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**Committee of Experts on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child
(DECS - ENF)**

**Analysis of the Council of Europe Network of Children's Rights Coordinators'
answers to a survey on the implementation of the
Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child for 2012-2015
and on future priorities**

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Executive Summary

This report compares and analyses the 26 responses of the Council of Europe National Children's Rights Coordinators to a survey relative to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015). The objective of this analysis is twofold:

1. To gain insight in the **progress achieved in the implementation** of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015)
2. To identify those issues that governments would like the CoE to address as a **matter of priority for the years 2014-2015 and beyond**.

The survey was divided into two parts:

1. Progress achieved and obstacles encountered
2. Needs and wishes for the years to come.

Both parts were sub-divided into the four strategic objectives of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015), namely:

1. Promoting child-friendly services and mechanisms
2. Eliminating all forms of violence against children
3. Guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations
4. Promoting child participation¹

The survey showed that significant progress has been achieved in many areas relative to the Strategy, but the main objectives still need to be attained. With regard to **child-friendly services and mechanisms**, considerable progress was noted in the area of child-friendly justice, social services, family policies and education. The improved coordination of services, as well as the adoption of a number of new laws, strategies and action plans on child-friendly mechanisms contributed to this progress. Nevertheless, a small number of states observed deterioration, in particular concerning child-friendly services relative to sport, culture and leisure.

As regards the elimination of **violence against children**, sexual violence was the area in which the main progress could be observed, with a large number of states adopting new (legal) measures. In general, new measures were also frequent with regard to integrated strategies on violence and relative to trafficking, but regression was also observed with regard to the latter, as well as with regard to violence in schools. For the work to eliminate violence against children, awareness-raising campaigns were generally considered to be a useful tool.

The rights of children in **vulnerable situations** were strengthened, and states paid particular attention to children in alternative care and children with disabilities. Deinstitutionalisation stood high among the priorities, but difficulties in finding adequate family-based solutions or sufficient numbers of foster families remain, especially for children with disabilities. A number of initiatives for the integration of children from minorities, migrant, and Roma children were also mentioned, but difficulties in tackling discrimination still exist.

As regards **child participation**, this is an area of interest for the states, but knowledge needs to be strengthened and solid methodologies must be disseminated to ensure meaningful participation of children in all areas of society. Much progress could be seen relative to children's right to be heard, in particular within the justice system, but challenges remain with regard to children's active participation as full citizens in society and also with regard to the media environment.

¹ Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015), p.3.

States indicated a long series of priorities for the years to come, focusing mainly on issues related to economic austerity, family policies, and children and the Internet and other media. Much attention was also granted to strengthened methodologies in data collection, monitoring and evaluation of measures to strengthen children's rights and child protection. Lastly, it is noteworthy that, although issues such as migration and trafficking are on the increase in Europe, these were not among the top priorities of many States for the years to come. Little attention was also paid to gender-based violence and to child-friendly services and mechanisms in the areas of sport, culture and leisure, as these issues could hardly be found on the list of state priorities.²

Below is a summary in the form of tables of the responses given by the National Children's Rights Coordinators to Part One of the questionnaire.

1 CHILD FRIENDLY SERVICES AND MECHANISMS					
	Issue	Improved	Stable	Deteriorated	Undefined
A	JUSTICE	15	9	2	2
B	HEALTH CARE	10	13	0	4
C	SOCIAL SERVICES	14	11	1	2
D	FAMILY POLICIES	13	11	1	3
E	EDUCATION	13	11	1	4
F	SPORT-CULTURE-LEISURE	4	14	4	7

2 ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	INTEGRATED STRATEGIES	17	7	0	4
B	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	22	7	2	1
C	TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN	15	10	3	4
D	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	5	20	0	4
E	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	11	13	1	3
F	VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS	11	14	3	4

3 THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE	17	10	2	3
B	CHILDREN FROM MINORITIES	9	14	0	5
C	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	15	9	0	4
D	CHILDREN IN DETENTION	11	15	2	2
E	CHILDREN ON THE MOVE	4	16	1	8
F	ROMA CHILDREN	12	14	0	4

4 CHILD PARTICIPATION					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	RIGHT TO BE HEARD	19	10	1	0
B	DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP	9	14	0	3

² Finding the reasons for this lies beyond the scope of the present analysis.

C	ACCESS TO INFORMATION	13	11	0	5
D	MEDIA ENVIRONMENT	7	15	1	6

Introduction

On 31 October 2013, a survey on the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) was sent out to the National Children’s Rights Coordinators on children’s rights in the 47 Member States (MS). By mid-2014, 24 countries had responded to the survey.³

The survey was divided into two parts:

1. Progress achieved and obstacles encountered
2. Needs and wishes for the years to come.

Both parts were sub-divided into the four strategic objectives of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015), namely:

1. Promoting child-friendly services and mechanisms
2. Eliminating all forms of violence against children
3. Guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations
4. Promoting child participation

While National Children’s Rights Coordinators from 24 countries⁴ filled in the survey, not all of them proceeded to respond to the questions in an equal manner. Some states left certain parts and/or questions unanswered, while others replied in the affirmative and/or negative to several options within one question.

Moreover, the first part of the questionnaire used for the purposes of this survey was formulated so as to show where the states had seen progress and/or adopted new measures, where the situation in a specific area had remained stable during the relevant period (2012-2013), or whether deterioration or regression had been noted. Nevertheless, the formulation of the first question, relative to child-friendly services and mechanisms, was set up slightly differently from the three following questions, asking the states only for progress, stability or deterioration. This could give the impression that one out of the three potential answers would be sufficient (and indeed this question generated fewer multiple answers than the following ones). On the other hand, the three following questions focused on new measures, stability or regression. This could be interpreted as opening up for multiple answers, as new measures do not automatically mean progress. Indeed, many states tended to reply to those questions with more than one answer, thus indicating a stable situation or regression despite the adoption of new measures.

For the abovementioned reasons, the joint results of this survey (or at least part one relative to implementation) may seem somewhat confusing at first sight, and the total sum of answers to a specific question may exceed the total number of respondent states. States that did not reply to a specific question are counted as “undefined” in the tables. It should also be noted that some states responded with general observations on the work carried out in the field of children’s rights and child protection, while others looked more specifically at the impact of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child in their countries. Therefore, care should be taken not to draw any too general conclusions from this survey. Nevertheless, the collected answers to the survey are clearly indicative of certain tendencies, and point out areas in which States have seen more – or less – progress since the beginning of the Strategy in 2012. The answers also identify areas in which a large number of States would like to see more focus and a higher priority over the next few years.

³ Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, FYR Macedonia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

⁴ One state handed in three separate replies, making the total number of questionnaires received 26.

Part One: Implementation

This part looks specifically at the *implementation* of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) in the four strategic areas indicated above. It looks at how the 26 respondents have estimated the situation in their respective countries with regard to different aspects of children’s rights and child protection, and identifies tendencies of progress and new measures, stability, and regression or deterioration. It also highlights specific concerns and particular elements of success relative to the implementation of the Strategy.

Question 1: Child-friendly services and mechanisms

Firstly, with regard to child-friendly services and mechanisms, the overall picture (Table 1) shows that there has been considerable progress in this area, in particular when it comes to child-friendly justice, social services, family policies, and education. At least half of the respondents indicated an improved situation in these areas, while only one or two states indicated deterioration. With regard to health care, there was also improvement, and no state indicated deterioration. Lastly, in the area of sports, culture and leisure, the least progress could be found, with only four states indicating improvement, and an equal number indicating deterioration.

Table 1

1 CHILD FRIENDLY SERVICES AND MECHANISMS					
	Issue	Improved	Stable	Deteriorated	Undefined
A	JUSTICE	15	9	2	2
B	HEALTH CARE	10	13	0	4
C	SOCIAL SERVICES	14	11	1	2
D	FAMILY POLICIES	13	11	1	3
E	EDUCATION	13	11	1	4
F	SPORT-CULTURE-LEISURE	4	14	4	7

A few states pointed out that the situation had deteriorated with regard to child-friendly services and mechanisms during the relevant period. Some of the reasons for this were that, despite new laws related to **child-friendly justice**, governments did not always address the issue of guaranteeing specialised lawyers in child-related cases. In one country, the possibility of a municipality to lower the age for administrative sanctions from 16 to 14 years of age was introduced, causing a risk of legal uncertainty because the law could be different from one municipality to another. Another example of deterioration was that, despite a new law establishing that children over the age of 12 must be formally informed of their right to be heard, the law did not grant due consideration to younger children. Moreover, it was pointed out that the child’s right to be heard was sometimes granted only in a limited number of matters, or that it was subject to the willingness of individual judges. It was also underscored that the right of the child to be accompanied by an independent and trusted person to a hearing or a court proceeding is not always guaranteed by the law.

Among the positive developments mentioned were a good number of newly adopted acts and laws strengthening the child-friendly character of services. As a good practice, it can be pointed out that one of the newly adopted Children’s Acts also includes a concise definition of the “best interest of the child”, which must lie as the basis for all decisions made regarding a child. Children’s rights monitoring mechanisms were also mentioned as good practice, in particular those that include children’s active participation in the monitoring process.

Improvements in the legal status of children were noted, and the rights of the child were, in many instances, strengthened with regard to child-friendly justice and juvenile justice, in particular as concerns the weight granted to children’s views and opinions. One state also pointed to new procedures on how to identify and collect evidence in cases on child abuse, while another developed a roadmap for the implementation of juvenile justice. A further example of good practice was one country’s newly

developed model for child custody dispute mediation with expert assistance, which, after a trial period with positive results, was to be extended to the whole territory during 2014. A mentoring project for children in conflict with the law was another example of progress highlighted by a state party. Child-friendly hearing rooms were also planned and/or created, and resources granted to enable video recording of hearings involving minors.

For child victims of sexual abuse, the protection in criminal proceedings was strengthened, pilot projects to promote assistance were launched, as was a children's emergency number which can support children in and after emergency situations related to sexual abuse. These examples, along with the creation of a number of *Barnahus* (children's houses) were all measures indicative of progress mentioned by the respondent states.

One state highlighted the introduction of an obligatory impact assessment on children and young adults for any law- or decision-making process of relevance to children. Furthermore, a number of states signalled the fact that important laws were adopted on the ratification of conventions such as the Istanbul Convention, the Lanzarote Convention, and the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure.

Attention was granted to the prevention of risk factors, in particular with regard to **child-friendly health services**, and important measures were noted in the area of child health. Some states developed new national health strategies, others created new services for children and families. In a few states, the setting up of youth-friendly, child-friendly, and baby-friendly health-centres, hospitals and maternities was mentioned. Furthermore, a good practice worthy of mentioning is the establishment of expert teams for the protection of children against abuse and neglect in health care institutions. Another is the elaboration of a national action plan for the health of children and young people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

With regard to **child-friendly social services**, examples of new measures were, among others, improved coordination of services, intensified social services for children in difficult situations, trainings for social workers and child protection specialists to ensure better implementation of new laws, and extended roles for social assistance and family protection services. Special protection of children at risk and children separated from their parents was also mentioned, as well as the creation of a new social inspection responsible for the inspection of social services.

Alternative care was also mentioned particularly as a field in which child-friendly services need strengthening, and a few states mentioned that preparations were made in view of changing the alternative care services into a more family based and child-friendly system. Moreover, proposals were made to better take into account the voices of children in alternative care, and one state mentioned having developed a methodology for community social services to prevent separation of children from their families.

Regarding **family policies**, one state considered that the lack of a coherent national family policy had led to a deterioration of the situation. Others mentioned progress in terms of awareness-raising events, new family policies intended to help parents educate their children in a respectful, ethical, and pedagogical manner, and reforms in the system of youth help, with the aim of ensuring fast and efficient help in as few steps as possible and in collaboration between different sectors such as healthcare and family care.

In **education**, several examples of newly introduced measures were given, such as new legislation for inclusive education, improving the learning environment, improved student welfare services, and strengthened child participation. One state mentioned that quality standards for child-friendly schools had been elaborated and approved, and another highlighted that measures were taken to improve the educational system for vulnerable groups of children. Furthermore, one state mentioned that efforts were made to strengthen the protection of children from violence in schools, and that all preschools, primary and secondary schools now have teams for the protection of children against violence.

In terms of **sport and leisure**, very few states made any specific comments, and the table indeed shows a higher number of undefined answers in this area of child-friendly services. Nevertheless, one state pointed out that nationwide children's festivals, summer camps and summer schools had been organised with public support, and that youth- and family support centres, including a creative centre for children with Downs syndrome had been set up. It was also noted that a new draft strategy arranging leisure time and sport of children was in way of preparation. Another state mentioned that guidelines for ethics in sports, including elements such the rights of the child, inclusion, and respect for diversity had been drawn up.

In the field of child-friendly services and mechanisms, the importance of ensuring evidence-based and preventive interventions was pointed out. Nevertheless, the remark was also made that, considering the protracted financial crisis, it should be considered acceptable that the level of child-friendly services could be maintained stable during the relevant period. Another state pointed out that the economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures could slow down the efforts and lead to a worsened situation for some children. The fact that one state mentioned the possibility to equip new public schools with modern equipment and free-of-charge textbooks as an important progress could also be indicative of the economic difficulties that some of the Council of Europe member states are currently facing. As a counter-measure, one state mentioned that targeted social assistance for low-income families is being strengthened. Again, when such measures are needed to cover basic needs, it is understandable that more elaborate steps toward fully child-friendly services and mechanisms may be slowed down or be temporarily out of range. This is of course no excuse to stop working for a child-friendly society, but may put in perspective the lack of the desired level of progress in some areas and/or in some states.

Question 2: Elimination of violence against children

Secondly, the member states were asked to express themselves on the situation regarding the elimination of violence against children. The overall picture (Table 2) shows that almost all respondent states adopted new measures on sexual violence and a clear majority did so on integrated strategies for the elimination of violence. In general, violence against children and child abuse seem to be highly prioritised in current policy plans. One state also pointed out that the implementation of existing laws and measures to combat, prevent and intervene in cases of violence against children has substantially improved. It was suggested that defining clear tasks, procedures and performance standards is fundamental to eliminate violence against children.

With regard to sexual violence, recent progress can, to a great extent, be explained by the signing and ratification of the Lanzarote Convention, and the respective adoption of national laws to allow for such ratification and/or to align the national criminal codes with this legal instrument. The signature and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was also mentioned. Furthermore, states have been strongly encouraged to adopt **integrated strategies** against violence since the beginning of the current Strategy, in particular through the Ankara conference in November 2012.⁵ New national strategies, acts, and action plans on children's rights were mentioned by several states, and one state specified that the strategy involves the psycho-social and medical sectors, the actors in direct contact with children such as teachers and youth workers, as well as the judicial and law enforcement sectors. Another state pointed out that procedures and principles for concerted work between different institutions has been central to the new strategy, while yet another state underscored that the new integrated national strategy includes the strategic goals of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015.

Very few states indicated new measures with regard to **corporal punishment**, where a stable situation seemed to prevail. This is partly due to the fact that at least half of the respondent states already have a legal ban on corporal punishment. Nevertheless, certain states still noted an increase in the awareness of the ban of corporal punishment and a high degree of the population being against corporal

⁵ Conference report available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/Source/RapportAnkara_en.pdf

punishment, and pointed this out as important progress. One state also mentioned that the legislation banning corporal punishment was complemented in 2013 to be even clearer, while in another state a newly drafted child protection act that included a ban of corporal punishment had recently been submitted to the government.

Table 2

2 ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	INTEGRATED STRATEGIES	17	7	0	4
B	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	22	7	2	1
C	TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN	15	10	3	4
D	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	5	20	0	4
E	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	11	13	1	3
F	VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS	11	14	3	4

A number of states noted amendments to their Criminal Codes introducing new criminal sanctions and increases in penalties for **sexual offences against children**. A good example of progress given by one state was to prolong the prescription time for crimes of a sexual nature to 15 years from the time the victim turns 18 years of age. Another was to introduce complementary sanctions for persons convicted of sexual offences against children, such as informing the employer of a person who works in contact with minors about his/her conviction. Furthermore, special requirements on persons employed to work with children were included in the legal framework of one state.

Two states highlighted that the ONE in FIVE campaign was disseminated in order to raise awareness and prevent **sexual violence against children**, and one state mentioned the Kiko material in this regard. The *EU Directive 2011/92 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography* was also invoked as a reason underlying new legislation in this area, in particular with regard to scrutiny of criminal records of volunteers working with children. More than one state also mentioned the adoption of new laws that exclude the statute of limitations for certain sexual crimes against prepubescent children, or that exclude amnesty or clemency in cases of sexual crimes against children. One country stated that a children's house pilot programme for child victims of sexual and physical violence had been launched. In another country, the many cases of child sexual abuse connected to the Catholic Church led to a cross-sectoral approach to protect the sexual integrity of children and to promote talking to children about these issues. Yet another state raised the age limit for legal prostitution from 16 to 18 years of age. Lastly, it was noted by one state that the aim of the strategy on sexual violence is to get sexuality out of the sphere of taboos, stimulate discussion, protect children's sexual and bodily integrity and have a positive view on sexuality and relations.

With regard to the elimination of **child trafficking**, 15 states mentioned new measures being taken during the relevant period. The *EU Directive 2011/36/ on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims* was mentioned by one state as having been transposed into national legislation. Nevertheless, three states noted regression in the area of child trafficking, and it was underlined that this is a phenomenon on the rise. One state explained that, because of the lack of resources, not enough was done to prepare new preventive programmes on the trafficking of children. Others claimed that new measures had been adopted in the areas of trafficking of children and gender-based violence, such as information material being developed and distributed to hospitals and social services, as well as to centres for asylum seekers. Moreover, the legal definition of trafficking was expanded in the law of a number of countries, while others pointed to national action plans and strategies. One state noted that since 2012, children victims of trafficking may be temporarily forcibly placed in institutions for their protection and care, and another stated that new procedures were set up for the identification, support and protection of minors who are victims of human trafficking.

To complement the comprehensive legal framework to protect children from violence, the protection of young women and girls at risk and/or threatened by forced marriage was strengthened in one state. In line with this, several other examples on new measures on **gender-based violence** were mentioned, such as advocacy work, new laws, integrated strategies, action plans and campaigns to address female genital mutilation (FGM). Awareness-raising campaigns on domestic violence and its impacts on children were also mentioned as good examples.

Another area in which awareness-raising campaigns on violence against children have been run is the school environment. However, some states pointed to regression in the area of **violence against children in schools**, and increasing incidents of such violence were noted. In one state a study on this issue has been launched, and another one mentioned increased allocation of funds for the collection of data on violence in schools. Several states have set up new mechanisms to combat school violence, including bullying. Furthermore, one state mentioned the establishment of a new notification system for incidents of violence in schools. A help-line both for teachers and for parents was mentioned as a good practice, and a practical guide on prevention and management of violence in the school environment was developed and distributed to teaching staff in one country. Other initiatives to inform parents and teachers on how to handle violence were also launched, and a pilot programme to prevent and reduce school bullying was set up. The safer Internet programme, which includes awareness raising, hotlines and helplines, was observed to have given good results, as did the EU Child Alert system, and in one country a “safe school year”-coalition was set up for one year.

Several challenges in the work to tackle violence against children were also mentioned by the respondent states, such as a current lack of family shelters, reduced resources, combined with a tendency of increased migration of children and families, caused by the economic crisis. These factors increase the vulnerability of children to violence. To improve the situation, different efforts were mentioned, for instance systematic training of professional groups working in contact with children, such as judges, lawyers, teachers, law enforcement officials, but also the development of a new type of social worker with specialised training in matters relative to children and youth. One state mentioned that it had carried out a child victims survey intended to provide information about violence that children experience at home, at school, and in other settings, while another stated that it had increased both quality and availability of family support and community-based services to families facing economy constraint.

Among the good practices singled out was an awareness-raising programme to prevent physical and psychological forms of ill-treatment and abuse of children coupled with the establishment of networks for early intervention and assistance by qualified healthcare professionals. Another example is the setting up of an inter-sectoral cooperation mechanism for the identification, assessment, referral, assistance and monitoring of child victims of violence and neglect. Lastly, as an important step toward the elimination of violence against children, it was also mentioned that regulations for cultural, artistic, sport, modelling, and publicity activities performed by children had been introduced in one country in order to prevent child abuse and hazardous child labour.

Question 3: The Rights of Children in Vulnerable Situations

Thirdly, the survey regarded special measures to protect and promote the rights of children in vulnerable situations, and the member states were asked to express themselves specifically on children in alternative care, children from minorities, children with disabilities, children in detention, children on the move and Roma children. As shown by Table 3, more than half of the respondent states mentioned that new measures had been taken with regard to children in alternative care and children with disabilities. Regression was noted by two states relative to children’s alternative care and detention issues, while one state noted regression concerning children on the move. With regard to this last category, it should be noted that only four states pointed to new measures, while as many as 8 states left this question unanswered or did not provide a clear answer. From the analysis of the

questionnaires, one possible reason for this could be that this issue is seen as part of – or is confused with – the categories of Roma children and/or children from minorities.

Table 3

3 THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE	17	10	2	3
B	CHILDREN FROM MINORITIES	9	14	0	5
C	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	15	9	0	4
D	CHILDREN IN DETENTION	11	15	2	2
E	CHILDREN ON THE MOVE	4	16	1	8
F	ROMA CHILDREN	12	14	0	4

A number of states expressed concern with regard to children placed in institutions, and pointed out that it is difficult to find a sufficient number of foster families or to guarantee children other forms of family based solutions. It was recognised that **children in alternative care** are specifically vulnerable to violence, and considerable efforts have been made to ensure a better quality and safety for children living without their families. Examples such as the adoption of new laws on foster care, decisions to prioritise family care over institutional alternative care, the development of centres for family-type placements, and the establishment of uniform quality standards and enhanced procedural approaches to place children in alternative care were mentioned. One state also mentioned that the appointment of a special Ombudsman’s service for children living separated from their families has been planned. One good practice that should be mentioned is the introduction of alternatives such as in-house intensive education measures for families in situations of negligence or maltreatment of children, allowing services to accompany the parents and thus avoid alternative care placement. Another state highlighted that its national programme on de-institutionalisation and alternative care had led to the establishment of services such as rehabilitation centres, day care centres, and family support centres, including centres for children with disabilities. It was clear from the replies to the survey that a transformation of the system of institutional care is on-going in several states, with the aim of improving the quality of alternatives to institutions and decreasing the number of children in institutional care.

Nevertheless, it was also clear that challenges to improve the quality of residential care institutions or to promote deinstitutionalisation of children remain numerous, in particular due to the inadequate number of foster families, which in turn often depends on a lack of sufficient support to such families. While a few states could point to decreasing numbers of children in institutions and increases in the number of family based care services, one state noted that the number of children in institutions had gone up despite the efforts undertaken, and another state mentioned a dropping number of foster families.

One thing that stood out from the survey was that, while progress was noted with regard to children in alternative care in many states, such progress was much slower when it comes to **children with disabilities**. One state pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen and organise social services at the level of local communities to prevent the separation of children from their families, in particular children with disabilities. Another state mentioned that a draft programme had been developed for the deinstitutionalisation of children without parents and children with disabilities, but recognised that the problem of institutionalisation still remains a serious one with regard to children with disabilities. Yet another state underlined that it has developed a programme to minimise the number of mentally disabled children living in institutions.

With regard to children with disabilities more in general, several states mentioned the adoption of new laws, some of which can be linked to the signature and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Nevertheless, it was pointed out that there is need for clear guidance on implementation in order to improve the situation for children with disabilities. Among the good practices mentioned by the respondent states was the introduction, in each ministerial cabinet and federal/regional administration of one state, of a person specifically designated to control that all new measures take into account the implications of such measures for persons with disabilities. Another good practice was the establishment of pilot projects for inclusive education, which have been introduced in some schools/kindergartens, and which provided children with disabilities with essential tools. A new social care model for children with mental and behavioural issues was developed in one state, while other states mentioned new strategies to guarantee equal rights and opportunities to children with disabilities. A few states mentioned studies or “white papers” on children with disabilities, and some had focused on the development of teachers’ skills in inclusive education or training of mobile support teams and personal assistants. However, as underlined by one of the respondent states, concrete changes for children with disabilities still remain to be seen.

In terms of the **detention of children**, 11 states noted new measures, while two states observed deterioration in this area. Examples of new measures ranged from amendments of existing and adoption of new laws, to the establishment of a task force mandated to develop a new strategy to improve the situation of juvenile detainees, to the setting up of an independent complaints mechanism in cooperation with the children’s rights commissioner, and all the way to a regulation on library services in prisons and juvenile correction centres and shelters. One state mentioned that an inspection report on youngsters in detention centres had also been compiled, while another noted that guidelines had been developed for the treatment of children at the police station. A good practice worthy of mentioning was the insertion of a provision in the juvenile courts act of one state, which provides that children serving a prison sentence longer than four weeks must have the opportunity to be placed in a detention centre nearby his/her former permanent residence in order to ensure the possibility of receiving family visits. One state noted that the number of detained children is very low and decreasing, while another state expressed serious concern over an increasing number of children placed in closed detention facilities, and with occasional instances of detention of children among adults in ordinary detention facilities. It was also noted by one state that there are signs of incorrect behaviour by law enforcement officials towards minors suspected of minor criminal offences.

Roma children represent another group of children considered to be in a particularly vulnerable and/or exposed situation. 12 respondent states indicated that new measures had been taken with regard to this group of children. No regression was noted, although it was underlined that more and more signs indicate that Roma children suffer a great amount of violence, for instance through their exploitation for begging and other purposes, by being forced into committing criminal acts, as well as within their own families. Roma children were also noted to have a very low status in the society. One state pointed out that current efforts have not yet had any real positive effects for Roma children.

Among good practices were: the opening of a new centre for accommodation of Roma children; an integrated strategy and plan of action to accompany the integration of Roma children into the society as well as into the school system; the introduction of Romani mediators, who can act as a bridge between the school and the Roma families. Several states pointed out that the number of Roma children attending school has increased, sometimes beyond the expectations, while the number of dropouts has decreased. One state pointed out that a number of efforts had been made to improve the situation of Roma children and children from minorities, including health services, assistance with birth registration and obtainment of identity papers, and free text- and work books for primary school. Another state mentioned that an action plan had been launched to tackle the exploitation of Roma children, while yet another gave the example of how a community mediator for Roma communities had been established to ensure their access to social assistance, education, healthcare, employment and documentation.

It was not uncommon for the respondent states to address **children from minorities, children on the move**, and Roma children together, as many of the measures taken to improve the situation for these groups of children seem to overlap. An example of this was the establishment of a mediation centre to assist children from minorities, children on the move and Roma children with information, orientation and accompanying them to public administrations, associations and schools, in view of favouring their integration and participation in the society. Unaccompanied children were observed to be a group of concern to some states, and it was noted that they could sometimes be detained awaiting deportation. New strategies and services are being established for these children, but it was underlined that a lot of work still needs to be done in terms of social inclusion. One state published a “white paper” on children on the run, paying particular attention to unaccompanied children, suggesting ways to improve children’s living situations and rights during the asylum process and improving the criteria for granting or rejecting asylum. One state noted that undocumented children do not always have access to school, and that the legislation is not always implemented properly, and another stated that the integration of migrants, including children, represented one of the main challenges to the country.

A number of efforts were made to improve the education system and school environment for children from minorities, such as the possibility of studying in the language of the minority group the student belongs to, text books published in Roma language, the publishing of a manual for the prevention of and protection from discrimination in the educational system, as well as the development of methods to foster the national, ethnic and linguistic identity of students belonging to minorities.

Question 4: Child participation

The fourth and last area of part one of the survey regarded child participation, and states were asked to answer to how the situation had evolved in terms of the child’s right to be heard, democratic citizenship, access to information, and the media environment. As shown by table 4, a clear majority of the respondent states indicated new measures with regard to the child’s rights to be heard, and about half of them could point to new measures on children’s access to information. One state noted regression with regard to the right to be heard and the media environment.

Table 4

4 CHILD PARTICIPATION					
	Issue	New measures	Stable	Regression	Undefined
A	RIGHT TO BE HEARD	19	10	1	0
B	DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP	9	14	0	3
C	ACCESS TO INFORMATION	13	11	0	5
D	MEDIA ENVIRONMENT	7	15	1	6

It became clear from the replies to the survey that, when considering the child’s **right to be heard**, many states focused on child-friendly measures in the justice system. For instance, it was highlighted that child participation and respect for the rights of the child in judicial proceedings was improving, and that a trusted person who is not the child’s legal representative can be present in court and during hearings if the child requires it. The obligation of judges to inform children on the case and how the child’s statements may impact the proceedings was also mentioned, and one state pointed out that the child also has the right to be informed about the procedure to appeal or to request protection of his/her rights before the Ombudsman for children’s rights. The obligation of judges to hear children was also mentioned by a number of states, and it became clear that different states have different ways of implementing this right. For instance, in one state judges must hear any child above 12 years of age, and may interview children at a lower age, whereas in another state the right to be heard of children over the age of 7, and of younger children capable of forming their own opinions, was strengthened. One state also underlined the obligation of judges to inform the child of the decision made and explain in what way the child’s opinion was taken into account. It was also mentioned by one state that, in the

case of children over 15 years of age who understand the subject-matter of the case, children are considered a party to a child welfare case and can exercise their right as such, including access to case documents and right to complain. Importantly, one state recalled that the child's right to be heard also includes his/her right to refuse to be heard.

However, the child's right to be heard goes beyond the justice system, and indeed several states gave other examples of new measures in this area. Alternative reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child written by children, participation in children's forums and youth councils, a council for children within the government, and child representatives involved in the process of developing the new strategy for children's rights were some of the novelties introduced during the relevant period. Furthermore, one country stated that the right of the child to be heard was guaranteed in youth help sectors as well as in school, and another state underlined that the importance of child participation is mentioned in the new child protection act, which children were actively involved in drafting. In one state, a national council of youth organisations was registered as an independent and self-governing organisation based on democratic regulations, and representatives from this organisation participate in a national working group on structured dialogue.

The child's right to be heard is, beside from being fundamental in matters directly concerning the child, intimately linked to **democratic citizenship** and the recognition of children as full citizens of a society. Several states gave good examples of how this aspect of children's rights can be strengthened. For instance, children's participation in national and international projects, child participation in child welfare councils, as well as pupils' parliaments, national councils, and other mechanisms to enhance the participation of pupils in decision-making processes were mentioned. In one state the national council of students is a consultative body to the Ministry of National Education, and represents the students before the institutions. One state also mentioned that youth councils had been made obligatory in every municipality, and in another state children have been included in the "public at large" for purposes of public participation in planning processes relative to the internal development of cities and municipalities.

Several initiatives were also launched to enhance children's knowledge about their own rights and about their possibilities as citizens. For instance, a participation project "I make politics" was launched in one state, while another mentioned the launch of an Internet platform for the education on citizenship and well-being. Schools are also increasingly implementing awareness-raising programmes on human rights and children's rights.

An important part of democratic citizenship is the possibility of a citizen to claim his/her rights and to be able to complain when those rights are not granted. Only limited mention of such mechanisms were made by the respondent states. Indeed, one state pointed out that there is a need to establish effective complaints mechanisms for children in schools, social- and health services. Only one state mentioned that it had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, and only one state mentioned a legal obligation to have a complaints system in residential care and youth services institutions.

With regard to **access to information**, there was some concern raised relative to the lack of sufficient child-friendly materials. Where this is the case, the right of all children to receive information from all institutions they come into contact with may be difficult to guarantee. One state noted that so far the only institution that offers information for children on state authorities and public services is the Ombudsman for children's website. Another stated mentioned that a collection of child-friendly materials on children's rights and other child-related topics had been made, while a third mentioned that a book on children's issues, such as children with disabilities, positive parenting, school bullying had been created for children and parents. Measures such as a new website for the fight against paedophilia and child pornography, which aims to inform and train children and the society at large how to recognise, prevent, and combat child sexual abuse and exploitation were also highlighted.

Lastly, the answers relative to **children and the media environment** were very disparate, and went from safer Internet programmes and media education in schools to training of media personnel in

children's rights and adequate media reporting of cases of child sexual abuse. It also became clear that the available resources are very different depending on the country, and one state mentioned as progress the fact that a majority of schools in the country are now provided with computers and Internet access. One state mentioned the adoption of a new special protocol that obliges the police to protect the identity of minors from possible media abuse, while another expressed concern with regard to the fact that, although posting of illegal content on the Internet is sanctioned, harmful content on the Internet is not yet accounted for in the national legislation. A good practice worthy of mentioning is the launch of a national programme on "young people and the media", aimed to sensitise the population on the risks and opportunities of audio-visual, electronic and interactive media. Furthermore, a few states mentioned that campaigns to combat hate speech online or cyber harassment were launched.

Other good examples on how to strengthen child participation in different areas were, for instance, increased funding for NGOs that run child participation programmes and increased focus on child participation in national strategies on the rights of the child. Good examples were also pointed out with regard to specific groups of children, such as efforts to improve participation of children in alternative care, a new programme to support gay-straight alliances in schools and to support LGBT youth networks, as well as the setting up of a taskforce of children against child abuse.

Among the main challenges pointed out was the lack of solid methods to train specialists on how to talk to and interview children, and how to involve children through effective methods of child participation. Concern was also expressed with regard to the continued lack of training and expertise of judges on how to interview/hear a child. Overall, there is awareness that child participation must be enabled in all sectors of society and involve a broad range of stakeholders, but greater and more efficient implementation is still needed.

Part Two: Future priorities

The second part of this report addresses the *future priorities* of the respondent states with regard to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) and beyond. Like part one, it is divided into the four strategic areas of the Strategy, and looks at how the 26 respondents have defined their priorities based upon the situation in their respective countries. At the end of this part, there is also a section on “other priorities” that states have identified and that they did not consider to be integrated in or directly related to the current Strategy. The full list of priorities indicated by the respondent states for each area can be found in Annex I to this report.

Question 1: Child-friendly services and mechanisms⁶

Beside some more general statements, through which the need for strengthened harmonisation of laws, strengthened child protection systems, and improved prevention and early intervention programmes were manifested, many states put an emphasis on the need for methodological tools that allow for a better **monitoring, evaluation and assessment** of child-friendly services and mechanisms. In order to develop such methodologies, several states asked for (comparative) studies and research.

It is noteworthy that **child-friendly family policies** was underlined as a strong priority area for a large number of states, and many recommendations were made as to how such policies could be strengthened. It became clear from the replies to the questionnaire that many states feel that parenting in today’s society is a real challenge, and a strong need is felt for good positive parenting practices and recommendations, as well as for stronger support for the increasing number of children going through family break-ups (e.g. parents’ divorce or separation).

Child-friendly health services also stood out as a priority area. Several states indicated that child- and youth-friendly health care needs to be further developed, and good practices on care for children with behavioural/mental problems need to be disseminated. One of the recommendations regarding child-friendly social services concerned the growing socio-economic inequalities between different groups of children and youth and the need for adequate support services to address this issue.

With regard to **child-friendly justice systems**, there were both general and more specific recommendations, but overall the main point regarded making it easier for children to participate in court proceedings. It was also pointed out that child-friendly practices in custody disputes and divorce cases should be shared, and that mediation skills need to be strengthened.

Priorities relative to **education** mainly concerned inclusive education, while none of the respondent states indicated any priorities with regard to child-friendly services in the areas of sport, culture and leisure.

Question 2: Elimination of violence against children⁷

With regard to the elimination of violence against children, there were also a number of rather generic statements, showing that this issue as a whole remains a priority for the respondent states. The need for improved methodologies for the **collection and systematisation of data** on violence against children came forth as a recommendation by several states, and monitoring was also underlined in this regard. Several states also showed interest in strengthening awareness raising campaigns on violence against children, and the ONE in FIVE campaign was mentioned as an example.

Sexual violence against children received much attention in the replies and was identified as a priority area for many states. Recommendations went from monitoring of offenders to prevent

⁶ Areas: justice, health care, social services, family policies, education and sport-culture-leisure.

⁷ Areas: integrated strategies, sexual violence, trafficking in children, corporal punishment, gender-based violence and violence in schools.

recidivism and establishing data banks on sexual offenders to focusing on victim assistance and on sexual violence among minors. The need to improve means to identify and detect child victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking was also underlined, and it was suggested that this could be done by raising awareness of the general public, in particular of children, and train professionals working with children to detect signs. Beside this recommendation, no particular priority was given to trafficking of children or gender-based violence, although it should be noted that these categories may, in some forms, be considered as part of sexual violence against children.

A number of states expressed the will to continue to pursue the goal of a Europe free from **corporal punishment**, ensuring that all Council of Europe member states adopt a full legal ban on this practice. It is noteworthy that in relation to the issue of corporal punishment, several states again emphasised the need to develop positive parenting programmes and to make parents fully understand their roles and responsibilities as parents.

With regard to **violence in schools** there were priorities to strengthen prevention measures and identify risk behaviour, as well as to strengthen the work against bullying. Violence on TV, on the Internet, and in other media was also indicated as a priority area for several states, and the banalisation of pornography, violence, racism, and hate speech online, and the realisation of how easily accessible these are to children, were mentioned as issues of concern.

Question 3: The Rights of Children in Vulnerable Situations⁸

There were a number of general recommendations regarding the need to strengthen services for children in vulnerable situations, and to ensure their access to, for instance, health care and early childhood services. It was also pointed out that many children have parents who depend on support services for reasons such as substance abuse, unemployment, physical/mental health issues, and the needs of those children also need to be recognised. One way of doing so is to strengthen social services at the local level, and to work for a stronger community mobilisation. States also mentioned that policies and programmes to **combat all forms of intolerance** against children from vulnerable groups are needed, especially in the school environment.

With regard to **children in alternative care**, a clear priority to several states is the deinstitutionalisation of children and to ensure sufficient alternative family- and community-based care options for children deprived of their family environment. For children in detention the need was stressed both to reduce the number and to improve the situation of children in detention.

Children with disabilities came forth as a strong priority area for many states, and particular focus was granted to the need to strengthen inclusive education and enhance inclusion of children with disabilities in community life. Guaranteeing equal rights and status of children with disabilities was also underlined as a priority, and it was noted that children with disabilities continue to be more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence.

The integration of **migrant children and Roma children**, as well as efforts to tackle their discrimination, was also mentioned as a priority by some states, and the situation of undocumented children, unaccompanied children, and children left in their country while parents work abroad was pointed out as an emerging issue.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that some states drew the attention to austerity measures when referring to children in vulnerable situations, pointing out that the economic crisis has made already vulnerable children even more exposed. More focus is therefore needed on **families affected by poverty** and mono-parental families, and support services for economically disadvantaged families need to be strengthened to meet those children's needs.

⁸ Areas: children in alternative care, children from minorities, children with disabilities, children in detention, children on the move, and Roma children.

Question 4: Child participation⁹

Child participation in general is a clear area of priority for many of the respondent states, and from the answers to the questionnaires a strong will to learn about more meaningful forms of child participation could be detected. States expressed a wish for studies and research in order to develop a methodology on child-participation as well as on good ways to monitor and evaluate such participation. There was also a wish for the development of more **child-friendly materials** in order to guarantee access to comprehensible information to children, and for the development of child-friendly complaints mechanisms. The sharing of best practices across member states was encouraged in this area.

With regard to children's **right to be heard**, it was noted in Part One of this report that states seemed to have focused mainly on this right within the justice system, although there were examples of other areas of public life in which this right has been increasingly acknowledged. As for the priorities in this area, it was noted that children's right to be heard should be enhanced in child welfare and health care mechanisms, and that the respect for the views of the child in all settings and on all matters affecting him/her should be promoted. It was also highlighted that training on how to involve children actively and how to talk to children in different settings need to be prioritised.

Democratic citizenship was also clearly on the list of priorities, and it was suggested that child-friendly citizen involvement systems be developed, that the process of creation of self-governance structures of pupils in educational institutions be facilitated, and that child participation in general be made more democratic – reaching all social levels.

Other priorities

Some of the respondent states chose not to indicate any priorities, while others wished to indicate **priorities that go beyond the framework of the current Strategy**. Among such issues were also suggestions as to how the next Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child could be developed, for instance by setting up a working group of representatives from member states, who could be given the task to make the first draft of the next Strategy. One state also suggested that it be discussed how the Council of Europe could evaluate the effect of its standards at national level, and determine if these standards – or how to use them – need to be further developed in order to be effective. Lastly, it was suggested that the new Strategy include precise monitoring modalities and that an evaluation process be clearly elaborated.

As for other general priorities, it was suggested that assistance be provided to set up **an Ombudsman for children's rights in all member states** that do not already have one, and that it be emphasised that integrated strategies and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms for children's rights have to be in place in the member states. One state also suggested that know-how be increased on "**child-friendly administration**", including child impact assessment in decision-making, child-participatory budgeting, indicators and follow-up on child-wellbeing, and coordination of child- and family policies. Focus on corporate social responsibility in child care systems was also something that one state suggested to include among the priorities.

Furthermore, **monitoring and evaluation** was something that was reiterated with regard to a number of different areas, suggesting a general need for better systems of data collection and evaluation in order to assess the impact of new measures for children's rights and child protection.

Three specific areas were granted particular attention by the respondent states with respect to future priorities: the **impact of economic austerity**, children and the Internet and other media, and family/parenting policies. It became clear that many states have felt the impact of the economic crisis and that this has negatively influenced the efforts to strengthen children's rights and child protection.

⁹ Areas: right to be heard, democratic citizenship, access to information, and media environment.

Thus, it was recommended that the new Strategy on the Rights of the Child address this issue in particular and focus on means to reduce family and child poverty. The economic crisis is considered a long-term issue by several states, and a warning was issued that limited resources will determine the possibilities to implement existing programmes for children also in the future. Improved efficiency is therefore crucial to ensure that children can continue to be protected and to avoid regression. Increasing inequalities in available funds at the local level have also led to uneven implementation of existing laws and policies within countries, and such inequalities need to be tackled. Furthermore, the economic crisis has made the children in vulnerable situations even more exposed, and has pushed new groups of children into situations of vulnerability, resulting, for instance, in an increased number of children on the streets and children exploited in labour.

The second issue that came forth strongly among the respondent states' future priorities was **children and the Internet and other media**, and it was recommended that this issue be addressed as a new important theme in the next Strategy on the Rights of the Child. This should be done taking into account both possibilities and risks, and enhancing media education for both children and parents. It should also pay attention to safe Internet procedures, risks of social media, and develop strong campaigns to combat hate speech and violence online, in particular the increasing levels of child sexual abuse images online. Awareness raising programmes should reach all children, for instance through its inclusion in the curriculum of all primary schools. Attention should also be paid to advertising and children.

Lastly, the issue of **parenting** and related difficulties was raised as a priority. As shown by the previous sections of this report, family policies and positive parenting were also very present among the priorities within the framework of the current Strategy. Nevertheless, some states chose to highlight this issue among "other priorities", underlining the need to develop networks of services to promote non-violent parenting skills in child rearing and education. It was suggested that such services focus on three levels: a) universal – providing general information at community level on the non-violent practices of upbringing and education; b) specialised – counselling and advising families where there is risk and/or cases of neglect/violence against children; c) highly specialised – providing highly qualified and individualised psychological/psychotherapeutic assistance for children victims of violence and their parents/careers in order to overcome the effects of trauma, prevent relapse, solve relationship conflicts, and provide legal assistance. It was also suggested that recommendations be drawn up on how to deal with family break ups, including conflictual divorces of parents, which are currently on the rise and put children's well-being at risk.

ANNEX I: Full list of priorities indicated by the respondent states (Part Two)¹⁰

1. CHILD FRIENDLY SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS

General:

1. Strengthen child protection systems
2. Development of policies and programmes
3. Harmonisation of the legislation on children's rights
4. Place emphasis on evidence-based interventions
5. Prioritise prevention and early intervention programmes for children
6. Prioritise inter-sectoral cooperation and integration of services, because children need quality assistance to matter what the type of problem or under which sector it falls
7. Promote child-friendly systems and mechanisms through national strategies for children's rights
8. Promote more cooperation between all relevant stakeholders in the child protection system
9. Protect children from human trafficking and exploitation in pornography and prostitution through special participatory prevention programmes
10. Education of professionals who are dealing with issues related to child protection
11. Awareness raising campaigns

Studies, Methodology, Monitoring and evaluation:

1. A study on the impact that a law can have on a child
2. Country studies to evaluate the legal practice from the perspective of children
3. Develop a European comparative study on practices of hearing children in trials and in mediation proceedings
4. Develop programmes/projects and systems for their monitoring and evaluation with clear indications of the roles and responsibilities of relevant bodies at all different levels
5. Support the introduction of child rights impacts assessment and spread good practices
6. Benchmarks, methodological tools, and legal processes to ensure the best interest of the child

Justice:

1. Child-friendly justice
2. Follow up on the implementation of the law on justice for children and ensure regular reports
3. Improve the promotion and the development of child-friendly mechanisms through the adoption of specific policies and programmes, especially in criminal proceedings
4. Make it easier for children to participate in court
5. Share information on child-friendly practices in custody disputes and divorce cases
6. Training of judges and prosecutors to improve the mediation skills in procedures concerning children

Health:

1. Develop national programmes and strategies that contribute to preserving and enhancing children's health
2. Development of youth-friendly health services
3. Dissemination of good practices for care for children with mental illnesses
4. Dissemination of good practices in behavioural problems and medical dependence
5. Improve the health situation of all children by increasing vaccination and general medical examinations, providing health insurance cards, and providing health education to children
6. Integrated child mental health and child welfare services

¹⁰ To facilitate the overview of the priorities indicated by the respondent states, these have been grouped into different sections.

7. Reorganization of Health Services in schools in order to promote a healthy culture among children and adolescents
8. Support efforts to implement the CoE recommendations on child-friendly services, in particular health care and services for children with disabilities

Social services:

1. Provide examples of good practices for social workers
2. Revise minimum quality standards and regulations for child social protection services to make them more child rights focused and participative
3. Social services for children adapted to the growing socio-economic inequalities between different groups of children and youth
4. Strengthen social care staff, particularly in rural areas
5. Preparation and training of social workers and psychologists working with families and children

Family policies:

1. Integrated services for families and children
2. Foster care services
3. Ensure sufficient spaces and quality care services for children
4. Good practices in positive parenting
5. Increased protection of children affected by parents' separation / divorce and family break-ups
6. Passport on the rights of the child for divorcing parents
7. Support the development of policies and programmes for positive parenting
8. Support the development of positive parenting policies and programmes, collect good national and international practices and develop methodological recommendations
9. Positive parenting techniques
10. Promote positive parenting and parental trainings
11. Support the development of policies and programmes to support families
12. Strengthen family counselling offices' work with parents in break up and conflict situations and widen the preventive counselling work for families
13. Improve the combination of family life and professional life with increased resources for parents
14. Develop and increase the number of family support services and family based alternative care services
15. Support child day centre activities
16. Reduce the number of children in residential care by socio-educational reintegration

Education:

1. Development of inclusive education and improvement of support services for educational and social inclusion of children
2. Promote and ensure inclusive education at the level of the educational system
3. Guidelines for the right to education at an early age (3 years up)

2. ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

General:

1. A Strategy for the protection of children from violence
2. Address the links and tensions between the need of an integrated plan on violence against children on the one hand and the choice for a comprehensive children's rights plan (which, in the best case, can be integrated in the general governmental planning) on the other
3. Develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children with special attention for prevention and intervention against child sexual abuse and exploitation

4. Develop alternatives to trial for children in conflict with the law, such as community service and mediation between the victim and offender in order to avoid stigmatization and enable effective reintegration
5. Emergency centre for children at high risk
6. Ensure the protection of personal data and prevention of re-victimization of children victims of violence, neglect and exploitation
7. Establish easily accessible mechanisms for children to report cases of abuse and violence against them, as well as ensure the necessary protection for such victims and assistance for their recovery and rehabilitation
8. Finance NGO programmes on violence against children and bullying
9. Focus on the implementation of the good legislation that is in place, in particular in terms of education of both victims and abusers
10. Focus not only on child victims but also on child perpetrators
11. Implementation of codes on domestic violence and child abuse
12. Improve early detection of symptoms and early intervention services
13. New legislation for children performing activities in the cultural-artistic, sport, modelling, and publicity fields in order to prevent abuse and hazardous child labour
14. Promotion of peer education on counteracting violence, with training and guidance for young educators
15. Social inclusion of Roma children
16. Special focus needed on children in poverty, children in institutional care, and sexual abuse of children
17. Strengthen and expand awareness-raising and education programmes and campaigns in order to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child hearings and discipline

Studies, Research, Monitoring, Data collection:

1. International research on violence by children against children
2. A set of instruments for the monitoring of violence against children and domestic violence
3. Improve the quality of collection and systematization of data on violence against children
4. Methodologies and good practices on data collection
5. New methodologies and improvement of data collection

Campaigns

1. Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to prevent violence and reduce the tolerance of violence against children
2. Dissemination of good practices for positive campaigns against violence
3. Implement media campaigns to inform the public about violence against and among children, domestic violence, violence at school, peer violence, and provide information about the campaign “1 in 5”
4. Increase awareness-raising campaigns against violence

Sharing of good practices:

1. Provide forums for the comparison and sharing of good practices on coordinated and integrated services for children that have experienced sexual or physical violence (Barnahus etc.)
2. Sharing of good practices in divorce and family break-up situations

Media, the Internet:

1. Discuss violence on TV and in other media
2. Ensure the protection of children from information on all existing media supports which can adversely affect mental and moral integrity of children
3. Focus on the banalisation of pornography, violence, racism, and hate speech online, and on how easily accessible these are to children
4. Continue the efforts relative to the dangers of the Internet

5. Increased attention on cyber criminality, such as grooming and online child pornography

Training and Capacity building:

1. Capacity-building in communities and in the public sector to enable early detection of violence against children
2. Capacity-building of school psychologists
3. Comprehensive and multi-sectoral training for all specialists working with children and families

Integrated strategies:

1. Further implementation of integrated national strategies
2. Implementation of inter-sectoral mechanisms to identify, assess, support, referral and tracking of child victims and potential victims of violence, neglect and exploitation

Sexual violence:

1. Create and develop national data banks on sexual abuse and exploitation of children
2. Ensure effective psycho-therapeutic assistance to children who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and take measures to keep the identity of child victims hidden from the public
3. Ensure that state legislation is in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention
4. Focus on violence and sexual abuse among children
5. Recording and monitoring of offenders to prevent recidivism of sexual crimes against children
6. Specialised services for sexually abused children
7. Step up efforts to investigate the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and prosecute and punish perpetrators with punishments commensurate to the gravity of the crime
8. Take measures to identify and detect child victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking by raising awareness of the public, in particular of children, and train professionals working with children to detect signs

Corporal punishment:

1. Continue to pursue the goal of a Europe free from corporal punishment
2. Continue to work for a European ban of corporal punishment and push the EU to add it to its agenda as well
3. Development and implementation of National Programmes for positive parenting
4. Implementation of positive parenting programmes to help reduce and prevent violence against children
5. In 2014, the ban on corporal punishment in Sweden has been in place for 35 years and is still a priority for the government, including in periodical studies on implementation
6. Parental training and awareness raising on different forms of violence against children, including neglect and psychological maltreatment, and make parents understand their role and responsibilities as parents

Violence in schools:

1. Anti-bullying programmes in schools
2. Implementation of programmes to prevent violence in schools
3. Increase the capacity of the education system for prevention of violence and risk behaviours in school

3. THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

General:

1. An obligation to act urgently in proceedings related to child protection, and to ensure that the best interest and well-being of the child is a priority
2. A participation task force of children against child abuse

3. Develop action plans for children in vulnerable situations
4. Develop measures to prevent and contrast cyber-bullying
5. Early detection of children at risk for antisocial behaviour
6. Holistic support for families with many children
7. Focus on children left alone due to family problems such as addiction, domestic violence, economic difficulties and unemployment, integration problems
8. Further implementation of inter-sectoral collaboration mechanisms in the medico-social field in preventing and reducing infant mortality and mortality of children aged up to 5 years at home
9. Increase the capacity of teachers in communication and teaching strategies to train pupils the skills to act in various life situations based on moral, civic and democratic values
10. Improve access to health care and early childhood services to vulnerable groups, which still suffer much higher child mortality rates than the general population
11. Improve the recognition of the needs of children whose parents receive support services for reasons such as substance abuse, unemployment, physical/mental health issues etc.
12. Improve the assistance guaranteed by social services at local level
13. Improve work for community mobilisation
14. Increase full access to all health and social services for vulnerable groups and increase the number of children completing their education
15. Prevention of extremism and radicalisation
16. Share opportunities for fast communication channels
17. Strengthen state child protection and adoption services and provide them with sufficient authority and adequate human, technical and financial resources to ensure effective coordination of activities on children's rights across all sectors and at national, municipal and local levels
18. Support the development of policies and programmes to combat all forms of intolerance against children from vulnerable groups in schools
19. Implementation of effective mechanisms to monitor the situation of children left behind, whose parents / single parents are working abroad
20. Implementation of information and awareness raising campaigns for children remained in the country, for migrant parents and persons responsible for the children's care

Economic crisis / Austerity measures:

1. Address issues related to times of crisis and budgetary restrictions
2. Focus on families affected by poverty and mono-parental families
3. Improvement of the system of social benefits to support family and child welfare, and tax incentives for families with children
4. Support services for economically disadvantaged families to understand children's needs

Alternative care:

1. Deinstitutionalisation of social care, development of alternative care for children
2. Development of early intervention family support social services, foster care services and family (re) integration services for children
3. Ensure sufficient alternative family and community based care options for children deprived of their family environment
4. Improve foster family services and family-based alternatives
5. Improve the quality of alternative care and services
6. Policies for children who leave care institutions

Children with disabilities:

1. Ensure access to educational institutions for children with mobility impairments
2. Harmonise national legislation with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
3. Help improve the situation of children with disabilities

4. Implement strategies to ensure the equal rights of children with disabilities
5. Improve legislative and administrative frameworks for children with disabilities, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
6. Improve services for children with disabilities
7. Prioritise the rights and status of children with disabilities, who continue to be more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, including corporal punishment
8. Promoting inclusion of children with disabilities in community life
9. Strengthen mechanisms for inclusive education and improve the collection of data on inclusive education to allow for monitoring of progress

Detention:

1. Help improve the situation of foreign children to avoid their detention and allow them to be reunited with their families
2. Implement measures in place to protect child victims involved in investigations and criminal proceedings
3. Improve the situation of children in detention
4. Reduce the number of children in detention

Children on the move:

1. Develop protection measures for children on the move and measures for their accommodation
2. Help support minor foreigners not only at basic schools, but also at high schools and universities
3. Improve legislative and administrative frameworks for children at risk of separation from the family
4. Improve the integration of migrant children
5. Prioritise children on the move and look into the situation of different children who fall into this group, such as undocumented children, unaccompanied children, children left in their country while parents work abroad etc., because this is an emerging issue
6. Trafficking of children

Roma children:

1. Address the difficulty of solving the contradictions between Roma children's integration in formal education and their families' (sometimes) lacking motivation to see this happen
2. Discrimination against Roma children
3. Help improve the situation of Roma children

4. CHILD PARTICIPATION

General:

1. Child-friendly materials
2. Develop materials suitable for children
3. Development of child-friendly materials
4. Child-friendly complaints mechanisms (also considering the entry into force of the CRC 3rd OP)
5. Child participation in national steering committees for the prevention and combating of violence against children
6. Create wider opportunities for the development/improvement of a child-friendly society
7. Develop programmes to promote child participation in various habitual environments (family, school, community) for different groups of children, based on specific needs related to age, development, risk of discrimination, etc.
8. Financing of NGO programmes that support child participation

9. Implement mentoring programmes for children in conflict with the law, in order to involve them in the community, help them build self-confidence and motivation, and improve their relations to school and the family
10. Inter-sectoral cooperation for improved social inclusion of children
11. Organise a national tournament in child rights
12. Participation of children in schools
13. Policies on encouraging child participation
14. Promote child participation initiatives that can be shared and spread both at local and national levels, including through the school systems

Studies and Research, Methodology, Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Develop a methodology on child participation
2. Develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance for determining the best interests of the child in every area, and disseminate these to the public, courts of law, administrative authorities and legislative bodies
3. Engage and support pupils in child rights monitoring and reporting to local and central authorities
4. Guidance to conduct research to evaluate the level of child participation
5. Increase children's participation in the monitoring of alternative care, including for children with disabilities, and share good practices between member states
6. Multiply child participation projects and ensure that they are evaluated
7. Projects that allow children to monitor work on children's rights

Campaigns:

1. Campaign to change the attitudes of the general public and, in particular, of adults working with children or on children's issues, to make them understand the importance of child participation
2. Conduct media campaigns presenting the best interests of the child in all matters
3. Inform the general public of the need to involve children and improve child participation

Right to be heard:

1. Children's right to be heard in child welfare and health care
2. Take necessary measures in order to implement existing legislation and promote and facilitate the respect for the views of the child in all settings and on all matters affecting him/her
3. Training of specialists at different levels on how to involve children actively and how to talk to children

Democratic citizenship:

1. Develop a child-friendly citizen involvement system, whereby children are included in management boards of schools, local councils, etc.
2. Facilitate the process of creation of self-governance structures of pupils in educational institutions, at district / municipal and national level, in order to provide opportunities for free expression and participation of children in education sector
3. Improve child participation in general and make it more democratic – reaching all social levels
4. Support national councils of pupils in consultation of the educational policies
5. Training for children on democratic citizenship and human rights

Access to information:

1. Focus on the right to child-friendly communication and information as part of children's participation, and share best practices across member states
2. Penalty provisions (e.g. fines) for health care institutions or other legal entities conducting health care activities if they do not provide for a child over 15 years of age and capable of

reasoning a possibility to access his/her medical records or they violate the child's right to confidentiality of data contained in his/her medical records

5. OTHER

Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child:

1. A working group of representatives from member states could be given the task to make the first draft of the next Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child
2. Discuss how the Council of Europe could evaluate the effect of its standards at national level, and determine if these standards – or how to use them – need to be further developed in order to be effective
3. For the CoE Strategy on the Rights of the Child: Timeframe optimisation, precise monitoring modalities, and the elaboration of an evaluation process

General:

1. Help set up children ombudsmen in countries that do not have one
2. Increase corporate social responsibility in child care systems
3. Better coordination
4. Efforts to further improve the structures and services involved in guaranteeing the full affirmation of children's rights
5. Emphasise that integrated strategies and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms have to be in place
6. Increase know-how and compare practices on child-friendly administration, including child impact assessment in decision-making, child-friendly/-participatory budgeting, indicators and follow-up on child-wellbeing, and coordination of child- and family policies
7. Establishment of various mechanisms within schools and external support to schools for inclusive education
8. Implement relevant guidelines, legislation and strategies to improve the rights of children
9. Pay special attention to the particularly difficult position for a growing number of “street children“ and children of asylum seekers

Monitoring and evaluation:

1. Focus on the most vulnerable groups and build capacities in the field of evaluation
2. Independent monitoring of inclusive education is an invaluable asset for keeping the pressure on the system to continue with the implementation of reforms for inclusive education
3. Monitoring mechanisms for children's rights

Economic austerity:

1. Reduction of family and child poverty
2. The long-term economic crisis and limited budgetary funds will also in the future determine the need for an analysis and technical assistance for the purposes of improving efficiency and effectiveness of the existing programs and services for children
3. Pay more attention to the consequences of the economic crisis, which has led to an increase in child labour
4. Combat inequalities in available funds at the local level, particularly in the least developed municipalities, which lead to uneven implementation of laws and policies

Children, the media, Internet:

1. Address children and the Internet as a new important theme, taking into account both possibilities and risks, and enhancing media education for both children and parents
2. Children and safe Internet procedures
3. Children and the media
4. Focus on the risks of social media

5. Implementation of the campaign for combating hate speech online should be comprehensive and conducted throughout primary schools
6. Increase attention towards violence against children online, especially child pornography which is still on the increase
7. Media, advertising and children
8. Promote information campaigns through the media

Parenting:

1. Create a national network of services to promote non-violent parenting skills in raising and educating children, focusing on 3 levels: a) universal - general information at community level on the non-violent practices of upbringing and education; b) specialized – counselling/advising families where there is risk and/or cases of neglect/violence against children; c) highly specialized - highly qualified and individualized psychological / psychotherapeutic assistance for children victims of violence and their parents / careers to overcome the effects of trauma and relapse prevention, solving relationship conflicts, legal assistance
2. Support studies and develop recommendations on how to deal with conflictual divorces of parents that are currently on the rise

Violence:

1. Debates about the prohibition of corporal punishment to change public opinion
2. Individualised approaches to support inclusion and prevention of school dropout and violence
3. Protection from violence against children in their pre-natal phase