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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Slovakia*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of Slovakia [1] at its 2848th and 2849th meetings,[2] held on 13 and 14 January 2025, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2876th meeting, held on 31 January 2025.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the sixth periodic report of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues,[3] which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegation of the State party.

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes the various legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State party to implement the Convention, including the National Action Plan of the European Child Guarantee, the National Strategy "Childhood without Violence for all Children (2023 – 2029) and its Action Plan (2023 – 2026), Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 and the creation of the post of Coordinator for the Protection of Children from Violence in 2017. The committee also welcomes the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the designation of the National Preventive Mechanism.

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: corporal punishment (para. 22), torture and other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment (para. 25), children deprived of

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-eighth session (13 January – 7 February 2025).

[1] CRC/C/SVK/6.

[2] See CRC/C/SR.2848 and 2849.

[3] CRC/C/SVK/RQ/6.

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a family environment (para. 29), children with disabilities (para. 32), education: aims and coverage (para. 39) and asylum seeking, refugee and migrant children (para. 42).

5. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.**

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation

6. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop a comprehensive law on children's rights and a child-rights impact assessment procedure for national legislation and policies relevant for children.**

Comprehensive policy and strategy

7. **While noting that no strategy or action plan focusing on the rights of children has been developed since the national action plan for children 2013-2017, the Committee recommends that the State party develop a comprehensive policy on children that encompasses all areas covered by the Convention and the Optional protocols thereto, and on the basis of the policy, develop a strategy with the necessary elements for its application, which is supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources.**

Coordination

8. **The Committee understands that the Committee for Children and Youth does not have the mandate to coordinate all the activities related to the implementation of the Convention and recommends that the State party considers to designate an authority, based on the model of the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children, with a clear mandate to coordinate all policies and measures for the implementation of children's rights in a cross-sectoral, national and local levels and provide it with the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective operation.**

Allocation of resources

9. **Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the budget needs of children and allocate adequate budgetary resources, in accordance with article 4 of the Convention, for the implementation of children's rights and, in particular, increase the budget allocated to social sectors and address disparities related to children's rights;**

(b) **Utilize a child-rights-based approach in the elaboration of the State budget, by implementing a tracking system for the allocation and the use of resources for children throughout the budget. The State party should also use this tracking system for impact assessments on how investments in any sector may serve the best interests of the child, ensuring that the different impact of such investment on children is measured.**

Data collection

10. **Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expeditiously improve its data collection system and ensure that data collected on children's rights covers all areas of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto, with data disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographical location, ethnic and national origin and socioeconomic background, in order to facilitate analysis of the situation of children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability;**

(b) **Ensure that statistical data and indicators on children's rights are shared among the ministries concerned and used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects for the effective implementation of the Convention.**

Access to justice and remedy

11. **While noting the efforts made by the State party, including the establishment of the litigation friend position and the support by the State party to implement the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure and to promote it globally, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that all children have access to: (i) confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and detention for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights; and (ii) legal support and age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation**;

(b) **Raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under the existing mechanisms and provide access to tools and services to file a complaint such as access to internet or interpretation services;**

(c) **Continue to raise awareness about the Optional Protocol to the Convention on a Communications Procedure and provide capacity-building activities aimed at training relevant actors, including children and/or child human rights defenders, on the Optional Protocol.**

(d) **Ensure systematic and mandatory training for all relevant professionals working with and for children on child-friendly procedures and remedies, children's rights and the Convention.**

Independent monitoring

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the independence of the Commissioner for Children and provide the Commissioner with unrestricted access to children deprived of liberty without prior authorization from the Prosecutor's office;**

(b) **Ensure adequate and long-term funding for the Slovak National Human Rights Centre and the Public Defender of Rights and establish a system for monitoring the implementation of measures proposed by these institutions.**

Children's rights and the business sector

13. **Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights and to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the Human Rights Council in 2011, the Committee recommends that the State party implement regulations to ensure that the business sector complies with international, regional and national human rights, labour, environment and other standards, particularly with regard to children's rights. In particular, it recommends that the State party**:

(a) **Carry out effective monitoring of implementation of these standards and appropriately sanction and provide remedies when violations occur;**

(b) **Require companies to undertake assessments, consultations, and full public disclosure of the environmental, health-related and children's rights impacts of their business activities and their plans to address such impacts.**

Cooperation with Civil Society

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Systematically and proactively involve civil society, including non-governmental organizations and children's organizations, in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to children's rights and establish mechanisms for their participation;**

(b) **Strengthen its measures to ensure full independence of civil society organizations, including those working on children's rights, so they may deploy their activities and communicate in a conducive environment.**

B. General principles (arts. 2–3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

15. **The Committee welcomes the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030. Nevertheless, in the light of reports of persistent discrimination against and social exclusion of children from ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, and non-citizens as well as against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, it reiterates its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to combat discrimination in all its forms and in particular hate speech, violence and ethnic segregation in education;**

(b) **Intensify public awareness and education campaigns and actions to address negative attitudes towards Roma children, children from migrant backgrounds, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, and promote tolerance and respect for diversity;**

(c) **Increase efforts to implement the Anti-Discrimination Act particularly by addressing the shortcomings in the interpretation of its provisions in the training of judges;**

(d) **Provide access to effective remedies for child victims of discrimination.**

Best interests of the child

16. **While commending the State party for enshrining a list of criteria for the best interests of the child assessment in Article 5 of the Family Law Act, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions as well as in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to, and have an impact on, children;**

(b) **Develop procedures and non-exhaustive list of criteria to provide guidance to all relevant persons in authority for determining the best interests of the child in every area as a primary consideration;**

(c) **Evaluate and eliminate, on the basis of the procedure and criteria described above, practices, policies and services that may not be in the best interests of the child.**

Respect for the views of the child

17. **Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Explicitly recognize in the relevant legislation the right of the child to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child and establish procedures for judges and social workers to implement this right;**

(b) **While noting the Law No. 360/2019 amending Law No 282/2008 Coll. on the promotion of youth work, develop toolkits for public consultation on national policy development and standardize such consultation with high levels of inclusiveness and participation, including consultations with children on issues that affect them;**

(c) **Strengthen the programmes and awareness-raising activities to promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, community and schools, including within student council bodies, with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations;**

(d) **Institutionalize and increase the numbers of the Pupils' and Students' Parliaments as regular events and ensure that they are provided with a meaningful mandate and adequate human, technical and financial resources, in order to facilitate children's effective engagement with national legislative processes on issues that affect them.**

D. Civil and political rights (arts. 7–8 and 13–17)

Right to preservation of identity

18. **The Committee urges the State party to uphold children's right to have their identity protected through ending the practice of anonymous abandonment of children, including through prohibiting the use of baby boxes, 'public incubators' or 'rescue nests', and to strengthen and promote the existing alternatives, including by providing family planning services, adequate counselling and social support for unplanned pregnancies.**

Right to privacy and access to appropriate information

19. **While noting the efforts made by the State party, in particular the adoption of the Action Plans for the National Strategy for Protection of Children in the Digital Environment (2022 – 2023 and 2024-2025), and recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the implementation of regulations, including the Act No. 264/2022 Coll. on Media Services, and of safeguarding policies for the media and in the digital environment to protect the privacy of children;**

(b) **Ensure that laws on access to information and the digital environment protect children from harmful content and materials and online risks, and provide for mechanisms to prosecute violations;**

(c) **Elaborate safeguards with a view to ensuring the rights of children in the use of artificial intelligence;**

(d) **Address digital inequalities and ensure equal access to digital technologies, especially the internet and computers, to all children, in particular children from Roma communities.**

E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a), and 39 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)

Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation

20. **The Committee welcomes the National Strategy "Childhood without Violence for all Children (2023 – 2026)" and the number of activities undertaken by the National**

Coordination Centre for Addressing Violence against Children. In the light of its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Establish a national database on all cases of violence against children, including domestic violence, abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the extent, causes and nature of such violence;**

(b) **Ensure that all cases of abuse of children, including sexual abuse, are promptly reported and investigated, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and duly sanctioned and reparations are provided to victims, as appropriate;**

(c) **Ensure that all children who are victims or witnesses of violence have prompt access to child-friendly, multisectoral, and comprehensive interventions, services and support, including forensic interviews and psychological therapy, with the aim of preventing the secondary victimization of those children, and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation and expansion of the *barnahus* model;**

(d) **Ensure as a standard procedure the acceptance of audiovisual recordings of the child victim's testimony as evidence, and conduct any questioning that is required in child-friendly facilities without delay;**

(e) **Implement the measures necessary to enhance awareness of child sexual abuse and exploitation among both the members of public and professionals working with and for children;**

(f) **Respond to all manifestations of child sexual exploitation and abuse, in particular online, including by strengthening the professional capacity and software tools to detect and investigate such abuse; promoting training for parents and teachers about risks online and the risks associated with sexting; ensuring and promoting accessible, confidential, child-friendly and effective channels for reporting all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse; and encouraging children to make use thereof.**

Corporal punishment

21. The Committee is seriously concerned that the Family Law provides for the right to use "adequate upbringing measures" and does not establish an explicit prohibition on corporal punishment in the family environment. It is also concerned about reports that corporal punishment is tolerated in the society and legal provisions against violence and abuse are not interpreted as prohibiting all corporal punishment in childrearing.

22. **Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2006) on corporal punishment, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Amend its legislation and explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in law in all settings, including in the home;**

(b) **Continue to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline;**

(c) **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for parents and professionals working with and for children to promote attitudinal change, within the family and the community, with regard to corporal punishment.**

Harmful practices

23. **Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, and taking note of target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage on the physical and mental health and well-being of children,**

especially girls, targeting households, local authorities, religious leaders and judges and prosecutors, especially in the Nitra region;

(b) **Establish protection schemes for victims of child marriage who file a complaint.**

Torture and cruel or degrading treatment or punishment

24. The Committee remains seriously concerned about reports of excessive use of force and ill-treatment of Roma children by the State party's law-enforcement officials. It is particularly concerned about the reports of low number of prosecutions and convictions and impunity of the police officers accused of ill-treatment of Roma children, despite its previous recommendations in this regard.

25. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (see CRC/C/15/Add.140, para. 26, CRC/C/SVK/CO/2, para. 35 and CRC/C/SVK/CO/3-5) and urges the State party to:**

(a) **Carry out prompt, impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all allegations of violent verbal and physical attacks and incidents of harassment against Roma children by State actors, especially the police, as well as private individuals, including all violent police raids in Roma settlements, and bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice;**

(b) **Design and implement a systematic strategy to improve the work of the police, prosecutors and judges with Roma communities, including regular training on human rights standards, and allocate adequate funding for its implementation.**

Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

26. **The Committee regrets the insufficient information on the implementation of its concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol.[4] Recalling its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol,[5] and recalling its previous concluding observations,[6] the Committee urges the State party to bring its penal code into full compliance with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol, especially as they relate to the definition of the sale of children. It also recommends that the State party step up its antitrafficking prevention efforts in relation to child victims, and take preventive measures to address the sale of children, child prostitution and sex trafficking in Roma communities.**

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1)–(2), 20–21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

27. **While commending the intentions of the State party to develop measures and services to prevent family separation and with reference to its Statement under article 5 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Include the duty of parents to provide appropriate guidance to children in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of children in trainings on positive parenting;**

(b) **Develop quality and accessible support services to keep children in all types of families as measures of preventing the separation of and placing a child in out of home care;**

(c) **Align the deinstitutionalisation policy with effective measures to support parents to look after their children.**

[4] CRC/C/OPSC/SVK/CO/1.
[5] CRC/C/156.
[6] CRC/C SVK/CO/3-5.

Children deprived of a family environment

28. The Committee notes the efforts made by the State party, in particular the National Action Plan for inclusion (2022-2026), the amendments to the Code of Non-Contentious Civil Procedure related to emergency placement of children, the use of family circle meetings as conference model for working with families and regular trainings to professionals working with and for children in alternative care settings. However, the Committee did not receive any comprehensive response on the deinstitutionalisation strategy of the State party and therefore it remains seriously concerned about:

(a) The information that the bill removing exemptions based on the age of the child from family-based care is still pending for adoption;

(b) The deinstitutionalisation strategy and action plan, which have not been aligned with the current challenges experienced by families and children;

(c) The high levels of institutionalization of children with disabilities although it is mandatory to offer family-based substitute care for children under six years of age;

(d) The increased number of child care centres and the continuous placement of children deprived of a family environment in institutional care;

(e) Insufficient monitoring of the situation of all children in alternative care;

(f) The limited capacity in the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and low financial rewards for social work professionals;

(g) Inadequate care, punitive practices and poor living conditions in re-education centers for children with behavioural difficulties;

(h) While Roma children continue to comprise the largest ethnic group in children's homes in the State party, the lack of employees belonging to the Roma community.

29. **Drawing the State party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Accelerate the adoption of the bill to remove exemptions from family-based care based on the age of the child;**

(b) **Consider updating the deinstitutionalisation strategy and action plan applying a multisectoral approach and coordination to address the multidimensional needs of families and children as prevention from institutionalisation;**

(c) **Accelerate the progress towards the deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities and provide for additional social protection measures for children with disabilities under the age of 6 years that address additional costs of disability, need for specialized services and assistive devices and equipment;**

(d) **Limit the placement of children in any type of residential care and ensure sufficient alternative family-based and community-based care options for children who cannot stay with their families, including by allocating sufficient financial resources for foster care and substitute family care, and facilitate the family reunification of children when possible;**

(e) **Ensure periodic review of the placement of children in care, and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children;**

(f) **Ensure that adequate human, technical and financial resources are allocated to alternative care centres and relevant child protection services, including professionals belonging to the Roma community, in order to facilitate the social reintegration of children resident therein to the greatest extent possible;**

(g) **Undertake a comprehensive reform of re-education centers and take preventative measures to address the underlying causes of children's behavioural challenges and prioritize children's holistic development;**

(h) **Continue to strengthen the capacity** of **the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and increase the wage of the social work professionals.**

Children of incarcerated parents

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expedite the amendments to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code in order to expand the substantive legal conditions for imposing house arrest and consider alternatively additional measures to permit mothers with young children under the age of 5 to remain in non-custodial settings both during the pre-trial stage and/or after conviction;**

(b) **In cases where detention is unavoidable, ensure that facilities are adapted to provide supportive environment for mothers and children with access to essential services;**

(c) **Protect and ensure the visitation rights of the children of incarcerated parents, including by increasing the frequency and duration of visits, providing adequate and child-friendly meeting premises, and removing restrictions on the number of simultaneous visitors.**

G. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

31. The Committee welcomes the National Program on the Development of Living Conditions for Persons with Disabilities for 2021–2030 and the National Action Plan for inclusion (2022-2026), but remains concerned that:

(a) There is limited support, including insufficient financial support, and inadequate social services for children with disabilities and their families as well as limited respite care for caregivers;

(b) There is a lack of data on children with disabilities who were reunited with their families or enter adoption or permanent family-based substitute care placements.

32. **Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability, and:**

(a) **Harmonize national legislation with the human rights model of disability and ensure change of overall attitude among professionals and communities towards disability;**

(b) **Organize the collection of disaggregated data on children with disabilities;**

(c) **Develop an efficient and harmonized system for disability assessment in order to facilitate access for children with all types of disabilities to appropriate and inclusive services, including to education, health, social protection and support services;**

(d) **Increase financial and social support for children with disabilities and their caregivers, including by providing the caregivers with access to respite care and support services.**

H. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

Health and health services

33. **Recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen the assessment, monitoring and prevention of the segregation in all its forms in the paediatric departments of some hospitals and eradicate discriminatory attitudes towards Roma women and girls in maternity care settings,**

including by improving independent oversight mechanisms for public and private healthcare facilities with sufficient authority, resources and clear mandate;

(b) **Amend the law and ensure its implementation in order to guarantee the rights of children to be accompanied by trusted adults such as parents, legal guardians or other caregivers, during hospitalization;**

(c) **Evaluate the implementation of the National Action Plan for Obesity Prevention for 2015-2025 to address poor nutritional habits among children and on that basis, develop a new action plan;**

(d) **Strengthen efforts to limit the marketing of food and beverages to children in line with the World Health Organization's set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children.**

Mental health

34. **While noting the National Mental Health Programme, the Mental Health Council and the establishment of the Mental Health Support Fund, the Committee recommends that the State party take measures to address the reported increase in mental health conditions among children, especially adolescents, and to provide timely interventions and consultations. In this regard, the State party should increase the number of qualified psychologists, especially in schools.**

Adolescent health

35. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and general comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, the Committee recommends that the State party take measures, including with regard to Roma children:**

(a) **To adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory age-appropriate school curriculum and targeted at adolescents, with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;**

(b) **To ensure that children and adolescents, including those who are out of school and those in rural areas, receive confidential and child-friendly age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;**

(c) **To continue addressing the incidence of drug use by children and adolescents by, *inter alia*, strengthening its efforts to provide children and adolescents with accurate and objective information and life skills education on preventing substance abuse — including tobacco and alcohol — and develop accessible and child-friendly drug dependence treatment.**

I. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))

36. **Noting the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030, and the European Union Child Guarantee Action Plan, the Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Allocate sufficient national resources and ensure targeted and efficient utilisation of the European Union resources for their implementation;**

(b) **Consider revising its policy on conditional cash benefits for children, which, according to the research evidence, affects disproportionately the Roma community;**

(c) **Strengthen its social housing policy to be easily accessible for families with children;**

(d) **Adopt policies and allocate budget to ensure that those living in rural areas and Roma settlements have adequate and safe drinking water and sanitation services.**

J. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2-3, 6, 12-13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 26-31)

37. **Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, and taking note of the environmental protection legislation of the State party, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a climate law that complies with the State party's international obligations as soon as possible;**

(b) **Ensure that the proposed Updated Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 is backed by sufficient financial resources, and clear targets and responsible actors;**

(c) **Ensure that children's special vulnerabilities, needs and views are taken into account in developing policies and programmes to address climate change and disaster risk management;**

(d) **Collect disaggregated data identifying the types of risk faced by children to the occurrence of a variety of disasters in order to formulate international, regional and national policies, frameworks and agreements accordingly;**

(e) **Take the necessary steps to ensure that the European Union nationally determined contributions, and the related National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030, are participatory and child rights-based, in their implementation;**

(f) **Seek bi-lateral, multi-lateral, regional and international cooperation in implementing these recommendations.**

K. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education: aims and coverage

38. The Committee welcomes the Strategy of inclusive approach in education and training for years 2022 - 2024 and its Action Plan as well as the "Opportunity for All" project of the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Youth. However, it remains concerned about:

(a) The continuous practice of segregation of Roma children in education;

(b) Disproportionately high numbers of Roma children in special education institutions;

(c) High proportion of dropout rates among Roma children;

(d) High proportion of children with disabilities in special education institutions and the lack of reasonable accommodation within mainstream education;

(e) The low rate of enrolment of children in preschool education, especially for Roma children, due to, *inter alia*, the low investment in preschool education, limited levels of support to families and the persistence of stereotypes regarding gender roles.

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take immediate steps to increase the integration of Roma children who are currently in special schools and classes into mainstream education;**

(b) **Allocate sufficient resources for the development of desegregation projects, including by providing Roma children with comprehensive support to maximize their learning potential in mainstream education and by addressing the socio-economic status and living conditions of such children as well as prevent the drop out of Roma children from schools;**

(c) **Ensure that all children with disabilities have access to inclusive education in mainstream schools, ensuring that schools are equipped with trained teachers, accessible infrastructure and teaching materials adapted to the needs of children with disabilities;**

(d) **Train and assign specialized teachers and professionals in integrated classes providing individual support and all due attention to children with learning difficulties;**

(e) **Allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood education, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development.**

Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities

40. **While noting the Culture and Creative Industries Strategy 2030 and recalling its general comment No 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, the Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to guarantee the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child, including by adopting and implementing play and leisure policies with sufficient and sustainable resources.**

L. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32–33, 35–36, 37 (b)–(d), and 38–40 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)

Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children

41. While commending the State party for its quick, effective and compassionate response and reception of the high number of Ukrainian people, including many children, fleeing the war in Ukraine, and its continuous support to these children, the Committee remains seriously concerned that:

(a) Although it is prohibited under the *Act on Residence of Foreigners* for unaccompanied children to be detained, it is reported that foreign families with children continue to be detained in poorly furnished and prison-like conditions. Those children who are detained, are not afforded full access to education, health, and services that promote children's growth and development;

(b) Children are required to undergo medical age determination procedures when there is a doubt about their age. Until the age is determined or if the person refuses to undergo the medical age determination procedure, they are considered as adults;

(c) Official court appointments of guardians for unaccompanied children are lengthy, delaying necessary administrative steps, and the guardians are not properly trained;

(d) Unaccompanied migrant children who do not apply for asylum are granted only tolerated residence, which is a temporary solution for 180 days that can be extended;

(e) Unaccompanied children enrolled in universities are not provided with legal guardians and do not receive necessary care;

(f) There is no of formal statelessness determination legislation and procedure;

(g) The persons granted asylum on humanitarian grounds are not entitled to family reunification.

42. **Recalling the joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration and its General Comment No. 6 (2005) on treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To end the detention of families with children and implement non-custodial measures in cases of asylum-seeker and refugee families with children;**

(b) **To ensure that the age assessment procedure is line with the principle of presumption of minority and give the person concerned the opportunity to challenge the outcome through a judicial procedure and further ensure that age assessment procedures are undertaken only in cases of doubt about the age of the person concerned, are subject to the informed assent of the child, are conducted in a safe, child- and gender-sensitive manner, and are undertaken by independent, multi-disciplinary team with appropriate expertise. While the procedure is under way, the State party should ensure that the person concerned is treated as a child and remains within the child protection system;**

(c) **Expedite the procedure for appointing trained guardians for the unaccompanied migrant children and ensure that they are provided with a longer-term solution for a legal stay in the country;**

(d) **Ensure that unaccompanied children enrolled in universities, are provided with guardians and the necessary care and support.**

(e) **Ensure that any return of Ukrainian children, especially unaccompanied children, and children living in institutions, only occurs after a rigorous, independent assessment of the safety of the situation on the ground, a proper determination of their best interests and comprehensive planning and support;**

(f) **Establish national legislation on a statelessness determination procedure in order to give effect to the rights of stateless children as enshrined in the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons;***

(g) **Take all necessary measures to ensure that the principle of family unity is legally available through family reunification to persons granted asylum on humanitarian grounds, including by amending the respective provisions of the Act on Asylum.**

Trafficking

43. **While noting the National Programme for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2019-2023, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers with penalties proportionate to the gravity of the crime as well as improve efforts to identify child victims within the country, especially foreign nationals, asylum-seekers, and Roma children, including by training relevant government officials.**

Administration of child justice

44. **The Committee commends the State party for establishing the new judicial map in 2023 and for the new Code of Criminal Procedure that strengthens the position of a child victim. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expeditiously re-establish the posts of specialized judges under the new Judicial Map and ensure that such specialized judges receive appropriate training;**

(b) **Continue implementing legislation providing free and specialised legal aid to children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings;**

(c) **Strengthen the implementation of non-judicial measures, such as diversion and mediation for children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service, and ensure that health and psycho-social services are provided to such children for their re-integration**;

(d) **Ensure that special procedures for interrogating children are used for all children up to and including the age of 18, with particular emphasis on their protection and avoiding re-victimization;**

(e) **Ensure that detention is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time and is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to its withdrawal;**

(f) **For the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, ensure that the children are not detained together with adults under any circumstances and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services.**

Children in armed conflict including implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

45. **While noting the State party's information that the Ministry of Justice presented a proposal to add a new offence of "involvement of children in armed conflicts" within the framework of an amendment to the Criminal Code by 2026, the Committee recommends that the State party accelerate efforts to criminalize violations of the provisions of the Optional Protocol regarding the recruitment and involvement of children in hostilities.**

M. Ratification of international human rights instruments

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

N. Cooperation with regional bodies

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe and the European Union on the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State party and in other States members of the Council of Europe.**

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

48. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the sixth periodic report, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.**

B. National mechanism for reporting and follow-up

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party establish a standing government structure and ensure that it has the mandate and adequate human, technical and financial resources to coordinate and engage with, and prepare reports to, international and regional human rights mechanisms and to coordinate and track national follow-up to, and the implementation of, treaty obligations and the recommendations and decisions emanating from those mechanisms effectively. The Committee emphasizes that such a structure should be adequately and continuously**

supported by dedicated staff and should have the capacity to consult systematically with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and civil society.

C. Next report

50. **The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the State party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines**[7] **and should not exceed 21,200 words.**[8] **In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.**

[7] CRC/C/58/Rev.3.

[8] General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.