenia, five children under the age of 14, who went missing between 1979 and 1996, are still missing. Currently, alerts are issued for an 11-year-old girl, who went missing in 2021, and for a four-year-old girl and a seven-year-old boy, missing since the end of 2020. These cases are dealt with as criminal offences of abduction of minors. Despite an intensive search and a criminal investigation, including cooperation with foreign authorities, the children have still not been found.<sup>113</sup>

The table shows the number of alerts issued by the police in the recent periods. The police issue an alert for a reported case if they do not trace the person in their first search operation. The data cover the searching for a missing child or a minor alert, and alerts issued for children and young adults who went missing/ run away from Radeče Correctional Home (minors placed there by the court upon committing a criminal offence) and residential educational institutions (*vzgojni zavodi*) (minors placed there based on the e.g. laws governing family matters, criminal acts and placement of children with special needs, respectively; i.e. children with emotional and behavioural issues).

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Searching for a missing child or minor alert					
Male – age					
0-7	4	0	3	12	2
7-14	10	7	14	18	23

mentioned hotline number in a visible place on its website and in the directory (Art. 200). An operator shall supply the police, at their written request, with the traffic and location data if these are required to locate a child whom parents or legal representatives have reported missing and who has with them or is presumed to have on them a mobile communications device (Art. 220, para 1). The police, however, shall not send the obtained data to the persons reporting a missing child if provision of such data would threaten the personal safety or dignity of the child, with particular regard to the regulations governing the protection of witnesses, restraining orders or the prevention of domestic violence (Art. 220, para 9).<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>115</sup> Slovenia, [The Electronic communications act](#) (*Zakon o elektronskih komunikacijah*), 28 September 2022, and subsequent modifications.



14-16	15	10	13	12	13
16-18	23	24	6	18	20
Female - age					
0-7	1	5	2	8	4
7-14	22	19	16	23	22
14-16	43	45	38	37	46
16-18	21	40	34	26	25
Alert due to escape from Radeče Correctional Home					
Male - age					
16-18	1	0	3	2	0
18-24	5	6	5	5	6
Female - age					
18-24	1	0	0	0	0
Alert due to escape from Residential Educational Institution					
Male - age					
7-14	6	8	4	11	5
14-16	13	14	19	16	22
16-18	28	29	19	22	18
18-24	8	5	2	2	1
Female - age					
7-14	2	5	8	2	11
14-16	15	8	13	13	29
16-18	15	26	16	17	45
18-24	1	3	1	4	1

\* The presented data cover only reported cases. The data for 2022 are preliminary, as the the annual report on the work of the police for 2022 has yet to be published. The number of alerts does not necessarily reflect the number of individual children, as it often happens that the same children go missing/ run away from home or other institutions.

The Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia issued, on 2 September 2020, the Decision No. 38222-1/2018/4, with which it assigned the number 116 000 (the hotline number for missing children) to the Ministry of the Interior. The number is directly operated by the Operation and Communication Centre of the General Police Directorate. All police officers who will be on duty at the mentioned telephone number receive(d) training. Experts from Slovenian non-governmental organisations also participated in the training.<sup>114</sup>

Regarding escapes of children to threatening environments, see also e.g. Section 1.4.8. with information on the Handbook on identifying early and forced marriages in the Roma community and on how to act in these cases.

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

The Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030, passed by the National Assembly in 2022, sets out the following measures to prevent the risk of poverty and social exclusion of children and youth: ensuring effective and free access to preschool education and care, education (including extracurricular activities), culture, a healthy meal every school day and healthcare; preventing early school dropout; determine groups of children in need and measures for them; monitoring the situation of different

No developments identified.

<sup>114</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

types of families and creating measures for families who temporarily find themselves in circumstances that make them particularly vulnerable, or live in such circumstances; promoting the early entry of young people into the labour market after completing their education and reducing the number of young people who are neither employed nor in education or training.<sup>116</sup>

#### 1.4.8. Children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma, Sami, etc.

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Following 2004 and 2011 strategies, the year 2021 saw the adoption of a new Strategy of Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji</i>). The strategy covers the period from 2021 until 2030. It sets out measures relating to education of Roma across different parts of the national education system. For example, the strategy envisages the following measures relating to preschool education: promoting inclusion of Roma children in public kindergartens that operate in immediate vicinity of Roma settlements; for Roma settlements, which are less embedded in the external environment and which face very complex issues, a department of regular kindergarten should be organised in the settlement with the possibility of multi-level inclusion of Roma children in urban and suburban kindergartens and departments;</p>	<p>In 2021, regulations governing norms and standards in kindergartens, elementary schools and educational facilities for children with special needs were amended to provide for systematic accommodation of the Roma assistants in Slovenian education system. In the past, Roma assistants were mostly employed on a project basis and their work was funded by the EU funds. The rules governing kindergartens stipulates that a full-time post of Roma assistant shall be available in kindergartens with more than 20 Roma children from Roma settlements, while a half-time post shall be available in kindergartens with between 10 and up to 20 children.<sup>121</sup> In elementary schools, a full-time job shall be available in schools with 31 or more Roma children, and a half-time post shall be available in schools with between 16 and up to 30 children.<sup>122</sup> The same standards apply in bilingual primary schools and primary schools with Italian as the language of instruction.<sup>123</sup> In primary schools and institutes for children with special needs, a full-time post shall be available in facilities with 13 or</p>

<sup>116</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030](#) (Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022–2030), 23 March 2022.

<sup>121</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on standards to conduct preschool education activities](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih za opravljanje dejavnosti predšolske vzgoje*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications

<sup>122</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje programa osnovne šole*), 28 May 2007, and subsequent modifications

<sup>123</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme in bilingual primary schools and primary schools with Italian language of instruction](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje programa osnovne šole v dvojezičnih osnovnih šolah in osnovnih šolah z italijanskim učnim jezikom*).

organisation of activities aimed at building and increasing the trust of Roma parents in institutional forms of care or education). With regard to primary education, the strategy sets out the following measures, amongst others: the implementation of measures for greater inclusion of children in the preschool education system, so that upon entering elementary school, children will be better equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills for fairer and more equal access to knowledge; the greatest possible inclusion of Roma assistants in the work of primary schools with the aim of reducing discrimination and building Roma trust in education institutions and self-esteem in children; better inclusion of primary school workers in educational programmes relating to work in multicultural environments; work with Roma families. As per secondary education, higher-level education and adult education, additional learning assistance and specific scholarship fund for Roma attending secondary schooling are recommended.<sup>117</sup> A commission is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Once a year, it is obliged to report to the minister responsible for education. Upon expiry of its four-year mandate, the commission produces a report on its work.<sup>118</sup>

In 2021, Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities launched the Handbook on identifying early and forced marriages in the Roma community and on how to act in these cases (*Priročnik o prepoznavanju zgodnjih in prisilnih porok v*

more Roma children, while a half-time post shall be available in facilities with between 6 and up to 12 Roma children.<sup>124</sup> In all cases, a Roma assistant shall complete secondary or secondary vocational education, or shall have a national vocational qualification as a Roma assistant. In facilities for children with special needs, the post titled additional expert to work with Roma pupils is further laid down. For example, 10 % of a full-time post shall be available in facilities with between four and up to eight Roma pupils, half-time post in facilities with between 14 and up to 19 children, full-time post in facilities with between 27 and up to 34 children, while two full-time posts shall be available in facilities with 45 or more children.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Klepac, A., Komac, M. (2021), [Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport.

<sup>118</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>124</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalnih programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami*), 11 June 2007, and subsequent modifications

<sup>125</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalnih programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami*), 11 June 2007, and subsequent modifications

*romski skupnosti in o ukrepanju v teh primerih*). The handbook targets institutions and organisations working with Roma communities. It contains information on the identification of the problem (e.g. recognising early signs that indicate that an escape of a child to a threatening environment or a forced marriage could occur), as well as legal bases for dealing with early and forced marriages. The handbook also includes examples of practical experiences and actions by institutions (e.g. social work centres, the police and state prosecutors) when dealing with such cases. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities reported that the handbook was produced in cooperation with representatives of different organisations, including representatives of the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (*Svet romske skupnosti Republike Slovenije*). Several trainings for professional workers (civil servants) in the social protection sector, education, police, healthcare, justice, and non-governmental organisations were held in 2022 and 2023 to enable them to deal properly with instances of early and forced marriages in Roma communities. Activities will further focus also on awareness-raising within the Roma community.<sup>119</sup>

In late 2021, the government adopted the National programme of measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2021-2030 (*Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030*). The programme is the major government initiative for improving the living conditions of the Roma. The programme consists of a set of objectives and measures covering different fields of life, including education, employment, social inclusion, housing, healthcare as well as awareness raising and fight against discrimination. The programme includes measures targeting at children mostly focusing on education. Amongst other, the programme sets out the

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<sup>119</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities related to the [handbook](#) and the main web page of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Office for National Minorities with listed [news items](#), including on this topic.

following objectives in the field of education: increased inclusion of Roma children in preschool education; Roma children successful completion of primary schooling; involvement of the Roma in further education for their successful integration into the labour market. Strengthening the role and improving the situation of Roma women and girls is an objective in the field of social protection. Elimination of harmful practices in the Roma community, such as the flight of minors to harmful environments (so-called early marriages) and forced marriages, as well as raising awareness of the harmfulness of these phenomena and the importance of action by competent institutions is another objective in this field.<sup>120</sup>

#### 1.4.9. Children involved in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses or parties

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Programme for children 2020-2025, which is the principal national policy document targeting the needs of children, sets out child-friendly procedures as a priority are. It lays down the following objectives: judicial and administrative proceedings involving children or dealing with their situation adapted to their needs and circumstances; ensuring that their opinion is heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity; all official persons with whom the child comes into contact during the procedure consider the best interest of the child as a central guideline, which is properly specified in such a way that it does not raise doubts about its content and does not allow abuse.<sup>126</sup></p> <p>The programme's implementing document, the Action plan for the implementation of the Programme for children 2020-2025 for the period 2020-2022 lays down more efficient children's access to judicial protection and the adequate treatment of children in judicial and</p>	<p>In 2019, the National Assembly passed amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act with a view to transpose the requirements of the Victims' Rights Directive into the national legislation. Amongst others, the amended act introduced a new general principle of considerate treatment of victims, with particular attention also given to those vulnerable because of their age (Art. 18.a). In addition to criminal offences against sexual inviolability under Chapter XIX of the Criminal Code, the criminal offence of neglect of a child and cruel treatment and the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings, an injured party (i.e. victim) who is a child shall also have, throughout the criminal proceedings, a lawyer if they have been a victim of criminal offences against marriage, family and youth under Chapter XXI of the Criminal Code, as well as the crimes of enslavement under Article 112. The lawyer shall ensure their rights, particularly regarding the protection of their integrity during the hearing before the court and the enforcement of pecuniary claims. Children who are victims of the above-mentioned offences shall also have a lawyer during the hearing in pre-trial proceedings. The court shall assign <i>ex officio</i> a lawyer to those who do not have one (Art. 65,</p>

<sup>120</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>126</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

administrative proceedings as an overarching objective. Specific objectives shall be the following, amongst others: ensuring effective enforcement of children's rights in court proceedings; preventing victimisation of children as a result of participation in court proceedings; achieving to the greatest extent that all stakeholders in court proceedings act in accordance with the principle of the best interest of the child; through training, developing the special competences of all stakeholders in procedures in which children are involved; special consideration of children, perpetrators of criminal acts who are involved in court proceedings; ensuring that judicial and administrative procedures are adapted to the needs of children and that children's opinions are heard and considered.<sup>127</sup>

After the expert consultations "Children before the court", organised by the Supreme Court (*Vrhovno sodišče*) in 2008, the judiciary, based on the opinions of various experts and the experience of judges in working with children in criminal proceedings, produced publications relating to the testifying of children in criminal proceedings. To make the process of testifying in criminal proceedings easier for children and to prepare them for it, the booklets present in a friendly way the children's role in the proceedings and the importance and function of the court. The booklets are adapted for children of different age groups. In November 2020, an updated version of the booklet intended for children aged between nine and 13 years was launched. In 2022, booklets aimed at girls and boys between five and eight years of age were published, respectively.<sup>128</sup>

para 3). The law further stipulate that the victim must be allowed to avoid unwanted contact with the suspect or defendant, unless the contact is necessary for the successful implementation of pre-trial or criminal proceedings (Art. 65, para 4). The investigating judge may order that an investigative act is recorded with appropriate technical audio or audiovisual recording equipment, while the testimony of a witness under the age of 15 who was the victim of the above-mentioned criminal offences shall always be recorded. (Art. 84, para 1). Direct questioning of persons under 15 years of age who are the victims of the above-mentioned criminal offences shall not be permitted at the main hearing. In such cases, the court must decide that the record of the previous questioning of such persons is read out. If necessary, the court proceed in the same manner regarding other child victims or an injured party with special needs for protection (Art. 331, para 5). The hearing of a witness under the age of 15, who was the victim of the above-mentioned criminal offence, shall be carried out in specially adapted premises, unless this is not necessary for justifiable reasons, which must be specifically explained by the court (Art. 240, para 6). The same shall apply to the interview conducted by the expert witness with the child (Art. 264.a). The amended act stipulates that if a person under the age of 18 is heard as a witness, the court may order that the public is excluded from the hearing (Art. 331, para 3). In the past, such adjustment was only granted to children up to 14 years of age. The law also introduces an individual assessment of victims. If this is possible, the competent authority in pre-trial or criminal proceedings shall assess, during the first contact with the victim, the degree of their exposure to secondary and repeated victimisation, intimidation and retaliation in order to establish the existence of special needs for protection. Amongst others, special consideration shall be given to the age of the victim (Art. 143.č, para 1&2). In addition, a child who, due to his age and mental development, cannot understand the meaning of the right to not be obliged to testify, is not allowed to be questioned as a witness, unless the defendant themselves requests it or if the

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<sup>127</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>128</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Slovenian judiciary dedicated to [publications targeting children](#).

court deems it to be in the best interest of the child (Art. 236, para 3).<sup>129</sup>

In 2019, the new Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act was adopted. It governs judicial proceedings relating to family matters and the protection of the best interests of the child. According to the law, for example, in the proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child, the court calls on the social work centre to inform the child, who is capable to understand the meaning of the procedure and the consequences of the decision, in an appropriate way about the initiation of the procedure and about their right to express their opinion. When the child wishes to express their opinion, they may do so at the social work centre or in an interview with the child's advocate who has been assigned to the child in accordance with the law governing the functioning of the Human Rights Ombudsman, or depending on age and other circumstances at an informal interview with the judge, which may involve the participation of a professional, always without the presence of the parents. At the interview at the social work center or with the judge, a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or the child's advocate, if they have been assigned to the child, may be present. Such a person or the child's advocate can help the child express their opinion. The court can prohibit the presence of a person if it considers that it is not a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or that the participation of this person in the procedure would be against the best interests of the child. A record of the interview shall be produced and the judge or the social work centre may decide that the interview be audio recorded or audio-video recorded. For the protection of the best interests of the child, the court may decide not to allow the child's parents to view the record or to listen to the audio record or watch the audio-video record (Art. 96). Amongst others, the court may also use as evidence a transcript or audio or audio-visual recording of an interview with the child from other judicial proceedings (Art. 48, para 2).<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal procedure act](#) (*Zakon o kazenskem postopku*), 29 September 1994, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>130</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.



#### 1.4.10. Children involved in judicial proceedings as suspects or accused persons

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Action plan for the implementation of the Programme for children 2020-2025 for the period 2020-2022 specifies the following among objectives in the field of child-friendly proceedings: special consideration of children, perpetrators of criminal acts who are involved in court proceedings.<sup>131</sup></p>	<p>In late 2020, the parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act to provide for the transposition of the Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings. For example, the law introduces the presumption of minority. When the age of the perpetrator cannot be determined, or in doubt whether they have already reached the age of fourteen, sixteen, eighteen or twenty-one, the presumption applies that they have not yet reached the age in question (Art. 452.a). With regard to the child's right to be informed, the competent authority immediately after informing the child that they are a suspect or accused person, or during the first contact upon informing them about this fact, instructs the child on at least the following: that the authority must inform their parents or guardian about the child's rights as soon as possible; that he has the right to the assistance of lawyer as laid down in the law; that he has the right to protection of privacy; that they have the right to be accompanied by their parents or guardian during the proceedings; that that he has the right to free legal aid (Art. 452.c). Amongst others, the law lays down that a child who has been deprived of liberty shall be immediately instructed about their rights. They shall be further informed that they may be deprived of liberty only in exceptional cases when a milder measure is not applicable, that the deprivation of liberty may last the shortest necessary period, and that a regular judicial review of the deprivation of liberty must be ensured. The competent authority must inform the child's parents or guardian about the deprivation of liberty as soon as possible and shall ensure that the child may contact them. After deprivation of liberty, a child is examined by a doctor without undue delay, if the minor needs medical assistance or if the minor, the parents, guardian or the child's lawyer so request (452.d). Regarding the access to a lawyer, the amended act sets out that a child may have a lawyer throughout the proceedings against them (Art. 454, para 1). Previously, the child could access a lawyer from the start of the preparatory proceedings.</p>

<sup>131</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

According to the amended act, a child shall have a lawyer from the beginning of the preparatory proceedings, if they are involved in the procedure for a criminal offense for which a prison sentence of more than three years is laid down in law. For criminal acts for which a lighter sentence is stipulated, they shall have a lawyer if the judge for juvenile offenders finds that the child needs one, considering in particular the child's mental development, level of understanding and personal characteristics of the minor, the complexity of the case and the weight of the sanction or other measures, which can be used against the child in a specific procedure. In the above-mentioned cases, the child shall have a lawyer through the investigative act, during which the child has the right to be present (e.g. the inspection of the crime scene and the examination of expert witnesses, examination of a witness), unless it is an investigative act carried out by the police without a court order. In any case, a child shall have a lawyer if deprived of liberty. If the child is to be assisted by a lawyer and does not hire one, and a lawyer is not hired by their legal representative or relatives, the authority, before the proceedings are taking place, shall appoint one ex officio (Art. 454). The law further lays down provisions relating to the considerate treatment of the child by the stakeholders involved (Art. 453), an individual assessment of the child (Art. 469), and audiovisual recording of questioning of the child (Art. 452.č). Judges, state prosecutors, police officers, lawyers and mediators who participate in proceedings against children acquire additional knowledge in the field of juvenile delinquency. They shall attend basic training and regular training (Art. 452.b).<sup>132</sup>

In 2021, the National Assembly passed the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act. To ensure the best interests of the child, this law determines the manner and conditions of comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings regarding certain criminal acts in the Children's house (Art. 1). Specific criminal offences under this shall be the following: crimes against humanity, against life and limb, against sexual integrity, against marriage, family and children, crimes under Articles 131 to 138 of the Criminal Code (e.g. forced marriage, torture, abduction and stalking), as well as some other crimes such as dangerous driving in road traffic (Art. 2, para 2). The law

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<sup>132</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

sets out principles of comprehensive treatment. While considering the child's age, maturity, capacity to understand the relevance and consequences of their actions and other personal traits, as well as the nature and circumstances of the crime, the state authorities and other participants involved in the provision of comprehensive treatment shall ensure: that the child receives the necessary information and explanations; that the protection and personal safety of the child are ensured so as to prevent exposure to secondary victimisation and revictimisation, intimidation and revenge; that the child is heard, that the procedures are carried out without undue delay (Art. 3). The comprehensive treatment shall be carried out as a public service in the Children's House (Art. 4). The Children's house shall perform the following tasks, amongst others: organising the interview or physical examination, and providing support to the child, as well as technical and spatial capacities for these proceedings; within the framework of crisis support, providing a counsellor during an interview or physical examination; and providing psychological, social and practical support to the child and their family members (Art. 7, para 1). The court decides whether the comprehensive treatment is provided to an underage victim or a witness in pre-trial or criminal proceedings regarding the above-mentioned criminal offences. The court shall also decide whether the treatment is provided to child victims or witnesses of other criminal offences or to the underage person against whom pre-trial or criminal proceedings are introduced (Art. 14, para 1&2). The court shall also order an interview with a child (Art. 17, para 1). The Children's House shall ensure that there is no unwanted personal contact between the child and the suspect or the accused before, during and after the interview (Art. 23, para 4). The questioning of the child is always audio and video recorded (Art. 26, para 1). If a child questioned under this law needs to be questioned again, this law shall apply. In doing so, the judge shall not allow hearing about the circumstances that were already the subject at the first hearing. The same professional as before shall carry out the additional interview unless there is a justified reason for the Children's House to appoint another professional (Art. 28). When examining physical injuries, the court makes a particularly careful judgment as to whether the examination should be carried out based on medical documentation and other information in the file or also by examining the child (Art. 30). Before the physical examination, the importance and nature of medical actions, important for the analysis and establishment of facts relevant to criminal proceedings,

	<p>are explained to the child with particular care and attention (Art. 31). If, despite careful explanations, the child objects to the examination, the examination of physical injuries shall be carried out by examining the medical documentation and information in the file, unless this would be against the interests of the successful implementation of pre-trial or criminal proceedings (Art. 32, para 1). The Children's House provides crisis support and psychosocial assistance to the child. Crisis support shall include, in particular, psychological support for the child during interrogation and physical examination. Psychosocial assistance shall be a more permanent form of psychological, social and practical assistance provided to the child after the interview or physical examination. The institution can also provide crisis support and psychosocial assistance to the child's family members who are not suspected of a crime against the child, if, in the opinion of the counsellor, this is dictated by the child's interest. For the implementation of crisis support and psychosocial assistance, the institution may cooperate with other organisations that provide assistance, in particular with social work centres, healthcare providers and other professionals, as well as non-governmental organisations (Art. 33).<sup>133</sup></p>
<p>1.4.11. Children at risk of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; child /forced marriages, honour-related violence</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>Please see section 1.4.8. for information on measures addressing early marriages in Roma communities.</p>	<p>In 2015, the National assembly adopted amendments to the Criminal Code. The amended law criminalised forced marriages (i.e. entry into a forced marriage or establishing a similar community) (Art. 132.a). According to the law, whoever, by force or threat of using force or the exploitation of a subordinate or dependent position, forces another person to enter into a marriage or to establish a similar community that in accordance with the law is equal to marriage in certain legal consequences, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for up to three years. If committed against a child, the</p>

<sup>133</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

	criminal offence shall be punishable with imprisonment of up to five years. (Art. 132.a). <sup>134</sup>
1.4.12. Children whose parents are in prison/custody	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
No documents in this respect reported. <sup>135</sup>	<p>The Family Code, adopted in 2017, applicable from 2019, stipulates that parents, above all others, have the right and obligation to protect the rights and interests of their child. The state implements measures to protect the rights and interests of the child only when parents do not exercise these rights and obligations, or they are not performed for the benefit of the child. In such cases, children may be placed in the care of another person, a crisis centre, a foster carer or an institution.<sup>136</sup></p> <p>According to available data, 12 children whose parents were imprisoned or in remand were in foster care in December 2021, and 11 in December 2022.<sup>137</sup></p>
1.4.13. Children who drop out of compulsory education and working children under the legal age for work	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
No documents reported. <sup>138</sup>	No developments identified.

<sup>134</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>135</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>136</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>137</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023)

<sup>138</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023)

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>On 30 June 2023, the National Assembly adopted the Resolution on the National Programme in the Field of Illicit Drugs 2023-2030 (<i>Resolucija o nacionalnem programu na področju prepovedanih drog 2023–2030</i>).<sup>139</sup> Among its main objectives are strengthening of prevention and early intervention to reduce the number of new drug users among the younger generation. The resolution envisions the development of specific programmes for especially vulnerable populations, among them children and young adults. Additional emphasis is given to the development and strengthening of early prevention. Early prevention is intended for children of all ages as well as for parents and future parents and all other members of society that play an important role in children’s life. Social and emotional learning and life skills are among the essential elements of early prevention approach. An agreement between the Ministry of Health and the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia was reached to secure funding for establishing the inpatient treatment of children having drug use disorders. The programme is set to begin working with children by the end of 2023.</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.

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<sup>139</sup> Slovenia, The Resolution on the National programme in the field of illicit drugs 2023-2030 (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu na področju prepovedanih drog 2023-2030*), 30 June 2023.

In 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted in its last observations on Slovenia the adoption of the new Family Code. It expressed its concern over the fact the legislation provides for exceptions to the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for both women and men with parental consent.<sup>140</sup>

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues expressed concerns over the situation of Roma children upon its visit to Slovenia in 2018. Amongst others, the body noted continuing referring of some Roma children to special classes or schools, and found that, “Lack of water means difficulty in maintaining basic hygiene, especially in cold weather. It has been reported that this is one of the factors contributing to Roma children being mocked and therefore avoiding schools in more than one community.”<sup>141</sup>

In 2018, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted the following, amongst others: “the insufficient coordination of the provision of the necessary services for children with disabilities, among all persons in positions of responsibility”; “the absence of mechanisms to ensure the participation of children with disabilities in decision-making processes affecting their lives, in particular the lack of mechanisms to ensure the right of children with disabilities to have their views taken into account on matters pertaining to them and their families, including their participation in all protection mechanisms”; “the lack of appropriate social and health-care services for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities”; “the lack of support and services for families, especially single female-headed families, that have members with disabilities, including children, as a result of which their risk of poverty and social exclusion is increased”; “lack of concrete targets and provisions for implementing inclusive education in existing policies and legislation providing for inclusive education”; “the insufficient capacity of regular schools to provide for curriculum accommodation and inclusive learning environments and, in particular, the lack of skills and knowledge among teachers about inclusive teaching methodologies and the low expectations of the capacities of children with disabilities.”<sup>142</sup>

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe raised different issues upon its visit to Slovenia in 2017. Amongst others, because of a risk of statelessness for children of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees born on the move or in Slovenia due to existing Slovenian legislation, they called on authorities to accede to the relevant international instruments on statelessness. The Commissioner also raised concerns over the phenomena of early marriage and pregnancies among Roma and urged the authorities to clearly determine in the legislation the minimum age for marriage and to implement prevention strategies. They also called on the authorities to develop a clear roadmap for the complete abolition of detention of minor migrants and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied children.<sup>143</sup>

In its 2021 report on Slovenia, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence expressed concerns over the following issues: arranged and early marriages in Roma and some other communities; failure of some schools to detect and respond to cases of children witnessing or experiencing domestic or any other form of violence; a serious lack of qualified and properly trained court experts on sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children; the absence of specialist

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<sup>140</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2023), [Concluding observations on Slovenia](#), 28 February 2023.

<sup>141</sup> United Nations (UN), Special Rapporteur on minority issues (2018), [Statement on the conclusion of his official visit to Slovenia, 5-13 April 2018](#), 13 April 2018.

<sup>142</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2018), [Concluding observations on Slovenia](#), 16 April 2018.

<sup>143</sup> Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (2017), [Report following his visit to Slovenia from 20 to 23 March 2017](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 11 July 2017.

training for experts providing psychological counselling to children who have been victims or witnesses of violence or abuse.<sup>144</sup>

Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings considered the following issues in Slovenia, amongst others: the disappearance of unaccompanied children from public care; the lack of systemic and comprehensive provision of longer-term accommodation and assistance to child victims of trafficking.<sup>145</sup>

In the recent period, the Human Rights Ombudsman issued various recommendations to the authorities, including amending legislation governing the placement of children with special needs to allow for the assignment of a permanent attendant to certain groups of children, in particular to children with autism spectrum, as this would contribute to their optimal development. The body further urged the authorities to respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to refrain, in the case of children (and persons related to them within the meaning of Article 8 of ECHR) who are in an irregular situation, from carrying out shortened informal return procedures based on agreements and protocols, which due to their nature cannot be optimal framework for protecting the child's interests. The Ombudsman also called on the authorities to fully regulate the status of departments in social care institutions, where children and adolescents with combined severe mental health problems and issues in intellectual and physical development are placed, as that their placement and treatment will be in accordance with the Mental Health Act. Amongst others, the ombudsman recommended the authorities to provide for the adequate legislative framework governing psychotherapeutic services that will enable access to regular treatments and therapies for children, adolescents and adults. The body also urged the authorities to stop detaining children in irregular situation and recommended that children and their families be accommodated in adequate institutions for the accommodation of children. The Ombudsman also noted that the lack of expert witnesses in family matters could lead to violations of children's rights and recommended the authorities and relevant stakeholder to do away with the unsustainable situation as soon as possible. Since there is no grammar school providing the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme that is physically accessible for persons with disabilities in the central and western regions of Slovenia, the Ombudsman recommended the authorities to provide funding for the elimination of architectural barriers at Bežigrad Grammar School. The Ombudsman, for example, called on the relevant authorities to set up a systematic form of accommodation and treatment of unaccompanied children. The body also called the authorities to amend the Crime Victims Compensation Act to allow for compensation for non-EU nationals, as to bring the national legislation in line with the Anti-Trafficking Directive.<sup>146</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.

In Slovenia, there is no single legal act governing children's rights and their protection. Such provisions are included in a variety of sectoral pieces of legislation. If legal provisions explicitly stipulating inter-institutional cooperation are a feature of an integrated approach towards child protection, the Slovenian system is becoming increasingly integrated. Historically, the field of the prevention of family violence has

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<sup>144</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021.

<sup>145</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (2018), [Report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 24 November 2017.

<sup>146</sup> For more information, see the web page with [reports produced by the Human Rights Ombudsman](#).



been the most heavily regulated in terms of inter-institutional cooperation (e.g. exchange of information between the relevant institutions in the case of violence, setting up of a multidisciplinary team).<sup>147</sup> For a considerable period, such an approach was lacking in other fields. In the recent period, for example, such an orientation can be noted with respect to certain groups of children who need support that is more comprehensive. In 2017, the parliament passed the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs. This act provides for the setting-up of early treatment centres. An early treatment center is staffed by a paediatrician specialist, a registered nurse, a mid-level nurse or an administrator, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, specialists in the field of special and rehabilitation education and social workers. A multidisciplinary team is assigned to a child and the team involves the parents.<sup>148</sup> In 2021, the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act was adopted. The law governs the manner and conditions of comprehensive treatment of child victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings regarding certain crimes in the Children's House. There are provisions in place governing the institution's cooperation with courts, state prosecutor's offices, the police, social work centres, medical institutions, non-governmental organisations and other professionals.<sup>149</sup>

The Slovenian child protection system is, generally, oriented towards prevention. In 1995, the responsibility for the functioning of Social work centres, that is – public institutions that play a considerable part in the national system of child protection, as well as social protection, was shifted from the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) to the then Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, signalling such an orientation. The relevant legislation in the field of social protection provides for the measures of social prevention. For example, when a case of a child, whose interests and development are at risk, is reported or identified, current standards requests that social work centres inspect possibilities of cooperation with the family and of assisting such a family, if possible, to resolve the situation. Before exercising public powers and intervening, the centres thus inspect the possibility of assistance to family by means of social protection services. Social protection programmes oriented towards prevention include programmes such as a national telephone helpline for any child in need of certain advice or support, certain activities targeting children who come from unfavourable family environment and face difficulties when growing up (e.g. day centres for children and youth). There are also activities aimed at supporting families such as “family

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<sup>147</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Rules on cooperation between the police and other authorities in the detection and prevention of domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju policije z drugimi organi in organizacijami pri odkrivanju in preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 19 March 2010; Slovenia, [The Rules on the treatment of domestic violence for educational institutions](#) (*Pravilnik o obravnavi nasilja v družini za vzgojno-izobraževalne zavode*), 10 December 2009; Slovenia, The Rules on procedures for dealing with domestic violence in the implementation of healthcare activities (*Pravilnik o pravilih in postopkih pri obravnavanju nasilja v družini pri izvajanju zdravstvene dejavnosti*), 21 February 2011.

<sup>148</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.

<sup>149</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

centres” (defined as programmes aiming e.g. to strengthen positive parenting, to improve communication within the family, to provide for personal growth of children and adolescents, as well as for holiday activities for children and occasional care for children). Relatively recent preventive measure is the prohibition of corporal punishment of children from 2016.

### 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.

In 2017, the new Family Code, regulating family matters, including measures for the protection of children, was adopted. The law shifted practically completely shifted the decision-making from social work centres to courts. The year 2019 saw the adoption of the new Non-contentious Civil Procedure Act, which lays down procedural rules under which courts deal including with family relations and procedures for the protection of children. Both laws put at the centre the child’s interests. The former, for example, stipulates that in all activities and procedures affecting a child, parents, state authorities and bearers of public authority, local authorities, and other legal and natural persons must act in the best interest of the child. The latter obliges the courts to undertake, ex officio, what is necessary to protect the rights and legal interest of children. Both laws set out more elaborate provisions on child participation. According to the Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act, for example, in the proceedings for the protection of the interests of the child, the court calls on the social work centre to inform the child, who is capable to understand the meaning of the procedure and the consequences of the decision, in an appropriate way about the initiation of the procedure and about their right to express their opinion. When the child wishes to express their opinion, they may do so at the social work centre or in an interview with the child’s advocate who has been assigned to the child in accordance with the law governing the functioning of the Human Rights Ombudsman, or depending on age and other circumstances at an informal interview with the judge, which may involve the participation of a professional, always without the presence of the parents. At the interview at the social work center or with the judge, a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or the child’s advocate, if they have been assigned to the child, may be present. Such a person or the child’s advocate can help the child express their opinion. The court can prohibit the presence of a person if it considers that it is not a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or that the participation of this person in the procedure would be against the best interests of the child.<sup>150</sup>

In 2016, corporal punishment of children was banned with the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.<sup>151</sup>

The monitoring period also saw the adoption of legislation providing for enhanced treatment of certain groups of children. These include the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs,<sup>152</sup> the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural

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<sup>150</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

<sup>151</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>152</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.

disorders in Education,<sup>153</sup> and the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act.<sup>154</sup>

The Provision of Foster Care Act, amended in 2019, stipulates an additional reason for extending a foster care contract after the child placed in foster care has reached the age of majority. The child's social work centre may extend the foster care contract when the person concerned has no other possibility of accommodation after completing secondary education and proves within 30 days that they are kept in the register of unemployed persons. The foster care contract may be extended on these grounds for a maximum of 12 months immediately after the completion of secondary education, but only until the person reaches the age of 26.<sup>155</sup>

Amongst others, the adoption of amendments to the Criminal Code provided for the prohibition of forced marriages and stalking.<sup>156</sup> The law lays down heavier penalties in case that these acts are committed against children. The adoption of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act in 2019 and 2020 involved the transposition of the Victims' Rights Directive and Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings, respectively, enhancing the guarantees for child victims and suspects or accused persons.<sup>157</sup>

For gaps and challenges, please see the Section 1.5. above.

### 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)

Previously an informal project carried out by the Human Rights Ombudsman, child advocacy has been systematically embedded with the ombudsman institution with the 2017 amendments to the Human Rights Ombudsman Act. The amended act lays down the child advocacy as Ombudsman's internal organisational unit. It shall be implemented through a volunteer network ensuring equal access to an advocate for all children. The purpose of advocacy is for the advocate to provide professional assistance to the child to express their opinion in all procedures and matters involving the child, and to communicate the child's opinion to the competent authorities and institutions that decide on their rights and interests. The advocate is not the child's legal representative. Professional assistance shall include psychosocial support for the

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<sup>153</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>154</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>155</sup> Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>156</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>157</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal procedure act](#) (*Zakon o kazenskem postopku*), 29 September 1994, and subsequent modifications.

child, conversations about their wishes, feelings and opinions, familiarising the child with procedures and activities in a child-appropriate manner, seeking the most adequate solution together with the child, and accompanying the child before the authorities and institutions that decide on their rights and interests.<sup>158</sup>

In 2021, the National Assembly passed the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act. In order to ensure the best interests of the child, this law determines the manner and conditions of comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings regarding certain criminal acts (e.g. crimes against life and limb, against sexual integrity, against marriage, family and children) in the Children's house. The law sets out the principles of comprehensive treatment (e.g. the protection and personal safety of the child are ensured so as to prevent exposure to secondary victimisation and revictimisation, intimidation and revenge; the child is heard and the procedures are carried out without undue delay). The Children's house organises interviews with children and their physical examination and provides spatial capacities for these proceedings as well. It provides crisis support and psychosocial assistance to the child. In particular, the crisis support shall include psychological support for the child during interrogation and physical examination. Psychosocial assistance shall be a more permanent form of psychological, social and practical assistance provided to the child after the interview or physical examination.<sup>159</sup>

In 2017, the parliament adopted the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs. Integrated early treatment of children with special needs and children with risk factors in the preschool period includes treatment of the child and their family in the preschool period with the aim of ensuring and stimulating the child's development, strengthening the family's capacity and encouraging the social inclusion of the family and the child. Early treatment centres (*centri za zgodnjo obravnavo*) shall carry out early treatment. Early treatment services include e.g. medical services necessary for diagnosis, condition assessment and medical care, early screening, detection, assessment and monitoring services, family training and counselling, physiotherapy, psychosocial assistance, provision of equipment and assistance with movement and communication and social protection services. The early treatment center is staffed by a paediatrician specialist, a registered nurse, a mid-level nurse or an administrator, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, specialists in the field of special and rehabilitation pedagogy and social workers and, if necessary, other specialists. (Art. 8). The services are provided based on an individual family assistance plan. Parents are involved in the work of multidisciplinary team. For example, the team's tasks include the child's diagnosis, preparation and monitoring of an individual family assistance plan, and creation of a plan for the child's transition to kindergarten, institution for the upbringing and education of children and adolescents with special needs, social welfare institution or elementary school.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Slovenia, [The Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>159</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>160</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.

## 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	There is no single institution primarily responsible for child protection at the national level.
<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>	x		<p>Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (<i>Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti</i>):<sup>161</sup></p> <p>- Directorate for family (<i>Direktorat za družino</i>);</p>

<sup>161</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Slovenia, [The Resolution on the family policy 2018–2028: “A Society friendly to all families”](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018–2028 “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”*), 20 February 2018; Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022–2030*), 23 March 2022.

<p>If <u>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>		<p>- Directorate for social affairs (<i>Direktorat za socialne zadeve</i>);  Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future (<i>Ministrstvo za solidarno prihodnost</i>);<sup>162</sup>  Ministry of Education (<i>Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje</i>);<sup>163</sup>  Ministry of Justice (<i>Ministrstvo za pravosodje</i>);<sup>164</sup>  Ministry of Health (<i>Ministrstvo za zdravje</i>);<sup>165</sup></p>
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<sup>162</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications

<sup>163</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act](#) (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Placement of children with special needs act](#) (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 12 July 2011, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Klepac, A., Komac, M. (2021), [Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport.

<sup>164</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>165</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Healthcare and health insurance act](#) (*Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju*), 12 February 1992, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Patient rights act](#) (*Zakon o*

		<p>Ministry of Culture (<i>Ministrstvo za kulturo</i>);<sup>166</sup></p> <p>Ministry of the Interior (<i>Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve</i>):<sup>167</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migration Directorate (<i>Direktorat za migracije</i>);</li> <li>- The Police (<i>Policija</i>);</li> </ul>
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*pacientovih pravicah*), 29 January 2008, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017; Slovenia, [The Resolution on the national mental health programme 2018–2028](#) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028*), 27 March 2018; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>166</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Media Act](#) (*Zakon o medijih*), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Audiovisual media services act](#) (*Zakon o avdiovizualnih medijskih storitvah*), 19 October 2011, and subsequent modifications; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>167</sup> Slovenia, [The State administration act](#) (*Zakon o državni upravi*), 31 May 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Foreigners act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Police tasks and powers act](#) (*Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije*), 30 January 2013, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana.

		<p>Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities (<i>Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za narodnosti</i>);<sup>168</sup></p> <p>Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants (<i>Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov</i>).<sup>169</sup></p> <p>The above-mentioned ministries and bodies have certain responsibilities for children, to a lesser or larger extent, in areas they cover. In general, however, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities most often coordinates policy and efforts aimed at children, including as regards children protection. Its Directorate for family and Directorate for social affairs cover this field.<sup>170</sup></p>
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<sup>168</sup> Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the establishment of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities](#) (*Odlok o ustanovitvi Urada Vlade Republike Slovenije za narodnosti*), 4 July 2013, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia act](#) (*Zakon o romski skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji*), 30 March 2007; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Nacionalni program ukrepov Vlade Republike Slovenije za Rome za obdobje 2021-2030](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>169</sup> Slovenia, [The Ordinance on the establishment of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants](#) (*Odlok o ustanovitvi Urada Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov*), 2 March 2017; Slovenia, [The Foreigners act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Temporary protection of displaced persons act](#) (*Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb*), 22 June 2005, and subsequent modifications; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije; Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>170</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).



<p>2.1.3. Are there child focal points or similar in different ministries or agencies?</p> <p>If <u>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	No such focal points are reported. <sup>171</sup>
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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>
<p>Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Amongst others, the ministry administers/coordinates the work of the following bodies:</p>	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing, monitoring	The ministry is one of the leading bodies when it comes to the child protection and child-related policies. It often assumes the leading role, coordinates policies, drafts proposals of legislation and policies in the field of family affairs and support to children, as well as in the field of social protection, and funds implementation of planned

<sup>171</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<p>- Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family (<i>Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino</i>): The Council is a permanent expert consultative body of the government. It is composed of members of non-governmental organisations, professional institutions in the area of children and family and members of the government. Amongst others, the body monitors and assess the situation of children and families, with emphasis on the exercise of the rights of children, and formulates basic positions for the adoption of legislation and strategic documents relating to children and families – Council members are representatives of non-governmental organisations and professional institutions in the field of children and families,</p>			<p>measures. Among other things, the ministry coordinated the preparation of Programme for children 2020-2025, which is the principal national policy document concerning children.</p>
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<p>as well as representatives of the government;<sup>172</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expert Council for Social Protection (<i>Strokovni svet za socialno varstvo</i>) – the body, among others, monitors the implementation of policies and measures in the field of social protection – it is composed of experts in the field of social protection appointed by the minister responsible for social protection upon proposal of the Social Chamber of Slovenia (<i>Socialna zbornica Slovenije</i>);<sup>173</sup></li> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for activities in the preparation and implementation of the Programme for children 2020-2025 (<i>Medresorska delovna skupina za aktivnosti pri pripravi in izvajanju Programa</i></li> </ul>			
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<sup>172</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>173</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

za otroke 2020–2025): its tasks include drafting the programme, drafting accompanying three-year action plans, and producing reports on the implementation of measures set out in the action plans – members include government representatives and representatives of professional organisations and non-governmental organisations;

- Interdepartmental working group for the implementation of the Resolution on the Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families” (*Medresorska delovna skupina za izvajanje Resolucije o družinski politiki “Vsem družinam prijazna družba”*): the working group produces action plans based on the resolution, as well as reports on the implementation of measures laid down in the action plans – it consists of representatives of ministries covering family

<p>policy and NGO representatives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for the preparation of the Resolution on the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women (<i>Medresorska delovna skupina (MDS) za pripravo Resolucije o preprečevanju nasilja v družini in nasilja nad ženskami</i>): the working group shall complete its activities upon adoption of the resolution – it involves representatives of the government, judiciary, state prosecutor, professional organisations and NGOs;</li> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for the preparation of the national action programme for Child Guarantee 2022-2030 (<i>Medresorska delovna skupina za pripravo nacionalnega akcijskega načrta za jamstvo za otroke 2022 – 2030</i>): its tasks include drafting the action plan and producing</li> </ul>			
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reports on the implementation of measures set out in the action plan, and its members are representatives of competent ministries; a consultative group involving NGO representatives was also set up. <sup>174</sup>			
Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future	national	coordination, policy making, financing	The ministry is responsible for institutional/ alternative care for children deprived of normal family life, and children with moderate, severe and profound mental disabilities.
Ministry of Education	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing, monitoring	The ministry is responsible for education, including education of groups at risk of vulnerability (e.g. children with special needs, Roma children, and migrant children). Its responsibility also includes institutional care for certain groups of children with special needs (e.g. children with physical disability, with sensory disability and with intellectual disability who cannot attend school in their place of residence, as well as children with behavioural and emotional problems). The ministry is also the appellate body in procedures on placement of children with

<sup>174</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

			special needs decided by the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia at first stage
Ministry of Health	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing	The ministry is responsible for the functioning of healthcare system, health insurance and provision of health care services, including to children and children with special needs. For example, based on the Programme for children 2020-2025 and the accompanying action plan, the ministry shall be responsible for e.g. co-funding public calls in the field of public health, programmes aimed at strengthening mental health, including those relating to prevention, early detection and treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents, setting up centres for mental health of children at primary healthcare level, and adopting measures, which ensure the early treatment of children with special needs and the coordinated assistance to the family. The last measure is further set out in the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs.
Ministry of Justice	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing	The ministry, amongst others, performs tasks in the areas, such as the organisation and status of courts, judicial administration and judicial proceedings, including proceedings involving children. For example, the ministry led the project and drafted the related legislation governing the protection of children in criminal proceedings and

			their comprehensive treatment in Children's House. According to the Programme for children 2020-2025 and the accompanying action plan, the ministry is responsible for several measures in the field of child-friendly proceedings.
Ministry of Culture	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing	Based on the Programme for children 2020-2025 and the accompanying action plan, the ministry is, amongst others, responsible for to ensure the access to quality cultural services for children and families with children, including vulnerable children. It is also responsible for implementing programmes relating to digital literacy and ICT skills.
Ministry of the Interior	national	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing	Among other things, the ministry performs coordination and administrative tasks in the field of migration, and is responsible, for example, for international protection procedures, including proceedings involving children. It also instructs police regarding their operation and provides for supervision over their work.
The Police	national/regional/local	implementing	The police are responsible for tracking missing children and are responsible for migrants who reside in the country in an unauthorised manner, including children. They are involved in criminal proceedings, including proceedings related to children, and have responsibilities regarding instances of violence in domestic environment



			(e.g. issuance of a restraining order, cooperation with other responsible bodies).
District courts ( <i>okrožna sodišča</i> ) (11 courts) <sup>175</sup>	regional	decision-making, implementing	With the overhaul of the legislation governing family relations and the related protection of children, and the legislation regulating the non-contentious civil procedure, district courts have been granted the responsibility to decide in proceedings relating to the best interests of the child. Amongst other, these include the following: the care and upbringing of a child, maintenance of the child, the child's contacts, measures on the protection of the best interests of the child (e.g. removal of the child from the family, removal of parental responsibilities) the placement of the child under guardianship, in foster care, in educational institutions or professional centres. They also decide on adoption-related matters.
Social work centres (16 regional centres with 62 local units) <sup>176</sup>	regional/local	coordination, training, monitoring, implementing	In spite of legal changes, social work centres remain the cornerstone of the national child protection system. They operate at several levels.

<sup>175</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

<sup>176</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019; Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications;

			<p>Firstly, they provide social protection services. Secondly, they are obliged and are bearers of public authority to intervene in case when a child is at risk. Apart from submitting motions to the court for the imposition of protection measures, the new legislation governing family relations grants the social work centres the power to carry out the emergency removal of a child from the family. The centres are further involved e.g. in mediation in family matters, they produce family and children assistance plans and opinions for the court in proceedings relating to the protection of the best interests of the child. The centres monitor e.g. the implementation of foster care and guardianship, as well as the implementation of the guardianship-like functions aimed at migrant children. Apart from this, some social work centres provide social protection programmes (e.g. day care centres, maternal homes and safe houses), operate crisis centres for women and children victims of violence, and provide for the functioning of the existing 10 crisis centres for children and</p>
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Slovenia, [The Social assistance payments act](#) (*Zakon o socialno varstvenih prejemkih*), 13 July 2010, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Act on the treatment of children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders in upbringing and education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020; Slovenia, [The International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Foreigners act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications.

			adolescents. The centres also decide on social allowances and various other benefits.
Association of Social Work Centres of Slovenia ( <i>Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije</i> ) <sup>177</sup>	national	Coordination, implementing	The Association of Social Work Centres of Slovenia determines the catalogue of tasks performed by centres for social work as social protection services, as tasks entrusted to them by law as public powers and as tasks assigned to them by other regulations. It further determines the standards and, with the consent of the competent minister, determines the norms for the implementation of individual types of task entrusted to social work centres by law as public powers and tasks assigned to them by other regulations. The catalogue includes the tasks performed by centres including in relation to child protection. The association also organises mandatory training for foster parents.
Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za delo</i> ) <sup>178</sup>	national	monitoring	The inspectorate oversees compliance with and implementation of legislation, including labour legislation providing for prohibition/restriction of work of children below 15 years of age, and protection of working children. The Social

<sup>177</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>178</sup> Slovenia, [The Labour inspection act](#) (*Zakon o inšpekciji dela*), 6 March 2014, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Employment relationships act](#) (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

			<p>Inspection (<i>Socialna inšpekcija</i>), set up within the inspectorate, monitors, amongst other things, the implementation of the Social Assistance Act and other regulations issued on its basis, as well as other laws and regulations issued on their basis, which determine public powers and tasks performed by individual organisations implementing social welfare activities (e.g. public social protection institutions, services providers, concessionaires and non-governmental organisations). The Labour Inspectorate is a body affiliated to the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.</p>
<p>Inspectorate for Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za šolstvo in sport</i>)<sup>179</sup></p>	national	monitoring	<p>The inspectorate oversees compliance with and implementation of legislation in the field of education (e.g. special needs education). The inspectorate is a body affiliated to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.</p>

<sup>179</sup> Slovenia, [The School inspection act](#) (*Zakon o šolski inšpekciji*), 21 May 1996, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act](#) (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Placement of children with special needs act](#) (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 12 July 2011, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Act on the treatment of children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders in upbringing and education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

Human Rights Ombudsman ( <i>Varuh človekovih pravic</i> ) <sup>180</sup>	national	NHRI, monitoring, advocacy	The Human Rights Ombudsman is the independent mechanism protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals in relation to state authorities, local self-government authorities and bearers of public authority. The Ombudsman examines individual complaints, which can be lodged by any person who believes that their human rights or fundamental freedoms have been violated, provided that they have exhausted all legal means to reach a solution to the alleged violation. The Ombudsman also observes the field of children's rights and there is a deputy Ombudsman responsible for this field. The body also provides the child's advocacy. The purpose of advocacy is the provision of professional assistance to the child to express their opinion in all procedures and matters in which they are involved. The Ombudsman obtained A status according to the Paris Principles.
Advocate of the Principle of Equality ( <i>Zagovornik načela enakosti</i> ) <sup>181</sup>	national	monitoring	The national equality body designed as a horizontal body to examine claims of alleged discrimination on various grounds and in various walks of life, both in public and private sector. Amongst others, the Advocate carries out independent research, publishes independent

<sup>180</sup> Slovenia, [The Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>181</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection against discrimination act](#) (*Zakon o varstvu pred diskriminacijo*), 21 April 2016, and subsequent modifications.

			reports and makes recommendations to authorities, employers, business and other entities, and participates in judicial proceedings involving discrimination.
Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Agencija za komunikacijska omrežja in storitve Republike Slovenije</i> ) <sup>182</sup>	national	monitoring	The agency oversees compliance with and implementation of legislation in the field of provision of audiovisual media services, including provisions aimed at children's protection. The agency is an independent body.
Culture and Media Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za kulturo in medije</i> ) <sup>183</sup>	national	monitoring	The inspectorate oversees compliance with and implementation of legislation in the field of media other than audiovisual media services, including provisions aimed at children's protection. The inspectorate is a body affiliated to the Ministry of Culture.
Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo</i> ), including its	national	research, monitoring	Amongst others, the institute implements basic, applied and developmental research work. Its Child Observatory carries out systematic monitoring of the situation and quality of life of children in Slovenia and, based on the data obtained in this way, formulates proposals for improving their situation. The institute

<sup>182</sup> Slovenia, [The Audiovisual media services act](#) (Zakon o avdiovizualnih medijskih storitvah), 19 October 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>183</sup> Slovenia, [The Media Act](#) (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

department Child Observatory <i>(Otroška opazovalnica)</i> <sup>184</sup>			created online Child Well-Being Index to measure the well-being and quality of life of children in Slovenia. A version of the index measures the situation of children at regional level. The institute also monitors the implementation of the social protection programmes and evaluates them. The institute is a public institution set up by the state.
Social Chamber of Slovenia <i>(Socialna zbornica Slovenije)</i> <sup>185</sup>	national		The chamber is central professional social welfare association in Slovenia. Amongst other, it has been entrusted to determine training programmes laid down in the Social Assistance Act, to plan and organise continuing professional education and training for social workers. The chamber further determines the content, conditions and method of taking the professional certification exam, plans and organises the supervision of professional work of social workers, and adopts the code of ethics for workers in the social assistance field. It also conducts the professional verification procedure of social assistance programmes. In

<sup>184</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications. For more information, see e.g. [national](#) and [regional](#) child well-being index.

<sup>185</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

			Slovenia, there is a network of public social assistance programmes for children and adolescents deprived of adequate family life and for children and adolescents with problems in growing up.
National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia ( <i>Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo</i> ) <sup>186</sup>	national/local	implementing, monitoring	The institute is a public institute which carries out research, counselling and developmental work in the field of education. It has been granted public powers to decide on the placement of children with special needs at the first stage of the procedure. The institute issues decisions upon opinion of expert commissions. The institute is a public institution set up by the state.
Early treatment centres ( <i>Centri za zgodnjo obravnavo</i> ) (25 centres) <sup>187</sup>	regional	implementing, monitoring	An early treatment centre carries out early treatment of children with special needs and children with risk factors in the preschool period. Early treatment services include e.g. medical services necessary for diagnosis, condition

<sup>186</sup> Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act](#) (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [The Placement of children with special needs act](#) (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 12 July 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>187</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017. For more information, see the web page dedicated to [the early treatment of children with special needs](#) on the website administered by the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*), with information on preventive health programs for children and adolescents.



			<p>assessment and medical care, early screening, detection, assessment and monitoring services, family training and counselling, physiotherapy, psychosocial assistance, provision of equipment, assistance with movement and communication and social protection services. No later than six months before the child enrolls into primary school, the centre's multidisciplinary team proposes the type of educational programme and assistance in school. The parents then lodge a placement application with the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in accordance with the law governing the placement of children with special needs. The institute then issues a placement decision based on the opinion of the multidisciplinary team. In this case, the expert opinion by the placement commission, as per the law regulating the placement of children with special needs is not necessary.</p>
Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities	national	coordination, implementing, monitoring, financing	<p>The office monitors the implementation of constitutional and legislative provisions relating to the special rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and to the position and special rights of the Roma community in Slovenia. For example, it coordinates the preparation of the national programme of measures of the government targeting the Roma community and the preparation of regular annual government reports on the situation of the Roma community in Slovenia. In practical terms, the</p>

			<p>office implements the National Roma Platform project (<i>Nacionalna platforma za Rome</i>). The project focuses on the local level. It is aimed at supporting municipalities where Roma live in developing local action plans for the inclusion of Roma and in strengthening inter-institutional integration and cooperation at the local level. Despite focusing on the local level, the implementation of the national programme of measures for Roma is also followed and evaluated through this project. Within the framework of this project, the office coordinates the work of an <i>ad hoc</i> group addressing escapes of minors to harmful environments (so-called early marriages) and forced marriages in the Roma community and implements several activities related to these topics..</p>
Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants	national	implementing, coordination, financing	<p>The office provides accommodation, support and psychosocial assistance to asylum seekers. It also provides integration support to persons to whom international protection has been granted. Per the Programme for children 2020-2025 and the accompanying action plan, the office is tasked with ensuring safe accommodation and comprehensive care for unaccompanied children, as well as their participation. In particular, a systematic solution for their accommodation should be delivered. The office shall further work on developing and setting up a programme for</p>

			supporting unaccompanied children during their transition to adulthood.
Municipalities ( <i>občine</i> ) (212 municipalities) <sup>188</sup>	local	coordination, legislation, policy making, financing	Local communities, namely municipalities, are responsible for provision of social protection services of assistance to the family at home aimed at e.g. persons with severe forms of disabilities or severely ill, including children, when social care at home can replace institutional care. This service may take the form of domestic social care (e.g. help with housework, with personal hygiene and assistance in maintaining social contacts) or mobile assistance, namely professional assistance including procedures for correcting disorders, counselling and therapeutic work. To this end, municipalities are responsible to select social work centres for the provision of these services or, alternatively, may grant concessions to other public or private entities to provide services in question. Local communities may also plan and fund social protection programmes and programmes of assistance to family that are important at local level, which also include funding of NGO activities targeting at children. Slovenian municipalities have established six schools with residential accommodation for children with intellectual disability.

<sup>188</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

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.

The adoption of the Family Code in 2017, applicable from 2019, represents the most important change in the child protection architecture in Slovenia in the monitored period. The law practically completely shifted decision-making powers from social work centres to courts in proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child (e.g. measures for the protection of the best interests of the child, custody, foster care, guardianship and adoption).<sup>189</sup> When submitting the draft law to the parliament for consideration, the government stated that the overarching goal of the proposed legislation was improving the situation of children in family relationships before the court proceedings, during proceedings and after the proceedings had ended. One of the important goals was to improve the state of legal security of citizens as regards decision-making in marital and family disputes and to harmonize procedures regarding decision-making on measures to protect the interests of children. The related goal was the faster resolution of family matters, in particular as regards decision-making on measures to protect the best interests of the child. Strengthening the core role of social work centres by separating their powers of authority from their professional and advisory functions was an additional goal. To this end, the centres should predominantly retain the latter functions.<sup>190</sup> In addition, in March 2019, the National Assembly passed the Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act. According to the draft law, the main goal of the proposal was the timely adjustment of the provisions governing judicial proceedings for settling family matters as laid down in the Family Code. This should further improve the situation of children and ensure more effective implementation of the principle of the best interest of the child. When tabling the bill, the government pointed out that the advantage of the non-contentious civil procedure, determined as a general procedure, is the possibility of dealing with the entire family situation in a coherent manner. This would as a result lead to the necessary specialisation. For example, a judge who specialises in family matters would be able to deal with all important issues relating to the protection of the best interests of the child.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>190</sup> Slovenia, The Draft Family code (*Predlog družinskega zakonika*), 20 December 2016.

<sup>191</sup> Slovenia, The Draft Non-Contentious civil procedure act (*Predlog družinskega zakonika*), 10 December 2018.

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.

<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>
<p>Social work centres (<i>Centri za socialno delo</i>) (16 centres with 62 local units), public institution under responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities),</p> <p>including operation of 11 crisis centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crisis centre for youth Celje (<i>Krizni center za mlade Celje</i>),</li> <li>- Crisis centre for children and adolscents Koper – Apricot</li> </ul>	<p>counselling, training activities, day care centres, including a day care centre for Roma children, 10 crisis centres for any child in need of assistance or advice (i.e. specialist first social assistance), as well as for emergency accommodation of children and youth, social protection services in support to family for home (i.e. support for settling family situation), support to family at home (practical assistance to families with children with severe disabilities or severaly ill), provision of social, parental and family allowances (Please see also the table above.)</p>	<p>children, Roma children, children deprived of parental care, child victims of domestic violence, child at risk, children in risk of or living in poverty</p>	<p>national budget, local budget, private sector</p>

<p>house (<i>Krizni center za otroke in mladostnike Koper - Marelična hiša</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for children and adolescents Krško (<i>Krizni center za otroke in mladostnike Krško</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for youth Ljubljana (<i>Krizni center za mlade Ljubljana</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for youth Maribor (<i>Krizni center za mlade Maribor</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for youth Murska Sobota (<i>Krizni center za mlade Murska Sobota</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for children and adolescents Nova Gorica – No. 10 (<i>Krizni center za otroke in mladostnike Nova Gorica – 10ka</i>),</p> <p>- Crisis centre for youth “Firefly” (<i>Krizni center za otroke “Kresnička”</i>) (in Gorenjska region),</p>			
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<p>- Crisis centre for youth Slovenj Gradec (<i>Krizni center za mlade Slovenj Gradec</i>),</p> <p>(all of the above for children between six and 18 years of age)</p> <p>- Crisis centre for children Grosuplje – Shelter house “Thumbelina” (<i>Krizni center za otroke Grosuplje – Hiša zavetja Palčica</i>) (principally, for children up to six years of age)</p> <p>- Crisis centre for children Maribor “Tom Thumb” (<i>Krizni center za otroke Maribor Palček</i>) (principally, for children up to six years of age)</p> <p>Social work centres also carry out public social protection programmes such as children day care centres, maternity homes and safe houses.</p>			
<p>Foster care (in April 2023, there were 565 natural persons with the license for</p>	<p>foster care</p>	<p>children in need of care and upbringing (e.g. children without parents, children removed from family)</p>	<p>national budget</p>

the provision of foster care, (515 females and 50 males) <sup>192</sup>			
Association of Centres for Social Work of Slovenia ( <i>Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije</i> ) (public authorisation on the basis of the Rules on conditions and procedures for the provision of foster care – Art. 39) <sup>193</sup>	training	training for candidates for foster carers, that is-candidates for caring for children in need of care and upbringing (e.g. children without parents, children removed from family)	national budget
Foster Care Association of Slovenia ( <i>Rejniško društvo Slovenije</i> ), NGO	support, training, organisation of events (e.g. meetings, camps for foster parents and children placed in foster care)	foster parents, children placed in foster care	local budget, donations
5 Centres for training, work and care of children and youth (up to 26 years of age), public social care institutions under responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social	care institutions	children with moderate, severe and profound mental disability	national budget

<sup>192</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to [foster care](#).

<sup>193</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on conditions and procedures for the provision of foster care](#) (Pravilnik o pogojih in postopkih za izvajanje rejniške dejavnosti), 9 December 2019.



<p>Affairs and Equal Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Centre for training, work and care Črna na Koroškem (<i>Center za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo Črna na Koroškem</i>),</li> <li>- Centre for training, work and care Dolfka Boštjančič (<i>Center za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo Dolfke Boštjančič</i>),</li> <li>- Centre for training, work and care Dobrna (<i>Center za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo Dobrna</i>),</li> <li>- Centre for training, work and care Matevž Langus Radovljica (<i>Center za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo Matevža Langusa Radovljica</i>),</li> <li>- Institute for training, work and care Dr Marijan Borštnar Dornava (<i>Zavod za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo Dr. Marijan Borštnar Dornava</i>)</li> </ul>			
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<p>9 residential institutions for children with behavioural and emotional disorders (children whose healthy development has been at risk and who have developed behavioural and emotional issues for different reasons such as e.g. inappropriate care and upbringing in family environment, children at risk), public educational institutions under responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth Home Malči Beličeva (<i>Mladinski dom Malči Beličeve</i>), 6-14 years</li> <li>- Youth Home Jarše (<i>Mladinski dom Jarše</i>),</li> <li>- Youth Home Maribor (<i>Mladinski dom Maribor</i>),</li> <li>- Educational Institution Planina (<i>Vzgojni zavod Planina</i>),</li> </ul>	<p>professional centres (<i>strokovni centri</i>) – counselling, care, education</p>	<p>children with behavioural and emotional disorders</p>	<p>national budget</p>
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<p>- Educational Institution Kranj (<i>Vzgojni zavod Kranj</i>),</p> <p>- Educational Institution Fran Milčinski Smlednik (<i>Vzgojno izobraževalni zavod Frana Mičinskega Smlednik</i>),</p> <p>- Elementary School Veržej – Home (<i>Osnovn šola Veržej – Enota Dom</i>), (The Home (Enota dom) is an organisational unit of a regular primary school accepting children with emotional and behavioural disorders, including population referred to by the court for coming in conflict with the law, namely population who were imposed educational measure),</p> <p>- Educational Institution Višnja Gora (<i>Vzgojno izobraževalni zavod Višnja Gora</i>),</p> <p>- Institution for Education Logatec (<i>Zavod za vzgojo in izobraževanje Logatec</i>) (also accepts population referred to by the court for coming in conflict with the law, namely</p>			
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population who were imposed educational measure).			
Radeče Correctional Home ( <i>Prevzgojni dom Radeče</i> )	accommodation facility; implementation of the educational measure of the placement of a minor who committed a criminal offence in a correctional home, which is ordered by the court	children who came in conflict with the law	national budget
public educational/residential institutions providing education and/or residence to children with disabilities who cannot be schooled in their place of residence:  4 under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  - Centre IRIS – Centre for Education, Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Counselling for the Blind and Partially Sighted ( <i>Center IRIS – Center za izobraževanje, rehabilitacijo, inkluzijo in svetovanje za slepe</i> )	educational institutions, counselling, care	children with disabilities who cannot be schooled in their place of residence	national budget/ local budget

*in slabovidne*) – children with the specified type of disability,

- Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Ljubljana (*Zavod za gluhe in naglušne Ljubljana*)

- Centre for education, rehabilitation and training Kamnik (*Center za izobraževanje, rehabilitacijo in usposabljanje Kamnik*) – children with physical disabilities,

- Centre for education, rehabilitation and training Vipava (*Center za izobraževanje, rehabilitacijo in usposabljanje Vipava*) – children with physical disabilities;

under the responsibility of municipalities:

- Elementary school Glazija (*Osnovna šola Glazija*) – children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Celje),

<p>- Elementary school Dr Ljudevit Pivk (<i>Osnovna šola dr. Ljudevita Pivka</i>) - children with intellectual disability (Municipalities of Ptuj, Destrnik, Dornava, Gorišnica, Hajdina, Juršinci, Kidričevo, Majšperk, Markovci, Videm, Zavrč and Žetale),</p> <p>- Centre for Training and Education Janez Levec Ljubljana (<i>Center za usposabljanje, vzgojo in izobraževanje Janeza Levca Ljubljana</i>) – children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Ljubljana),</p> <p>- Centre for upbringing, education, training and counselling, Home Anton Skala Maribor (<i>Center za vzgojo, izobraževanje, usposabljanje in svetovanje Gustava Šiliha, Dom Antona Skale Maribor</i>) – children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Maribor),</p>			
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<p>- Elementary school IV Murska Sobota (<i>Osnovna šola IV Murska Sobota</i>), children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Murska Sobota),</p> <p>- Centre for training Elvira Vatovec Strunjan (<i>Center za usposabljanje Elvira Vatovec Strunjan</i>) – children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Piran),</p> <p>- Elementary School Minka Namestnik – Sonja (<i>Osnovna šola Minke Namestnik – Sonje</i>), children with intellectual disability (Municipality of Slovenska Bistrica)</p>			
<p>25 early treatment centres (<i>centri za zgodnjo obravnavo</i>)</p>	<p>screening, treatment, counselling</p>	<p>children with special needs, children with risk factors</p>	<p>health insurance scheme</p>
<p>18 centres for mental health of children and adolescents (<i>centri za duševno zdravje otrok in mladostnikov</i>)</p>	<p>prevention, counselling, treatment, education, family assistance</p>	<p>children, adolescents and their parents who need support in solving difficulties or maintaining and strengthening mental health</p>	<p>health insurance scheme</p>

3 counselling centres for children, adolescents and parents ( <i>svetovalni centri za otroke, mladostnike in starše</i> ) (set up by the municipalities of Ljubljana, Maribor, and Koper and Izola, respectively)	diagnostic, counselling and therapeutic services	children with special needs, abused children, children with issues when growing up, parents	local budget
Children's House ( <i>Hiša za otroke</i> )	support, protection, counselling, medical examination, interviewing, awareness raising, research, training	child victims and witnesses of crime, in particular sexual abuse	national budget, foreign grants
Asylum Home ( <i>Azilni dom</i> ), and branches, under responsibility of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants	accommodation of international protection applicants, temporary displaced persons	International protection applicants, temporary displaced persons, including families with children	national budget, EU funds
Centre for foreigners ( <i>Center za tujce</i> ), under responsibility of the police	accommodation of migrants in unauthorised situation	migrants in unauthorised situation, including families with children and unaccompanied children	national budget
Student dormitory – Forestry, Wood Technology and Health Services School Postojna ( <i>Dijaški dom – Srednja</i> )	care, accommodation	asylum seeking unaccompanied children; unaccompanied children with granted international protection	National budget



<i>gozdarska, lesarska in zdravstvena šola Postojna)</i>			
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work ( <i>Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za socialno delo</i> ) (public authorisation under the International Protection Act – Art. 18, para 4)	training	provision of training to candidates for legal representatives of asylum-seeking unaccompanied children	national budget
Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth ( <i>Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije</i> ), NGO	telephone helpline (national 116111 number), financial assistance, advocacy (the organisation coordinates a network of NGOs working in the field of children's rights and advocating for their rights, namely the Network for Children's Rights ( <i>Mreža za otrokove pravice</i> ))	children, children in risk of or living in poverty	national budget, local budget, EU funds, private sector
Caritas Slovenia ( <i>Slovenska karitas</i> ), and affiliated organisations, religious institution, religious foundation	financial assistance, assistance in kind; crisis accommodation and care for victims of trafficking in human beings, awareness raising; day centre, maternity homes, safe house, psychosocial assistance, advocacy	children in risk of or living in poverty; victims of trafficking in human beings, including children, women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence; mothers with children and pregnant women who face social distress or housing issues	national budget, local budget, private sector, general public

Association of Friends of Youth Ljubljana Moste Polje ( <i>Zveza prijateljev mladine Ljubljana Moste Polje</i> ), NGO	financial assistance, psychosocial counselling to families	families, children in risk of or living in poverty; children, parents and families in need for e.g. resolving inter-personal problems, behavioural and emotional issues	national budget, local budget, private sector, general public
Slovene Philanthropy, Association for Promotion of Volunteering ( <i>Slovenska filantropija, Združenje za promocijo prostovoljstva</i> ), NGO	integration support and other assistance to migrant children and families, day centres for migrants; intergenerational cooperation	migrants, including migrant families with children; refugees, persons with temporary protection, unaccompanied children	national budget, local budget, EU funds
Legal centre for the protection of human rights and environment ( <i>PIC - Pravni center za varstvo človekovih pravic in okolja</i> )	legal support, provision of information	asylum seekers, including children, persons with temporary protection	UNHCR
ARS VITAE, NGO	day centre for children and adolescents, prevention, counselling, psychosocial assistance	children with temporary or permanent learning difficulties, children without such difficulties who wants to develop positive self-evaluation, children with minority language background, persons who are experiencing violence or survivors, including children and adolescents	national budget, local budget, donations
Youth Aid Centre Association – YACA ( <i>Društvo Center za pomoč mladim – CPM</i> ), NGO	prevention, counselling	youth between 15-29 years of age with learning difficulties, with difficulties in family	national budget, local budget

		relationships and other relationships, those at risk of poverty and social exclusion	
Association for work with youth in need Ray ( <i>Društvo za delo z mladimi v stiski Žarek</i> ), NGO	day centre, prevention, counselling	children and youth between 8-25 years of age in need	national budget, local budget, private sector
Association for Development of Voluntary Work Novo mesto ( <i>Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo mesto</i> ), NGO	day centres for Roma children, day centre for children from disadvantaged background, including migrant children, children deprived of normal family life, children at risk of poverty and exclusion, learning assistance, psychosocial assistance	Roma children, migrant children, children and youth deprived of normal family life, children and youth with issues when growing up, children with behavioural and emotional issues, children at risk of poverty and exclusion	national budget, local budget, donations
Institute Salesianum ( <i>Zavod Salesianum</i> ), religious institution, private institute	counselling, provision of assistants, preventive educational activities, including on the street	children and youth deprived of normal family life, children and youth with issues when growing up	national budget, local budget, donations
MISSS Institute, Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia ( <i>Zavod MISSS, Mladinsko informativno svetovalno središče Slovenije</i> ), NGO	day centre, counselling, psychosocial assistance	children and youth with issues when growing up, migrant families	national budget, local budget

(Association for preventive work) ( <i>Društvo za preventivno delo</i> ), NGO	counselling, preventive workshops	children between 13 and 15 years of age	national budget, local budget, donations
Institute Nora, Contemporary Addictions Centre ( <i>Zavod Nora, Center sodobnih zasvojenosti</i> ), NGO	psychological counselling	children, youth, parents, adults addicted to digital technologies and the internet	national budget, local budget, donations
Reclaim the Power Association ( <i>Združenje za MOČ</i> ), NGO	counselling, psychosocial assistance, telephone helpline, workshops, advocacy	child victims of sexual abuse, adolescents, adult survivors, parents	national budget, local budget, non-public sources
Association SOS Help Line for Women and Children - Victims of Violence ( <i>Društvo SOS telefon za ženske in otroke - žrtve nasilja</i> ), NGO	telephone helpline, psychosocial assistance, safe houses, support groups, advocacy	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse	national budget, local budget, donations
Association for nonviolent communication ( <i>Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, counselling, advocacy, safe houses, training for violators	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse, children and youth who have experienced violence, violators	national budget, local budget, donations
Association for Assistance to Women and Children Victims of Violence, Safe House	psychosocial assistance, advocacy, safe houses, maternity home	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence; mothers with children and pregnant	national budget, local budget, donations, users, non-public sources

Gorenjska ( <i>Društvo za pomoč ženskam in otrokom žrtvam nasilja, Varna hiša Gorenjske</i> ), NGO		women who face social distress or housing issues	
Association Life without Violence ( <i>Društvo življenje brez nasilja</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, counselling, advocacy, safe house	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence	national budget, local budget, donations
Association Regional Safe House Celje ( <i>Društvo regionalna varna hiša Celje</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, advocacy, safe house, counselling	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence	national budget, local budget, donations
Women's Counselling Service ( <i>Društvo ženska svetovalnica</i> ), NGO	crisis accommodation centre, hotline, psychosocial assistance, advocacy, counselling	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse	national budget, local budget, donations
Association Safe Shelter – Safe House Pomurje ( <i>Društvo varnega zavetja Varna hiša Pomurja</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, advocacy, safe house, counselling	women and their children, if they have them, victims of violence, particularly domestic violence	national budget, local budget, donations
Public Institute Socio Celje ( <i>Javni zavod Socio Celje</i> ), public institute	psychosocial assistance, advocacy, maternity home	mothers with children and pregnant women who face social distress or housing issues	national budget, local budget, donations

Institute Emma – Centre for assistance to victims of violence ( <i>Zavod Emma – Center za pomoč žrtvam nasilja</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, advocacy, counselling, support group	persons who have experienced violence, children who have experienced violence	national budget, local budget, donations
Ključ Association, Centre for combating trafficking in human beings ( <i>Društvo Ključ, Center za boj proti trgovanju z ljudmi</i> )	awareness raising, safe house, care and support	victims of trafficking in human beings, including children, pupils, students	national budget, local budget
Family Study and Research Centre ( <i>Študijsko - raziskovalni center za družino</i> ), NGO	psychosocial assistance, counselling	victims of violence, children and youth from families at risk, children	national budget, local budget
Family centre Calm ( <i>Družinski center Mir</i> )	psychosocial assistance	victims of violence, including children	national budget, local budget
Centre for education, supervision and therapeutic help Maribor ( <i>Center za izobraževanje, supervizijo in terapevtsko pomoč Maribor</i> ), private institute	therapeutic assistance	children, parents and families in need for e.g. resolving inter-personal problems, behavioural and emotional issues	national budget, local budget

<p>Breaks – Institute for Family Therapy, Counselling and Education (Prelomi – Inštitut za družinsko terapijo, svetovanje in izobraževanje)</p>	<p>psychosocial assistance</p>	<p>children, parents and families in need for e.g. resolving inter-personal problems, behavioural and emotional issues</p>	<p>national budget, local budget</p>
<p>Web eye (<i>Spletno oko</i>)  University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences (coordinator); ARNES – Academic and research network of Slovenia; MISSS Institute - Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia; Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (<i>Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede; ARNES – Akademska in raziskovalna mreža Slovenije; Zavod MISSS - Mladinsko informativno svetovalno središče Slovenije; Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije</i>)</p>	<p>online hotline platform for reporting internet-based sexual abuse of children</p>	<p>child victims of online sexual abuse</p>	<p>national budget, EU funds</p>
<p>Family centres (<i>Centri za družine</i>):</p>	<p>educational and practical workshops on the topic of positive parenting, holiday activities for children and</p>	<p>children and parents</p>	<p>national budget</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and education centre Rakičan castle: Prekmurje family centre (<i>Raziskovalno izobraževalno središče Dvorec Rakičan: Družinski center Prekmurje</i>);</li> <li>- Association Family and youth centre Cerklje: We build bridges (<i>Društvo družinski in mladinski center Cerklje: Gradimo mostove</i>);</li> <li>- Association of volunteers of the Vincentian association of goodness: Family centre of Miren castle (<i>Društvo prostovoljcev Vincencijeve zveze dobrote: Center za družine Mirenski Grad</i>);</li> <li>- Adult education centre Lendava: Perc family centre (<i>Ljudska univerza Lendava: Center za družine Perc</i>);</li> <li>- Adult education centre Ormož: Ormož family centre (<i>Ljudska univerza Ormož: Center za družine Ormož</i>);</li> </ul>	<p>workshops for children or youth, counselling for improving the ability to manage emotions, building positive self-image, and learning to solve various problems</p>		
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<p>- Association for the development of human resources and social programmes Novus: Harmony family centre (<i>Društvo za razvoj človeških virov in socialnih programov Novus: Center za družine Harmonija</i>);</p> <p>- MOCIS, Adult education centre: Family centre Andemški hram (<i>MOCIS, Center za izobraževanje odraslih: Center za družine Andemški hram</i>);</p> <p>- Mala ulica Public Institute – Centre for children and families in Ljubljana: Mala ulica family centre (<i>Javni zavod Mala ulica – Center za otroke in družine v Ljubljani: Družinski center Mala ulica</i>);</p> <p>- Adult education centre Celje: AEC Celje family centre: Families in the centrifuge of modern times (<i>Ljudska univerza Celje: Družinski center LU Celje: Družine v centrifugi sodobnega časa</i>);</p>			
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<p>- Back on the horse Institute: Hug (<i>Zavod nazaj na konja: Objem</i>);</p> <p>- Adult education centre Ptuj: Family centre Pantry of wisdom (<i>Ljudska univerza Ptuj: Center za družine Špajza modrosti</i>);</p> <p>- Playful world Institute, Institute for light movement and gentle contact: Family centre Playful world (<i>Zavod Igrivi svet, zavod za lahkotno gibanje in nežen stik: Center za družine Igrivi svet</i>)</p>			
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2.1.6. Please indicate if any child participation or feedback mechanisms are part of child protection services.

In Slovenia, there is no standalone law governing child participation. Various laws regulate this field. Notably, the Family Code, which, amongst others, regulates relations between parents and children and measures for the protection of best interests of the child, stipulates, for example the following: when deciding on the care, upbringing and maintenance of the child, on contacts, the exercise of parental care and the granting of parental care to a relative, the court observes the child's opinion, expressed by the child itself or through a person they trust and have chosen, if they are capable of understanding its meaning and implications (Art. 143, para 1). When deciding on a measure for the protection of the best interests of the child, the court considers the child's opinion, expressed by the child itself or through a person they trust and have chosen, if they are able to understand its meaning and consequences. The court, however, may issue an injunction without obtaining the child's opinion beforehand (Art. 158). Regarding adoption proceedings, the act lays down that in the adoption procedure, the court shall observe the child's opinion, expressed by the child themselves or through a person they trust and have chosen, if they are able to understand its meaning and consequences. According to the law, adoption requires the child's consent if they can understand its meaning and consequences (Art. 215, para 2&3). With respect to guardianship,

for example, the guardian must consult with the ward before any important task. Their opinion must be considered if the ward has expressed it and if they are able to understand its meaning and consequences (Art. 247, para 2).<sup>194</sup>

According to the Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act, in the proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child, the court calls on the social work centre to inform the child, who is capable to understand the meaning of the procedure and the consequences of the decision, in an appropriate way about the initiation of the procedure and about their right to express their opinion. When the child wishes to express their opinion, they may do so at the social work centre or in an interview with the child's advocate who has been assigned to the child in accordance with the law governing the functioning of the Human Rights Ombudsman, or depending on age and other circumstances at an informal interview with the judge, which may involve the participation of a professional, always without the presence of the parents. At the interview at the social work center or with the judge, a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or the child's advocate, if they have been assigned to the child, may be present. Such a person or the child's advocate can help the child express their opinion. The court can prohibit the presence of a person if it considers that it is not a person whom the child trusts and has chosen, or that the participation of this person in the procedure would be against the best interests of the child (Art. 96, para 1-3).<sup>195</sup>

Accordingly, the Human Rights Ombudsman Act lays down the child advocacy within Ombudsman's internal organisational unit. It shall be implemented through a volunteer network ensuring equal access to an advocate for all children. The purpose of advocacy is for the advocate to provide professional assistance to the child to express their opinion in all procedures and matters involving the child, and to communicate the child's opinion to the competent authorities and institutions that decide on their rights and interests. The advocate is not the child's legal representative. Professional assistance shall include psychosocial support for the child, conversations about their wishes, feelings and opinions, familiarising the child with procedures and activities in a child-appropriate manner, seeking the most adequate solution together with the child, and accompanying the child before the authorities and institutions that decide on their rights and interests (Art. 25.a, para 1&2).<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>195</sup> Slovenia, [The Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

<sup>196</sup> Slovenia, [The Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications.

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 the law, a non-governmental organisation shall meet the following conditions: it is a legal person governed by private law seated in the Republic of Slovenia; it was established by domestic or foreign natural or legal persons governed by private law; it is a non-commercial organisation; it is a non-profit organisation; it is independent from other entities; it is not organised as a political party, church or any other religious community, a trade union or chamber of commerce.<sup>197</sup></p> <p>Generally, civil society organisations are established either as societies (<i>društva</i>) or as institutes (<i>zavodi</i>).</p> <p>According to the Societies Act (<i>Zakon o društvih</i>), a society is an independent and non-profit association, established by persons with an aim to pursue their common interests (Art.1, para 1). By law, a society shall be a legal person of private law, whereas it becomes a legal person upon its registration with the local administrative unit (<i>upravna enota</i>) (Art. 5, para 1 in conj. with Art. 17, para 1). For registration, an organisation must present, among other things, minutes of the founding assembly, its basic act (e.g. statute) determining its activities, a list with personal data of its founders, address, personal data of its representative, data on its activities and a proposal concerning principal activity of the organisation (Art. 18, para 1).<sup>198</sup> The latter two shall be submitted in accordance with the National standard classification of activities, which is similar to NACE classification).<sup>199</sup> The National standard of activities was adopted by the government on the</p>

<sup>197</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on non-governmental organisations](#) (*Zakon o nevladnih organizacijah*), 20 March 2018.

<sup>198</sup> Slovenia, [The Societies act](#) (*Zakon o društvih*), 30 May 2006, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>199</sup> Slovenia, [The Decree on the standard classification of activities](#) (*Uredba o standardni klasifikaciji dejavnosti*), 19 July 2007, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>basis of the National Statistics Act (Art. 31).<sup>200</sup> This classification is harmonised with the NACE classification. It, essentially, serves for statistical purposes capturing economic activities, regardless of the operator (e.g. government body, enterprise, self-employed person, society or an institute). According to this classification, business entities, including NGOs, register economic activities that they pursue for payment. As noted, NGOs, generally, pursue their activities on non-for-profit basis. Their payment may include e.g. funds obtained from authorities based on public calls, publication or other activities, provided that they register them. These rules apply to all organisations – that is, societies, regardless of their area of activity. According to the Societies Act, there shall be a central registry of operating societies, kept by the Ministry of the Interior (Art. 46, para 2).<sup>201</sup> According to the implementing rules, the register shall include data on organisation classified in groups and sub-groups according to purposes for their establishment, their goals and tasks (Art. 14). These rules do not specify organisations working for child protection as a separate entity. There is a major group of organisations regarded as organisation helping people, and it includes many organisation working with different groups of population, not only children. Within this group, there is also a sub-group of organisation classified as organisation which are friends of youth (<i>društva prijateljev mladine</i>), but this sub-group fails to capture many organisation working with children.<sup>202</sup> As a result, organisations supporting children are, indeed, included in the registry, but many of them could not be identified. However, NGOs working for children shall, to a great extent, be registered for social protection activities (e.g. social protection with accommodation, social protection without accommodation, day care of children, other social protection activities, and activities of humanitarian or charitable organisations, all</p>
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<sup>200</sup> Slovenia, [The National statistics act](#) (*Zakon o državni statistiki*), 25 July 1995, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>201</sup> Slovenia, [The Societies act](#) (*Zakon o društvih*), 30 May 2006, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>202</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the Register of associations, Register of foreign affiliate associations and registers of public interest associations](#) (*Pravilnik o registru društev, registru podružnic tujih društev in evidenci društev v javnem interesu*), 28 December 2006, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>according to the National standard classification of activities). According to the Societies Act, the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Interior Affairs (<i>Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za notranje zadeve</i>) monitors whether activities implemented by societies comply with their basic act (e.g. statute) (Art. 51, para 1), since societies cannot perform activities other than those determined in their principal act, that is – their registered activities.<sup>203</sup></p> <p>According to the Institutes Act (<i>Zakon o zavodih</i>), the institutes are organisations established to perform the activity of education, science, culture, sports, health, social services, childcare, disability, social protection or other activities, provided that the goal of these activities is no profit-making (Art 1, para 2). Institutes may be established by domestic and foreign natural and legal persons unless otherwise provided by an act for particular activities or types of institutes (Art. 2). By law, the establishment of an institute is recorded in court registry (Art 12),<sup>204</sup> including data on their activities based on the National standard classification of activities. As noted earlier, this does not necessary allow for their identification. They shall, however, like societies, be registered for social protection activities to a considerable extent. An institute may enter into contracts and perform other legal transactions only within the scope of the activity entered in the court register (Art. 21).</p> <p>Unlike societies, institutes are more closed and structured organisations. For example, according to the Societies Act, membership in societies is open to any person, provided that they adhere to terms and conditions set out in the society’s basic act (Art 2, para 2). A society is managed by their members directly or, indirectly, through elected members, as defined in its basic act (Art. 12). All important decisions, including amendments to its basic act defining its activities, shall be, generally, decided/adopted by all members (Art. 13, para 1).<sup>205</sup> Opposite to societies, an institute is not an organisation based on membership. Based on the</p>
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<sup>203</sup> Slovenia, [The Societies act](#) (*Zakon o društvih*), 30 May 2006, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>204</sup> Slovenia, [The Institutes act](#) (*Zakon o zavodih*), 21 March 1991, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>205</sup> Slovenia, [The Societies act](#) (*Zakon o društvih*), 30 May 2006, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>Institutes Act, the founders define, in the founding act, activities of the organisation and its bodies, amongst others (Art. 8). By the law, an institute shall be managed by a collegiate management body (i.e. council/board) (Art. 29, para 1), shall have a director or other individual body as its executive management body (Art. 31, para 1), and shall have an expert body (i.e. council/board) to observe issue concerning the professional work of the institute (Art 43&amp;44).<sup>206</sup></p> <p>Both type of organisation may also pursue economic activities for profit, but these must not be prevalent. Possible gaining, however, shall not be shared among members or founders, but must be invested in their core activities that are performed on not-for-profit basis.</p> <p>The law thus does not differentiate between civil society organisations based on the field of their activity. There is a general legal obligation, according to the aforementioned procedure, for registering all civil society organisations, including those working in the field of child protection/working for children, and not because they work in this specific field.</p> <p>The Act on Non-governmental Organisations introduced a new register that includes data on non-governmental organisations operating in the public interest. The Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (<i>Agencija Republike Slovenije za javnopravne evidence in storitve</i>) shall set up and keep this register (Art. 19, para 1).<sup>207</sup> The ministry which grants the status shall enter the necessary information (e.g. an organisation's registration number, tax number, legal form of organisation, number and date of granting or withdrawing the status in the register (Art. 20, para 1 in conj. with Art. 19, para 2).<sup>208</sup> According to the Rules on determining the criteria for demonstrating significant achievements of the operation of non-</p>
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<sup>206</sup> Slovenia, [The Institutes act](#) (*Zakon o zavodih*), 21 March 1991, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>207</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services related to the [register on non-governmental organisations operating in the public interest](#).

<sup>208</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on non-governmental organisations](#) (*Zakon o nevladnih organizacijah*), 20 March 2018.

		<p>governmental organisations for granting the status of a non-governmental organisation in the public interest in the fields of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities, there shall be non-governmental organisation operating in the public interests in the fields of e.g. social protection, family policy, protection of persons with disabilities and protection against discrimination (Art. 1). With regard to criteria pertaining to the field of social protection, an NGO shall have to demonstrate, for example, that it carries out activities that are comparable in terms of quality or purpose to the activities of public institutions, or activities that complement the network of public institutions in terms of the content of the work or the manner of operation, or has obtained a verification document issued by the Social Chamber of Slovenia (Art. 2). Criteria in the field of family policy require, for example, that an NGO continuously implement activities strengthening positive parenting and improving communication in the family, activities ensuring conditions for the personal growth of children and adolescents, or creative leisure activities aimed at children and adolescents. To obtain the status, NGOs can also implement activities facilitating healthy development of children and meeting their special needs in the area capturing at least two municipalities or an urban municipality (Art. 3).<sup>209</sup></p> <p>Notably, non-governmental organisations often implement programmes aimed at children as public social protection programmes, as laid down in the Social Assistance Act.<sup>210</sup> Social Chamber of Slovenia, which provides for verification of these programmes, keeps the register of verified programmes.<sup>211</sup> The legislation stipulates that</p>
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<sup>209</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on determining the criteria for demonstrating significant achievements of the operation of non-governmental organisations for granting the status of a non-governmental organisation in the public interest in the fields of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities](#) (*Pravilnik o določitvi kriterijev za izkazovanje pomembnejših dosežkov delovanja nevladne organizacije za podelitev statusa nevladne organizacije v javnem interesu na področju dela, družine, socialnih zadev in enakih možnostih*), 20 September 2019, and subsequent modification.

<sup>210</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>211</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Social Chamber of Slovenia related to the [verification of public social security programmes and the related register](#).



		social protection programmes covers areas such as the following: children and adolescents who are deprived of appropriate family life and adolescents with problems in growing up; inclusion of Roma; prevention of violence, programmes to assist victims of violence and programmes to work with perpetrators of violence. <sup>212</sup>
<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>In Slovenia, child protection system closely intertwines with the national social protection system. The latter includes various measures that may target children. According to the Social Assistance Act, social protection scheme includes social protection services and other measures (Art. 3). Social protection services include the following, amongst others: the first social assistance (e.g. identifying and defining social distress and difficulties, estimating possible solutions and informing entitled persons about possible types of social assistance services and benefits) (Art. 12); personal assistance (e.g. counselling, arranging the affairs in order to enable the development of social capacities of individual persons) (Art 13), assistance to victims of crime (e.g. provision of professional support and counselling) (Art. 14.a); assistance to family for home (i.e. professional counselling and help with respect to family relations, care for children, and enabling family to restore its role in everyday life) (Art. 15, para 2); assistance to family at home (i.e. social care provided to beneficiaries in the case of disability or old age and in other cases where social care at home can replace institutional care) (Art. 15, para 3); institutional care, including for children deprived of normal family life and children with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities (Art. 16). The former would involve orphanage-like institutions, but such institutions do not exist in Slovenia. In terms of social protection, only residential facilities for children with intellectual disabilities are operational. There are five centres for training, work and care in Slovenia. These are public institutions under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In general, public institutions, social work centres or other public institutes provide above-mentioned social protection services to a significant degree. The growing involvement of</p>

<sup>212</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the co-financing of social assistance programmes](#) (*Pravilnik o sofinanciranju socialnovarstvenih programov*), 25 October 2016, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>private entities is only registered with regard to the provision of assistance to family at home, but this service very rarely captures children. It can target children with severe physical or intellectual disabilities, or severely ill children, but the most recent available data show that there were 0.05 % children among the recipients of this service in 2021.<sup>213</sup></p> <p>In terms of residential care for children, no civil society organisation or any other private entity is involved. All the other residential institutions are under the responsibility of public authorities. There are residential institutions for children with special needs that cannot be schooled in the place of their residence, and for children with emotional and behavioural disorders. These residential facilities are part of the education system, are run as public institutes, and are set up either by the government or by local authorities. Similarly, the Asylum home which accommodates asylum seekers, including children, is operated by a government office, while the police administer the Centre for foreigners, the only national facility that accommodates migrants in irregular situation.</p> <p>In practice, the most important programmes implemented by civil society organisation working with children are delivered as public social protection programmes (e.g. a telephone helpline for children in need of advice or support, day care centres, programmes targeting women victims of domestic violence and their children, if they have them, a programme aimed at children, adolescents and adults addicted to digital technologies and the internet). The Social Assistance Act defines social protection programmes as programmes intended to prevent and solve the social hardships of individual vulnerable groups of the population. They shall be implemented in accordance with the doctrine of social work as a supplement or alternative to social protection services and measures and shall be co-financed based on public calls. There shall be public social protection programmes, developmental social protection programmes, experimental social protection programmes and supplementary social protection</p>
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<sup>213</sup> Kovač, N., Istenič, A., Petrič, M. (2022), *Spremljanje izvajanja storitve pomoči za družino: pomoč na domu – Analiza stanja v letu 2021, končno poročilo*, Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

		<p>programmes. Public social assistance programmes are programmes that have been implemented as development programmes for at least three years and have been verified based on the procedure determined by the Social Chamber in agreement with the minister responsible for social protection. Public social assistance programmes shall be included in the uniform system for evaluating the achievement of the programme's objectives, which includes checking the appropriateness of the programme for the target population, measuring the success and effectiveness of the programme, assessing the risk of implementing the programme, and analysing aspects of the programme's sustainability. Developmental programmes are programmes that are implemented for a shorter period and do not yet meet the conditions for obtaining professional verification. Experimental programmes are programmes that can be implemented for a maximum of three years, and which develop new methods and forms and approaches to prevent and solve the hardships of individual vulnerable groups. Supplementary programmes are programmes of local importance that supplement the network of public and developmental programmes but are implemented according to the principles and methods of work in social protection. The social protection programme provider shall meet conditions in terms of staff and space and conditions regarding technical equipment according to the type of implemented social protection programmes, the appropriate share of financial resources and other conditions specified in the public call (Art. 18.s). In order to implement developmental and experimental programmes, the providers shall obtain the opinion of the Social Chamber regarding professional adequacy of the programs (Art. 18.š).<sup>214</sup> Upon successful verification procedure, the Social Chambers issues verification document for a public social protection programme valid for seven years (Art. 9).<sup>215</sup> Only verified programmes and programmes that obtained opinion from the Social Chamber on its adequacy are eligible for co-funding by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and</p>
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<sup>214</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>215</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the professional verification of social protection programmes](#) (*Pravilnik o strokovni verifikaciji socialnovarstvenih programov*),

			<p>Equal Opportunities. Public social protection programme providers shall also ensure supervision over their work (Art. 4, para 2-4).<sup>216</sup> Supervision is a method of permanent learning from work and at the same time one of the forms of professional monitoring and protection of the quality of professional work in social protection organisations (Art. 3). Supervision providers licensed by the Social Chamber carries out the supervision (Art. 5).<sup>217</sup></p> <p>The public social protection programme providers produce reports on the programme implementation every six months, as well as the final report, and submit them to the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Developmental programme providers produce interim and final reports.<sup>218</sup></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>		x	<p>No such agreement is reported.<sup>219</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities reports that it cooperates with non-governmental organisations by means of issuing public calls and co-funding social protection programmes and programmes aimed at families. Public calls for co-funding social protection programmes are issued every year, while the last public call for funding activities of family centres was published in 2020 covering the period 2021-2025.<sup>220</sup></p> <p>As noted above, social protection programmes are programmes intended to prevent and solve the social hardships of individual vulnerable groups of the population. Amongst others, there are violence</p>

<sup>216</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the co-financing of social assistance programmes](#) (*Pravilnik o sofinanciranju socialnovarstvenih programov*), 25 October 2016, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>217</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the planning, monitoring and carrying out of professional work supervision in the field of social assistance](#) (*Pravilnik o načrtovanju, spremljanju in izvajanju supervizije strokovnega dela na področju socialnega varstva*), 19 September 2003.

<sup>218</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to the [social protection programmes](#).

<sup>219</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>220</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

		<p>prevention programme (e.g. safe houses, counselling, hotline), programmes aimed at children and adolescents (e.g. telephone helpline, day centres), programmes targeting persons with addiction (e.g. assistance to children, adolescents and adults addicted to digital technology and the internet), and Roma social inclusion programmes (e.g. day centres for Roma children).<sup>221</sup></p> <p>Family centres implements the following activities: educational and practical workshops on the topic of positive parenting, holiday activities for children and workshops for children or youth, counselling for improving the ability to manage emotions, building positive self-image, and learning to solve various problems.<sup>222</sup></p> <p>These programmes are funded from the national budget.</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>As a rule, the government cooperates with other state bodies and organisations, including local authorities through the competent ministries. In doing so, it particularly deals with their opinions and initiatives and formulates its position regarding these opinion and initiatives. The government also informs them about its measures, and if necessary, invites their representatives to meetings of its working bodies, establishes government councils and organises other forms of cooperation (Art. 49).<sup>223</sup></p> <p>In practice, before the adoption of legislation and strategic documents by the Government, government materials, if necessary and reasonable, are sent to the Association of Municipalities and towns of Slovenia (<i>Skupnost občin Slovenije</i>), the Association of Municipalities</p>

<sup>221</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to the [social protection programmes](#).

<sup>222</sup> For more information, see the government web page on [public call for funding activities of family centres in the period 2021-2025](#).

<sup>223</sup> Slovenia, The Rules of procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Poslovnik Vlade Republike Slovenije*), 10 May 2001, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>of Slovenia (Združenje občin Slovenije) and the Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia ZMOS (Združenje mestnih občin Slovenije) for opinion. In specific cases, <i>ad hoc</i> cooperation is also in place. This, for example, includes cooperation within the framework of EU projects. In general, in Slovenia, policies and legislation in the field of child protection and care are planned, adopted and implemented primarily at the national level, albeit they can be supplemented by municipalities. Examples include co-funding social protection programmes, including those aimed at children and adolescents.<sup>224</sup></p>
<p>2.3.2. Is there inter-agency cooperation between the relevant actors having 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>x</p>	<p>Set up in accordance with the Family Code, Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family is the permanent professional consultative body of the government. It is composed of members of non-governmental organisations, professional institutions in the area of children and family and members of the government. Amongst others, the body monitors and assesses the situation of children and families, with emphasis on the exercise of the rights of children and formulates basic positions for the adoption of legislation and strategic documents relating to children and families. It further drafts opinions on proposed laws and prepares initiatives for coordinated action of competent authorities in the area of children and families and for cooperation among competent authorities, professional institutions and non-governmental organisations. The council also monitors the implementation of laws and measures relating to children and families. It reports on its work to the government annually. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities performs professional, administrative and technical tasks for the council (Art. 18).<sup>225</sup></p> <p>The ministry, in addition, coordinates the work of several interdepartmental bodies:</p> <p>- Interdepartmental working group for activities in the preparation and implementation of the</p>

<sup>224</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>225</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>Programme for children 2020-2025: its tasks include drafting the programme, drafting accompanying three-year action plans, and producing reports on the implementation of measures set out in the action plans. Members include government representatives and representatives of professional organisations and non-governmental organisations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for the implementation of the Resolution on the Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families”: the working group produces action plans based on the resolution, as well as reports on the implementation of measures laid down in the action plans. It is composed of representatives of ministries covering family policy and NGO representatives;</li> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for the preparation of the Resolution on the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women: it involves representatives of the government, judiciary, state prosecutor, professional organisations and NGOs;</li> <li>- Interdepartmental working group for the preparation of the national action programme for Child Guarantee 2022-2030: its members are representatives of competent ministries. A consultative group involving NGO representatives was also set up.<sup>226</sup></li> </ul> <p>In the field of healthcare, there is the Interdepartmental working group for the implementation of the “Resolution on National Mental Health Programme 2018-2028” and preparation of the Action programme 2024-2028.</p> <p>The functioning of the Children’s House is another example of cooperation. Set up by the government, it provides for comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings concerning specific criminal offences. According to the law, its managing body, the Council of the Children’s House is composed of seven members. The government ministries</p>
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<sup>226</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

		<p>appoint five members, one member shall be a representative of the staff, and the last member shall be a representative of non-governmental organisations working for the rights of children. Additional body, the Expert Council gives opinions and proposals regarding training programmes, protocols for multidisciplinary and interagency cooperation and other specialist questions. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the Bar Association of Slovenia shall each appoint one member, while non-governmental organisations working for the children's rights shall have at least one member on the Council.<sup>227</sup></p> <p>In practice, the field of prevention of family violence has been historically most heavily regulated in terms of inter-institutional cooperation. There is a series of regulation in place governing this cooperation. For example, the most comprehensive framework covering reporting procedures is in place in this field. Based on the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, several implementing regulations have been adopted. For example, based on the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence, public bodies, bearers of public authorities, public service providers, bodies of self-governing local communities and NGOs, shall be obliged to inform Social work centres, and the police or the public prosecutor of the case involving suspicion that a child is a victim of violence within 24 hours (Art. 4, para. 1). This information is to be provided in written, in electronic format or via telephone. The information provided via telephone must be also provided in written within three days. In cases of immediate danger, all the mentioned organisations must immediately report the case to the social work centre or the police.<sup>228</sup> There are additional</p>
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<sup>227</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>228</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.



		<p>implementing regulations adopted based on the Family Violence Prevention Act which defines reporting obligations by the police, educational institution and healthcare providers.<sup>229</sup> The rules further lay down additional cooperation between institutions, including the setting-up of a multidisciplinary team. After the social work centre receives a report, it performs all necessary measures within its competency for the protection of the victim and collects information from all institutions that might possess such information; the social work centre is obligated to send within 5 days feedback information to the institution that reported violence to the social work centre (Article 4, para 5). The social work centre reviews all the circumstances of the case and prepares a risk assessment and assesses the need for an individual plan of assistance to the victim. When deemed necessary, the social work centre includes other institutions and state bodies by establishing a multidisciplinary team (Article 6, Para. 2) If the social work centre is the only institution that was informed about a case of a child victim, the social work centre immediately reports the case to the police or the state prosecutor's office (Article 6, Para. 4). Multidisciplinary team involves a group of experts with the purpose of providing integrated assistance and protection of the victim (Art. 8, para 1). The tasks of the team include the following: exchange of information to clarify the circumstances necessary to protect and assist the victim by phone, e-mail and at meetings convened by the social work centre; coordination of activities; informing the victim about all forms of assistance provided by the authorities; drawing up a plan to help the victim and monitoring its implementation, if this is necessary based on the produced assessment of the risk; offering the most appropriate protection to the victim; and making</p>
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<sup>229</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the treatment of domestic violence for educational institutions](#) (*Pravilnik o obravnavi nasilja v družini za vzgojno-izobraževalne zavode*), 10 December 2009; Slovenia, [The Rules on cooperation between the police and other authorities in the detection and prevention of domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju policije z drugimi organi in organizacijami pri odkrivanju in preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 19 March 2010; Slovenia, [The Rules on procedures for dealing with domestic violence in the implementation of health activities](#) (*Pravilnik o pravilih in postopkih pri obravnavanju nasilja v družini pri izvajanju zdravstvene dejavnosti*), 21 February 2011.

			decisions with the aim of implementing the assistance (Art. 7). <sup>230</sup>
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)?			
<p>In Slovenia, no in-depth studies dealing with inter-institutional cooperation could be identified. A small-scale study involving 7 interviews with professional workers with social work centres, namely regional coordinators for the prevention of (domestic) violence. According to the study, barriers to cooperation include the following, amongst others: geographical dispersion of services responsible for certain area, as some services are, for example, more than 100 km away from the scene of intervention, and this results in prolonged interventions; no NGOs in certain area, because these organisations tend to be important partner in child protection in areas where they exist; poor responsiveness of certain services, healthcare in particular, albeit there are improvements in this respect in certain areas; irresponsiveness on the part of psychiatrists; problems in other areas with the presence of specialists from Ljubljana; problems with convening the crisis team within the social work centres, as some staff work on other emergency issues; poor responsiveness results in the lack of needed information; long meetings and poor management of the team work, as a consequence of a lack of training on managing multidisciplinary teams; occasionally, poor knowledge of other institutions' competences and unrealistic expectations; poor knowledge of healthcare personnel about the field and the dynamics of dealing with violence.<sup>231</sup></p>			
Question	YES	NO	Comments
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>If <u>yes</u>, 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?</p>			

<sup>230</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>231</sup> Domiter Protner, K., Leskošek, V., Frangež, D. (2019), 'Medinstitucionalno sodelovanje: problem, izzivi in dobre prakse' in: Leskošek, V., Kodele, T., Mešl, N., *Zaščita otrok pred nasiljem in zanemarjanjem v Sloveniji*, Ljubljana, Fakulteta za socialno delo, pp. 254-256.

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).

In Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities acts as central authority in respect to 1980, 1993 and 1996 Hague Conventions.<sup>232</sup>

Based on the Hague Adoption Convention, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on Interstate Adoptions (*Sporazum med Vlado Republike Slovenije in Vlado Republike Makedonije o meddržavnih posvojitvah*) was concluded in 2007. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities acts as central authority in relation to this agreement. The purpose of the agreement is to regulate the conditions and manner of implementation of inter-country adoption ensuring that it is in the child's best interest, that the procedure of adoption observes the fundamental rights stipulated in national legislation and international instruments ratified by the parties, and to establish such a system of cooperation between the parties that would ensure compliance with the measures for the protection of children, thus preventing the abduction, sale or trafficking in children. The agreement further details the legal effects of the adoption, procedure and the role of relevant bodies in the procedure (e.g. the role of authorised bodies regarding assessment of the adequacy of potential adoptive parents, preparation of report on the child and checking if it is possible to adopt such a child under the national legislation of parties; the role of central authorities under the agreement in respect to the protection of children), transfer of the child and cooperation between the relevant authorities.<sup>233</sup> The authorities reported no similar agreements in relation to the above-mentioned instruments.<sup>234</sup>

The Slovenian police report that they were involved in the setting-up of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons and immediately joined the network at its inception. According to the police, the network contributes to the construction of the European policy in the field of missing persons, including vulnerable groups, such as children. In the period 2020-2022, during which a Slovenian officer presided over the network, the Slovenian police and the Ministry of the Interior organised three international conferences. The purpose of all conferences was to provide new knowledge, experience and practices and to create a common European approach to dealing with missing persons, increasing thus the chances of finding missing persons and returning them home safely and as soon as possible. The conferences involved presentation and discussion of new tools and approaches in searching for missing persons, as well as promising practices. "Non-law enforcement" aspects of dealing with missing persons were also presented, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations both from Slovenia and abroad. The Slovenian police also contributed to the approval of the Council Conclusions on Stepping Up Cross-Border Police Cooperation in the Area of

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<sup>232</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>233</sup> Slovenia, , [The Act ratifying the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on interstate adoptions](#) (*Zakon o ratifikaciji Sporazuma med Vlado Republike Slovenije in Vlado Republike Makedonije o meddržavnih posvojitvah*), 22 November 2007.

<sup>234</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

Missing Persons during the last Slovenian EU presidency. The Slovenian, as part of the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons, closely cooperates with the AMBER Alert Europe Foundation.<sup>235</sup>

#### 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

While the overall structure of the child protection services has not changed much. In terms of governance, the same structures are generally in place, with dispersed responsibilities for certain areas of intervention, but with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities often assuming the coordination of activities.

There were, however, some notable developments in the monitoring period. One of the most significant changes was the adoption of the new Family Code, which transferred practically all decision-making responsibilities regarding family matters and child protection measures from social work centres to courts. The rationale was to enhance the state of legal security of citizens as regards decision-making in marital and family disputes and to harmonize procedures regarding decision-making on measures to protect the interests of children. The related goal was the faster resolution of family matters, in particular as regards decision-making on measures to protect the best interests of the child. Strengthening the core role of social work centres by separating their powers of authority from their professional and advisory functions was an additional goal. To this end, the centres should predominantly retain the latter functions.<sup>236</sup> The Family Code also laid down the setting-up of the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family, a government permanent consultative body. Amongst others, its tasks include the preparations of initiatives for the coordinated action of competent bodies in the area of children and families and for cooperation among competent authorities, professional institutions and non-governmental organisations.

In practice, the field of prevention of family violence is still by far the most heavily regulated in terms of inter-institutional cooperation, with social work centres providing for the coordination of activities aimed at protecting and assisting the victims.

The noted gaps in this period, amongst others, include the following: “the insufficient coordination of the provision of the necessary services for children with disabilities, among all persons in positions of responsibility”; “the absence of mechanisms to ensure the participation of children with disabilities in decision-making processes affecting their lives, in particular the lack of mechanisms to ensure the right of children with disabilities to have their views taken into account on matters pertaining to them and their families, including their participation in all protection mechanisms”; “the lack of appropriate social and health-care services for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities”; “the lack of support and services for families, especially single female-headed families, that have members with disabilities, including children, as a result of which their risk of poverty

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<sup>235</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>236</sup> Slovenia, The Draft Family code (*Predlog družinskega zakonika*), 20 December 2016.

and social exclusion is increased”;<sup>237</sup> a serious lack of qualified and properly trained court experts on sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children; the absence of specialist training for experts providing psychological counselling to children who have been victims or witnesses of violence or abuse;<sup>238</sup> the lack of systemic and comprehensive provision of longer-term accommodation and assistance to child victims of trafficking;<sup>239</sup> the lack of court expert witnesses in family matters; the lack of systematic form of accommodation and treatment of unaccompanied children;<sup>240</sup> the lack of systematic form of accommodation and treatment of unaccompanied children; the lack of support services during transition to adulthood, in particular targeting those who found themselves in the care of the state (e.g. institutional care, foster care); the lack of staff in care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities, which could also provide for care of children with combined intellectual disabilities and mental health problems.<sup>241</sup>

Please see also the Section 2.3.3. above.

## 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)

Based on the Family Code, adopted in 2017, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family (*Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino*) was set up. The Council is a permanent expert consultative body of the government. It brings together different stakeholders, and is composed of members of non-governmental organisations, professional institutions in the area of children and family and members of the government. Its fairly comprehensive list of tasks includes the monitoring and assessment of the situation of children and families, with emphasis on the exercise of the rights of children. The body also formulates expert starting positions for the adoption of legislation and strategic documents relating to children and families. It further discusses draft acts in the area of children and families and produces professional opinions on draft documents. In addition, the body prepares initiatives for the coordinated action of competent bodies in the area of children and families and for cooperation among competent authorities, professional institutions and non-governmental organisations. It also monitors the implementation of legislation and strategic documents adopted in

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<sup>237</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2018), [Concluding observations on Slovenia](#), 16 April 2018.

<sup>238</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021.

<sup>239</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (2018), [Report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 24 November 2017.

<sup>240</sup> For more information, see the web page with [reports produced by the Human Rights Ombudsman](#).

<sup>241</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 13, 39.

the field of children and families. The Council is funded from the state budget.<sup>242</sup> In May 2023, the government, with an order, appointed two child representatives to the Council.<sup>243</sup>

An example of inter-institutional cooperation is the Multidisciplinary group for the prevention of domestic violence Pomurje (*Medinstitucionalna skupina za preprečevanje nasilja v družini Pomurje*), set up within the then Social work centre in Murska Sobota, currently the Social work Centre Pomurje, Murska Sobota unit (*Center za socialno delo Pomurje, enota Murska Sobota*) in 2013. The group is oriented towards awareness raising of experts and lay public about the issues of domestic violence. The group links all institutions that have a hand in dealing with instances of domestic violence and protection of victims, including children. Apart from awareness raising, the group carries out training for groups at risk and professionals, facilitates institutional cooperation of competent authorities, and works towards the reduction of reporting time and identification of perpetrators of violence. The group studies the dynamics of a violent relationship, the responsibilities and procedures of social work centres and the police in dealing with domestic violence and the duties and roles of various institutions, issues of violence against children, children against their parents, and monitors the legislation. The group involves two permanent members, the coordinator for the prevention of domestic violence and a police officer, while other members alternate depending of the issue at hand. The social work centre received both domestic and European awards for the group's work.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>243</sup> Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vlada Republike Slovenije*), Order No. 1301-4/2023/4, 11 May 2023. The mentioned order is not available in the public domain. For more information, see: Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vlada Republike Slovenije*), '[48. redna seja Vlade Republike Slovenije](#)', public release, 11 May 2023. Hyperlink was accessed on 16 May 2023.

<sup>244</sup> For more information, see the government web page with information on the [2020 recipients of awards for work in the field of social care in 2020](#), and the web page of the European Social Network with information on [the 2022 European Social Services Awards](#). See also: Domiter Protner, K., Leskošek, V., Frangež, D. (2019), 'Medinstitucionalno sodelovanje: problem, izzivi in dobre prakse' in: Leskošek, V., Kodele, T., Mešl, N., *Zaščita otrok pred nasiljem in zanemarjanjem v Sloveniji*, Ljubljana, Fakulteta za socialno delo, p. 260-261.

### 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		<p>There is no single legislative document governing budget allocation on child protection, but the budget allocation covering specific purposes is laid down in different laws.</p> <p>For example, the Social Assistance Act stipulates that the following shall be funded from the state budget, amongst others: family counselling; crisis accommodation, including for children; children's homes (albeit none exists in the country); institutional care of children with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities; support to victims of crimes; activities of social protection institutions when exercising public powers. According to the law, public social protection programmes and development social protection programmes, including programmes intended for children deprived of normal family life shall be funded from both the state and municipal budget.<sup>245</sup></p> <p>According to the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, for instance, the following is funded from the state budget: salaries in basic and secondary schools, including schools and institutions for the education of children with special needs; material costs, investment maintenance and renovation of real estate and equipment in institutions for the education of children with special needs; material costs related to the care for children with special needs in accordance with the placement decision, transportation of pupils and preschool children with special needs in accordance with the legislation governing elementary and preschool education, respectively; activities and tasks related to the education of Roma; Slovenian language courses for foreigners enrolled in primary and secondary education;</p>

<sup>245</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>mother tongue courses for foreigners enrolled in primary and secondary education; consideration and placement of children with special needs in accordance with the act governing the placement of children with special needs.<sup>246</sup></p> <p>The Domestic Violence Prevention Act lays down funding from the state budget of the following, amongst others: training on violence, especially violence against children, including sexual abuse of children; programmes intended for identifying and learning of positive parenting skills in the field of the upbringing of children; creation of measures to prevent violence, monitoring its implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of these measures by preparing proposals for improvement.<sup>247</sup></p> <p>The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, for instance, sets out the rights arising from parental protection insurance, and the rights to family benefits. The former includes e.g. maternal, paternal and parental leave, maternity, paternity and parental benefit, the right of parents to part-time work and to payment of social security contributions due to parenthood. The latter includes e.g. parental allowance, child benefit, large family allowance, childcare allowance and partial payment for the lost income. According to the law, the former is paid from the insurance scheme, that is – contributions paid by persons liable (e.g. employees, employers), but also from the state budget if the collected contributions do not suffice to cover the obligations arising from the parental protection insurance scheme. The law further stipulates that the state budget pays the family benefits.<sup>248</sup></p>
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<sup>246</sup> Slovenia, [The Organisation and financing of education act](#) (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*), 6 February 1996, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>247</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>248</sup> Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3 April 2014, and subsequent modifications.



		<p>Another example is the Provision of Foster Care Act. According to this act, the state budget shall fund the provision of foster care in Slovenia.<sup>249</sup></p> <p>As regards policy documents, the Action plan for the implementation of the Programme for children 2020-2025 for the period 2020-2022, the latter being the major national policy initiative aimed at children, sets out measures, responsible bodies for the implementation of specific measures and the funds to be allocated for specific measures.<sup>250</sup></p>
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	<p>As noted, there is no single all-inclusive children-related budget line in the national budget. However, the budget allocated on social protection is a separate item in the state budget. This budget line of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities includes, for example, separate budget on foster care, on institutional care for children and persons up to 26 years of age with moderate, severe and profound disabilities, on family benefits and parental protection allowances, as well as on programmes of family support. These, however, do not exhaust all resources allocated for children protection, such as for services provided by Social work centres.</p> <p>Apart from this, the budget of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport includes, for example, separate budget lines for, respectively, financing of educational institution for children with special needs and transportation of children in Centres for training work and care, institution established for education and care of children with moderate, severe and profound mental disabilities.<sup>251</sup></p> <p>At the time of writing, 2022 budget financial statement (i.e. actual spending) was not</p>

<sup>249</sup> Slovenia, [The Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2002, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>250</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2021), [Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Programa za otroke 2020–2025 \(AnPO20-22\) za obdobje 2020-2022](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>251</sup> For more information, see, for example, the government web page with the [special part of the 2022 final budget](#).

		available. In 2021, € 14,253,920,256 was spent from the state budget), € 1,465,569,245 (10.3 %) of which went for social protection. Because of Covid-19 pandemics, additional € 919,421,632 (6.5 %) was spent on family benefits, social protection and assistance to unemployed persons. <sup>252</sup>
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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.

Years for which the budget financial statements are available (i.e. actual spending), in €:

2021 – 14,253,920,256 (total state budget)/ 1,465,569,245 (social protection) – 10.3 % (because of Covid-19 pandemics, additional 919,421,632 was spent on family benefits, social protection and assistance to unemployed persons – 6.5 %)

2020 – 12,564,292,497/ 1,379,764,216 – 11 % (because of Covid-19 pandemics, additional 384,000,476 was spent on family benefits, social protection and assistance to unemployed persons – 3 %)

2019 – 9,911,693,352/ 1,279,218,999 – 12.9 %

2018 – 9,463,367,275/ 1,123,351,496 – 11.9 %

2017 – 9,156,233,012/ 1,048,219,053 – 11,4 %<sup>253</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
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)?  <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</i>	?	?	No comprehensive data source on this topic could be identified at this stage. If possible, upon further research, this information shall be provided.  Comprehensive research studies and reports focusing on funding of child protection mechanisms in Slovenia, and adequacy and sustainability of funding could not be identified. For example, the Human Rights Ombudsman has not reported on the financial side of the child protection system in Slovenia in the recent period. The last concluding observations produced by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child dates to 2013. Thus far, only a few sources of limited data have been

<sup>252</sup> For more information, see the government web page dedicated to [budget spending](#).

<sup>253</sup> For more information, see the government web page dedicated to [budget spending](#).

<p><i>Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		<p>identified. For instance, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (<i>Zagovornik načela enakosti</i>) recently produced a report on the accessibility of secondary education facilities in Slovenia for persons with reduced mobility. Amongst others, the findings show that, “Among the reasons for inaccessibility, secondary schools with partial accessibility mostly indicated the lack of financial resources for architectural interventions or improvements, such as the installation of an elevator.”<sup>254</sup> An analysis of the functioning of crisis centres for children and youth from late 2016 showed that the staff of these facilities was in need of additional professional education and training, but participation in seminars was conditional on financial resources, which crisis centres often could not provide.<sup>255</sup> Foster Care Association of Slovenia, for instance, reports insufficient compensation for care the foster carers provide and insufficient coverage of material costs of foster care.<sup>256</sup></p>
<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>	<p>X</p>	<p>Many cornerstones of the child protection and social protection systems are funded from the state budget. This applies, for example, to social protection services, from professional support and counselling to institutional care for children with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities. Social work centres and other public entities provide these services. Crisis accommodation and related services, as well as social protection programmes, of which many are implemented by non-governmental organisations, are also funded from the national budget. Educational facilities for children with special needs, including those offering accommodation and care are also publicly funded.</p>

<sup>254</sup> Advocate of the Principle of Equality (2022), [Accessibility of Secondary Schools for Persons with Reduced Mobility – Special Report – Summary](#), Ljubljana, Advocate of the Principle of Equality.

<sup>255</sup> Dremelj, P., Topolovec, N., Kobal Tomc, B. (2016), [Analiza delovanja KCM: Priprava predlogov za prenovo organizacije Kriznih centrov za mlade \(KCM\) – Končno poročilo](#), Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

<sup>256</sup> Mali, M., Žiberna, M. (2022), ‘Predlogi za spremembe na področju rejništva’, [Rejniški glasnik, No. 56](#), pp. 35-40.

		<p>There are also examples where EU funds played an important role. The Ministry of Education financed with resources from EU funds, namely European Social Fund, major projects in the field of Roma education, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Together for knowledge (<i>Skupaj za znanje</i>) (2016-2021), € 6,557,566.08, of which € 5,246,052.86 from ESF.<sup>257</sup> this was a multi-year project aimed at pre-school and schoolchildren. It was based on the following main pillars: operation of a preparatory kindergarten, provision of education activities in Multipurpose centres (<i>Večnamenski centri</i>) in Roma settlements targeting children who do not attend or do not regularly attend mainstream kindergartens; employment of Roma assistants who facilitate better integration of school children and act as a bridge between schools and Roma parents; provision of extra-school learning assistance to school children and provision of out-of-class education activities,<sup>258</sup></li> <li>- Multipurpose Roma centres as innovative learning environment (<i>Večnamenski romski centri kot inovativna učna okolja</i>) (2021-2023), ESF: the project activities involve developing innovative and flexible pedagogical practices and their implementation in educational work with Roma children in Multipurpose Roma centres, which are facilities set up in Roma settlements during past project activities. Special emphasis is on individualised programmes for Roma children (i.e. discovering and strengthening the child's strong areas) and on Roma cultural and linguistic heritage, as to strengthen the socio-cultural identity of Roma children.<sup>259</sup></li> </ul> <p>The Ministry of Education also funded in this manner the following project aimed at children with disabilities:</p>
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<sup>257</sup> For more information, see the government web page on [EU funds](#).

<sup>258</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [Together for knowledge](#) project.

<sup>259</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

		<p>- Network of professional institutions to support children with special needs and their families (Mreža strokovnih institucij za podporo otrokom s posebnimi potrebami in njihovim družinam) (2016-2020), € 4 million, 80 % ESF): the ministry funded activities for the establishment of professional centres, which will join in a national network of professional institutions. Within the framework of two pilot projects (i.e. professional institutions for supporting children with special needs, and professional centres for the comprehensive treatment of children with emotional and behavioural disorders), 13 professional centres (<i>strokovni centri</i>) operated in Slovenia assisting children with special needs. The main activities of the professional centres were special-pedagogical diagnostics, consulting and professional support to educational institutions, production and rental of didactic aids and equipment, and development of professional work;<sup>260</sup></p> <p>- Hand in hand HELP - Strengthening the competences of professional workers in education for the work with children with special needs (<i>Z roko v roki poMOČ - Krepitev kompetenc strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju na področju dela z otroki s posebnimi potrebami</i>) (2017-2021), € 1,494,000, 80 % ESF): the aim of the project is the provision of support to professional workers in education regarding the inclusion of children and adolescents with various special needs. The support takes the form of individual consultations, lectures and workshops for professional workers in education.<sup>261</sup></p> <p>Another example is from the field of asylum. The Migration Directorate (<i>Direktorat za migracije</i>) with the Ministry of the Interior funds the following project:</p>
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<sup>260</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023). For more information, see also the government web page on EU funds with information on the project of [professional centres](#).

<sup>261</sup> For more information, please see the web page of the project [Z roko v roki poMOČ](#). For more information, see also the government web page on EU funds with information on [this project](#).

			<p>- Support in proceedings for granting international protection (<i>Podpora v postopku priznanja mednarodne zaščite</i>), € 56,045.53 in 2022, 75 % of which from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund: the project, amongst others, pays fees to legal representatives (<i>zakoniti zastopniki</i>) of asylum-seeking unaccompanied children for the work they carried out in supporting the children in proceedings for granting international protection. The project was already implemented in the previous financial perspective and will continue in the new financial perspective.<sup>262</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Justice reported funds received for the following project:</p> <p>- Barnahus Promise 3 project (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2023, € 146,835, EU funding: training for conducting forensic interviews and providing therapies (psychosocial assistance) to children in the Children’s House. (The ministry received funds from Norway Grants: 1 February 2021 – 30 November 2023, € 1.56 million: setting up the Children’s House, its pilot operation, equipment and evaluation).<sup>263</sup></p>
<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>The authorities reported that they are not in possession of any information on this topic.<sup>264</sup> There is anecdotal evidence that enterprises provide for donations or media support for certain projects or carry out their own (e.g. provision of holidays to children who cannot afford them), but no comprehensive and conclusive research study or data on this issue could be identified.</p>

<sup>262</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023, response dated 22 February 2023).

<sup>263</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

<sup>264</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<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 general, state and non-governmental organisations tend to implement the overwhelming majority of services and programmes. As noted above, there is certain evidence that enterprises support some activities in the field of child protection, but studies looking into this field could not be identified.</p> <p>With regard to the non-governmental sector, please see Section 2.2. Civil society organisations active in the area of child protection above. Please also see information on service providers in table 2.1.5. above.</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 concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		x	<p>In-depth studies dealing with allocation of human rights in the field of child protection could not be identified in Slovenia. Available sources suggest that there is a lack of human resources in Slovenia.<sup>265</sup> As reported by the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for children and family, according to the Social Chamber of Slovenia (2017), 11,170 persons were employed in the area of social protection, 2.2 % of whom were specialists in the field of child protection. According to reported 2017 UNICEF data, at least 25 % more staff were needed for the implementation of all tasks.<sup>266</sup> Foster Care Association of Slovenia, for instance, notes a lack of human resources covering the field of foster</p>

<sup>265</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 54.

<sup>266</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 54.

		<p>care at social work centres.<sup>267</sup> The authorities, for example, report the lack of staff in crisis centres for children and young people. In practice, it is observed that placements in crisis centres, which are otherwise intended as short-term solutions, are for this reason too long.<sup>268</sup></p> <p>Existing sources further points to several other challenges. This includes the following: a serious lack of qualified and properly trained court experts on sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children;<sup>269</sup> a chronic shortage of qualified court experts, psychologists and general experts dealing with children, which consequently causes significant delays in the court proceedings;<sup>270</sup> the staff increase in social work centres, which would reduce the staff turnover at centres, as this was, for example, seen by foster families as a significant obstacle to cooperation with the centres; lack of professional workers with the social work centres who would be present during supervised contacts between children and parents;<sup>271</sup> the lack of staff in care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities, which could also provide for care of</p>
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<sup>267</sup> Mali, M., Žiberna, M. (2022), 'Predlogi za spremembe na področju rejništva', [Rejniški glasnik, No. 56](#), pp. 35-40.

<sup>268</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>269</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021.

<sup>270</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021; Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije (2023), '[Sodni sistem ne zasleduje največje koristi otrok](#)', public release, 17 March 2023; for more information, see also the web page with [reports produced by the Human Rights Ombudsman](#),

<sup>271</sup> Kodele, T., Mešl, N., Rape Žiberna, T. (2022), '[Posvet Rejništvo v Sloveniji \(marec 2022\)](#)', *Socialno delo*, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 337-341.



			children with combined intellectual disabilities and mental health problems. <sup>272</sup>
<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>		X	<p>Available sources identifies the following challenges: “the lack of skills and knowledge among teachers about inclusive teaching methodologies and the low expectations of the capacities of children with disabilities”;<sup>273</sup> “a serious lack of qualified and properly trained court experts on sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children”; “absence of specialist training for experts providing psychological counselling to children who have been victims or witnesses of violence or abuse”; questionable ability professional workers in educational institutions to identify and deal with suspicions of domestic violence, as “ore effective training is needed for staff in educational facilities to enable them to identify and respond appropriately to child victims and witnesses of domestic violence”; the lack of well-trained staff at the social work centres supervising contact between perpetrators of violence and their children; professional workers in the education, healthcare and the social protection sectors need additional training to enable them to deal properly with instances of early and forced marriages in Roma communities;<sup>274</sup> lack of qualification on the judges, lawyers and those representing the children to deal with them when they are involved in proceedings.<sup>275</sup></p>

<sup>272</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 39.

<sup>273</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2018), [Concluding observations on Slovenia](#), 16 April 2018.

<sup>274</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021.

<sup>275</sup> Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije (2023), [‘Sodni sistem ne zasleduje največje koristi otrok’](#), public release, 17 March 2023.

<p>3.2.3. Is there a <u>compulsory certification or licencing</u> process for social workers and other professionals who work for child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly describe the process.</p>	x	<p>There is <u>no</u> specific licensing procedure for social workers and other professionals who work in the field of child protection. The certification process, however, is in place, and applies to all social workers, regardless of the field of their work. Apart from the relevant educational qualification in the fields specified below, and provided that they pass the certification exam, no further certificate needs apply to professional workers with social work centres who work with children, and for whom the Directorate for Social Affairs of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is responsible. The authorities reported no additional specific criteria applicable to these professionals.<sup>276</sup></p> <p>Pursuant to Social Assistance Act, professional workers and professional assistants shall perform these services.</p> <p>Professional workers according to this act shall be workers who have obtained higher or university degree in social work and have completed six months of traineeship or have six months of work experience in the field of social protection and have passed certification exam in the field of social protection. Professional workers shall also be workers who have obtained higher or university degree in psychology, biopsychology, education science and its specialised disciplines, administration, law, sociology, health care – occupational therapy branch, and theology, with the appropriate specialisation, and have completed nine months of traineeship, or have nine months of work experience in the field of social protection and have passed certification exam in this field. Professional workers in children’s homes (please note that the law allows for this possibility, but the orphanage-like institutions do not exist in Slovenia) and in social care institutions for children with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities shall be workers who have obtained higher or university degree in social work and have completed six</p>
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<sup>276</sup> Information was provided by the Minsitry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 19 April 2023, response dated 18 April 2023).

		<p>months of traineeship, or have six months of work experience in the field of social protection and have passed certification exam in this field. Professional workers in these institutions shall also be workers who have obtained higher or university degree in education science, social education science, psychology, biopsychology and special education science, and have completed nine months of traineeship, or have nine months of work experience in the field of social protection and have passed certification exam (Art. 69).</p> <p>The Social Chamber of Slovenia determines the manner and conditions for completing traineeship and for passing the certification exam (Art. 71).<sup>277</sup></p> <p>According to the Rules on professional examination in the field of social assistance (<i>Pravilnik o strokovnem izpitu na področju socialnega varstva</i>), this procedure, among other things, includes testing the participant's (i.e. professional workers) knowledge of topics relating to marriage, family relationships and partnerships, and may also include topics relating to child protection (Art. 8&amp;9).<sup>278</sup> The Rules on professional exam for professional assistants in the field of social assistants (<i>Pravilnik o strokovnem izpitu za strokovne sodelavce na področju socialnega varstva</i>) also involves testing the participant's knowledge regarding the protection of family and children.<sup>279</sup></p> <p>Pursuant to Social Assistance Act, professional workers and professional assistants in public social protection institutions are obliged to participate in educational and training activities, as determined by the Social Chamber of Slovenia</p>
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<sup>277</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>278</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on professional examination in the field of social assistance](#) (*Pravilnik o strokovnem izpitu na področju socialnega varstva*), 18 September 2020.

<sup>279</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on professional exam for professional assistants in the field of social assistants](#) (*Pravilnik o strokovnem izpitu za strokovne sodelavce na področju socialnega varstva*), 22 March 2022.

		<p>(Art. 73).<sup>280</sup> The Chamber plans these activities based on questionnaires sent to public social protection organisations, individual interviews as well as on data from strategic documents governing the field of social protection (Art. 10). To this end, the Chamber, each year, until the end of October, prepares the annual plan of educational and training activities (Art. 12), and produces the related catalogue (Art. 15). Educational activities may be provided by any organisation which is registered for the provision of such activities or has such activities determined in its articles of associations, upon condition that these have been verified by the Chamber (Art. 16 in conj. with Art. 18, para 1). Depending of the scope of training and educational programmes, verification shall be valid from two to four years (Art. 25, para 1).<sup>281</sup></p> <p>With regard to non-governmental organisations, the most important programmes implemented by these organisations are delivered as public social protection programmes (e.g. a telephone helpline for children in need of advice or support, day care centres, programmes targeting women victims of domestic violence and their children, if they have them, a programme aimed at children, adolescents and adults addicted to digital technologies and the internet). They shall be implemented in accordance with the doctrine of social work as a supplement or alternative to social protection services and measures and shall be co-financed based on public calls. Public social protection programmes are programmes that have been implemented as development programmes for at least three years and have been verified based on the procedure determined by the Social Chamber in agreement with the minister responsible for social protection. Amongst others, the social protection programme provider shall meet conditions in terms of staff.</p>
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<sup>280</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications

<sup>281</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules concerning planning and organising the continuing professional education and training](#) (*Pravilnik o načrtovanju in organiziranju stalnega strokovnega izobraževanja in usposabljanja*), 8 June 2004.

		<p>(Art. 18.s).<sup>282</sup> According to the rules governing the co-funding of these programmes, such programmes shall be implemented by a lead professional worker, by professional workers, professional assistants, lay workers with at least a higher professional education and lay workers with including secondary education (Art. 5, para 1).<sup>283</sup> According to the Social Assistance Act, under the guidance of professional workers, individual social protection services may be provided through voluntary and non-professional work by lay workers for whom professional education is not specifically prescribed (Art. 72).<sup>284</sup> There shall also be developmental social protection programmes. Its staff may involve the same personnel as the public social protection programmes but do not need to involve the lead professional worker (Art. 5, para 2). Public calls for co-financing social protections programmes shall determine criteria regarding staff in more details (Art. 5, para 3).<sup>285</sup> The last public call for the co-financing programmes in 2023, for example, laid down that professional workers shall meet the above-mentioned qualification criteria from the Social Assistance Act, and that the lead professional worker shall have at least two years of work experience as professional worker under this act, or have passed the professional exam in the field of social protection and have at least four-year work experience in this field. Lay workers, in addition, shall have at least a higher education degree, or have completed secondary education.<sup>286</sup></p>
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<sup>282</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>283</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the co-financing of social assistance programmes](#) (*Pravilnik o sofinanciranju socialnovarstvenih programov*), 25 October 2016, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>284</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>285</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the co-financing of social assistance programmes](#) (*Pravilnik o sofinanciranju socialnovarstvenih programov*), 25 October 2016, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>286</sup> For more information, see the government web page relating to the [public call for the co-financing of social protection programmes in 2023](#).

<p>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?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>	x	<p>There are <u>general provisions</u> applicable to all volunteers, regardless of the field of their activity.</p> <p>The Volunteering Act (<i>Zakon o prostovoljstvu</i>) stipulates the principle of protection of beneficiaries of voluntary work, namely that voluntary organisations must, when selecting, training and guiding volunteers working with persons with special needs and other vulnerable groups (e.g. children below 15 years of age), ensure that volunteers have or obtain necessary knowledge, skills and experience for work with vulnerable groups (Art 11, para 1). There no provisions specifying qualifications of volunteers. With respect to training of volunteers, the voluntary organisations must ensure that a volunteer learn, in theoretical and practical terms, about the content and manner of voluntary work, instruct the volunteer about the voluntary organisation, its functioning and general acts, as well as its code of ethics, and shall acquaint the volunteer with their rights and obligations in relation to voluntary work. (Art. 32).</p> <p>There are also <u>exclusion criteria</u> in place. Voluntary work may <u>not</u> be performed by persons who were imposed safety measure of mandatory psychiatric treatment or were banned from performing an occupation or activity related to the relevant field of voluntary work, or against whom criminal proceedings have been introduced or were convicted with final judgment for criminal offences against body and limb, sexual inviolability or property. (Art. 11, para 2). A voluntary organisation must conclude an agreement with a volunteer (Art. 16, para 1). A mandatory element of such an agreement is the volunteer's statement that they have not been subject to measures specified above, whereas the voluntary organisation may request that the volunteer produce certificate from criminal or other official evidence confirming this (Art. 18, para 3).<sup>287</sup></p>
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<sup>287</sup> Slovenia, [The Volunteering act](#) (*Zakon o prostovoljstvu*), 3 February 2011, and subsequent modifications.

		<p>According to the law, the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia supervises the implementation of Article 11, that is – provisions ensuring that volunteers have or obtain necessary knowledge, skills and experience for work with vulnerable groups (including children) and provisions providing for exclusion criteria with respect to voluntary work. (Art. 49, para 2).<sup>288</sup></p> <p>(Please see also the preceding section regarding information on lay workers in the field of social protection.)</p>
<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>		<p>The police report that they place great emphasis on the education and training of police officers and criminal investigators in the field of child protection. The education and training system includes police officers from all three levels: national, regional and local. Annual training courses that take place within the police range from training of criminal investigators working with juvenile crime departments, training on the prevention and investigation of domestic violence involving training for multipliers (i.e. experienced police officers guide less experienced police officers through the entire process of dealing with domestic violence in which children are often involved) to training on peer violence.<sup>289</sup> For example, the training programme “Investigation of juvenile delinquency” is intended for criminal investigators with individual police directorates (<i>policijske uprave</i>) and police officers at police stations who work in this field. In addition to juvenile delinquency, these officers primarily deal with sexual abuse of children and other forms of violence against children, as well as crimes against marriage, family and children. The training is therefore adapted to these needs. The training involves the following objectives and topics: the participants learn about the characteristics of the period of childhood and adolescence, developmental characteristics of</p>

<sup>288</sup> Slovenia, [The Volunteering act](#) (*Zakon o prostovoljstvu*), 3 February 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>289</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

		<p>children, their individual differences, and learn to understand the stimulating or harmful influence of the environment on the children's development. In relation to the issues of domestic violence, they learn about the relevant legislation governing the field, about the concept of violence and its manifestations and the dynamics of violence. They further become familiar with the long- and short-term consequences for victims and learn about possible responses on the part of both the victims and perpetrators. They are further instructed about the professional guidelines, including as regards the rights of victims and perpetrators of violence, cooperation with other institutions, including NGOs, the possibility of preventive action and the importance of multidisciplinary teams. The participants also learn about the types of child abuse and survival strategies. In addition, the participants become familiar with the effects of social norms on juvenile delinquency. They learn to identify the common causes of aggressive behaviour, delinquency, suicide, drug abuse and running away, and learn more about the issue of peer violence. Amongst others, they become familiar with the police procedures in handling and investigating juvenile delinquency and with preventive action in this area. The training lasts 24 hours (i.e. three days). It is implemented by criminal investigators and officers with the General Police Directorate (<i>Generalna policijska uprava</i>) or regional police directorates, with the involvement of external experts (e.g. professionals with the social work centres, educational facilities, state prosecutor's office, courts and NGOs). The training course "Domestic violence - training of multipliers", for example, is attended by experienced police officers and criminal investigators who, with the assistance of internal and external experts (e.g. professionals with social work centres, schools, state prosecutor's office, non-governmental organisations), acquire additional knowledge, and above all become familiar with general trends in the field of prevention, detection and investigation of domestic violence and with the related case law. The participants deal with the concept of domestic violence, and its occurrence and dynamics. Amongst others, they learn about its consequences for victims, the applicable</p>
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		<p>professional guidelines, cooperation with other institutions and the importance of multidisciplinary teams when dealing with instances of domestic violence, standard of proof and the applicable case law. By the end of the training, the participants understand the relevant legislation governing the field and their powers in this regard. The participants also learn about fundamental factors affecting the training process, adequate training facilities and the forms and manners of implementation of the training programme. The training lasts 24 hours (i.e. three days).<sup>290</sup></p> <p>There is also annual professional meeting of experts from the social work centres and the police, which also includes training. Also annually, there are expert consultations organised in cooperation with Spletno oko (i.e. online hotline for reporting instances of internet-based sexual abuse of children) on crimes against the sexual integrity of children on the internet. Consultations organised in cooperation with Judicial Training Centre (<i>Center za izobraževanje v pravosodju</i>) and the Association of State Prosecutors of Slovenia (<i>Društvo državnih tožilcev Slovenije</i>) deal with topics related to children as victims or as perpetrators.</p> <p>Every year, there is also an expert consultation under the working title "Youth and crime", which discusses current topics that affect young people (use of illicit drugs, internet addiction, peer violence, etc). The consultation is intended for professionals with the police, social work centres, prosecutors, judges and workers in educational institutions.</p> <p>Within the framework of the PROMISE III project, selected criminal investigators were trained to conduct forensic interviews with children. The interviews took place in the Children's House. Since they also received training according to the 'Train the Trainers' method, they will further train other criminal investigators and police officers on how to interview children. In total, nine persons</p>
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<sup>290</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 7 April 2023).

		<p>obtained relevant international certificates. The training took place from autumn 2020 to May 2022.</p> <p>In 2022, criminal investigators with the Criminal Police Directorate (<i>Uprava kriminalistične policije</i>) held a lecture (i.e. training) at a meeting of principals of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. The result of these lectures was an increase in the number of requests for lectures and training from these institutions on topics such as peer violence, sexual abuse of children and sexual exploitation of children on the internet. Lectures and training are held for pupils, students, parents as well as for employees of educational institutions.</p> <p>The police finance their training activities from their regular funds, which are allocated from the state budget.<sup>291</sup></p> <p>The Judicial Training Centre sets out in its programme consultations, training and seminars related to the conduct of authorities when a child is involved in proceedings. The Centre organises, for example, expert consultations every year. The participants discuss vulnerable groups. In 2022, the topic of consultations was the child as victim and perpetrator, namely whether a child who committed an illegal act is a victim or the perpetrator. The year before, the participants discussed the treatment of particularly vulnerable children. Professional consultations are intended for judges, professional workers with the courts, state prosecutors, professional workers with the state prosecutors' offices, lawyers and police representatives. They all attend the consultations regularly.</p> <p>In 2022, the Centre started with Basic training for judges, state prosecutors and mediators in criminal cases who participate in proceedings against minors (<i>Osnovno usposabljanje za sodnike, državne tožilce in poravnalce v kazenskih zadevah, ki sodelujejo v postopku proti mladoletniku</i>). The training will end in 2024. Every year, the centre organises several training</p>
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<sup>291</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

		<p>activities. In 2022, there were five events, while four activities shall take place in 2023. The goal of the training is to adequately educate all stakeholders involved in the proceedings against a minor, in particular on the following issues: the specifics of dealing with juvenile offenders and juvenile delinquency, understanding the development of minors, the techniques of interviewing or questioning a minor, and enforcement of criminal sanctions against minors. The training activities are intended for judges, state prosecutors, mediators in criminal cases, professional workers with the courts and state prosecutors' offices, representatives of the police, representatives of social work centres and lawyers. Upon completion of basic training, in-depth training will follow. The participants highlighted their satisfaction with the possibility to gain insight into the functioning of other bodies. They emphasized the importance of dealing with practical cases and the intensive cooperation of all training participants as well.</p> <p>After it became applicable in May 2022, the Judicial Training Centre introduced a seminar on the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act. At the seminar, participants learn about selected topics related to the protection of children in criminal proceedings and their treatment in the Children's House. The target groups of the seminar are judges, state prosecutors and professional workers with the courts and state prosecutors' offices.</p> <p>At the training Dealing with domestic violence and victims of domestic violence (<i>Obravnavanje nasilja v družini in žrtev nasilja v družini</i>), participants deal with topics, such as prevention and detection of violent acts, prosecution, trial and enforcement of sanctions for acts of domestic violence. The needs and rights of victims of domestic violence and the prevention of secondary victimisation are also addressed. The target groups of the seminar are judges, state prosecutors and professional workers with the courts and state prosecutor's offices.</p>
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		<p>Training courses are funded from the state budget or from EU funds, through operation Effective justice (<i>Učinkovito pravosodje</i>).<sup>292</sup></p> <p>In Slovenia, generally, the field of prevention of family violence is most heavily regulated. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act stipulates that, apart from workers in social care institutions, workers in the police, health care organisations and education institutions who are responsible for the field of family violence shall be obliged to take part in permanent education and training on this topic (e.g. prevention and detection of violent acts, prosecution, trial and enforcement of sanctions for these violent acts, on equality between women and men, on the needs and rights of victims and prevention of secondary victimisation) to the extent defined by the ministries responsible for the areas in question (Art. 10, para 3&amp;4). Judges and prosecutors who in the course of their work deal with victims and perpetrators of violence shall receive regular education on the above-mentioned topics during their permanent education and training (Art. 10, para 6).<sup>293</sup></p> <p>Based on the relevant implementing regulation, namely the Rules on the cooperation between the police and other authorities in the detection and prevention of domestic violence, the police officers and criminal police officers who are involved in the prevention and investigation of cases of domestic violence are obliged to participate in training for at least three days per year (Art. 12, para 1). The police officers who occasionally deal with cases of family violence are requested to participate in training for at least one day per year (Art. 12, para 2). The General Police Directorate is responsible for organisation of such training, and to this end, shall cooperate with other police units. The police officers and criminal police officers who concluded training for multipliers in the field of</p>
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<sup>292</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

<sup>293</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, and subsequent modifications.

			<p>prevention of family violence shall cooperate during provision of such training (Art. 12, para 5).<sup>294</sup></p> <p>In order to be able to identify instances of domestic violence, healthcare workers shall also attend training. It must be attended by healthcare workers who provide healthcare in the field of general or family medicine, pediatrics, gynecology, psychiatry and community nursing service, in emergency or trauma clinics and hospital departments, and in counselling services. It shall take place every five years, and shall last at least five hours (Art. 8, para 1-3).<sup>295</sup></p>
<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 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>	(X)	(X)	<p>In the 'Police Officer' higher education study programme (<i>Višješolski študijski program policist</i>), the police candidates study about the following topics, amongst others: observing the relevant conventions and legal protection of children when investigating crimes committed by minors and when investigating instances of domestic violence; peculiarities of the criminal proceedings against minors. The study programme also includes course on ethics and human rights.<sup>296</sup></p> <p>At the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana (<i>Pravna fakulteta v Ljubljani</i>), the course on family law is delivered to second-year students. The course includes topics of relations between children and parents, measures to protect the best interest of the child, on foster care, guardianship and adoption, as well as on the protection of children's rights in procedures of family law.<sup>297</sup> University of Maribor, Faculty of law (<i>Univerza v Mariboru, Pravna fakulteta</i>) offers the course on</p>

<sup>294</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on cooperation between the police and other authorities in the detection and prevention of domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju policije z drugimi organi in organizacijami pri odkrivanju in preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 19 March 2010.

<sup>295</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on procedures for dealing with domestic violence in the implementation of health activities](#) (*Pravilnik o pravilih in postopkih pri obravnavanju nasilja v družini pri izvajanju zdravstvene dejavnosti*), 21 February 2011.

<sup>296</sup> For more information, see the curriculum of the ['Police Officer' higher education study programme](#).

<sup>297</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana with the [family law syllabus](#).

		<p>family and succession law to second-year students. The course involves topics of relations between children and parents, their rights and obligations, on adoption, foster care and guardianship, amongst others.<sup>298</sup></p> <p>At the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Medicine (<i>Univerza v Ljubljani, Medicinska fakulteta</i>), specific topics of child protection could not be identified. The same holds for the University of Maribor, Faculty of Medicine (<i>Univerza v Mariboru, Medicinska fakulteta</i>).</p> <p>At the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education (<i>Univerza v Mariboru, Pedagoška fakulteta</i>), for example, the course entitled the “Sociology of family and the preschool child” is delivered to third-year students of preschool education. The course, amongst others, covers the following topics: domestic violence, preschool children, mass media and contemporary addictions, and preschool children, poverty and social exclusion. It is envisaged that the students obtain skills allowing them to help preschool children when e.g. dysfunction, illness, violence or aggression occur in their family.<sup>299</sup> At the same institution, the class teaching study programme includes a course on psychology in education. The course, for instance, deals with the topic of class as a social system and related issues of social acceptance and peer violence, while it also covers methods of conflict resolution.<sup>300</sup> Both the above-mentioned study programmes also include the course on special education dealing with the provision of inclusive education to children with special needs. Similarly, at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education (<i>Univerza na Primorskem, Pedagoška fakulteta</i>), the class teaching study programme includes the course on the foundations for inclusion of children with special needs, which is delivered to</p>
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<sup>298</sup> For more information, see the web page of the University of Maribor, Faculty of Law with the information on [family and succession law syllabus](#).

<sup>299</sup> For more information, see the web page of the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education with information on the [sociology of family and preschool children syllabus](#).

<sup>300</sup> For more information, see the web page of the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education with information on the [psychology of education syllabus](#).

		<p>fourth-year students. The four-year students may also choose the course entitled School between right and responsibility. The course covers topics such as peer relationships, prevention of violence in school and methods of peaceful conflict resolution, the children's right to privacy and the protection of personal data.<sup>301</sup></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>	<p>x</p>	<p>In Slovenia, examples of joint training activities involving professionals from different fields could be identified. For example, there is annual professional meeting of experts from the social work centres and the police, which also includes training. Every year, there is also an expert consultation under the working title "Youth and crime", which discusses current topics that affect young people (use of illicit drugs, internet addiction, peer violence, etc). The consultation is intended for professionals with the police, social work centres, prosecutors, judges and workers in educational institutions.<sup>302</sup></p> <p>The Judicial Training Centre sets out in its programme consultations, training and seminars related to the conduct of authorities when a child is involved in proceedings. The Centre organises, for example, expert consultations every year. In 2022, the topic of consultations was the child as victim and perpetrator, namely whether a child who committed an illegal act is a victim or the perpetrator. The year before, the participants discussed the treatment of particularly vulnerable children. Professional consultations are intended for judges, professional workers with the courts, state prosecutors, professional workers with the state prosecutors' offices, lawyers and police representatives.</p> <p>In 2022, the Centre started with Basic training for judges, state prosecutors and mediators in criminal cases who participate in proceedings against minors. The training will end in 2024. Every year, the centre organises several training</p>

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<sup>301</sup> For more information, see the web page of the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education with information on the [class teaching study programme](#).

<sup>302</sup> The information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

		<p>activities. The goal of the training is to adequately educate all stakeholders involved in the proceedings against a minor, in particular on the following issues: the specifics of dealing with juvenile offenders and juvenile delinquency, understanding the development of minors, the techniques of interviewing or questioning a minor, and enforcement of criminal sanctions against minors. The training activities are intended for judges, state prosecutors, mediators in criminal cases, professional workers with the courts and state prosecutors' offices, representatives of the police, representatives of social work centres and lawyers.<sup>303</sup></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>Please see Sections 3.2.1. and 3.2.2. above.</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

Comprehensive studies on the capacities of the national child protection system could hardly be identified in Slovenia. Compared to a decade ago, there have been some notable legal changes, introducing some new mechanisms, or changing the role of those already in place. In 2017, for example, the 2017 Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs stipulated the setting-up of Early treatment centres (*centri za zgodnjo obravnavo*), which provide for comprehensive early treatment of preschool children with special needs and children with certain risk factors.<sup>304</sup> Another example is the Protection of Children in Criminal Proceedings and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act from 2021. It set up the Children's House, a facility

<sup>303</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

<sup>304</sup> Slovenia, [The Act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs](#) (*Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 14 July 2017.



aimed at considerate treatment of child victims and witnesses involved in criminal proceedings.<sup>305</sup> Previously only an informal project, the mechanism of Child Advocacy became an organisational unit embedded with the Obudman institution.<sup>306</sup>

As noted, there are also challenges that needs to be addressed. Amongst others, this includes the following: “the lack of skills and knowledge among teachers about inclusive teaching methodologies and the low expectations of the capacities of children with disabilities”;<sup>307</sup> “a serious lack of qualified and properly trained court experts on sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children”; “absence of specialist training for experts providing psychological counselling to children who have been victims or witnesses of violence or abuse”; questionable ability professional workers in educational institutions to identify and deal with suspicions of domestic violence, as “more effective training is needed for staff in educational facilities to enable them to identify and respond appropriately to child victims and witnesses of domestic violence”; the lack of well-trained staff at the social work centres supervising contact between perpetrators of violence and their children; professional workers in the education, healthcare and the social protection sectors need additional training to enable them to deal properly with instances of early and forced marriages in Roma communities;<sup>308</sup> lack of qualification on the significant obstacle to cooperation with the centres; lack of professional workers with the social work centres who would be present during supervised contacts between children and parents;<sup>309</sup> the lack of staff in care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities, which could also provide for care of children with combined intellectual disabilities and mental health problems.<sup>310</sup>

#### 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)

In Slovenia, non-governmental organisations have historically been instrumental in introducing innovative programmes that complemented existing social protection services provided by public institutions. NGOs developed their activities on their own initiative targeting specific groups. Examples include a telephone hotline, day centres for children and youth with issues in growing up, a day centre

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<sup>305</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>306</sup> Slovenia, [The Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>307</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2018), [Concluding observations on Slovenia](#), 16 April 2018.

<sup>308</sup> Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2021), [Baseline evaluation report on Slovenia](#), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 21 June 2021.

<sup>309</sup> Kodele, T., Mešl, N., Rape Žiberna, T. (2022), [Povzet Rejništvo v Sloveniji \(marec 2022\)](#), *Socialno delo*, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 337-341.

<sup>310</sup> Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino (2020), *Poročilo Sveta Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*, Ljubljana, Svet Republike Slovenije za otroke in družino, p. 39.

for Roma children, shelters and safe houses for victims of domestic violence, which accommodates women, including with children. There are also day centres for migrants, including migrant families. Gradually, networks of social protection programmes have been created and such initiatives have become an established and essential element of the national social protection scheme. These initiatives apply for funds with the state and local communities. To this end, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities most notably provides for co-funding of such initiatives by means of annual public calls. A system of verifications, evaluations and supervision has also been gradually erected, and established programmes tend to be recipients of multi-annual funding.<sup>311</sup> While not necessarily sufficient for an expansive staff and services policies, such manner of funding provides for a more sustainable implementation of projects. The verification and evaluation frameworks, in addition, guarantee the quality programme implementation.

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<sup>311</sup> For more information, see, for example, government web page related to [social protection programmes](#).

## 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?

The cooperation and interaction of the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection system in place is best described as a three-fold structure, combining the work of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*), The Association of Social Work Centres (*Skupnost Centrov za Socialno Delo*) and Social Work Centres (*Centri za socialno delo*).

- THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Ministry is responsible for the operation of key aspects of social protection at a general and abstract level, which is mainly reflected in policies and measures aimed at minimising socio-economic hardship, poverty and social exclusion. It therefore performs key tasks within its remit, which also largely concern the exercise and protection of the rights of children, families and adolescents.

- ASSOCIATION OF CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WORK

In the field of child protection, the Ministry concretises the above-mentioned tasks with the cooperation of the Association of Social Work Centres, which is the official association of all 16 Social Work Centres and serves as the link between the Faculty of Social Work (*Fakulteta za socialno delo*), the national social protection and welfare institutions/bodies (e. g. Social Chamber of Slovenia), the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and all 16 Social Work Centres. The Association of Social Work Centres prepares and harmonises the powers, standards, norms and tasks that Social Work Centres must follow in the Catalogue of Public powers and tasks according to the law, and services provided by Social Work Centres (*Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD*).<sup>312</sup> It does so taking into account the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*)<sup>313</sup> and while cooperating with other state bodies, public authorities, public service providers, other service providers in the fields of social protection, health, education and training, local authorities

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<sup>312</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<sup>313</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.

and NGOs.<sup>314</sup> The Catalogue is confirmed annually by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

- SOCIAL WORK CENTRES

At the implementation level, child protection is implemented to the greatest extent through the work of the 16 Social Work Centres. According to Article 49 of the Social Assistance Act (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), Social Work Centres provide social prevention services, social first aid, personal assistance, support for victims of crime, family support for the home, community action for the socially deprived, as well as intervention services and crisis accommodation.<sup>315</sup> As per Article 49.a of the Social Assistance Act (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*) the Government designates the Social Work Centres, their headquarters and territorial jurisdiction, as well as their units and their specific areas of operation, in a manner that ensures the rational and efficient performance of their tasks, with a decree.<sup>316</sup> As mentioned above, the tasks, powers and duties of Social Work Centres are precisely and detailly defined in the Catalogue. Apart from this, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is also responsible for the operation of five Centres for training, work and care which provide institutional care for children with moderate, severe and profound mental disabilities. With regard to the interactions between the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection systems, a recent development has been the adoption of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*),<sup>317</sup> which regulates the comprehensive treatment of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems who are enrolled in kindergartens and schools, as well as children with emotional and behavioural disorders who are placed in specialist centres (residential institutions) for children with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders. The adoption of the law provides for a more detailed regulation at the national level of the cooperation of the Ministry, institutions for the education of children and adolescents with special needs, Social Work Centres and their subordinate bodies and authorities, the Police, the Courts and other national and sub-national social welfare and assistance bodies with families of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems.

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

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<sup>314</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<sup>315</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>316</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>317</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020, with subsequent modifications.

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.

Yes.

In terms of financial support – at the legislative level – the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*) regulates parental care insurance and the rights deriving from it, family benefits, and the conditions and procedure for claiming individual rights (e. g. parental leave; paternity and maternity leave; parental allowance; part-time work).<sup>318</sup> With the 2022 amendment, the Parental protection and family benefits Act (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*) now introduces longer paid parental leave, more days of non-transferable paid paternity and maternity leaves, extends the period of part-time work for child-care, and raises the maximum amount of parental allowance in line with the rise in the minimum wage.<sup>319</sup> Additionally, the Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act (*Zakon o uveljavljanju pravic iz javnih sredstev*) establishes and regulates the types of monetary benefits, subsidies and payments, the income limits to be taken into account for the purpose of claiming public entitlements which depend on material circumstances, the uniform method of determining material circumstances, the amount of certain public entitlements and the procedure for claiming them, especially child benefits, kindergarten subsidy, school lunch subsidy and state grant),<sup>320</sup> and The Action Plan 2022-2023 for the Implementation of the Resolution on National Mental Health Programme 2018-2028 (*Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Resolucije o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018-2028*)<sup>321</sup> With long-term vision to enable all people in Slovenia to realise the right to optimal mental and physical well-being, paying particular attention to measure and activities, aimed at establishing supportive environments and programmes for strengthening of the mental health in families.

At the implementation level, families are provided with various types and forms of support. The main role is played by Social Work Centres, which provide families with home help, preliminary divorce counselling, help for children and adolescents with growing-up problems, and counselling for adolescents who have come in contact with the criminal justice system. Furthermore, there are various preventive programs for parents in place.

The Family Code provides funding for family support programmes which provide family support content for parenthood, promoting positive parenting, strengthening parenting competences, improving communication and family relations, offering creative and active leisure time for children and families, facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life, providing psychosocial support for children and parents, and other content aimed at improving the quality of family life.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Slovenia, The [Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3rd April 2014, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>319</sup> Slovenia, [The Parental protection and family benefits act](#) (*Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih*), 3rd April 2014, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>320</sup> Slovenia, The [Exercise of rights from public funds act](#) (*Zakon o uveljavljanju pravic iz javnih sredstev*) with subsequent modifications, 15 July 2010.

<sup>321</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2022), [Akcijski načrt 2022-2023 za izvajanje Resolucije o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018-2028](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

<sup>322</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

Family Centres represent a place for socializing of different generations, a place for quality strengthening the individual's social roles, support for easier reconciliation of family and professional life and space for exchange of good practices and positive experiences. Family Centres provides space for: informal socializing with the purpose of meeting or informally transferring various day to day positive practices among children, adolescents, adults and families; educational and practical workshops based on development of positive parenting; carrying out holiday activities for children, organised periodic care of children; counselling to improve emotional coping skills, building a positive self-image, and for learning to solve a variety of problems.<sup>323</sup>

The Parental Skills Training Programme (*Trening starševskih veščin*) is conducted by the Association for Nonviolent Communication (*Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo*).<sup>324</sup> The Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018-2028 (the MIRA programme) (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028 (Program MIRA)*) is a strategy document, adopted by the Parliament in 2018, which attempts to intertwine all existing structures and add much-needed new ones into an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral organisation for the promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of mental health problems, and is based on the involvement, integration and cooperation of all services and all stakeholders in the mental health care of individuals and groups in the local community and at all levels of care.<sup>325</sup> The Incredible Years Program (*Neverjetna leta*) is a series of interconnected, evidence-based programmes for parents, children and teachers to prevent and address behavioural problems in children at an early age.<sup>326</sup> The SCOMS Project – The Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents (*SCOMS Projekt – Svetovalni center za otroke, mladostnike in starše*),<sup>327</sup> has individual units all across Slovenia. The Godparent Programme (*Program Botrstvo*) is run by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza Prijateljev Mladine Slovenije*) and is aimed at children and adolescents from families in need from all over Slovenia who need additional support and help to improve their quality of life. Finally, the Intensive Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit working under the auspices of the University of Ljubljana Psychiatric Clinic plays a key role in providing medical support to children and adolescents with mental health problems and their families.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to [family centres](#).

<sup>324</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Association for Non-Violent Communication related to the [Parental Skills Training Programme](#).

<sup>325</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [MIRA Programme – National Mental Health Programme](#) operated by the National Institute of Public Health.

<sup>326</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Incredible Years programme with information on [programme activities](#).

<sup>327</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents Ljubljana with [information on its work](#).

<sup>328</sup> For more information, see the web page of the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana related to the [Intensive Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit](#).

Expanding on that: for social assistance beneficiaries, the access to various social assistance services at social work centres (e.g. first social assistance, personal assistance, assistance to victims of crime, family home support) is free of charge, provided that the beneficiary agrees to it and concludes or accepts a Cooperation Agreement. Enrolment in the social assistance system and use of services thereof are voluntary and accessible immediately after the eligibility criteria are met. However, should the situation of identifying children at risk or treating a child at risk arise, social work centres must prioritise provision of services aimed at protecting the best interest of the child.<sup>329</sup> Other providers, in particular NGOs, provide their services in accordance with general guidelines of professional conduct, with their own internal rules of operation, and prioritise cases in accordance with afore-mentioned conduct, and with their own discretion and the needs of each specific case.

#### 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?

According to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*)<sup>330</sup> and the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*),<sup>331</sup> anyone who has information that a child is at risk (e.g. is a victim of violence or lives in inadequate conditions) must inform either the Social Work Centre, the Police, the Court or the State Prosecutor's Office (Article 6 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and Article 180 of the Family Code). This applies in particular to schools, kindergartens, and healthcare institutions, which are legally obliged to report violence against a child. Procedures in case of child endangerment are led by a professional worker at the Social Work Centre, who convenes a multidisciplinary team, where the Child's endangerment is assessed and appropriate measures are taken depending on the level of endangerment. According to the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*),<sup>332</sup> a multidisciplinary team consists of a group of professionals and is set up with the aim of providing comprehensive assistance and protection to an individual victim. It is formed if the Social Work Centre's case coordinator considers that the involvement of professionals from various fields is necessary for the assessment of the need to prepare a victim assistance plan or for its drawing up and implementation (Article 8, Paragraph 1). The Social Work Centre, therefore, leads the procedure and coordinates the other actors involved (e. g. school, NGOs). In case of violence, the Police also lead their own procedures.

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<sup>329</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 19 April 2023, response dated 18 April 2023).

<sup>330</sup> Slovenia, The [Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>331</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>332</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

The Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*) stipulates that the Court ultimately decides on the measures proposed to protect the best interests of the Child (Paragraph 1 of Article 160).<sup>333</sup>

#### 4.1.4. What are the crisis emergency responses in place?

According to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*)<sup>334</sup> and the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*),<sup>335</sup> anyone who has information that a child is at risk (e.g. is a victim of violence or lives in inadequate conditions) must inform either the Social Work Centre, the Police, the Court or the State Prosecutor's Office (Article 6 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and Article 180 of the Family Code). This applies in particular to schools, kindergartens, and healthcare institutions, which are legally obliged to report violence against a child. Procedures in case of child endangerment are led by a professional worker at the Social Work Centre, who convenes a multidisciplinary team, where the Child's endangerment is assessed and appropriate measures are taken depending on the level of endangerment. According to the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*),<sup>336</sup> a multidisciplinary team consists of a group of professionals and is set up with the aim of providing comprehensive assistance and protection to an individual victim. It is formed if the Social Work Centre's case coordinator considers that the involvement of professionals from various fields is necessary for the assessment of the need to prepare a victim assistance plan or for its drawing up and implementation (Article 8, Paragraph 1). The Social Work Centre, therefore, leads the procedure and coordinates the other actors involved (e. g. school, NGOs). In case of violence, the Police also lead their own procedures.

The Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*) stipulates that the Court ultimately decides on the measures proposed to protect the best interests of the Child (Paragraph 1 of Article 160).<sup>337</sup>

Expanding further on sanctions, should the institution/social work professional not report about the child in need: firstly, as the social work centres are public institutions, the compliance of their operation with the law is the state's responsibility. According to Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia,<sup>338</sup> everyone has the right to compensation for damage caused to him or her by unlawful conduct on the part of the person or body performing the service or other activity in

<sup>333</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>334</sup> Slovenia, The [Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>335</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>336</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>337</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>338</sup> Slovenia, The [Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Ustava Republike Slovenije*), 23 December 1991, with subsequent modifications.



connection with the performance of the service or other activity of a public authority, a local authority or a body vested with public powers. One could, therefore, sue the state for compensation. However, in terms of personal responsibility of the public official, Article 258 of the Criminal Code (*Kazenski zakonik*)<sup>339</sup> stipulates that an official or public servant who knowingly violates laws or regulations, abandons his or her supervision or otherwise acts in a manifestly negligent manner in the performance of his or her official duties, even though he or she foresees or ought to have foreseen that a serious violation of the rights of another or damage to a public good or damage to property might result therefrom, and a serious violation or serious damage does result, shall be liable on conviction to a 1) fine, or to a 2) term of imprisonment of not more than three years. The omission to report may, therefore, constitute a criminal offence.

#### 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>Paragraph 1 &amp; 2 of Article 6 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (<i>Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini</i>).<sup>340</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Authorities and organisations as well as non-governmental organisations which in their work encounter circumstances on the basis of which it is possible to conclude that violence is being inflicted, shall be obliged to immediately inform a social work centre, except in cases where the victims themselves expressly oppose this, and there is no suspicion of criminal offence that should be prosecuted <i>ex officio</i>;</li> <li>2) Anyone, and in particular professional healthcare staff and personnel working in care institutions, educational and social institutions, as well as providers of activities for children within sports and culture associations shall – regardless of the provisions on the protection of business secrets – immediately inform a Social Work Centre, the Police or the State Prosecutor's Office where there is a suspicion that a child or a person who due to personal circumstances is not capable</li> </ol>

<sup>339</sup> Slovenia, [The Criminal code](#) (*Kazenski zakonik*), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>340</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, with subsequent modifications.

		<p>of taking care of him or herself, is the victim of violence.</p> <p>Paragraph 1 &amp; 2 of Article 180 of the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>):<sup>341</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) National authorities, bodies of self-governing local communities, public authority holders, public service providers and non-governmental organisations which in their daily work learn of circumstances from which it may be presumed that a child is endangered, shall have the obligation to immediately inform thereof the competent Social Work Centre or Court;</li> <li>2) Everyone, in particular health professionals and staff in child-care centres, educational institutions and social institutes, and providers of content for children in sports and cultural associations shall, notwithstanding the provisions on professional secrecy, immediately inform a Social Work Centre where in their daily work they learn of circumstances from which it may be presumed that a child is endangered.</li> </ol> <p>Paragraph 1 &amp; 2 of the Article 4 of the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>):<sup>342</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) All authorities are obliged to inform the Social Work Centre within 24 hours of becoming aware of domestic violence;</li> <li>2) In case there are circumstances which suggest that a child is a victim of violence, the authorities shall inform the Social</li> </ol>
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<sup>341</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>342</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

		<p>Work Centre, the Police or the Public Prosecutor's Office within 24 hours of becoming aware of such circumstances.</p> <p>Paragraph 2 of Article 91 the Social Assistance Act stipulates that any authority, institution and other organisations which, in the course of their work, become aware that a child, a minor or a person deprived of legal capacity is at risk are obliged to inform the social work centre in their area.<sup>343</sup></p> <p>Paragraph 4 of Article 60 of the Police Tasks and Powers Act (<i>Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije</i>) has the power to impose a restraining order for 48 hours, prohibiting the person from approaching the child or place concerned.<sup>344</sup></p> <p>With regard to the sanction mechanism if the obliged institution did not report about the child, please see the expansion in answer 4.1.4.</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?

It is always possible to call the Police or the emergency services. The police have several reporting mechanisms available (phone number 113, phone 080 1200 for anonymous reporting, anonymous electronic reporting, and via some applications). The police check every report, regardless of how it is received. Based on the first findings, it starts with activities and by informing other services. When the Police are informed of violence against children or of a child atrisk, they must also notify the Social Work Centre. The Social Work Centre, outside working hours, has an intervention service, which is available at all times when the centre is not open and intervenes on the basis of the report by the Police. Intervention services are set out in Article 16 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*) and in Paragraph 4 of Article 49 of the Social Assistance Act (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*).<sup>345</sup> In addition to that, the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on

<sup>343</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>344</sup> Slovenia, [The Police tasks and powers act](#) (*Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije*), 30 January 2013, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>345</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence regulate the cooperation of other bodies and organs with Social Work Centres (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*).<sup>346</sup>

There are special telephones for children in need (e.g. TOM Telephone (*TOM Telefon*) – 116 111 under the Association of Friends of Youth Slovenia)<sup>347</sup> or victims of violence (SOS Telephone 0801155 (*SOS Telefon*) under the SOS Association (*Društvo SOS*)).<sup>348</sup> Advisers on the phone must receive training to work on the helpline.

In terms of TOM TELEPHONE, regarding the education and training, all consultants are required to submit a clean criminal record and go through a multi-stage selection process before starting work:

1. an information presentation for all interested candidates;
2. individual interviews with each candidate;
3. selection of suitable candidates for training;
3. mandatory theoretical training and role plays (36h);
4. mandatory practical induction (29h);
5. final interview.

The first selection stage is an individual interview conducted by a professional via telephone. The second screening is the theoretical training, where the suitability of the consultant is checked by the external supervisor of each group, who leads the training. The third screening is the practical induction, where the suitability of the counsellor is checked by the volunteer mentor and senior counsellors. The consultant's cooperation can be terminated at any point if the Association determines that the consultant is unsuitable, and the consultant can withdraw from the training process at any time. If the consultant passes all assessments, a voluntary agreement is signed at the final interview.<sup>349</sup>

The procedures depend on specifics of each individual case. In these terms and in addition to what has been said above, in 2022 the TOM helpline, a helpline for children in need, referred children who contacted them to the following institutions:<sup>350</sup>

The Police – 179 children,  
Social Work Centres – 131 children  
112 Emergency Line – 9 children,  
Emergency Unit – 4 children.

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<sup>346</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>347</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [TOM telephone](#) operated by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth.

<sup>348</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Association SOS telephone for woman and children – victims of violence with [information on its work](#).

<sup>349</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, response dated 27 February 2023).

<sup>350</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, response dated 27 February 2023).

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.3. Do children have the right to report independently?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide information on the availability of <u>age-appropriate and child-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>	X		<p>Children can report abuse or violation of their rights to an adult they trust (within the school counselling service, in the framework of additional professional assistance, to a Social Work Centre professional or to the assistant director or director of the Social Work Centre). In addition, they can (and are informed about it) always contact the crisis centre for children and adolescents, where, if needed, they are accommodated. If the Centre becomes aware of violence against a child, it may interview the Child without informing the parents. The Child's data is protected, the Child can report anonymously, and eventually, once they are safe, the parents are confronted.<sup>351</sup></p> <p>Expanding on that, the legislation does not discriminate in any terms the legitimacy of the media or source via which the competent authorities receive information on the violation of the child's rights. Put differently, the reporting obligation applies everytime, regardless of the form of receipt of information (it may be via telephone, online, orally, in writing, in person, or by a third party, etc.) and for everyone (a natural person or a state organ) who becomes aware of circumstances which suggest that the child's rights are at risk (Article 180).<sup>352</sup></p> <p>The Catalogue of public powers and tasks according to the law, and services provided by Social Work Centres (<i>Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD</i>) defines how to lead procedures in an age-appropriate and child-friendly way.<sup>353</sup></p>
<p>4.2.4. Are children informed of their right to report and</p>	X		<p>They are informed in various ways; however, the most efficient are programs for strengthening primary prevention. In these terms, the NEON</p>

<sup>351</sup> Information was provided by the Association of Centres for Social Work of Slovenia (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 March 2023, response dated 27 February 2023)

<sup>352</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>353</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<p>how they can do it? If yes, by whom and how?</p>		<p>Programme – Safe Without Violence (<i>Program NEON – Varni brez nasilja</i>), funded by the ISA Institute and the Ministry of Health (<i>Ministrstvo za zdravje</i>), which aimed at children in kindergarten and primary school, the young in secondary school, their parents and professionals in educational institutions (the project lasted from 2020-2022, needs to be mentioned. The programme will be implemented on a long-term basis.<sup>354</sup></p> <p>If the Child is placed into the Residential Care Institution, they are informed about their right to report to the professional staff or the principal of the Institution upon admission.<sup>355</sup></p> <p>When giving lectures to children in schools or when presenting police officers in schools, the police always mention the possibility of reporting to the police, how the procedure works and how important it is to report something that happened to them or a peer.<sup>356</sup></p>
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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?

At the beginning of 2022, The Children's Rights Network (*Mreža za otrokove pravice*)<sup>357</sup> – a network of NGOs working on children's rights, aimed to support, encourage and coordinate NGOs, launched a joint initiative called Let's put children's rights at the heart of Slovenian politics (*Postavimo otrokove pravice v središče slovenske politike*).<sup>358</sup> The initiative emphasised the growing need for a consolidated legislation (e.g. the Children's Rights Act) to make all stakeholders more aware of their rights and obligations. This would allow for a much more effective implementation and legal protection of children's rights, as well as monitoring of the level of their realisation.

The key barriers are currently in recognising and reporting abuse. There is a persistent apprehension of being recognised as the victim or the reporter of abuse, which also applies to organisations (e.g. school). Often individuals or organisations that should act, keep information to themselves either

<sup>354</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the ISA Institute related to the [NEON Programme – Safe Without Violence](#).

<sup>355</sup> Information was provided by the Residential Treatment Institution Planina (*Strokovni center Planina*) upon request (via post office, 27 February 2023).

<sup>356</sup> For more information, see the police web page dedicated to [children and adolescents](#).

<sup>357</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Children's Right Network with [information on its work](#).

<sup>358</sup> Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije (2022), '[Postavimo otrokove pravice v središče slovenske politike](#)', public release, 24 February 2022.

considering it a personal matter or fearing for their reputation. Mostly, these issues seem to be of a practical nature. There are, however, also problems at the normative level. For example, child victims of abuse are repeatedly victimised when they have to report the abuse repeatedly to different professionals. In addition to that, lengthy registration procedures are also a problem.<sup>359</sup> Moreover, working with the perpetrator, not just the abused Child, is also essential as not sufficiently addressed in the current legislative and practical framework.<sup>360</sup>

Therefore, according to practitioners in the field, there is most room for improvement at the level of the broader society's sense of what abuse actually is and when, how and to whom it must be reported. More attention should be paid to awareness-raising and education campaigns towards specific groups and society as a whole.<sup>361</sup>

Furthermore, the biggest gaps, observed by the Police, are: the placement of children in certain cases (e.g. the placement of a minor who has been ordered to stay away from their parents because of the minor's violent acts) and the lack of professionals able to provide psychosocial support to children.<sup>362</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. 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.)

Several legal provisions provide for the obligation of Social Work Centres to react and protect the best interests of the Child - Article 159 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*),<sup>363</sup> Article 19 and 20 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act,<sup>364</sup> Article 91 of the Social Assistance Act (*Zakon o socialnem*

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<sup>359</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023).

<sup>360</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023).

<sup>361</sup> Information was provided by the Association of Centres for Social Work of Slovenia (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 March 2023, response dated 27 February 2023).

<sup>362</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>363</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>364</sup> Slovenia, [The Domestic violence prevention act](#) (*Zakon o preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 1 February 2008, with subsequent modifications.

varstvu)<sup>365</sup> and Chapter III of the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*).<sup>366</sup> The latter stipulates an obligation of the professional worker at the Social Work Centre to convene a multidisciplinary team, where the Child's endangerment is assessed and appropriate measures are taken depending on the assessed level of endangerment. The Multidisciplinary team consists of a group of professionals of various fields (e. g. psychology, Police, social workers, the Court) with the aim of providing comprehensive assistance and protection to an individual victim. It is formed if the Social Work Centre's case coordinator considers that the involvement of bodies from various fields is necessary for the assessment of the need to draw up a victim assistance plan or for its drawing up and implementation (Article 7-10). The specific professionals to be invited, however, are not determined at the legislative level but rather in practice according to specific needs and problems of every individual case. Should there be a need for imposing emergency removal or an interim injunction, the Social Work Centre must, as mentioned in 4.1.4., apply to the Court for an interim injunction and the Court must decide on the application for an interim injunction immediately, or within 24 hours at the latest (Paragraph 1 of Article 168 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*)).<sup>367</sup>

Additionally, The Association of Centres for Social Work (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo*) prepares a Catalogue of public powers and tasks according to the law, and services provided by Social Work Centres (*Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD*), which indicates possible measures and interventions to be taken in such circumstances.<sup>368</sup> Furthermore, In 2017, The Association for Non-violent Communication (*Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo*) published the Professional guidelines for working with children experiencing neglect and/or violence (*Strokovne smernice za delo z otroki, ki doživljajo zanemarjanje in/ali nasilje*),<sup>369</sup> which describe the principles of working with children experiencing neglect and/or abuse.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.2. Are there applicable standards in the form of legal provisions, guidelines, protocols,	X		- Please, see Section 4.1.3 below;

<sup>365</sup> Slovenia, [The Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>368</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>367</sup> Slovenia, [The Family Code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>368</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<sup>369</sup> Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo (2017), [Strokovne smernice za delo z otroki, ki doživljajo zanemarjanje in/ali nasilje](#), Ljubljana, Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo.



interagency agreements or regulatory frameworks regarding investigation and assessment procedures following reporting and identification procedures?		- The Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services ( <i>Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev</i> ). <sup>370</sup>
4.3.3. Is the assessment carried out by a multidisciplinary team of professionals?	X	The Multidisciplinary team consists of a group of professionals of various fields (e.g. psychology, Police, social workers, the Court) with the aim of providing comprehensive assistance and protection to an individual victim. It is formed if the Social Work Centre's professional, who is the case coordinator, considers that the involvement of bodies from various fields is necessary for the assessment of the need to draw up a victim assistance plan or for its drawing up and implementation (Article 7-10 of the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence ( <i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i> )). <sup>371</sup>
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.		
Social Work Centres are in charge of a case and must assess the case and undertake measures for the protection of a Child at risk. If the risk assessment requires so (e.g. there are reasons for suspecting that a person is about to endanger the life, personal safety or freedom of a person with whom they are or were in a close relationship within the meaning of the provisions of the Criminal Code or the law regulating prevention of family violence, the Police may, however, on the basis of the Police Tasks and Powers Act ( <i>Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije</i> ) issue a restraining order prohibiting a violator		

<sup>370</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services](#) (*Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev*) 27 May 2010, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>371</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

from approaching a particular place or person.<sup>372</sup> The offender, against whom the restraining order has been issued, must immediately vacate the place or area in question and hand the keys of the residence, which they share with the victim, to a police officer. The police officer must remove the offender if they fail to comply with the order. The Police shall prohibit the offender from approaching a particular place or person for 48 hours and immediately send the order for review to the District Court investigating judge, who may uphold, amend or annul the restraining order. The imposed order must be, in each and every case, reviewed by the Court, i. e. the investigating judge must decide on the measure within 24 hours. If the investigating judge upholds the restraining order, they may issue the measure for up to ten days, whereas the validity of the measure commences at the moment when the Police issued the measure. The Police must, upon issuing the restraining order, immediately inform the competent local Social Work Centre about the measure. When an education institution attended by a child victim is also a place which shall not be approached by the offender, the Police inform the responsible person of such an institution about the restraining order and the time period of its validity. The Police also provide other data from the restraining order, which are important for the protection of a child (Article 60).

Question	Yes	No	Comments
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?	X		<p>Several legal provisions provide for the obligation of social work centres to react and protect the best interests of the child, such as the provisions of the Social Assistance Act<sup>373</sup> (Article 91, obligation of reporting to the social work centre) and Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>)<sup>374</sup> (Chapter 7 – measures for protecting of the best interests of the child).</p> <p>Furthermore, according to the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>),<sup>375</sup> Social Work Centre having territorial jurisdiction over a particular case of domestic violence shall coordinate inter-institutional cooperation. If</p>

<sup>372</sup> Slovenia, [The Police tasks and powers act](#) (*Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije*), 30 January 2013, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>373</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>374</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>375</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

		<p>notified of such a case, the competent social work centre must undertake to provide for increased safety of the victim, shall obtain all available information in order to prepare the risk assessment, and, if assessed so, shall prepare an individual plan for assistance to the victim and summon the multidisciplinary team. If only social work centre was informed about the case, it shall immediately inform the police. In cases of suspicion of criminal offence against a child, it shall immediately lodge criminal complaints with the police or the public prosecutor.</p> <p>The Rules on Cooperation between the Police and Other Authorities in the Detection and Prevention of Domestic Violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju policije z drugimi organi in organizacijami pri odkrivanju in preprečevanju nasilja v družini</i>),<sup>376</sup> determines that the Police shall be obliged, when dealing with the case of domestic violence, to observe provisions of criminal legislation, including criminal proceedings, minor offence proceeding and provisions governing police tasks and powers. This implementing regulation further defines the possibility that the police issue a proposal for setting up a multidisciplinary team and their role in such a team.</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 enhance the efficiency of their actions?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>- Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>)<sup>377</sup> – via multidisciplinary teams; and</p> <p>-Internal acts of the agencies/bodies.</p>

<sup>376</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on cooperation between the police and other authorities in the detection and prevention of domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju policije z drugimi organi in organizacijami pri odkrivanju in preprečevanju nasilja v družini*), 19 March 2010, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>377</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

<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>National bodies, namely Social Work Centres, apply similar procedures and provide for protection for a child who is not a Slovenian national. There are, however, no specific recent studies on the application of this provision in practice.</p> <p>In terms of admitting the Child to Residential Institutions, such admission (and accompanying procedures) does not depend on the Child's foreign status.<sup>378</sup></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>At the request of the Court, the Child's opinion is obtained by the Social Work Centre. Child-sensitivity and age-appropriate manner are always case-specific and subject to the discretion of the specially trained social worker/psychologist of the Social Work Centre. The Child can express their opinion at the Centre – with the Child's advocate or in an informal interview with a judge. The parents are not present.<sup>379</sup></p> <p>In cases of abuse, a forensic interview with a specially trained criminalistic police officer may be conducted in a specifically adapted environment – children's house (Barnahus).<sup>380</sup></p> <p>With regard to the request on information related to the assessment of the child's opinion, no guidelines aimed at assessing whether a minor has the ability to express opinion could be identified. However, Paragraphs 1, 2 &amp; 5 of Article 96 of the Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act (<i>Zakon o nepravdnem postopku</i>) provide the following protocol:<sup>381</sup> In proceedings for the protection of the best interests of the child, the court shall call upon the social work centre to inform the child who is capable of understanding the importance</p>

<sup>378</sup> Information was provided by the Residential Treatment Institution Planina (*Strokovni center Planina*) upon request (post office, 27 February 2023).

<sup>379</sup> Information was provided by the Association of Centres for Social Work of Slovenia (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 March 2023, response dated 27 February 2023).

<sup>380</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Children's House with [information on its functioning](#).

<sup>381</sup> Slovenia, The [Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

		<p>of the proceedings and the consequences of the decision in an appropriate manner on the initiation of the proceedings and the child's right to express their opinion (i. e. duty to explain). Where the child wishes to express their opinion, they can do so at the social work centre or in an interview with the Child's Advocate who has been assigned to the child in accordance with the act governing the Human Rights Ombudsman, or, with regard to the age and other circumstances, in an informal interview with a judge, which can also take place in cooperation with professionally qualified persons, but always in the absence of the parents. The social work centre must then send to the court, within a time limit that is determined by the court but may not be shorter than 30 days, an opinion that the child is either: 1) not capable of understanding the meaning of the proceedings or the consequences of the decision, or 2) records that the child was informed of the initiation of the proceedings and the right to express their opinion, and 3) the child's opinion, if they expressed one.</p> <p>Therefore, the assessment of the child's opinion (or absence of one, should the child not wish to provide it) is an <i>ex officio</i> obligation of the judge presiding in each individual case.</p>
<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>The cooperation of different service providers is defined in the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>),<sup>382</sup> they cooperate via Multidisciplinary teams.</p>
<p>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.</p>		

<sup>382</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

Regarding the question, the following should be emphasized.<sup>383</sup>

1) If children refuse to have contact with their abusive father, the Child is put under pressure, the mother is sought out as the cause, and the Child is threatened with removal and reassignment, rather than investigating why the Child is refusing contact. In the experience of NGOs, mothers often try very hard to prepare the Child for contact, but some children (especially older children) initially refuse contact with their father. There is, therefore, room for improvement in terms of listening to the Child when assessing whether contact is in their best interest;

2) In cases where violence/abuse is involved and children are at risk, interim injunctions are often made to obtain interim protection of the best interests of the Child on grounds of risk, a Custody Order, a No Contact Order or a Restriction of Contact Order, a Supervised Contact Order, a State Border Prohibition Order, a Protection of the Child's best interests by reason of the Child's risk, a Protection of the Child's best interests by reason of the Child's risk. Although these applications should be prioritised, they are processed too slowly by Courts (especially at Ljubljana District Court), taking several months. The wait for state provided legal counselling is also too long;

3) Children are often emotionally abused by the perpetrator during contact. Children, although formally safe, are subjected to continued pressure, manipulation, control by the perpetrator over the other parent;

4) When children are taken abroad, despite a temporary injunction giving custody to the parent in Slovenia, the return procedure is very difficult which in turn makes the investigation into child abuse more difficult.<sup>384</sup>

Furthermore, the Police observe the widest gaps at: the placement of children in certain cases (e. g. the placement of a minor who has been issued the restriction order to stay away from their parents because of violent acts); and the lack of professionals to provide psychosocial support to children.<sup>385</sup>

Finally, as per another NGO,<sup>386</sup> key barriers are in reporting abuse - there is too much fear of exposing the reporter or the victim, including the organisation (e. g. school). There is a mindset of "I don't want to get involved in other people's lives", "it's not that bad", for the sake of the organisation's reputation, "let's just sweep it under the carpet"...

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<sup>383</sup> Information was provided by the Association SOS telephone for woman and children – victims of violence (Društvo SOS telefon za ženske in otroke – žrtve nasilja) upon request (9 March 2023).

<sup>384</sup> Information was provided by the Association SOS telephone for woman and children – victims of violence (Društvo SOS telefon za ženske in otroke – žrtve nasilja) upon request (9 March 2023).

<sup>385</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>386</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023).

#### 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?

According to Paragraph 1 of Article 167 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*), the decision is adopted by the Social Work Center. However, as already mentioned above, the Social Work Centre must, within 12 hours of the Child's removal, apply to the Court for an interim injunction to remove the Child. The Court must decide on the application for an interim injunction immediately, and within 24 hours at the latest (Paragraph 1 of Article 168 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*)).<sup>387</sup>

Expanding on that, there is no legally determined minimum age for adoption and hearing of a child - the process of acquiring the child’s opinion is always carried out with respect to the child’s understanding of the situation and in a manner in which the child actually can understand and provide their opinion. Therefore, rather than legally determined age, the standard is *the child’s understanding* (Section 2.2.1.2).<sup>388</sup> The Court, then, takes into account the given opinion if it determines, via the provided documentation and conducted hearings, that the child is capable of understanding the meaning and consequences of the given opinion (Article 158).<sup>389</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>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?</p> <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>	x		<p>Article 156 of the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>) stipulates the obligation to act in accordance with the principle of the least restrictive measure, meaning that on deciding on the measure, two restrictions must be considered: 1) if the adopted measure is able to provide adequate protection, such measure shall be the least restrictive for the parents' exercise of parental care; and 2) if possible, the adopted measure should not seek to remove the Child from their parents.</p> <p>Furthermore, when deciding on the measure, the Court shall consider the Child's opinion, expressed by the Child themselves or through a person whom they trust and whom they have chosen, provided that they are capable of understanding its meaning and consequences (Article 158 of the Family Code).<sup>390</sup></p>

<sup>387</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>388</sup> Dremelj, P., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), [Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve](#), Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

<sup>389</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>390</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

			<p>The procedure and specifics of child-specific risk assessment and determining appropriate measures for working with the family and for working with the Child are set out in detail in the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>).<sup>391</sup></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 authorities, and if there are age-related requirements.</p>	x		<p>According to Article 143 of the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>), while deciding on the custody, upbringing and maintenance of the Child, on contact, on the exercise of parental care and on the award of parental care to a relative, the Court shall also take into account the Child's opinion, expressed by the Child himself or through a person they trust and have chosen, provided that the Child is capable of understanding its meaning and consequences; the same goes for deciding on which measure to adopt (Article 158).<sup>392</sup></p> <p>According to Paragraph 2 of Article 158 of the Family Code, the Court may, however, issue the interim injunction without receiving the Child's opinion,<sup>393</sup> therefore, this is left to the discretion of the authorities.</p> <p>The age-related conditions are fulfilled according to general rules on legal capacity of natural persons: at 14 years of age, criminal responsibility and participation in Court are made possible, at the age of 15, the Child can be a party to the proceedings and can also participate in Court. However, as stated in the first paragraph of this answer 4.2.3., the Court shall consider the Child's opinion even if the Child is younger than 14 years old, provided that it has been determined that the</p>

<sup>391</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>392</sup> Slovenia, The [Family Code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>393</sup> Slovenia, The [Family Code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.



		<p>child is capable of understanding the meaning and consequences of given opinion.</p> <p>Expanding on that, in the adoption procedures for example (and the same, <i>mutatis mutandis</i>, in other cases of obtaining the child's opinion), the social work professional informs the child (who is old enough to understand) that adoption is the best solution for them. In doing so, she tries to get to know and consider the child's view of the problem, to enable them to participate in the process in such a way that their right to preserve their dual identity is respected. The child must be allowed to express their views, expectations and fears regarding the planned adoption. The professional shall consider the child's wishes regarding the transition to the new family and in maintaining contact with the past (ensuring that the transition is gradual; the possibility to keep their name; maintaining contact with relatives, foster carers, friends from the previous family environment, etc.).</p> <p>The transition of a child from one environment to another must be planned, gradual and built on the principle of the best interests of the child. The professional should work with the child through several interviews, monitor their experiences, well-being, and wishes during the adoption process and inform them appropriately about the activities that are to follow. Preparation should take place in an environment that is familiar to the child and where they feel comfortable. Several meetings with the child should be held in the beginning for the sole purpose of the adoption, to get to know the professionals and accept them as trustworthy people.<sup>394</sup></p>
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<sup>394</sup> Dremelj, P., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), [Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve](#), Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

#### 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
Foster care	x		<p>The State.</p> <p>According to the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>), fostering is aimed at enabling children to grow up in a healthy way in the care of persons other than their parents, to be brought up, educated, to develop their personality in a harmonious way and to be trained to live and work independently (Article 10).<sup>395</sup></p> <p>The foster carer is entitled to a monthly fostering allowance for each Child, which includes a maintenance allowance and payment for work (Article 50),<sup>396</sup> fostering is, therefore, paid.</p>	
Residential – institutional care	x		<p>The State</p> <p>According to the Social Assistance Act (<i>Zakon o socialnem varstvu</i>), Institutional care is a broader term that covers all forms of assistance in an institution, other family or other organised form to replace or supplement the functions of the beneficiary's own home and family, in particular accommodation, organised food and care, and health care (Paragraph 1 of Art 16).<sup>397</sup></p> <p>Institutional care for children and minors deprived of normal family life also includes, in addition to the above, education and preparation for life (Paragraph 2 of Article 16).<sup>398</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, in accordance with the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and</p>	

<sup>395</sup> Slovenia, [The Family Code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>396</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>397</sup> Slovenia, The [Social Assistance Act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>398</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

		<p>Bevaioural disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i>), Residential/Institutional Care is also provided for Children and Youth with Emotional and Bevaioural disorders.<sup>399</sup></p> <p>Children in Residential Institutions are cared for by Professional Staff (for demanded training, please see answer 4.3.10).</p>
Other forms of family-based or family-like care placements	x	<p>Child Guardianship (<i>Skrbištvo otroka</i>) - Civil Society (oversight by the State).</p> <p>The Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>) also regulates Child Guardianship. The purpose of guardianship is to ensure that children's personality is fully developed through care and education, and that they are equipped to live and work independently. Guardianship is also intended to safeguard the property and other rights and interests of individuals (Paragraph 1 &amp; 3 of Article 239).<sup>400</sup> The guardianship of the Child ends when one becomes fully capable of exercising his or her legal capacity, by adoption or by a court decision (Article 261).<sup>401</sup> The guardian shall care for a child with the same diligence as the parents, but shall not be obliged to maintain a ward or take the ward into their home (Article 258).<sup>402</sup></p> <p>The guardianship is a voluntary and honourable function (Paragraph 2 of Article 240).<sup>403</sup></p>
Supervised independent living arrangements for children	x	<p>The State</p> <p>Article 28 of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i>), stipulates that, on the proposal of the</p>

<sup>399</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and bevaioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>400</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>401</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>402</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>403</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

			expert group, an adolescent who is placed into the Residential Institution by a Court measure and is unable to return to their home environment shall be placed in Youth Accommodation ( <i>Mladinska stanovanja</i> ) immediately after the expiry of the Court measure or within one year of the expiry of the measure. A young person may continue to be accommodated in a Youth Home ( <i>Mladinsko stanovanje</i> ) for a maximum period of 12 months after the completion of their education or until they reach the age of 26. <sup>404</sup>																
<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 (?)		<p>In terms of institutional care, two categories of institutions should be mentioned: 1) centres for training, work and care (CUDV); and 2) institutions for children and adolescents with special needs.</p> <p>1) In terms of child protection services, Centres for training, work and care (CUDV) provide institutional care for children and special education programme for children, adolescents and adults up to the age of 26 with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities. Institutional care includes basic and social care and health care. For children and adolescents deprived of a normal family life, institutional care also includes education and preparation for life, but as already noted children's home (i.e. orphanage-like institutions) do not exist in Slovenia. Tables below show the number of children in residency at 5 CUDVs across Slovenia as of 31 December 2022<sup>405</sup> (for total capacities, please, see answer 4.5.7)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Type of service</th> <th colspan="4">CUDV Črna na Koroškem</th> <th rowspan="2">Σ</th> </tr> <tr> <th>&lt;7 yrs</th> <th>7-18 yrs</th> <th>18-21 yrs</th> <th>21-26 yrs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social assistance programme for children and adolescent</td> <td>0</td> <td>6</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type of service	CUDV Črna na Koroškem				Σ	<7 yrs	7-18 yrs	18-21 yrs	21-26 yrs	Social assistance programme for children and adolescent	0	6	4	0	10
Type of service	CUDV Črna na Koroškem				Σ														
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<sup>404</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>405</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future (*Ministrstvo za solidarno prihodnost*) upon request (e-mail, 12 April 2023).

Type of Service	CUDV Dobrna				Σ
	<7 yrs	7-18 yrs	18-21 yrs	21-26 yrs	
Social assistance programme for children and adolescents up to 21 yrs - Full-day institutional care	0	19	8		27
Social assistance programme for persons of 21-26 yrs - Full-day institutional care	0	0	0	10	10
Σ		19	8	10	<b>37</b>
s up to 21 yrs - Full-day institutional care					
Social assistance programme for persons of 21-26 yrs - Full-day institutional care	0	0	0	7	7
Σ	0	6	4	7	<b>17</b>

<b>ZUDV Dornava</b>					
Type of Service	<7 yrs	7-18 yrs	18-21 yrs	21-26 yrs	$\Sigma$
Social assistance programme for children and adolescents up to 21 yrs - Full-day institutional care	0	13	8	0	21
Social assistance programme for persons of 21-26 yrs - Full-day institutional care	0	0	0	8	8
$\Sigma$	0	13	8	8	<b>29</b>

<b>CUDV Draga</b>					
Type of Service	<7 yrs	7-18 yrs	18-21 yrs	21-26 yrs	$\Sigma$
Social assistance programme for children and adolescents up to 21 yrs – Full-day institutional care	3	27	14		44

Social assistance programme for persons of 21-26 yrs – Full-day institutional care	0	0	0	17	17
<b>Σ</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>61</b>

<b>CUDV Radovljica</b>					
Type of Service	<7 yrs	7-18 yrs	18-21 yrs	21-26 yrs	<b>Σ</b>
Social assistance programme for children and adolescents up to 21 yrs – Full-day institutional care	0	7	3	0	10
Social assistance programme for persons of 21-26 yrs – Full-day institutional care	0	0	0	6	6
<b>Σ</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>

Regarding the institutions for children and adolescents for special needs, these provide education and support services, including residential programmes, for children with special needs. Request for information regarding the number of children enrolled in these institutions has been sent to the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*). The Ministry only provided total numbers of children with special needs, enrolled in regular or adapted

primary school programmes (in the table below) as this is supposedly the only available information:<sup>406</sup>

	School Year				2019/20
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Type of disability- Σ	Gender – Σ	12247	13996	9948	13302
	Male	8328	9477	6689	8891
	Female	3919	4519	3259	4411
Children with intellectual disabilities	Gender – Σ	752	836	378	579
	Male	457	521	232	343
	Female	295	315	146	236
Blind and partially sighted children or children with visual impairment	Gender – Σ	50	57	20	35
	Male	26	30	12	21
	Female	24	27	8	14
Deaf and hard-of-hearing children	Gender – Σ	156	162	66	96
	Male	84	95	38	54
	Female	72	67	28	42
Children with speech and language disability	Gender – Σ	872	1026	582	975
	Male	624	737	430	722
	Female	248	289	152	253
Children with physical/motoric disability	Gender – Σ	111	101	39	69
	Male	65	59	25	46
	Female	46	42	14	23
Children with long-term illnesses	Gender – Σ	995	1101	557	805
	Male	659	697	336	485
	Female	336	404	221	320
Children with emotional and behavioural disorders	Gender – Σ	181	216	215	314
	Male	137	149	142	207
	Female	44	67	73	107
Children with deficits in specific areas of learning	Gender – Σ	4472	4712	3052	4296
	Male	2952	3074	1914	2651
	Female	1520	1638	1138	1645
Children with autism spectrum disorders	Gender – Σ	19	19	3	2
	Male	17	17	3	2
	Female	2	2	–	–

<sup>406</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (e-mail, 17 April 2023).



			<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Children with multiple disabilities</b></td> <td><b>Gender – Σ</b></td> <td>3881</td> <td>5339</td> <td>3718</td> <td>5071</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Male</b></td> <td>2808</td> <td>3814</td> <td>2682</td> <td>3666</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Female</b></td> <td>1073</td> <td>1525</td> <td>1036</td> <td>1405</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Unknown disability</b></td> <td><b>Gender – Σ</b></td> <td>758</td> <td>427</td> <td>1318</td> <td>1060</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Male</b></td> <td>499</td> <td>284</td> <td>875</td> <td>694</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Female</b></td> <td>259</td> <td>143</td> <td>443</td> <td>366</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Children with multiple disabilities</b>	<b>Gender – Σ</b>	3881	5339	3718	5071		<b>Male</b>	2808	3814	2682	3666		<b>Female</b>	1073	1525	1036	1405	<b>Unknown disability</b>	<b>Gender – Σ</b>	758	427	1318	1060		<b>Male</b>	499	284	875	694		<b>Female</b>	259	143	443	366												
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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>The table shows the number of alerts issued by the Police. An alert is issued for reported cases if the person has not been traced by the Police in their first search operations. The table shows the number of alerts issued for persons who went missing/ran away from: 1) Radeče Correctional Home (<i>Prezgojni dom Radeče</i>)<sup>407</sup> (for minors who committed criminal offences, placed there by the order of the Criminal Court); 2) Residential Treatment Institutions (<i>Vzgojni zavodi</i>) (for children placed there by the order of the Criminal Court or by the order of a Family Court):<sup>408</sup></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Alert due to escape from Radeče Correctional Institution</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Male - age</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-18</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-24</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Female - age</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-24</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alert due to escape from Residential</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Alert due to escape from Radeče Correctional Institution						<b>Male - age</b>						16-18	1	0	3	2	0	18-24	5	6	5	5	6	<b>Female - age</b>						18-24	1	0	0	0	0	Alert due to escape from Residential					
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<sup>407</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia related to the [Radeče Correctional Home](#).

<sup>408</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).



			profession, <i>must</i> have at least three children in placement at the same time, at least two of them for a full month. These norms, however, may be reduced due to Child's specific health-related, emotional or behavioural needs. <sup>412</sup>
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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.

Pursuant to the Provision of Foster Care Act (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), a person who wishes to provide foster care must permanently reside in Slovenia, must have completed at least technical or vocational training and must be of full age (Article 5, para 1).<sup>413</sup>

In negative terms, a foster carer shall not be a person whose parental rights have been revoked, a person who lives with such a person, a person without legal capacity, a person who has been convicted by final judgment for certain criminal offences, including criminal offences against sexual inviolability (Article 6).<sup>414</sup> The applicable legislation does not provide for the repetition of the vetting procedure once the candidate has been selected. Similarly, by law, selected foster carers do not have to resubmit an application and be reassessed once they have been selected. If a competent Social Work Centre is made aware of any of the mentioned circumstances, it is obliged to submit a reasoned proposal to the Ministry to withdraw the carer's licence (Article 16, Article 43).<sup>415</sup>

Foster care may also be provided by certain Child's relatives if the Social Work Centre establishes, upon reviewing all the circumstances of a case, that this is in the best interest of a child (Article 7, para 1, Article 14).

A person who wishes to engage in foster care shall submit an application with appropriate supporting evidence to the competent Social Work Centre (Article 8, Paragraph 1).<sup>416</sup> Upon receiving the application, the centre checks if the candidate fulfils the criteria stipulated above and produces an assessment of the applicant's adequacy by examining the candidate's motives for pursuing foster care and by taking into account all factors likely to have either positive or negative effects on psychosocial development of a child (Article 9, Paragraph 1 in conj. with Article 31).

Apart from this, the Rules on conditions and procedures of foster care (*Pravilnik o pogojih in postopkih za izvajanje rejniške dejavnosti*) provide that the assessment also includes a note on the applicant's motives for fostering, the applicant's personal qualities relevant to fostering, the preparation of the

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<sup>412</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>413</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

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<sup>416</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

family to admit the Child (relationships, communication, family atmosphere), the candidate's willingness to participate in the individual project group and their understanding of the foster care system and the role of foster carer as a collaborator of the Social Work Centres (Article 13, Paragraph 2).<sup>417</sup>

The Provision of Foster Care Act<sup>418</sup> further stipulates that each year, not later than by the end of September, the responsible ministry determines the number of needed foster care providers and informs Social Work Centres about this (Article 10). The Social Work Centres, not later than by the end of the year, presents the ministry with received applications and assessments of individual candidates (Article 11).<sup>419</sup>

The funds for training are provided from the State's Budget (Article 12, Paragraph 4).<sup>420</sup>

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?

Before explaining the Legislation-related reporting obligations, we should emphasise that, according to the Catalogue of public powers and tasks according to the law, and services provided by Social Work Centres (*Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD*),<sup>421</sup> Social Work Centres must provide an opinion and furtherly report to the Court on the implementation of all child protection measures, especially 1) interim injunctions, 2) foster care, 3) child guardianship, 4) adoptions and any other measure taken to protect the best interest of the Child.

According to the Provision of Foster Care Act (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*) the Social Work Centres have an obligation to monitor the development of the Child in foster care and the fulfilment of the obligations agreed in the fostering contract – the Centre must set up an Individual Project Team involving the Social Work Centre's professional worker in charge of monitoring the individual Child, the foster carer, the parents, and the Child, the latter only if the Child's centre assesses that participation would be beneficial for the Child, given the circumstances of the case. (Article 34, 35,

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<sup>417</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on conditions and procedures of foster care](#) (*Pravilnik o pogojih in postopkih za izvajanje rejniške dejavnosti*), 9 December 2019, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>418</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

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<sup>420</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>421</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

39).<sup>422</sup> The Individual Project Team must report to the Social Work Centre once a year (Paragraph 2 of Article 37).<sup>423</sup>

The same applies in terms of placement of the Child in Residential Care. The Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*) stipulates that during the placement of the Child in the Residential Institution, the Social Work Centre (or, more specifically, the professional worker in charge of the individual Child) constantly monitors the implementation of the placement by providing assistance to the family, participating in the expert group, participating in the implementation of the child's or adolescent's individualised programme, and preparing the family for the child's or adolescent's return to the home environment. The report on implementation is sent to the Residential Institution once a year (Paragraph 2 & 3 of Article 17).<sup>424</sup>

In cases of emergency removal of the Child (interim injunction) or the implementation of a measure of more permanent nature, the Social Work Centre monitors the implementation of such measure in accordance with the Aid Plan and reports to the Court which issued the order once a month (Article 160, 163 & 164 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*)).<sup>425</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.6. Are children placed in foster care homes geographically <u>close to their biological families</u> , school, friends, and/or community?	X (?)		The answer depends on whether such placement is in the best interest of the Child (Paragraph 1 & 3 of Article 14 of the Provision of Foster Care Act ( <i>Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti</i> )). <sup>426</sup>
4.5.7. Is there a <u>national registry</u> of residential institutions for children?	X		Only data on residential capacities in Centres for training, work and care (CUDV) are available (please, see Section 4.5.1. for more information):  1) CUDV Črna na Koroškem – 22 persons 2) CUDV Dobrna – 37 persons 3) ZUDV Dornava – 31 persons

<sup>422</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>423</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>424</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>425</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>426</sup> Slovenia, The [Provision of foster care act](#) (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*), 27 November 2012, with subsequent modifications.

<p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide information regarding the existent number of residential institutions and their capacity (beds).</p>			<p>4) CUDV Draga – 96 persons 5) CUDV Radovljica – 38</p>
<p>4.5.8. Are there <u>accreditation and licensing procedures</u> for residential institutions in place?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide information on the legislative framework, the responsible authority and procedure.</p>			<p>In Slovenia, the child protection system closely intertwines with the national social protection system. The latter includes various social security services that may target children, including residential care (with respect to children, this may include residential care for children with moderate, severe and profound mental disabilities, and children deprived of normal family).</p> <p>In terms of residential care for children, no civil society organisation or any other private entity is involved. All the other residential institutions are under the responsibility of public authorities. There are residential institutions for children with special needs that cannot be schooled in the place of their residence, and for children with emotional and behavioural issues.<sup>427</sup> The latter group is also regarded as population with special needs. These residential facilities are part of the education system, and are – according to Paragraph 3 of Article 2 of the recently adopted Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i>), designated by the Minister of Education in accordance with the criteria for the creation of a public network of such centres.<sup>428</sup></p>
<p>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</p>	x		<p>The fundamental documents where such standards and norms are defined is the Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services (<i>Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev</i>).<sup>429</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, in terms of the technical/infrastructural aspect, The Rules on Minimum Technical Requirements for Social Services Providers (<i>Pravilnik o minimalnih tehničnih zahtevah za izvajalce socialnovarstvenih storitev</i>) stipulate</p>

<sup>427</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to the [network of expert centres for children and adolescents with special needs](#).

<sup>428</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in Education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>429</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services](#) (*Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev*), 27 May 2010, with subsequent modifications.

<p>personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions, and daily care of children)?</p>		<p>that facilities of institutional care shall be built in accordance with legislation governing construction, including provisions governing unhindered access to buildings (Article 4), and further determine minimum requirements to be fulfilled by these facilities.<sup>430</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, in addition to general acts stated above, the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs (<i>Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalni programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami</i>)<sup>431</sup> set forth norms and standards for covering the teaching and learning obligations of teaching staff, the teaching and learning obligations of headteachers and assistant headteachers, the criteria for the creation of an advisory service, a library, an administrative, accounting and technical service, and the criteria for the creation of departments and teaching groups for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special educational needs.</p>
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#### 4.5.10. How is the residential care staff recruited, vetted, and trained?

All Residential Institutions intended for children have been set up by the state, and their employees work in public sector. At ground level, based on the Public Servants Act (*Zakon o javnih uslužbencih*), they shall be recruited via publicly announced vacancies.<sup>432</sup>

In accordance with Article 69 of the Social Assistance Act, the professionals working in social care shall obtain higher education in social work, concluded the internship and passed the professional exam in the field of social work, or shall have higher education in the field of, psychology or biopsychology, pedagogical education and its specialised disciplines, administration, law, sociology, health - occupational therapy and theology with a relevant specialisation, and have completed a nine-month traineeship or have nine months of work experience in the field of social welfare and have passed a professional examination.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>430</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on minimum technical requirements for social services providers](#) (*Pravilnik o minimalnih tehničnih zahtevah za izvajalce socialnovarstvenih storitev*), 25 May 2006, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>431</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalni programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami*), 11 June 2007, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>432</sup> Slovenia, Slovenia, [The Public servants act](#) (*Zakon o javnih uslužbencih*), 11 June 2002, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>433</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

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>If <u>yes</u>, briefly describe to whom and how children can lodge complaints.</p>	X		<p>Children can report to the professional worker of the Social Work Centre who monitors the implementation of the measure in question (for details, please, see section 4.5.5)</p> <p>Age-appropriate and child-friendly standards are, as mentioned above, defined in the Catalogue of Public Powers and Tasks According to the Law, and Aervices Provided by Social Work Centres (<i>Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD</i>).<sup>434</sup></p> <p>If the Child is placed into the Residential Institution, he or she is informed about their rights, particularly the right to lodge complaints to the counsellors or the principal, upon admission.<sup>435</sup> Article 30 of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i>), Stipulates that that the child or adolescent, who consider that their rights have been violated, he or she may, within eight days of becoming aware of the violation, submit a request for the protection of his or her rights to the Principle of the Institution – either in writing or orally on the record.<sup>436</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>	X		<p>Paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju</i>) stipulates that, no later than in the last month of the court measure, the expert team, together with the adolescent and the parents, shall draw up a plan for the adolescent's integration into independent life and work, including, inter-alia, a plan for completing their education, finding a job, finding housing, engaging in possible forms of support, and assisting the adolescent in his or her home environment. If the young</p>

<sup>434</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<sup>435</sup> Information was provided by the Residential Treatment Institution Planina (*Strokovni center Planina*) upon request (via post office, 27 February 2023).

<sup>436</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.



Briefly describe who is responsible for such assistance?		<p>person is unable to return to their home environment, they shall be placed in youth accommodation.<sup>437</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, The Catalogue of Tasks and Public Powers Carried Out by the Social Work Centres (<i>Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD</i>)<sup>438</sup> specifies in detail the sequence of required and optional actions undertaken by social work centres. With regard to children, placed into foster care or an institution, the catalogue lists the following forms of assistance, which is performed by the Social Work Centres: 1) preparation of the Child for leaving the foster care family and returning to his/her family; 2) review of the entire situation, agreement on future life and forming the assistance; 3) working with the family on the changes that the return of the Child will bring.</p>
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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.

The Catalogue of Tasks and Public Powers Carried Out by the Social Work Centres (*Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD*) specifies the sequence of required and optional actions undertaken by Social Work Centres. Concerning children, placed into foster care or an institution, the catalogue lists the following forms of assistance, which is performed by the Social Work Centres.<sup>439</sup>

Placement into institution:

- cooperation with the institution, and the family,
- review of the situation and preparation of a project that would allow the Child to return,
- a project on the continuation of the measure;

Foster care:

- working with the family while the Child is placed into foster care
- Assistance to the Child's family in settling their issues and relationships,
- joint planning and monitoring of the goals;
- preparation of the Child for leaving the foster care family and returning to their family.

Furthermore, in term of children placed into the institutions, the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in*

<sup>437</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>438</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

<sup>439</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

*mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*)<sup>440</sup> stipulates that the Social Work Centres shall monitor the implementation of the measure by providing assistance to the family in a case-specific way that enables and prepares the family for the Child or adolescent's return to the home environment (Paragraph 2 & 3 of Article 17).

<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>In accordance with what has been said in section 4.5.5, the professional worker of the Social Work Centre who monitors the Child and their family before and during the implementation of the measure may also monitor them and provide and coordinate assistance <i>after</i> the measure in question has been finished. The scope and method of monitoring and assistance depend on specifics of each individual Child and their family.<sup>441</sup></p>
<p>4.5.15. Are decisions of placement in alternative care reviewed?</p> <p><u>If 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>	X		<p>In accordance with the Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence (<i>Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini</i>)<sup>442</sup> and Article 17 of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (<i>Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in</i></p>

<sup>440</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>441</sup> Information was provided by the Association of Centre for Social Work of Slovenia (*Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije*) upon request (email, 1 March 2023, response dated 27 February 2023).

<sup>442</sup> Slovenia, The [The Rules on the cooperation between bodies and on the operation of social work centres, multidisciplinary teams and regional services in dealing with domestic violence](#) (*Pravilnik o sodelovanju organov ter o delovanju centrov za socialno delo, multidisciplinarnih timov in regijskih služb pri obravnavi nasilja v družini*), 14 April 2009, and subsequent modifications.

*izobraževanju*),<sup>443</sup> the competent Social Work Centre coordinates inter-institutional cooperation and reports to the Court. Article 160 of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*) furthermore stipulates the Court's obligation – *ex officio* or on a motion - to impose measures to protect the best interests of the Child, to decide to terminate the measure if the grounds for it have ceased to exist, to impose another measure to protect the best interests of the Child if, in the course of implementing the measure, it appears that it has a detrimental effect on the Child's health, development or property, to decide to extend the measure imposed, or to reimpose the measure. Therefore, the Court reviews the measures upon the Social Work Centre's report.

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?

The fundamental legal framework lies in chapter five of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*), which regulates fundamental questions and issues regarding adoption (i.e. formal conditions, procedure, competences).<sup>444</sup>

Furthermore, in 2019, as provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Minsitrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*), the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) issued Guidelines for Adoption Work (*Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve*)<sup>445</sup> - a professional manual relating to 1) Social Work Centre's professionals working with people who wish to adopt a child (formal procedure, reception and examination of the written application by which applicants express their wish to adopt, individual preparation for adoption, group preparation for adoption); 2) work of the professionals with the other parties involved in the adoption process (formal procedure, work with biological parents, work with the Child, international adoption); and 3) recommendations for work in the field of adoption in broader sense.

In the field of adoption, public powers are exercised by the Social Work Centres . Their competences, task and powers regarding adoptions are defined in the Catalogue of Public Powers and Tasks According to the Law, and Services Provided by Social Work Centres (*Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD*) (sub-section 1.3.4, pg. 81-92).<sup>446</sup>

<sup>443</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>444</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>445</sup> Dremelj, P., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), [Smernice za delo na področju posvojitve](#), Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

<sup>446</sup> Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije (2022), [Katalog javnih pooblastil, nalog po zakonu in storitev, ki jih izvajajo CSD](#), Ljubljana, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.

Regarding the adoption procedure, an application to become a candidate for adoption is made to the Social Work Centre. The procedure is managed by the Centre's professional worker and a psychologist is involved to carry out a psychological assessment of the applicants. Formal conditions are checked and interviews and home visits are carried out. The Social Security Worker issues a professional opinion and enters the candidate in a database. Regarding the choice of the candidate, the Social Work Centre selects the most suitable candidate from among all possible candidates for adoption, taking into account the characteristics and needs of the Child, the wishes expressed by the applicants, the professional opinion of the Social Work Centre, the wishes of the biological parents regarding the prospective adoptive parents, and considering the time of registration in the central database of candidates for adoption, and then files a petition for adoption with the Court.<sup>447</sup>

Private adoptions are not possible in Slovenia. However, it is possible to adopt a child from abroad. In terms of international adoptions, Slovenia currently cooperates with the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia on a continuous basis, on the basis of bilateral agreements. It is also possible to adopt a child from countries that are not signatories to the Hague Adoption Convention or to a bilateral agreement, provided that the country of the Child determines the conditions and procedure of the adoption.<sup>448</sup>

Expanding on that, in 2022, the parliament adopted an amendment to the Family Code, redefining marriage and cohabitation as a union of two persons (instead of a union of a man and a woman) (Articles 3 & 4) and, as a result, equalised the rights of heterosexual and homosexual couples to adopt children.<sup>449</sup> Therefore, homosexual couples can now adopt children in the same way and procedure as heterosexual ones.

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.

According to the NGO SOS Association (*Društvo SOS*),<sup>450</sup> operating hotline for victims of violence, the persisting problem is a lack of extensive and coherent legislation, which should take greater account of the specific dynamics of violence. This is most evident in cases of divorce, where children are traumatised in family divorce proceedings, where domestic violence is involved. The divorce process is always very stressful for the Child, and in the case of violence, it is particularly distressing and threatening for the Child, especially in terms of manipulation, attempts to influence, continued pressure, intimidation and control of the perpetrator over the other parent, which perpetrators of violence through contact, unfortunately, often resort to. In fact, there are many problems with procedures that do not follow the needs of children to regulate the situation when mothers and their children leave a violent relationship. Children are extremely vulnerable and unprotected in their

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<sup>447</sup> Information was provided in an oral interview with a social work professional with the Social Work Centre – Ljubljana Šiška 1 February 2023.

<sup>448</sup> For more information, see the government web page related to [adoptions](#).

<sup>449</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>450</sup> Information was provided by the Association SOS telephone for woman and children – victims of violence (*Društvo SOS telefon za ženske in otroke – žrtve nasilja*) upon request (email, 9 March 2023)

relationship with the adults who are important to them, and we believe that they are often the last resort in these processes.

However, in practice, difficulties in placing children in crisis centres for children and young people and in foster families are reflected in a lack of capacity and staff. It is observed that placements in crisis centres for children and young people, which are intended to be short-term only, are for this reason too long. There are also problems with the placement of children in foster care, as there are sometimes difficulties in finding a suitable foster family.<sup>451</sup>

Furthermore, there are certain data-related issues as data in data bases are not sufficiently broken down. However, according to the information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*), they are working and cooperating with the Social Protection Institute (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) to improve the data-related situation.

In terms of Foster Care, as provided by the Report of the Council for Children and Families for the period 2017-2019 (*Poročilo Sveta RS za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*),<sup>452</sup> the number of foster placements has been declining since 2010. For example, in 2012-2016, foster placements lasted just under 7 years. The authors of the study on Procedures, organisation and standards in foster care<sup>453</sup> believe that the principle that foster care should last as long as it is in the best interest of the Child should be implemented. In this context, intensive work should be done to eliminate the causes of fostering, a proactive individual project team should be set up which works intensively with the Child, the foster carer and the family of origin, and standards of work should be standardised as a matter of urgency.

In terms of Adoption, the above-mentioned Report sets forth the gaps in regulation of international adoptions. More attention needs to be paid to the protection of children who have lived in institutional settings prior to adoption, and it is recognised that adoptive parents need to be prepared and continuously worked with in all cases, including intercountry adoptions. As information on adoption was often scattered and unreliable, a central database has been established in accordance with Articles 283, 284 and 285 of the Family Code. The database contains information on candidates for adoption; children in need of adoption; biological parents of children in need of adoption and adoptions carried out in the Republic of Slovenia. The data are entered into the database by the Social Work Centres.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>452</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023). The two later reports do not provide information on the topic in question, mostly due to COVID-19.

<sup>453</sup> Rakar, T., Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. et al. (2010), *Postopki, organizacija in standardi na področju rejništva*, Ljubljana, Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo.

<sup>454</sup> Slovenia, [The Family code](#) (Družinski zakonik), 21 March 2017, and subsequent modifications.

According to the Report on Implementation of Social Assistance Programmes 2021<sup>455</sup> that there is an urgent need to provide free or affordable psychotherapy. There is an urgent need to regulate a network of programmes for children and adolescents with mental health problems, programmes to reduce poverty and loneliness among the elderly, intergenerational programmes, programmes to help victims of violence, residential groups with 16 and 24-hour support, and support programmes for people who wish to remain in their home environment. There is also a need for employment workshops for people who are disabled or unemployable due to mental health problems. At the same time, they point out that in recent times parents often report depression, anxiety and stress in their children, withdrawal, worsening emotional and behavioural problems, and more and more self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and other distress. Many children and adolescents also face hardships due to parental conflict, parental divorce and domestic violence. Furthermore, housing is a major problem in preparing for independent life: unfavourable conditions and availability of rents, credit, non-profit housing... At the same time, there is the problem of insufficient resources, insufficient income, as well as debts, loans, maintenance, foreclosures and other financial burdens. There is a lack of capacity or social resources to ensure a safe transition from organised forms of living to more independent forms of living. The Report also points to staffing problems (understaffing, lack of properly educated and trained staff, underpayment, lack of equality with public sector employees).

#### 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

The new Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*)<sup>456</sup> is of critical importance in terms of treatment of the children with emotional and behaviour disorders who are enrolled in kindergartens and schools, as well as children with emotional and behavioural disorders who are placed in specialist centres (residential institutions) for children with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders. The adoption of the law, as mentioned above provides for a more detailed regulation at national level of the cooperation of the Ministry, institutions for the education of children and adolescents with special needs, Social Work Centres and their subordinate bodies and authorities, the Police, the Courts and other national and sub-national social welfare and assistance bodies with families of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems.

Furthermore, in terms of Foster Care, in 2017, the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*)<sup>457</sup> was adopted, replacing the Marriage and Family Relations Act, which was the main legal source regulates foster care as a special form of care for children in need of care and upbringing by persons other than their parents. The essential difference between the Family Code and the Marriage and the previous Family Relations

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<sup>455</sup> Document was provided by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>456</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>457</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

Act is that under the Marriage and Family Relations Act, the competence and power to decide on the placement of a child in foster care had been with Social Work Centres, whereas under the Family Code, the Court has the decision-making power, which means that a higher and more rigorous level of protection of children's rights is ensured (Section 3.3.1).<sup>458</sup>

In terms of the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*) replacing the Marriage and Family Relations Act, the same applies for Adoptions. In addition, the Family Code regulates the formal conditions for adopting a child in a more specific way, both for the adoptive parent and for the Child. The Family Code introduces an additional qualification for adoption, namely that the adoptive parent cannot be a person who has been convicted of an intentional offence prosecuted ex officio or of an offence against life and limb or against sexual integrity for which the offender is prosecuted on motion, nor can he/she be living with a person who has been convicted of these offences by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*. The same reservations also apply to foster care providers in the provisions of the Provision of Foster Care Act (*Zakon o izvajanju rejniške dejavnosti*). As regards the consent of the Child's parents to the adoption, the Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*) newly stipulates that such consent is only possible after the Child is eight weeks old. Under the provisions of the Marriage and Family Relations Act, adoption was possible after one year from the fulfilment of the condition on the part of the Child, but the Family Code has shortened this period to six months. This still guarantees the protection of parental care and, at the same time, gives the Child the opportunity to obtain effective protection of his or her rights and best interests sooner than one year, which is what adoption is intended to do. To support the decision to adopt a child, the Family Code provides for the creation of a database with an anonymised record of information on candidates for adoption and on children in need of adoption (Section 3.3.3).<sup>459</sup>

#### 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)

Another promising practice is the institute of the Children's Advocate at the Human Rights Ombudsman, adopted on the basis of the Human Rights Ombudsman Act (Section III.a).<sup>460</sup> The Children's Advocate is commonly present at: divorces – in deciding on the custody of the Child and deciding on contact; pre-adoption of the Child; change of contact; removal of the Child from the family and placement in institutional care; removal of the Child from the family and placement in a foster family; contact with the Child in foster care. The Children's Advocate is appointed upon the Ombudsman's initiative, should the need arise, or by the Child's own initiative, or upon the Child's report of a problem to a parent or other trusted adult.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Slovenia, The [Resolution on the family policy 2018-2028: "A Society friendly to all families"](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018-2028: "Vsem družinam prijazna družba"*), 20 February 2018.

<sup>459</sup> Slovenia, The [Resolution on the family policy 2018-2028: "A Society friendly to all families"](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018-2028: "Vsem družinam prijazna družba"*), 20 February 2018.

<sup>460</sup> Slovenia, The [Human Rights Ombudsman Act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>461</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman related to the [Child Advocacy](#).

As already mentioned above, there is a great potential with the NEON Programme – Safe Without Violence (*Program NEON – Varni brez nasilja*), funded by the ISA Institute and the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*), aimed at children in kindergarten and primary school, the young in secondary school, their parents and professionals in educational institutions. The programme promotes a systematic and holistic approach to violence prevention in Educational Institutions. It highlights the important supportive role of peers, e.g. witnesses of peer violence. It empowers them to respond supportively and help stop peer violence. Even in cases of sexual and other forms of violence, peer support can have a significant impact on the decision of a child, young person or adolescent who has experienced violence to disclose it.<sup>462</sup>

At the end, we must mention the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities' funding of various programmes and workshops run by contractors selected by the Public Calls. Family Centres, for example, are a place to bring together different generations, to strengthen individual social roles, to support the reconciliation of family and professional life and to exchange good practices and positive experiences. The Centres also offer educational and practical workshops on developing positive parenting, provide holiday activities for children and organise occasional child-care. The Family Centres offer their services free of charge. In 2021 and 2022, the psychosocial assistance programmes received approximately EUR 835,000.00 annually from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the ISA Institute related to the [NEON Programme – Safe Without Violence](#).

<sup>463</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).



## 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?

The Social Inspection Authority (*Socialna inšpekcija*)<sup>464</sup> of the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za delo*) is the fundamental inspection body in terms of monitoring the functioning of social welfare system, including child protection system, affiliated to the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*). It oversees the operation of public social welfare institutions, concessionaires and other legal or natural persons providing social assistance services (Paragraph 1 of Article 102).<sup>465</sup>

The Inspectorate for Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za šolstvo in šport*)<sup>466</sup> supervises the compliance with the legislation in the field of education and, according to Paragraph 3 of Article 34 of the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*) in the educational institutions.<sup>467</sup> The Inspectorate is also responsible for supervising the functioning of the system and implementation of the legislation regarding children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems who are enrolled in kindergartens and schools, as well as children with emotional and behavioural disorders who are placed in residential institutions for children with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders (Paragraph 1 of Article 35).<sup>468</sup> Concerning the implementation, providing and carrying out healthcare

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<sup>464</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia related to the [functioning of the Social Inspection](#).

<sup>465</sup> Slovenia, The [Social assistance act](#) (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*), 4 November 1992, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>466</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Inspectorate for Education of the Republic of Slovenia with [information on its functioning](#).

<sup>467</sup> Slovenia, The [Placement of children with special needs act](#) (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*), 12 July 2011, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>468</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020, with subsequent modifications.

activities for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural disorders, the competence lies with the Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia<sup>469</sup> (Paragraph 3 of Article 35).<sup>470</sup>

The Human Rights Ombudsman in general protects human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals in relation to state authorities, local self-government authorities and bearers of public authority, and is proposed by the President and elected by the Parliament (Article 1 & 2).<sup>471</sup> By law, the Human Rights Ombudsman has above all the authority to obtain, from state and other bodies which they can monitor, all data without regard to the degree of confidentiality, in order to perform investigations (Article 6) and, in this capacity, to call witnesses for questioning (Article 36, para 2). The Ombudsman examines individual complaints, which can be lodged by any person who believes that their human rights or fundamental freedoms have been violated, provided that they have exhausted all legal means to reach a solution to the alleged violation (Article 30). The proceedings are informal and free of charge for the complainants (Article 9, para 3). The Ombudsman may warn a body which has violated the complainant's right(s) to rectify the violation or the irregularity committed, or even propose that it compensates the complainant for the damage caused (Article 39, para 2).

The organisation and work methods of the Human Rights Ombudsman as well as the division of fields of work procedures and roles are determined by the Rules of Procedure of the Human Rights Ombudsman (*Poslovnik Varuha človekovih pravic*).<sup>472</sup> Pursuant to these rules, matters falling within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman are divided into various fields, including the field of protection of children's rights. For each field, there shall be a responsible Deputy Ombudsman (Article 23, para 1 & 2), and, currently, there is a Deputy Ombudsman for the Protection of children's rights (Mr. Jože Ruparčič, PhD), who has, within the field of children's rights, every competence and power of the Ombudsman.

In addition to that, great progress has been made in the field of protection of children's rights, with the implementation of the Child Advocacy programme.<sup>473</sup> The manner in which child advocacy is carried out, its organisation and the procedure for involving children in advocacy, as well as the composition, tasks and working methods of the expert Council that monitors the implementation of advocacy are regulated and the Children's Advocate is defined in the General Act on the Implementation of Child Advocacy (*Splošni akt o načinu izvajanja zagovorništva otrok*).<sup>474</sup> The purpose

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<sup>469</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia with [information on its functioning](#). (

<sup>470</sup> Slovenia, The [Act on the intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders in education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>471</sup> Slovenia, The [Human Rights Ombudsman act](#) (*Zakon o varuhu človekovih pravic*), 20 December 1993, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>472</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules of procedure of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Poslovnik Varuha človekovih pravic Republike Slovenije*), 7 January 2019.

<sup>473</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman on [Child Advocacy](#).

<sup>474</sup> Slovenia, [The General legal act on child advocacy, the organisation of advocacy, the integration of children into the advocacy system and on the tasks, composition and method of work of the expert council](#) (*Splošni akt o načinu izvajanja zagovorništva otrok, organizaciji zagovorništva, vključitvi otroka v zagovorništvo ter nalogah, sestavi in načinu dela strokovnega sveta*), 27 June 2018, with subsequent modifications.

of advocacy is to provide professional assistance to a Child to express their opinion in all proceedings and matters involving the Child and to forward the Child's opinion to those competent authorities and institutions which decide on the Child's rights and best interests. Child advocacy concerns not only the realisation of the requirements of the European Convention on the Exercise of the Children's Rights but also the realisation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which imposes an obligation on Parties to ensure the Child's right to free opinions and expression of them in all cases in relation to the Child. As mentioned earlier, the Children's Advocate is commonly present at procedures involving: divorces – in deciding on the custody of the Child and deciding on contact; pre-adoption of the Child; change of contact; removal of the Child from the family and placement in institutional care; removal of the Child from the family and placement in a foster family; contact with the Child in foster care.

If a particular area requires the consideration of several ministries, an inter-ministerial working group is set up by a decision setting out its composition, organisation and tasks, on a proposal from the Minister. Cooperation and exchange of information and data may take place in meetings or in writing - in the form of explanatory notes. Such cooperation is established with various authorities, NGOs and the Ombudsman. In addition to that, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Families (described in detail below in answers 5.1.6 & 5.1.7) meets regularly and discusses topics in the field of family policy. In addition to its members, other representatives of bodies and services of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as non-governmental organisations and professional institutions in the field of children and the family, may be invited to attend the Council's meetings when - in the light of the subject matter - their active participation in the discussion and in the submission of initiatives and proposals is reasonable.<sup>475</sup>

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.

Usually, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of action plans and strategies is the responsibility of either working groups set up for this purpose or specific sectors at the ministries. Regarding the most important strategies, in 2020, an inter-ministerial working group was set up to develop the strategic document Children's Programme 2020-2025 (*Program za otroke 2020-2025*).<sup>476</sup> The working group is comprised of representatives of ministries, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders with the task of addressing the situation of the children and child protection system in the Republic of Slovenia in a comprehensive and wide-ranging manner. According to the document, the inter-ministerial working group monitors the implementation of the proposals for the three-year action plans for the Programme, including timelines, indicators and measure promoters. The Inter-Ministerial Working Group will also prepare reports on the implementation of the actions of the two-year action plans, monitor any revised circumstances and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the measures. In addition to that, The Inter-Ministerial Working Group will report on the effectiveness of the implementation of individual actions. The inter-ministerial group will

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<sup>475</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (e-mail, 19 April 2023, response dated 18 April 2023).

<sup>476</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

annually report on the progress of the inter-agency work to the new Council for Children and Families, set up by the government in 2023.

The draft of the National Programme on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2023-2028 (*Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečavnja nasilja v družini in nasilja nad ženskami*) stipulates that monitoring the implementation of the Resolution is the responsibility of all sectors of ministries that are responsible for the implementation of the individual measures. Once a year, the sectors submit a report on the implementation of the objectives of the Resolution and the implementation of the measures to the ministry. The document is currently under preparation within the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

The implementation of the Resolution on the Family Policy 2018-2028: "A Society Friendly to All Families" (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018-2028: "Vsem družinam prijazna družba"*)<sup>477</sup> is monitored through the preparation of reports on the implementation of the measures of the two-year and three-year Action Plans until 2028. Monitoring the implementation of the Resolution is the responsibility of all sectors of ministries responsible for the implementation of the measures. Once a year, the sectors submit a report on the implementation of the objectives of the Resolution and the implementation of the measures to the Council for Children and Families of the Republic of Slovenia. The Council shall also include a report on the implementation of the Resolution in its regular annual report to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

In addition to what has already been mentioned, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) prepares an annual analysis of the situation of children in Slovenia, which serves as the basis for the annual report that the Council is obliged to submit to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The focus of the analysis changes each year in agreement with the client, depending on the topicality of the issues of each period.<sup>478</sup>

The basis for the cooperation between the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) and the government is Article 7 of the Social Assistance Act (*Zakon o socialnem varstvu*). The Article states that the Institute carries out information, analytical, expert-documentation and programme activities in the field of social protection, as well as basic, applied and development research work in this field. Annually, a co-financing agreement for the given year is concluded between the Social Protection Institute and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The contract specifies the work programme and the tasks to be carried out considering each year's professional and political needs and development priorities. In each annual analysis of the situation of children, a particular area of special relevance for that year is highlighted. For example, in recent years, particular attention has been paid to the analysis of (improving) child participation, the calculation of the appropriate level of child support, and during the period of the Covid 19 epidemic, the focus was on everyday life of the children during the Covid 19 epidemic. For the purposes of monitoring the situation of children and their well-being, the Index of Children's Well-

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<sup>477</sup> Slovenia, The [Resolution on the family policy 2018-2028: "A Society friendly to all families"](#) (*Resolucija o družinski politiki 2018-2028: "Vsem družinam prijazna družba"*), 20 February 2018.

<sup>478</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

being (IBO) and the Regional Index of Children's Well-being (RIBO) are being used.<sup>479</sup> In terms of internal procedures of the Institute, the draft of the annual work plan is submitted by the Institute's Director to the Board of Management at least one month prior to the period to which it relates. The work plan is, as mentioned drawn up jointly with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and usually depends on the Ministry's needs. However, oftentimes tasks are also proposed by the Institute's staff according to perceived content and data gaps. Regarding the formulation of the tasks in the work plan in the Institute's field of operation, the Directorate for the Family (*Direktorat za družino*) is the most extensively involved governmental body.<sup>480</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>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.</p>	X		<p>Before legislation affecting children's rights is drafted, relevant analyses are carried out (either by the Ministry's internal units or the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia) and reference international surveys and child well-being index. For example, in 2023, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (<i>Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti</i>) in cooperation with the Social Protection Institute (<i>Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo</i>) produced an online tool, called Child Support Calculator,<sup>481</sup> for the informative calculation of the appropriate level of child support, based on an assessment of the average monthly cost of the Child's living needs and an assessment of the parents' assets, income and other earning capacities. The online tool will be a tool for determining the level of the Child's needs and the ability of the parent to pay appropriate child maintenance. It is intended to support judges - to facilitate the calculation of the amount of maintenance, as well as the Ministry in advance of the reform of the legislation in this area.<sup>482</sup></p>

<sup>479</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (e-mail, 19 April 2023, response dated 18 April 2023).

<sup>480</sup> Information was provided by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) upon request (e-mail, 14 April 2023).

<sup>481</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia with the [child support calculator](#).

<sup>482</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

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.

The Rules on Minimum Technical Requirements for Social Services Providers (*Pravilnik o minimalnih tehničnih zahtevah za izvajalce socialnovarstvenih storitev*) stipulate that facilities of institutional care shall be built in accordance with legislation governing construction, including provisions governing unhindered access to buildings (Article 4), and further determine minimum requirements to be fulfilled by these facilities.<sup>483</sup>

The Rules do not provide any data collection obligations. However, according to Article 16 of the Rules,<sup>484</sup> the group rooms at the Training and Care Centre for Children and Adolescents are designed for five to eight users.

According to the Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future (*Ministrstvo za solidarno prihodnost*), the data is disaggregated by age (age groups: <7 years, 7-18 years, 18-21 years, 21-26 year). However, the Ministry is not in possession of data regarding the length of institutional residency, nor is the data disaggregated by gender.<sup>485</sup>

Rules on norms and standards of social security services (*Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev*)<sup>486</sup> define standards for the provision of these services, from less complex, such as the first social assistance, to institutional care of children and minors, particularly for those with moderate, severe or profound mental disabilities in centres for training, work and protection. For instance, one of the services stipulated by the law is the social assistance to family for the home, which is aimed at individuals and families in cases where hardship and difficulties arise from the unsettled relations within the family and could only be solved by changes in the family as a whole, or when the hardship experienced by two or more family members require a more permanent support and guidance to ensure normal conditions for the survival and development of the family. According to the rules, this service carried out by Social Work Centres is provided by two professional workers, the head of the service and a collaborator. The rules further define the amount of time dedicated to the service in question and stipulate the average annual norm of 50 such services to be provided by the head of the service and 60 services per collaborator. According to the Rules, a pair of professional workers providing this service shall cover 10,000 families (Article 5).

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<sup>483</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on minimum technical requirements for social services providers](#) (*Pravilnik o minimalnih tehničnih zahtevah za izvajalce socialnovarstvenih storitev*), 25 May 2006, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>484</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules on minimum technical requirements for social services providers](#) (*Pravilnik o minimalnih tehničnih zahtevah za izvajalce socialnovarstvenih storitev*), 25 May 2006, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>485</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future (*Ministrstvo za solidarno prihodnost*) upon request (e-mail, 12 April 2023).

<sup>486</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services](#) (*Pravilnik o standardih in normativih socialnovarstvenih storitev*) 27 May 2010, with subsequent modifications.

Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalnih programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami*)<sup>487</sup> regulate norms and standards for the education of children with special needs in all educational and social-care institutions that have units or departments for the education of children with special needs. These Rules regulate especially: 1) a tailor-made programme for preschool children, 2) a specialised programme for primary school children with lower educational standards, 3) adapted primary school education programmes with an equivalent educational standard, 4) a special education programme, 5) adapted educational programmes for vocational and secondary vocational education, 6) special (Post)Rehabilitation Practical Training and 7) educational programmes (Article 1).

For example, in terms of educational programmes (Section 7), the norm for forming an educational group for children with mild intellectual disabilities and for blind and partially sighted children, deaf and hard of hearing children, children with speech-language impairment and children with physical disabilities is 12 children, the norm for the formation of an educational group for children with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities and for children with multiple disabilities is 8 children (Article 48). Furthermore, the norms for forming an educational group for children with emotional or behavioural disorders are: the norm for the formation of an educational group for children with emotional and behavioural disorders is 10 children, the norm for the formation of an educational group for children with behavioural disorders and mental illnesses (disorders) is 4 children, a group may be formed if the conditions for its functioning are provided for in the field of health care, the norm for the formation of a residential group is 8 children (Article 49).

In addition, the Code of Ethical Principles in Social Assistance (*Kodeks etičnih načel v socialnem varstvu*)<sup>488</sup> stipulates an obligation for all social assistance workers to comply with the Code of Ethical Principles, as well as with any professional or service provider codes of ethics adopted by them in the course of their activities, and which relate to the treatment of social care users.

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 protection policies and legislation?	X		The Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Families ( <i>Svet RS za otroke in družino</i> ) is a professional consultative body established on the basis of Paragraph 1 of Article 18 of the Family Code ( <i>Družinski zakonik</i> ). <sup>489</sup> The Council also, among other things, monitors the implementation of measures in the field of family policy, including with respect to children and their protection.

<sup>487</sup> Slovenia, The [Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs](#) (*Pravilnik o normativih in standardih za izvajanje vzgojno-izobraževalnih programov za otroke s posebnimi potrebami*), 11 June 2007, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>488</sup> Slovenia, [The Code of ethical principles in social assistance](#) (*Kodeks etičnih načel v socialnem varstvu*), 20 May 2014.

<sup>489</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<p>If <u>yes</u>, at what level is this done? Please provide indicative examples.</p>		<p>The Council, its powers and competences are furtherly described below in answers 5.1.6. and 5.1.7.</p> <p>As the consultations of the Council are of an internal nature – meaning the consultations are carried out by members of the Council, in order for consultancy to be executed in a holistic and professional manner, the Council consists of representatives of various institutions working in different topic-relevant fields of expertise: 1) the government (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture); 2) professional institutions (Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Work, Faculty of Law, the Peace Institute, Association of Centres for Social Work); and 3) NGOs (Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth, Centre for Protection of Human Rights and Environment, Slovenian Foster Carers Association, Association of Marriage and Family Therapists of Slovenia, Slovenian Foundation for UNICEF, and the Family Initiative). As such, the Council is competent to cover substantial and procedural aspects of its work.</p> <p>However, according to the Report of the Council for Children and Families for period 2017-2019 (<i>Poročilo Sveta RS za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019</i>),<sup>490</sup> if the need arises, the Council draws upon – with respect to the relevant topic(s) in question, the research and analyses of various other actors (e.g. Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (<i>Urad RS za makroekonomske analize in razvoj</i>), Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo</i>), National Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje RS</i>), etc.).</p>
<p>5.1.6. Is the responsibility for data collection on child protection determined in the legislative framework?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The responsibility lies with the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Families – a permanent expert advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, which monitors and assesses the situation of children and family, with emphasis on the implementation of children's rights, and proposes expert bases for the adoption of legislation and</p>

<sup>490</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).



		<p>strategic documents in the field of children and family, examines proposals for laws in the field of children and the family and prepares expert opinions on proposals for laws, prepares initiatives for coordinated action by the competent authorities in the field of children and the family and for cooperation between the competent authorities, professional institutions and non-governmental organisations, and monitors the implementation of legislation and measures adopted in the field of children and the families.<sup>491</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, all legislative acts adopted in recent years include provisions on data collection – if the act in any way refers to children, there will be provisions regulating data collection. In addition, the recently adopted Personal Data Protection Act (<i>Zakon o varstvu osebnih podatkov</i>)<sup>492</sup> regulates the Child's consent; Article 8 stipulates that the Child's consent to use information society services offered directly to children or which it can be presumed that children will use is valid if the Child is 15 years of age or older. If the Child is under 15 years of age, the consent shall be valid only if given or authorised by the Child's parent, guardian or a person to whom parental care has been granted. Where the information society service is offered free of charge, the parent, foster parent or a representative of the institution in which the Child is placed may also grant consent. In cases where the terms and conditions of the provider of the information society services prescribe a higher age of the Child for the use of these services, the age set out in the said terms and conditions of the provider of the services shall be considered.</p>
5.1.7. Is there a single authority responsible for monitoring data collection and centralised coordination and data sharing at national level?	X (?)	<p>The Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Families (<i>Svet RS za otroke in družino</i>) is a professional consultative body established based on Paragraph 1 of Article 18 of the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>).<sup>493</sup></p> <p>The Council monitors and assesses the situation of children and families, with emphasis placed on the</p>

<sup>491</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (e-mail, 19 April 2023, response dated 18 April 2023).

<sup>492</sup> Slovenia, The [Personal data protection act](#) (*Zakon o varstvu osebnih podatkov*), 15 December 2022.

<sup>493</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<p>If <u>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>exercise of the rights of children, proposes the technical principles for the adoption of legislation and strategic documents in the area of children and families, discuss proposed acts in the area of children and families and prepare professional opinions on proposed acts, prepares initiatives for the coordinated action of competent bodies in the area of children and families and cooperation among competent authorities, professional institutions and non-governmental organisations, monitor the implementation of legislation and measures adopted in the area of children and families (Paragraph 2 of Article 18).<sup>494</sup></p> <p>In 2004, the Children's Observatory (<i>Otroška opazovalnica</i>) was established (as part of the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (<i>Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo</i>) with the aim of monitoring the situation of children in Slovenia. The creation of a database on children was one of the tools developed for this purpose. The database has been modified over time, supplemented with indicators and domains. It was updated every year and a reporting system was set up. Over the years, it has been found that the database has very few visitors, that it is not functioning optimally, that it is technically outdated. Therefore, the database was updated to indexes (IBO and RIBO) which are furtherly described below in answer 5.1.8.<sup>495</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>To monitor the situation of children and their well-being, in 2018 the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (<i>Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti</i>) developed the Index of the Child Well-Being (IBO)<sup>496</sup> and the Regional Index of Child Well-Being (RIBO)<sup>497</sup> together with the Social Protection Institute of Slovenia (<i>Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo</i>). The Index is designed for 27 European countries and is monitored by 21 contextual indicators. This allows for an analysis</p>

<sup>494</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>495</sup> Information was provided by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>496</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia on the [Child well-being index](#).

<sup>497</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia on the [Regional child well-being index](#).

		<p>of the rankings of individual countries and an analysis of the context that might influence the results of the Index. The IBO puts Slovenia in an international context and tells how well children in Slovenia are doing compared to their European peers. The RIBO provides a more detailed picture of the situation of children in Slovenia and their well-being and allows for comparisons of children's well-being within the regions of Slovenia based on several indicators (e.g. child poverty risk rate, severe material deprivation rate, material goods index, cultural goods index, infant mortality rate, child suicide rate, etc. ).<sup>498</sup> The RIBO establishes and graphically<sup>499</sup> displays a comparison of children's well-being by statistical region within Slovenia, thus enabling a better understanding of regional disparities with regard to children's wellbeing, and thus the formulation of public policies capable of reducing such disparities and, consequently, of accelerating and rebalancing regional development. It was created as a follow-up to the Institutes' Index of Child Well-being (IBO). A regional index of child well-being is not only a novelty in Slovenia, but also a rarity in the international context since, given the large gaps in the availability of data on children, indices at the local or regional level are few and far between, even abroad. The RIBO is presented on a user-friendly website with modern, internationally accepted data display methods. In 2023, the RIBO Regional Child Well-being Index will be updated with up-to-date data in cooperation with IRRSV.<sup>500</sup></p>
5.1.9. Are there data protection protocols in place and adhered to?	X	<p>Child Protection Policy<sup>501</sup> sets out an obligation of all institutions/organisations to ensure full compliance with the data protection legislation. Furthermore, in case of media coverage of project activities, it</p>

<sup>498</sup> For more information, see [the web page supported by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia with the RIBO indicators table](#).

<sup>499</sup> For more information, see the web page supported by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia with [the graphic display of child well-being by regions](#).

<sup>500</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>501</sup> Information was provided by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023). The document is of an internal nature and has been provided only in English.

		stipulates that informed consent must be obtained from the Child's legal guardian and the national Guidelines for Reporting on Children <sup>502</sup> will be followed. Data protection shall be guaranteed in accordance with the national and European standards, especially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
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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.

In the beginning of 2022, The Children's Rights Network (*Mreža za otrokve pravice*)<sup>503</sup> – a network of NGOs working on children's rights, aimed to support, encourage and coordinate NGOs, launched a joint initiative called Let's put Children's Rights at the Heart of Slovenian Politics (*Postavimo otrokove pravice v središče slovenske politike*).<sup>504</sup> The Initiative proposes that the State updates existing databases, a comprehensive database of children and areas related to family affairs. Based on the updated indicators, it will be possible to analyse, formulate policies (health, poverty, education, leisure, violence etc.) and assess progress in raising child well-being and promoting child rights. The proposal emphasises that data should be disaggregated by age, sex, socio-economic background and migrant status.

As for systematic and consistent data collection, the situation is confusing. The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia should be collecting and analysing the data, however, their web page seems to have stopped being updated in 2017. Upon request, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) provided information, as mentioned above, that in 2023, the RIBO Regional Child Well-being Index will be updated with up-to-date data in cooperation with the Institute.

## 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.

<sup>502</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman related to the [guidelines on media coverage](#).

<sup>503</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Children's Right Network with [information on its work](#).

<sup>504</sup> Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije (2022), '[Postavimo otrokove pravice v središče slovenske politike](#)', public release, 24 February 2022.

Protection of Children in Criminal Procedure and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi*);<sup>505</sup> the main objectives of the Act are to provide for a comprehensive and systemic treatment of juvenile victims and other victims of crime, on the basis of international legal standards and conventions and good practices adopted in other countries and promoted by both the European Union and the Council of Europe; to define clear starting points, complementing existing criminal legislation, in order to prevent secondary victimisation of child victims and witnesses and to pursue the best interests of the Child; to regulate independently a number of institutes within the framework of a single law, making the system of treatment clearer, more transparent and thus more consistently guaranteeing the legal security of child victims and victims of crime. The Act establishes the institutional framework, principles and procedures for the protection and comprehensive treatment of minor victims and witnesses of the offences defined in the Law in criminal proceedings, and, exceptionally, of other offences. Where the best interests of the Child so require, the holistic treatment of children as provided for in this Act may also be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the treatment of juvenile offenders.

New Non-Contentious Civil Procedure Act (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*);<sup>506</sup> with regard to court proceedings, Article 96 of the Act provides that the Child may give his or her opinion: 1) at the Social Work Centre, in the presence of a person whom the Child trusts and chooses, or 2) in an interview with the Children's Advocate assigned to the Child in accordance with the law governing the Ombudsman (Article 25a of the CRC), or 3) depending on the age and other circumstances, in an informal interview with a judge, including with the participation of a professionally qualified person, but always without the presence of the parents. The Court may also prohibit the presence of a particular person if it considers that they are not a person in whom the Child has confidence and whom the Child has chosen, or that the participation of that person in the proceedings would be contrary to the best interests of the Child.

The Child may express their views through the Child's confidant or a confidential person, through the Child's advocate, directly in an informal interview with the judge.

The new Family Code (*Družinski zakonik*)<sup>507</sup> bestows the decision making and supervision of implementation of measures/supervision of the exercise of children's rights, the adoption and foster care on the Court (instead the Social Work Centres), meaning the level of supervision is higher and more authoritative (for details, please, see section 4.4 of this Report).

The concept of Child Advocacy (*Zagovorništvo otrok*); the Children's Advocate (*Zagovornik otrok*) is appointed upon the Ombudsman's initiative, should the need arise, or by the Child's own initiative him or herself, or upon the Child's report of a problem to a parent or other trusted adult, in any case when it is noticed that a child cannot fully and freely exercise their right to express their opinion.<sup>508</sup>

In 2016, The Police participated in the establishment and immediately joined the European alliance of police experts on missing persons, the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons, abbreviated PEN-MP.

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<sup>505</sup> Slovenia, The [Protection of children in criminal procedure and their comprehensive treatment in Children's House act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi*), 26 March 2021.

<sup>506</sup> Slovenia, The [Non-contentious civil procedure act](#) (*Zakon o nepravdnem postopku*), 8 March 2019.

<sup>507</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>508</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman relating to the [Child Advocacy](#).

The network currently comprises over 80 experts from 30 European countries, with police experts from Canada, the UK and Australia. The work of the PEN-MP network of experts undoubtedly contributes to the development of European policy on missing persons, with a particular focus on missing children and the elderly as a highly vulnerable group.<sup>509</sup>

The coordination of Inter-Institutional cooperation and reporting (i.e. between state authorities, public authorities, public service providers, other service providers in the field of social protection, health, education and training, local self-government authorities and NGOs) is led by the Social Work Centre (or more precisely; the Multidisciplinary Team of the Social Work Centre, consisting of various professional from various field of expertise) which is locally competent to deal with a specific case of (domestic) violence. As such, the CSD acts as a hub of information and actions necessary to adequately address and respond to the specificities of concrete cases. However, the cooperation, procedure and exchange of information in specific cases is regulated by the individual relevant regulations. Huge and long-awaited progress has been achieved within the field of regulation of inter-agency cooperation, in particular with adoption of the 1) The Act on the Treatment of Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Problems and Disorders in Upbringing and Education (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*),<sup>510</sup> (for the cooperation of authorities – on all levels – with regard to treatment of Children and Adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems) and 2) the Protection of Children in Criminal Procedure and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House Act (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*).<sup>511</sup> The proceedings with regard to the latter are further specified in the Decree on the method of cooperation between the Children's House and other participants in providing comprehensive treatment at the Children's House (*Uredba o načinu sodelovanja med Javnim zavodom Hiša za otroke in drugimi udeleženci pri zagotavljanju celostne obravnave v hiši za otroke*), which stipulates the Institution's obligation to provide, upon request, the information and/or data to the Court, Police, Prosecution, regulates the cooperation between the Institution and Social Work Centres, Educational Institutions and other organizations, and sets out the steps involved in the hearing of the Child, any physical examination of the Child and the setting up an Expert Witness.

Regarding the national-regional cooperation/exchanges: before the adoption of legislation and strategic documents by the Government, the Government cooperates with local authorities. In specific matters, where necessary and reasonable, cooperation is carried out on an ad hoc basis (e.g. in the context of EU projects). Prior to the adoption of legislation and strategic documents by the Government, the Government's material is sent (where necessary and reasonable) for the opinion of the Community of Municipalities of Slovenia SOS (Skupnost občin Slovenije SOS), the Association of Municipalities of Slovenia ZOS (Združenje občin Slovenije ZOS), and the Association of City-Municipalities of Slovenia ZMOS (Združenje mestnih občin Slovenije ZMOS). In general, policies and legislation on child protection and care are primarily developed, adopted and implemented at the national level, but may also be

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<sup>509</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>510</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on the treatment of children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders in upbringing and education](#) (*Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju*), 17 December 2020.

<sup>511</sup> Slovenia, [The Protection of children in criminal proceedings and their comprehensive treatment in Children's house act](#) (*Zakon o zaščiti otrok v kazenskem postopku in njihovi celostni obravnavi v hiši za otroke*), 26 March 2021.

complemented by municipalities as part of their social activities/initiatives (e.g. co-financing social assistance programmes for children and adolescents).<sup>512</sup>

However, some gaps remain. More should be done in the field of 1) empowering children to know what abuse means and whom they can report it to; 2) educating children regarding where to go for help or to confide in an adult; 3) speeding up all procedures involving children; 4) ensuring that the Child has professionals to help them after any abuse (it is unacceptable for children to wait more than a year to be seen by a paedopsychiatrist or psychologist).<sup>513</sup> In addition, the children are often not heard and have no influence on decisions, and do not receive feedback on the proposals they have. They are not told whether any of their proposals are feasible and, if not, why not, which could be of key importance to exercising their rights (for further elaboration, please, see Section 7.3 of this Report).

### 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)

In January 2023, the Slovenian Police introduced the AMBER Alert Slovenia;<sup>514</sup> an alert or rapid response system for missing children. AMBER Alert is a synonym for Missing Children Alert Systems, designed to inform the public as soon and as widely as possible about a child's imminent disappearance. The alert system is a call for voluntary police participation in the rapid dissemination of emergency notifications in the most serious and threatening cases of missing children. The cooperation is between the police and radio and television organisations, social networks and other media, transport companies, NGOs and others. The aim is to encourage the whole community to help in the search for a missing child or to provide any information they may have about the missing Child, the person with the Child, the whereabouts, or circumstances of the disappearance.<sup>515</sup>

Child Advocacy, as mentioned above, to help children express their opinion and protect their rights.<sup>516</sup>

According to the draft of the Report on the Implementation of the "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Children's Programme 2020-2025 for period of 2020-2022" (*Poročilo o izvajanju akcijskega načrta za izvajanje programa za otroke 2020-2025 za obdobje 2020-2022*) by the Inter-Ministerial Working

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<sup>512</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>513</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) and the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>514</sup> For more information, see the web page of the police related to the [Amber Alert](#).

<sup>515</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>516</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

Group on Activities for the Preparation and Implementation of the 2020-2025 Children's Programme,<sup>517</sup> the Ministry of Justice is launching a project on "Improving the situation of forensic expertise in family matters and thus the position of children in court proceedings (*Izboljšanje stanja na področju sodnega izvedenstva v družinskih zadevah in s tem položaja otrok v sodnih postopkih*)" and has already established an inter-ministerial working group for the implementation of this project. The aim of the project will be to find solutions to the lengthy decision-making process in family matters, which is caused, among other things, by the fact that there is a shortage of forensic experts in clinical psychology, and thus delays in issuing expert opinions.

Furthermore, a joint EU-Council of Europe project "Improving the juvenile justice system and strengthening education and training of prison staff (*Izboljšanje mladoletniškega kazenskopravnega sistema in okrepitev izobraževanja ter usposabljanja zaporskega osebja*)" is also being implemented from September 2021. The project responds to the need to improve the juvenile criminal justice system and the system for the enforcement of criminal sanctions in line with the latest European and international standards and good practices. To this end, the project has yielded a comprehensive review of the national legal framework and policies on the treatment of juvenile offenders, an analysis of case-law and a comparative analysis with a set of good practices in other European countries.

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<sup>517</sup> The draft of the document has been provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023). The document has not yet been made public.



## 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.

Yes, education on child rights is part of the formal School Curricula for primary schools. According to the prescribed curricula, there are two subjects within which pupils get in touch and educated on the topic in question – 1) Learning about society (*Spoznavanje družbe*), (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade – 9–11-year-olds, altogether 175 school hours), and 2) National and Civic Culture and Ethics (*Domovinska in državljanska kultura in etika*), (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade – 12–14 years old, altogether 70 school hours).<sup>518</sup>

Regarding the subject “Learning about Society”, the curricula, prepared by the The Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education (*Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za splošno izobraževanje*), set out operational objectives and content; in terms of The Rights of the Child, these are knowing and understanding<sup>519</sup> 1) the child's fundamental rights, duties and responsibilities (towards themselves and others); 2) recognising when given examples, the exercise of human and children's rights and responsibilities (in Slovenia and elsewhere, presently and in the past); 3) understanding the importance of acceptance and respect for difference, identifying types of violence between and against children; 4) human rights and duties; 5) learning about and using different coping strategies to manage emotions, make decisions and deal with different issues, for example: interpersonal issues.

With regard to the subject National and Civic Culture and Ethics (*Domovinska in državljanska kultura in etika*), operational objectives and content, in terms of children's rights, set out the following standards:<sup>520</sup> In the context of learning about human rights, pupils learn about and identify a specific type of human rights - the rights of the child, and the protection of children's rights. Pupils learn about the principles embedded in the definitions of children's rights. They become familiar with the procedures for protecting children's rights and the institutions that ensure this and, therefore, come to grasp the specific nature of children's rights. They also learn about the work of non-governmental organisations for the protection of human and children's rights.

The formal curricula do not provide direct instructions to teachers to explicitly mention or teach about the EU Charter. However, our educated guess is that it is practically impossible to give lessons on human rights without mentioning the Charter, therefore, we suppose teachers do indeed mention it. In addition to that, Active EU Citizenship - Teachers' Guide (*Aktivno državljanstvo EU – priročnik za*

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<sup>518</sup> For more information, see the government web page with the [elementary school curricula \(predmetnik osnovne šole\)](#).

<sup>519</sup> Budnar, M., Kerin, M. et al. (2011), [Učni načrt. Program osnovna šola. Družba](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

<sup>520</sup> Karba, P., Šumi, I. et al. (2011), [Učni načrt. Program osnovna šola. Domovinska in državljanska kultura in etika](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

*učitelje*) publication,<sup>521</sup> published in 2022 as a handbook for teachers, does explicitly mention various EU efforts with regard to financing programmes (e. g. CERV) aimed at protecting and promoting rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and, explicitly, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

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 Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*), on the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*), implemented the project "The Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool (*Implementacija orodja Sveta Evrope za oceno participacije otrok*)".<sup>522</sup> The project resulted in the conclusion, that information about children's rights and the right to express their opinions is not a problem in itself, and is generally rated as very good by children; the more important question is how to ensure that children (regardless of their abilities, capabilities) are treated on a fully equal footing, and to ensure that their interests and views are genuinely taken into account, where the results of their efforts are truly visible and tangible, whether in the areas of education, health, justice, leisure or spatial planning. Based on the findings, the Ministry got involved in the preparation and implementation of the international project CP4Europe, which is being implemented in Slovenia together with the Social Protection Institute and Legal Informational Centre for Protection of Human Rights and Environment (*Pravno informacijski center za varstvo človekovih pravic in okolja*) from April 2021. Together with the Council of Europe - Child Rights Division and the Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland and Portugal, they have applied for and received funding from the European Commission for the project. It will run until the end of March 2023, with a final conference scheduled for 25 April 2023.

The Police for Children<sup>523</sup> project started in 1995. It is aimed at preschool children and children in the first year of primary school. Through a puppet show, children learn about the dangers they may find themselves in and what the solution is in these cases. The children actively participate in the show throughout. In the second part, the children get to know the police officers and some of their equipment. Around 1,100 performances have been staged all over the country. The project is carried out in cooperation with an external puppet show performer. Due to the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID, the performances in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled, and there was not much interest in 2022, as this decision depends mainly on the request of educational institutions. The cost of the puppet show is covered by the Educational Institution and the participation of police officers is part of their regular duties. This does not mean, however, that police officers are not involved in prevention activities at educational institutions. Police officers and criminalistic police officers give lectures to pupils, students, parents and school staff on topical issues: peer violence, sexual abuse,

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<sup>521</sup> Banjac, M., Pušnik, T., et al. (2022), *Aktivno EU državljanstvo – priročnik za učitelje*, Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, Fakulteta za družbene vede – Univerza v Ljubljani.

<sup>522</sup> Boljka, U., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), *Implementing the child participation assessment tool in Slovenia*, Ljubljana, Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>523</sup> For more information, see the web page of the police related to the [Police for Children project](#).

sexual abuse on the Internet and the dangers of the Internet, as well as activities related to traffic safety, and the use of pyrotechnics.<sup>524</sup>

An important campaign regarding raising awareness of child rights was carried out during the opening of the new public service - Children's House.<sup>525</sup> The opening of the Children's House was also broadly supported and covered by the media. A detailed presentation of the Children's House was made to Social Work Centre employees and various profiles of employees in the judiciary and schools.<sup>526</sup>

The Protocol for the Detection and Treatment of Peer Violence in Educational Institutions (Protokol o zaznavi in obravnavi medvrstniškega nasilja v vzgojno-izobraževalnih zavodih)<sup>527</sup> - although primarily aimed at reactive/curative measures and procedures on how to deal with violence once it already happened, the Protocol sets forth many possible courses of action for situations before violence occurs: in well-thought-out educational strategies and integrated school action, in long-term and systematic attention to relationships and dialogue, in efforts to build a safe climate and a culture of good community involving all pupils, in systematic teacher training in classroom management, in equipping pupils with communication skills and conflict-resolution strategies, and in sensitising everyone - pupils and teachers and parents about the occurrence of violence and in making a clear statement in favour of zero tolerance of violence.

## 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.

"If You See Injustice, Use Justice" (*Če vidiš krivice, uporabi pravice*)<sup>528</sup> was a project in 2020 – in the COVID-19 period, aimed at raising awareness among children and young people to help them understand that they are not only beneficiaries of rights, but can also actively contribute to the realisation of both their own rights and the human rights of others. The project was communicated 1) via the Ombudsman's video-address,<sup>529</sup> broadcast to all schools in Slovenia, and 2) via two

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<sup>524</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>525</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [Children's House](#).

<sup>526</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

<sup>527</sup> Lešnik Mugnaioni, D., Klemenčič, I. et al. (2022), [Protokol o zaznavi in obravnavi medvrstniškega nasilja v vzgojno-izobraževalnih zavodih](#), Ljubljana, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

<sup>528</sup> Slovenia, Human Rights Ombudsman (*Varuh človekovih pravic*) (2020), 'Če vidiš krivice, uporabi pravice', public release, 18 November 2020.

<sup>529</sup> For more information, see the Human Rights [Ombudsman's YouTube channel with the video](#).

infographics (informative posters)<sup>530</sup> distributed to schools across Slovenia to be displayed on notice boards. The website and communication content (posters, graphics, etc.) are designed in a child-friendly language and in a child-friendly way that encourages children to contact the ombudsman, informs them about the different ways of contacting the ombudsman (letters, e-mails, phone number, address to report in person) and highlights that the procedure is free of charge. However, the website is only available in Slovenian and English, not in any of the minority languages.

As mentioned before, the NEON Programme – Safe Without Violence (*Program NEON – Varni brez nasilja*) is of key importance of educating and raising awareness of children’s rights. It is funded by the ISA Institute and the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) and aimed at children in kindergarten and primary school, the young in secondary school, their parents and professionals in educational institutions. The programme promotes a systematic and holistic approach to violence prevention in Educational Institutions. It highlights the important supportive role of peers, e. g. witnesses of peer violence. It empowers them to respond supportively and help stop peer violence. Even in cases of sexual and other forms of violence, peer support can have a significant impact on the decision of a child, young person or adolescent who has experienced violence to disclose it.<sup>531</sup>

In 2022, the Police launched the "School - the Path to Success" (*Šola – pot k uspehu*) prevention project. By reaching out to children, their parents, Roma representatives and others who can contribute in any way to Roma children's enrolment in primary and further education, the project aims to help children realise their rights and duties, which will also benefit them later in life, and in the long term will contribute to increasing their safety through knowledge of their rights and duties. Furthermore, as part of educational activities in educational institutions, the Police also emphasise the rights of pupils, which are intertwined with the right to a safe childhood. The content is mainly focused on the issues of violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation on the Internet and on the awareness of their rights.<sup>532</sup>

In general, it can be stated that the EU Charter is explicitly mentioned very rarely. However, in the above-mentioned Ombudsman’s video address of the "If You See Injustice, Use Justice" project, the Ombudsman does explicitly mention the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, despite the absence of awareness raising explicitly on the Charter, all reviewed sources substantially heavily intertwine the rights and elaborations set forth in the Charter.

Furthermore, as part of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2022 (*Akcijski načrt za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi*), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) has started systematically educating children about trafficking in human beings, with workshops to be held in the current and upcoming school year. In addition, on 26 January 2023 the Government adopted the Action Plan of the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2023-24 (*Akcijski načrt medresorske delovne skupine za boj proti trgovini z ljudmi*), which – in terms of child rights – sets forth several goals to be implemented in the field of combating human trafficking. In terms of preventive, we should emphasize the following goals: raise systematic awareness among children and adolescents about the dangers of trafficking in human beings and recruitment methods, and train them to recognise the risks, take appropriate action and behave in a self-protective manner by carrying out lectures and workshops; 2) To address the phenomenon of

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<sup>530</sup> For more information, see [the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman with the posters](#).

<sup>531</sup> For more information, see the web page set up by the ISA Institute, which is dedicated to the [NEON Programme – Safe Without Violence](#).

<sup>532</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) upon request (email, response dated 22 February 2023).

forced and early marriages in the Roma community in an inter-institutional and multidisciplinary manner, with the aim of reducing the number of these phenomena, and to raise awareness of these phenomena among members of the Roma community and all relevant institutions.<sup>533</sup>

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>534</sup>? Please briefly describe.

The Ministry of Education has started to renew the Programme guidelines for the advisory service in kindergarten, primary and secondary school, with completion expected this year (2023). These also include raising activities regarding the complaint mechanisms as part of a broader purpose aimed at completing and complementing aspects of the content that are missing or need to be upgraded in line with the requirements of the needs of children, pupils and students. In terms of covered themes and topics, the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) highlights the cooperation with the management of the Educational Institutions, the professional staff of such Institutions, parents and external Institutions with which they necessarily cooperate in carrying out their work (Centres for Mental Health of Children and Adolescents, Social Work Centres, Centres for Early Childhood Treatment, Centres of Expertise for the Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Counselling Centres, etc.).<sup>535</sup>

In terms of international protection, we must mention that raising awareness of complaint mechanisms, children's right to appeal and the appeal procedures in the international protection procedure is ensured through regular information about their rights and obligations in the procedures under the International Protection Act (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*).<sup>536</sup> Furthermore, the child's parents, or legal guardian in the case of an unaccompanied minor, is also duly informed of the relevant information and shall additionally ensure that the child's rights are respected. Currently, all applicants for international protection under the UNHCR project also have access to free legal assistance in proceedings under the International Protection Act, if necessary, which further contributes to the above-mentioned awareness-raising. In cooperation with the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), existing information materials are being updated to make them more accessible or understandable to children.<sup>537</sup>

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?

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<sup>533</sup> For more information, see the government web page relating to the work of the [Inter-ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#).

<sup>534</sup> For more information, see the web page of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights relating to the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure](#).

<sup>535</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Education (*Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

<sup>536</sup> Slovenia, The [International protection act](#) (*Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti*), 4 March 2016, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>537</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) upon request (email, response dated 22 February 2023).

The most well-known is Safe.si – <sup>538</sup> a national awareness point on the safe use of the internet and mobile devices for children, teenagers, parents and teachers. Through separate sections for parents, teachers and young children, the site offers advice, workshops and a help centre, covering topics and themes like: Identity and privacy, social networks, online and mobile mistreatment, excessive use of new technologies, protection of computers and mobile devices, virtual worlds, acting on the internet, to name a few.

The Web Eye (*Spletno oko*)<sup>539</sup> hotline allows internet users to anonymously report child sexual abuse images if they come across them online. It is part of the Safer internet Centre (*Center za varnejši internet*), which is coordinated by the University of Ljubljana (*Univerza v Ljubljani*), Faculty of Social Sciences (*Fakulteta za družbene vede*), in cooperation with partners Arnes, Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine*) and Centre MISSS (*Mladinsko informativno svetovalno središče Slovenije*). The project is co-financed by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency in Slovenia financial support also comes from the Government Information Security Office (*Urad vlade za informacijsko varnost*). Members of Advisory Board of Safer Internet Center are also the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the General Directorate of Police, representatives of the media and representatives of other organizations, working in the field of child protection.

Furthermore, the Safer Internet Day: Together for a Friendlier Internet campaign was carried out on 7 February 2023, for the 20th time, with institutions all-over Slovenia raising awareness of perils of the internet, with focus on the issue of inappropriate content that children and teenagers are exposed to and are negatively affected by.

The Children's Programme 2020-2025 (*Program za otroke 2020-2025*)<sup>540</sup> also sets forth goals for undertaking and providing activities, aimed at: 1) all children receiving systemic prevention and protection from any kind of informational-communicational abuse; 2) professional help for children addicted to digital technology; 3) quality online content to enable children to develop ICT skills (digital literacy) and other skills necessary for their safety in the digital environment, the development of critical thinking, creativity, etc.

### 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)

According to the Report of the Council for Children and Families for period 2017-2019 (*Poročilo Sveta RS za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*), provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) we should mention the inadequate meeting of the structural conditions for child-friendly courts. Although the report shows that stakeholders are actively and enthusiastically addressing the problem, it points out that the aspect of inclusion or participation of children and adolescents in activities aimed at building

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<sup>538</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [Safe.si awareness centre](#).

<sup>539</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [Spletno oko platform](#).

<sup>540</sup> Vlada Republike Slovenije (2020), [Program za otroke 2020-2025](#), Ljubljana, Vlada Republike Slovenije.

child-friendly courts (e. g. accepting children's suggestions for the design of hearing rooms, taking their views into account in the application of protective measures, etc.) remains overlooked.

In terms of educating the stakeholders in the judiciary, we must mention the adoption of the Decree on the method of cooperation between the Children's House and other participants in providing comprehensive treatment at the Children's House (*Uredba o načinu sodelovanja med Javnim zavodom Hiša za otroke in drugimi udeleženci pri zagotavljanju celostne obravnave v hiši za otroke*)<sup>541</sup> The Decree established the method of cooperation between the Public Institution Children's House and other participants in the treatment of minor victims and witnesses in pre-trial and criminal proceedings and minors under the age of eighteen against whom pre-trial or criminal proceedings are pending. The Institution shall also have the task of regularly informing the other actors of the standards and protocols adopted and applied in the institution, in accordance with the principles of integrated treatment of children in the Children's Home. The way of cooperation is regulated in relation to each other participant in the procedure separately by chapter (with the court, the public prosecutor's office, the police, social work centres, health care providers). It also regulates the way in which the institution cooperates with organisations to provide crisis support and psychosocial assistance and to provide training in the institution (with organisations providing assistance; with educational institutions; and regulates the cooperation of organisations and experts in training in the institution).

Furthermore, in terms of educating law enforcement bodies, the police place great emphasis on education and training for police officers and criminals in child protection. The education and training system involves police staff from all three levels: national, regional and local, and the Police also responds to invitations from other institutions (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, NGOs, Ministry of Education, etc.) which address related child protection and awareness raising topics in their training. When the training is organised by the police, external experts in various fields are invited as lecturers. The training covers a range of topics from domestic violence (children can also be victims), juvenile delinquency, peer violence, and specialised training for criminal investigators, who carry out their work and tasks within the framework of juvenile delinquency teams and units. In all these cases, up to 3 days of training are involved. The training is financed from regular funds. The training takes the form of lectures and workshops. In accordance with the provisions of the law regulating the operation of the Children's House, forensic interviews with children were conducted in the Children's House during the transition period. As they have also received training under the Train the Trainers system, they will in future also train other criminals and police officers how to conduct interviews with children. In 2022, two criminalists from the Criminal Police Administration gave a lecture (training) at a meeting of head teachers of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. As a result of these lectures, there has been an increase in the number of requests for lectures and training by kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools on topics such as peer violence, child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children on the internet. Lectures and training sessions are provided for pupils, students, parents as well as for staff in educational institutions.<sup>542</sup>

Annual training sessions held within the police force: training for future criminal investigators, prevention and investigation of domestic violence, training for multipliers (experienced police officers guide less experienced police officers through the whole process of dealing with domestic violence in

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<sup>541</sup> Slovenia, The [Decree on the method of cooperation between the Children's House and other participants in providing comprehensive treatment at the Children's House](#) (*Uredba o načinu sodelovanja med Javnim zavodom Hiša za otroke in drugimi udeleženci pri zagotavljanju celostne obravnave v hiši za otroke*), 19 October 2022.

<sup>542</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).

which children are often involved), professional meeting of Social Work Centre and police professionals (the purpose of the training is also to train), an expert consultation organised jointly with the Web Eye (*Spletno oko*) reporting point on child sexual offences on the internet, an expert consultation organised jointly with the Judicial Training Centre (*Center za izobraževanje v pravosodju*) and the Association of Public Prosecutors (*Društvo državnih tožilcev*), where topics related to children as victims or as perpetrators are discussed.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 28 February 2023).



## 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>544</sup> in place, with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children?		X	<p>Child Advocacy (<i>Zagovornik otrok</i>),<sup>545</sup> aimed at providing professional assistance to a child to express their opinion in all proceedings and matters involving the child, and to forward the child's opinion to those competent authorities and institutions which decide on the child's rights and best interests.</p> <p>However, the Children's Advocate does not have the ability or power to enforce individual complaints, only to report and refer to the competent authorities.</p> <p>In 2018, the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Act ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (<i>Zakon o ratifikaciji Izbirnega protokola h Konvenciji o otrokovih pravicah glede postopka sporočanja kršitev</i>).<sup>546</sup></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>In terms of children accessing justice, we must emphasize the opening of Barnahaus – The Children's House (<i>Hiša za otroke</i>) on 27 May 2022. The Children's House is a public institution providing children with child-friendly treatment in pre-trial and criminal proceedings. This means that instead of going to court, the child can now be invited to a hearing at the Children's House. The Children's House is staffed by a psychologist, a social pedagogue, an educator and a social worker, with many years of experience working with child victims of crime. The work of the staff</p>

<sup>544</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions dedicated to the [Paris Principles](#).

<sup>545</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Human Rights Ombudsman relating to the [Child Advocacy](#).

<sup>546</sup> Slovenia, [The Act ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure](#) (*Zakon o ratifikaciji Izbirnega protokola h Konvenciji o otrokovih pravicah glede postopka sporočanja kršitev*), 20 March 2018.

		<p>is tailored to each individual case, considering the circumstances of the specific case.<sup>547</sup> For this Purpose, an Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the implementation of the “Children’s House” project was established in 2017. It is chaired by the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice. The members are representatives of the following ministries: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Health, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, the General Police Administration, the Community of Social Work Centres, the Ljubljana Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents, the Supreme State Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the SOS Telephone Association, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, the High Court of Ljubljana.<sup>548</sup></p> <p>In addition to that, Paragraph 3 of Article 98.a of the Courts Act (<i>Zakon o sodiščih</i>)<sup>549</sup> stipulates that family law cases have a special status, since it expressly provides that, family law divisions may be organised at each district court, at courts having the status of a higher court, and at the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia. Currently, there are family law divisions are organised at the district courts of Ljubljana, Maribor, Nova Gorica, Kranj, Krško, Novo mesto, Murska Sobota and Ptuj. The High Court in Maribor also has a Family Law Division, altogether 10 family divisions.<sup>550</sup></p> <p>These courts all have rooms specially adapted in a child-friendly manner for hearings of children. In some instances, these rooms are also used for needs and purposes of hearing children in criminal proceedings. However, many interviews with children are carried out in an informal way – either 1) in the judge’s office, or 2) at the local Social Work Centre’s premises – these are</p>
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<sup>547</sup> For more information, see the web page of the [Children’s House](#).

<sup>548</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

<sup>549</sup> Slovenia, The [Courts act](#) (*Zakon o sodiščih*), 24 March 1993, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>550</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023).

			equipped in a way that's most conforming to children, or 3) via Audio-Visual Technologies (mostly Zoom). The choice of option depends primarily on the needs of the individual case and on an assessment of what will be least burdensome for the child or best serve the best interests of the child. <sup>551</sup>
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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 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?	X (?)		<p>The Council for Children and the Family (<i>Svet RS za otroke in družino</i>) is a permanent consultative body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, established under Article 18 of the Family Code (<i>Družinski zakonik</i>), which defines the first task of the Council as monitoring and assessing the situation of children and the family, with an emphasis on the realisation of children's rights.<sup>552</sup> Since 2023, the Council also includes two children's representatives.<sup>553</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, The Children's Parliament<sup>554</sup> is a programme to educate children to be politically active (citizenship and participation encourage children to take part in social life). It is aimed at primary school children with 396 primary schools participating in the programme, which is 86.6% of all primary schools. The organisation and delivery of the programme is closely linked to the school year and is tiered. Children start discussing a topic at school level, continue at the municipal and regional level and finish at the national level. Without school-based mentors and regional coordinators, the programme would not be</p>

<sup>551</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministrstvo za pravosodje*) upon request (e-mail, 18 April 2023).

<sup>552</sup> Slovenia, The [Family code](#) (*Družinski zakonik*), 21 March 2017, with subsequent modifications.

<sup>553</sup> Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vlada Republike Slovenije*), Order No. 1301-4/2023/4, 11 May 2023. The mentioned order is not available in the public domain. For more information, see: Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Vlada Republike Slovenije*), '[48. redna seja Vlade Republike Slovenije](#)', public release, 11 May 2023.

<sup>554</sup> For more information, see the webpage of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth related to the project [Children's parliament](#).

		<p>possible. The programme can be said to be recognised, but only to a very small extent by the State. The State, through the National Education Institute (<i>Zavod RS za šolstvo</i>), is allocating EUR 10,000.00 (incl. VAT) - this school year. The programme relies on donor funding.<sup>555</sup></p> <p>In terms of formal mechanisms for receiving and responding to children's ideas, no such mechanism is currently in place.</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?	X (?)	<p>Children's Parliaments.<sup>556</sup> They take the form of meetings (debates) that allow all primary school pupils to participate. Sessions take place in primary schools in classroom communities and at the school parliament. In each school, pupils choose a delegation for the municipal Children's Parliament. At the municipal Children's Parliament, they choose a delegation for the regional Children's Parliament, where representatives represent the interests of their peers at the National Children's Parliament. This takes place once a year, in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. Their effectiveness is monitored by the Association of Friends of Youth (<i>Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije</i>) (NGO), however, currently, there is no <i>ex officio</i> independent national accountability mechanism for such protocols in place.</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)

In February 2021, the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine*) launched a pilot project called the Children's Journalism Hub (*Otroško novinarsko središče*),<sup>557</sup> which aims to bring together children and journalists in the search for answers and information on a variety of social issues.

<sup>555</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023).

<sup>556</sup> For more information, see the webpage of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth related to the project [Children's parliaments](#).

<sup>557</sup> For more information, see the webpage of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth related to the project [Children's journalism](#).

The pilot project Children's Journalism Centre ended in 2021, however, since the interest in the project was enormous, the Children's Journalism Hub continues to work.

In terms of gaps, we must mention the low child participation rate. In 2019, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo*) surveyed<sup>558</sup> the level of children's participation with the help of the Council of Europe's tool. The findings revealed that while different aspects and fields of child participation may vary in assessment, the overall conclusion is that Slovenia still lacks a continuous and systemic approach in spite of having some excellent child participation practices. In general, although children are given a voice, the desired goal where all children (also younger and vulnerable children) would initiate and share decisions with adults (in the policy fields most affecting them), empowering them while benefiting from adult expertise as part of systemic approach to child participation is not achieved yet, as confirmed in the above mentioned survey. It revealed that Slovenia is ranked at step 3, 4 or 5 of the Hart scale of participation (out of 8 steps). The first three are non-participatory and manipulative practices of children's participation, while only the next five can be considered participation.

Furthermore, according to the information provided by the Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine*), at national level, the situation is worrying. Decision-makers do not take children and their opinions seriously, and children are not treated as competent interlocutors. Children in Children's Parliaments also report that they do not receive feedback on the proposals they make.<sup>559</sup> As provided by the Report of the Council for Children and Families for the period 2017-2019 (*Poročilo Sveta RS za otroke in družino za obdobje 2017-2019*) (Report from 2020) citing the UN Children's Committee (2020), they are "concerned that the Children's Parliament project is run by civil society and therefore lacks adequate support, especially financial support, to ensure the sustainability of the programme. The Committee recommends that the State party assume primary responsibility for the effective functioning of the Children's Parliament and provide it with adequate human, financial and technical support".<sup>560</sup> However, in terms of participation, the Report also mentions some promising initiatives coming from local authorities. Through self-initiative, some Municipalities are introducing so-called participatory budgeting - a democratic process where citizens aged 15 and over propose how to allocate part of the budget and projects to their village communities.

As for the promising practice regarding child participation, from April 2021 to June 2023 Slovenia, together with Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland and Portugal, took part in the The European Union/Council of Europe Joint Project "CP4EUROPE - Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe".<sup>561</sup> The project aimed to contribute to the promotion of children's rights to participation at national and pan-European levels in accordance with Council of Europe standards and tools in this area. In Slovenia, the project was led by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and was implemented in cooperation with PIC - Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment. The main expected impact of the project was that children across Europe find multiple

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<sup>558</sup> Boljka, U., Rosič, J. et al. (2019), [Implementing the child participation assessment tool in Slovenia](#), Ljubljana, Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>559</sup> Information was provided by the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (*Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije*) upon request (email, 27 February 2023).

<sup>560</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) upon request (email, 6 March 2023, response dated 28 February 2023).

<sup>561</sup> For more information, see the [CP4E project](#) web page.

and innovative opportunities to participate in decision-making processes through stronger child participation mechanisms.

Deliverables at the national level included assessments of national mechanisms, the development of model national strategies, handbooks, checklists and training materials aimed at building capacities on collective and individual child participation. All project partners supported the establishment of a “Child participation leadership network”, to benefit from mutual peer support in addressing the challenges of child participation.

Outputs of the project in Slovenia included:

- induction seminar + capacity building seminars involving various stakeholders;
- translation of the Handbook on children's participation "Listen - act - change" into Slovenian Language and testing the handbook with Slovenian professionals that work with children in various contexts;
- checklist for improving the participation of deprived children in various contexts;
- child safeguarding policy for engagement with children;
- focus groups with children from vulnerable groups (one of the findings of the CPAT assessment in 2019 was that children from vulnerable groups were rarely involved in projects, decision-making, and that they seldom expressed their views). Children were invited to present their views on the European Child Guarantee regarding measures and actions that should Slovenia include in the national action plan;
- the Guidelines for decision makers on child participation;
- on April 25, 2023, the national Child participation conference was organised with 159 attendees from ministries, centres of social work, NGOs, courts, development clinics and early childhood centres, family centres, primary schools, research, and other organisations in the field of education. The vast majority were professionals who work directly with children.

Children were also involved in drafting the Child Guarantee National Action Plan. On 9 March 2022, an event co-organised by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Association of Friends of Youth of Slovenia, the Legal centre for the protection of human rights and environment – PIC and the Slovenian Foundation for UNICEF was held, involving 37 children from all over Slovenia aged between 12 and 15 years.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) (NLO comments, 3 August 2023).