

Observations of the Republic Of Lithuania on the Report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Nils Muižnieks following his visit to Lithuania, 5-9 December 2016

Preliminary remarks

Lithuania strongly supports the Council of Europe and actively promotes its standards and values in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Lithuania attaches great importance to the international human rights instruments and obligations arising from them.

Lithuania fully supports the mandate of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and commends the Commissioner and his team for their tireless efforts in monitoring human rights in the Council of Europe member states. Monitoring visits provide an important opportunity for the Council of Europe member states to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Commissioner and ensure a positive impetus for follow-up actions on the national level. The work of the Commissioner should be supported by all member states of the Council of Europe.

Lithuania notes with appreciation the in-depth report of the Commissioner following his visit in December 2016 and his valuable recommendations concerning women's rights and gender equality, rights of children and rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Lithuania.

The Commissioner's recommendations will be carefully considered by the Lithuanian authorities. Lithuania looks forward to the continued cooperation with the Commissioner for Human Rights in the future.

Comments

Lithuania would like to take this opportunity to make the following observations. The comments refer to individual passages in the Commissioner's report. The numbering corresponds to the numbering of the relevant sections and paragraphs of the report.

Chapter 1. Women rights and gender equality

Section 1.1. Legislative and policy framework

12. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to clarify that the *Lithuanian National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015–2021* sets four goals: to promote equal opportunities in the field of employment and occupation; promote gender equality in decision-making; improve effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality; promote integration of the gender aspect into other policies.

Furthermore, the *Inter-institutional Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination for 2015-2020* ceased to be valid as of 1 January 2017. The new *Action Plan for Promotion of Non-discrimination for 2017-2019* is currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in collaboration with other ministries, institutions and the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.

17. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to note that it is envisaged that the new Labour Code will enter into force on 1 July 2017.

Section 1.4. Enforcement of legislation in force and prevention measures

49. It should be noted that in February 2017 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania accepted the second cycle Universal Periodic Review recommendations to ratify the Istanbul Convention. On 16 June 2017 the Committee of Human Rights of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is hosting a *conference “The Ratification of Istanbul Convention – Expected Changes”* with the expected participation of GREVIO president F. Acar and vice-president R. Logar. The conference aims to promote accurate and factual information regarding measures envisaged in the Istanbul Convention.

Chapter 2. Rights of children

Section 2.3 Children in socialisation centres.

79. The Ministry of Education and Science would like to clarify that the special education centre in Švėkšna does not implement medium care of minors. By the end of 2014, 156 minors resided in six socialisation centres. By the end of 2015, 125 minors (86 boys and 39 girls) resided in socialisation centres.

Section 2.5 Violence against children

98. The Office of the Prosecutor General would like to clarify that according to the *Strategic Action Plan of the Office of the Prosecutor General for 2016-2018*, one of the priorities of the Office of the Prosecutor General is the strengthening of prosecution in criminal matters related to violent crimes against children (not only related to criminal matters concerning sexual exploitation of children).

101. While implementing the priority “strengthening of prosecution in criminal matters related to violent crimes against children” (*the Strategic Action Plan of the Office of the Prosecutor General for 2016-2018*), the Office of the Prosecutor General aims to intensify pre-trial investigation actions; to shorten the term for gathering the material for expertise and the term for providing expertise; implement the principle of questioning a child only once; decrease the duration of pre-trial investigations; increase the percentage of finalised pre-trial investigations by submitting the case to court; increase the control of procedural decisions.

The Office of the Prosecutor General would like to note that currently according to the *Article 186 of the Criminal Procedure Code* of the Republic of Lithuania, a representative of a national institution for protection of children rights or a psychologist shall be summoned to the hearing of a witness or victim under 18 years of age only if requested by the parties to the procedure or further to the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor, or pre-trial investigation judge. Usually during the pre-trial investigation an under-aged victim or witness is questioned in premises suitable for questioning a minor. As of 1 August 2018, *amendments to the Article 186 of the Criminal Procedure Code* will establish that a representative of a national institution for protection of children rights or a psychologist shall always be summoned to the hearing of a young child witness or victim, and to the hearing of a witness or victim under 18 years of age in criminal matters related to crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual self-determination and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from the prostitution of an under-aged person or the involvement of an under-aged person in prostitution, or in other cases, if requested by the parties to the procedure or further to the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor,

or pre-trial investigation judge. According to the above-mentioned amendments, an under-aged victim or witness shall always be questioned in premises suitable for questioning a minor.

According to the Order of the Prosecutor General No. I-318 of 30 October 2012, the *Recommendations on the specialisation in the prosecution process and in pre-trial investigations, and on allocation of criminal cases to prosecutors* (hereinafter – “the Recommendations”) were approved. According to the Recommendations, a specialisation of prosecutors concerning juvenile justice is established. It should be noted that the success of the pre-trial investigation does not only depend on the competences of the prosecutor, but also on the competences of the pre-trial investigation officer. Currently, pre-trial investigation officers do not have an established specialisation related to juvenile justice.

Aiming for a better protection of the rights of children in the process of prosecution, the collaboration among the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Office of the Ombudsperson of Children Rights and the Office of the Prosecutor General is being improved.

The Office of the Prosecutor General organizes trainings aimed at developing competences of prosecutors, pre-trial officers and employees of Child Rights Protection Service in the area of working with victims of violence, including under-aged victims. In 2016, the Office of the Prosecutor General organized 7 trainings on juvenile justice and domestic violence:

- “*Contemporary problems of juvenile justice*” (attended by 23 prosecutors, 12 court representatives, 41 police officer, 14 representatives of Child Rights Protection Service);
- “*The specifics of juvenile justice after the amendments to the Criminal Code*” (attended by 62 prosecutors, 45 police officers, 10 representatives of Child Rights Protection Service);
- “*Prevention, assistance and control of domestic violence against children*” (attended by 4 prosecutors);
- “*We are able to fight domestic violence: experience and perspectives*” (attended by 3 prosecutors);
- “*The Right of the Child to Respect*” (3 prosecutors);
- Two seminars on *domestic violence* (one seminar was attended by 31 prosecutor and 1 judge; the second seminar was attended by 30 prosecutors, 2 judges and 2 police officers).

Section 2.6 Conclusions and recommendations

102. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has developed a *draft law on amending the Law on the Framework of Child Protection No. I-1234*, as well as draft laws for other related acts (hereinafter – “the Draft Law”), which were registered at the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania on 9 February 2017. The Draft Law is aimed at improving the currently existing system of child protection safeguards, which would give the child the required effective support and a proper environment for the full development of the child. It is suggested to centralize the implementation of children rights protection, replacing the earlier delegated (transferred to municipalities) function of protection of the rights of a child into the function of the state protection of the rights of a child, and the subordination of children rights protection units at municipal administrations to change into their subordination to the State Child Rights Protection Service, which is proposed to be legalized as the central authority in the state for the protection of the rights of the child and adoption.

It should be noted that provisions of *Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 20, 21, 23 and 58 in the Law amending the Law on Education No I-1489 and the Law amending the Law on the Minimal and Medium Child Care No X-1238* provide for the enforcement of a coordinator for inter-institutional

cooperation at the municipality. The activities of the coordinator for inter-institutional cooperation are aimed at: coordinating services of education support, social and health care services to children and their representatives provided by municipalities, defining the demand of such support and services, monitoring of the accessibility and quality, providing information to the local community on the possibilities of receiving educational support and social and health care services for children and their representatives, drafting of the development plan for coordinated educational support and social and health care services, planning, coordination and assessment of the implementation of the minimal and medium child care measures, establishment of the need and the accessibility of minimal child care measures and corresponding services, coordination of processes of social integration of children into the society. This activity is an integral part of the general system for protecting the rights of the child and contributes to the protection of children rights.

103. The Minister of Social Security and Labour approved in the Order No A1-83 of 14 February 2014 *the Action Plan for the Transition from institutional care to family and community services to the disabled and children without parental care*. The Action Plan provides for actions in 2014-2020 promoting the development of the system for transition from institutional care to the provision of services in the community and support to families and guardians (caregivers).

The Ministry together with the European Social Fund Agency and the State Child Rights Protection Service (hereinafter – the CRPS), signed on 3 November 2015 a tripartite agreement on funding and administration (hereinafter – “the Agreement”). The EU Structural Fund co-finances the Project “*Sustainable transition from institutional care to the development of conditions in Lithuania for providing services in the community and to the families*” (hereinafter – “the Project”), which is part of the 1st phase of the transformation of institutional care. The aim of the Project is to create conditions for an effective transition from institutional care to family and community-based services in Lithuania and is directly associated with the goals of the reorganization of institutional care:

1. Ensure a sustainable environment and conditions for every child (including a disabled child) to live in his/her biological family, and for children deprived of parental care to live in the family of guardians or foster parents, or social family and to receive community support;
2. Enable the disabled adults and their families (guardians/carers) to receive individual community services meeting their needs.
3. Promote changes in the values of society by forming a positive attitude toward the reorganisation of the system and ensure publicity of the processes.

The Project provides for measures to achieve the set goals and will be implemented in all regions of Lithuania. The Project foresees:

- To assess individual needs of representatives of target groups, residing in care establishments selected for transformation and develop for them individual plans of services,
- Create sustainable models of providing services and corresponding legal and methodical instruments required for the implementation;
- Create and test new forms of community services for target groups;
- Evaluate the development level of community-based social services in the regions and municipalities, draft plans for developing community-based services and the improvement of infrastructure of services;

- Carry out the assessment of staff competences and motivation of the selected for transformation care institutions, improve professional staff competence;
- Implement inter-institutional, inter-departmental and inter-sectoral cooperation in the transformation of care institutions;
- Change negative public attitude to children living in care institutions and persons with mental disorders or disabilities, and disseminate information on the transformation process of institutional care.

Transformation of institutional care in providing community-based services is designed to ensure the necessary professional assistance to families facing crisis, seeking to ensure that children could live in their families. If the child is not safe with his/her parents, the aim is to provide the child with care in the families of social guardians or foster parents (guardians) and promote adoptions of children. Transformation of institutional care also provides for the involvement of persons with disabilities into the community through creating new targeted services, changing negative attitudes and views of the community, motivating employees and developing their skills to provide community-based services.

New forms of community services tested in the Project will accelerate the provision of such services in the whole country. The development of such services will contribute to creating conditions that temporary neglected children would not be placed in care homes, but could finally return to their biological families after the required support and assistance were provided, or could join the families of guardians or be adopted.

For achieving the goals of the Project, the following activities are implemented:

- 1) 3 sets of methodical documents on determining individual needs of residents in care home selected for transformation and further development of their individual plans are prepared for children without parental care; for children with mental disorders and disabilities; for adults with mental disorders and disabilities. Following the prepared sets of methodical documents, it is planned by the end of 2017 the assessment of individual needs of residents of social care institutions under transformation and draft an individual plan of services for each assessed person. On the basis of the evaluation results community services will be developed at the national, regional and local levels. The estimated number of assessments and individual plans will cover 2 700 care home residents.
- 2) The set of methodical documents for the evaluation of staff motivation and competences is prepared. According to this set of methodological documents evaluation of staff of the selected for transformation institutions including the development of individual plans started from September 2016. In total 1 379 individuals were assessed. Employee assessment results will be presented in the first quarter of 2017. Based on the assessment of motivation and competences of the staff, trainings will be organized this year for administrators and providers of social services to children, the disabled and their families (guardians, carers) to help them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in providing care and other community services.
- 3) A special programme has been developed for preparing close relatives to take care of a child. According to this programme 61 certified social worker were trained in providing services of training and counselling of guardians (carers) and foster parents.
- 4) It is planned to test during the implementation of the Project new community services and increase the accessibility of social services to target groups by rendering the following services: family type community children care homes, supportive care, complex assistance

to pregnant women and families of single mothers with children under 3 years of age; safeguarded accommodation for individuals with mental disorders; service of a temporary respite at home of the beneficiary and a service of a temporary respite at the institution; case management service. In the third quarter of 2016 purchasing procedures for the above-mentioned services were started.

- 5) 6 seminars were held on the provision of community services, theoretical and practical aspects, cooperation principles in implementing the transformation of institutional care. Two training sessions were organized for the leaders of the region, municipalities and local communities on the management of the development of services provided in the municipality. Trainings were aimed at ensuring that actors in municipalities and on the national level could organize effectively and ensure the quality, relevant inter-institutional decisions creating preconditions for sustainable transformation of institutional care through the development of community services in Lithuania.
- 6) In December 2016 a tender was announced for the acquisition of services in providing training to administrators and providers of services to children, the disabled and their families. Trainings are aimed at improving vocational competences of employees, increasing knowledge and developing skills in providing appropriate assistance to the representatives of target groups. Trainings will be organized for employees working with the child and the family; employees working with the disabled and their families; employees of the child rights protection units; employees of municipality administrations in charge of organizing the provision of social services; employees of care institutions under transformation.
- 7) Sociological surveys and polls were carried out on the attitude of Lithuanian residents to the transformation of institutional care, adoption, care and guardianship. Over 1000 Lithuanian residents and 500 participants in the transformation of institutional care were interviewed during the survey. Referring to the findings, a strategy for the publicity was developed aiming to promote guardianship and adoption, change of negative attitudes towards children from care homes; reduction of discrimination and stereotypes related to persons with mental disorders or disabilities; transformation of institutional care publicized in the media, findings of surveys circulated among Child rights protection units, specialists and municipality representatives.
- 8) A website for the public and stakeholders of the transformation www.pertvarka.lt was created. The site provides relevant information to the target groups and the general public, as well as an opportunity to debate. Since May 2016 on the screens of public transport in major Lithuanian cities advertising video clips are broadcasted. They encourage care (guardianship) and adoption of children and pursue for eliminating the existing stereotypes about persons with mental disorders or disabilities. It also aims at informing the general public about the implementation of the institutional care reform in Lithuania, its objectives and activities. In various towns of Lithuania 12 social actions “Care. Family. Community” were held. Mobile photo exhibitions in 2016 provided information to the society at large about adoption and guardianship (care) in the family, about people with mental disorders and/or disabilities.

Representatives of the Ministry, the Service and the Department of the Disabled Affairs have met in March 2017 to review and assess the Project plan of measures. They decided to make certain procedures more effective. Subsequently, in summarizing and reviewing measures of the Project, usefulness of the measures for guardians and professionals working with them, it may be stated that implementation of Project measures is carried out considering the needs of target groups,

assessing their best interests in pursuing to prepare the methodological basis for the new forms of community-based services to children, persons with disabilities and their families (guardians), and improve the accessibility and the quality of the existing social services.

104. On 30 March 2017 Seimas has *adopted amendments to the Civil Code* (hereinafter – “the Amendments”) and attendant legal acts aimed at ensuring security of children in the family and speeding up the procedures of child care and adoption. The Amendments foresee the obligation of the Child Rights Protection Service (CRPS) to react to dangerous situations of children with urgency. Having received information about possible violations of children's rights the CRPS shall assess the validity of the received information and immediately take measures for protecting the rights of the child - move the child to a safe environment. The new provisions commit all institutions directly dealing or working with children to report to the CRPS about any noticed violations of children rights, exposure to threat or inappropriate behaviour.

It has been decided to legalize in the *amendments to the Law of Social Services* the definition and functions of the trained professional duty carer, who would commit to take the child into the family and take care of the child until he/she is returned to the family of parents or transferred into a foster or adoptive family. The duty carer shall take care of the child left without parental care, or a child at social risk according to the mutual cooperation agreement on the provision of service with the centre of guardians.

105. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to note that having assessed the future reform of the child rights protection system, the Ministry is elaborating the *Draft Specification of Procedures for the assessment and determination of the threat-level to the child*, and other documentation required for the implementation of the reform. The Ministry is also developing a *plan of centralization of the State Child Rights Protection Service and child rights protection divisions in municipalities*, aiming to strengthen territorial child rights protection sub-divisions and the central Child Rights Protection Service. There are also plans to draft the corresponding legislation providing for actions of child protection services and social workers in determining the need for assistance and the provision of services to the family. Following the adoption of such legislation, unified practice of child protection enforcement will be applied in the country.

The draft law proposes to legalize the unified custom model for supporting the child and the family, through financing of mobile teams of professionals, who together with professionals in municipalities would provide intensive and qualified expert help. At the same time it is proposed to formalize the case management of the child and parents, so that the development of a help plan would be ensured. The help plan would provide the family with the necessary assistance and the essential services that timely care of children and the family at risk could help to bridge the emerging crisis and prevent the removal of the child from the representatives by law. Failure to change the attitude of parents to their child and their behaviour, when threat to the safety of the child persists, the draft law will oblige the Child Protection Section of the municipal administration to apply to the court for the permission to take the child away from his representatives by law. It should be noted that removal of the child from the family exclusively under the permission of the court is in line with international legislation, since the provisions of the UN Child Rights Convention stipulate that decision concerning separation of the child from his parents should be taken by competent authorities, examined in court, enacted by law, and without prejudice to procedures, because the removal of the child from the family in the administrative procedure may at this point offend the rights of the family as a private institute.

108. On 14 February 2017 the Seimas adopted amendments to *the Law on the Fundamentals of Child Rights Protection* (hereinafter – “the Law”), stipulating for the prohibition of all forms of

violence against children, including physical punishments. It is defined in the Law, that violence against children – by action or inaction making direct or indirect deliberate physical, psychological or sexual impact on the child, disregard of honour and dignity or neglect leading to the exposure of the child to harm or danger to his/her life, health or development. The adopted amendments are aimed at consolidating and defining the forms of violence against children: physical violence, psychological outrage, sexual abuse and neglect. Protecting and safeguarding the rights of the child, the State undertakes to take every effort in applying the required legal, administrative, social, educational and any other measures aimed at ensuring the protection of the child from all forms of violence, including physical punishments, to which s/he may be exposed by parents, other representatives of the child or any other person taking care of the child.

112. The Minister of Social Security and Labour approved in the Order No A1-132 of 10 March 2016 *the National Child Welfare Programme* which is aimed at creating preconditions for children to live in their biological family, by developing the access to preventive and comprehensive services for the child and his/her biological family at risk of crisis or affected by violence, and for the child deprived of parental care – to appropriate care (guardianship) or adoption conditions meeting the best interests of the child and the need to live in a family environment or the environment close to the family.

The *State Programme on Domestic violence prevention and assistance to victims for 2014-2020* is supplemented with additional provisions concerning prevention of all kinds of domestic violence against children in all its manifestations, and the development of the system of specialized assistance to children followed by the provision of such assistance.

The *Inter-institutional Action Plan on the implementation of 2015-2025 Public Security Development Programme* (hereinafter - the Plan), approved by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 7 May 2015, foresees a measure of providing comprehensive services to children (to witnesses) aggrieved by violence or indirect domestic abuse, and their family members.

113. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to note that through the implementation of the *Child Welfare Action Plan for 2016-2018*, trainings for various specialists working in the field of child welfare were organized in 2016. Training activities were attended by 653 participants in total. In 2017 training activities are also being organized for professionals working in the field of child welfare.

114. The Relief Centre for child victims of sexual abuse has been already established (hereinafter – “the Relief Centre”). The mission of the Relief Centre is to create a child-friendly (favourable) environment for performing pre-trial actions (interviews of the child, medical examination, etc.), and, if necessary, to provide short-term comprehensive assistance (psychological, social, legal, medical, etc.) to the child and (or) a family member. The Relief Centre provides all services needed for the child *in situ*, therefore the child does not have to visit different institutions for giving evidence several times and in this way is safeguarded from additional trauma. The Relief Centre provides temporary accommodation for children and their parents (guardians). The Relief Centre is equipped with child-friendly facilities for interviews (equipment that allows safe interviewing of the child, including recordings of interviews), for medical examination (doctors may examine and assess the signs of injury and the general health status of the child), for the assessment of psychological and social environment of the child and for providing psychological assistance to the child.

Chapter 3. Rights of persons with disabilities

Section 3.1. Implementation of CRPD

121. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to clarify that since 26 October 2016, after the enforcement of the new wording of the *Regulations of the Council for the Affairs of the Disabled*, approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in the Resolution No. 1042 of 19 October 2016, the Council for the Affairs of the Disabled (hereinafter – “the Council”) is a public advisory body consisting of 20 members. The Council consists of 9 representatives of state institutions, 9 representatives from organizations of the disabled, one (1) municipal representative and one (1) representative of the academic community. The task of the Council is to analyse the issues of social integration of the persons with disabilities and submit proposals to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the ministries and other state and municipal institutions concerning the policy of social integration, its implementation thereafter, draft legislation regulating public relations of the persons with disabilities and the UN reports on monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol.

Section 3.2. Persons in institutional care

126. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to clarify that in Lithuania there are currently 23 social care homes for adults (where at least 80 % of residents have mental and intellectual disabilities and with more than 30 long-term care places), with a combined total of 4920 residents.

127. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to provide addition information that in the end of 2015, the Project “*Creation of Conditions for Sustainable Transition from Institutional Care to the Provision of Services in a Family and Community*” (hereinafter – “the Project”) was approved. The aim of the Project is to create a system of comprehensive services that enable every child, person with disabilities or their families (guardians) to receive individual services according to their needs and necessary assistance in the community, and every child deprived of parental care to grow in a safe environment in his/her biological or foster family.

According to *the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with Disabilities and Children Deprived of Parental Care for 2014–2020*, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour approved the group of experts who monitor and evaluate the implementation of the de-institutionalisation process. Delegated experts of organisations of persons with disability, State and municipal institutions are involved in the process.

128. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to note, that in 2016, the implementation of *Integral Assistance Development Programme* was extended and 38 new municipalities have been involved in the process of providing social care services.

Section 3.3. Mental health policy

134. The Seimas Ombudsperson’s Office would like to note that in the para 134 of the Report an invalid provision of *the Article 28 of the Law on Mental Health Care of the Republic of Lithuania* (hereinafter – “the Law”) is quoted. The provision of the Law that used to empower specialized mental healthcare commissions set up by local municipalities to address issues of involuntary hospitalization, involuntary treatment and disputes arising between the patient, his/her representative and medical personnel in connection to health care and related issues, has not been operational since 16 July 2005.

Section 3.4. Legal Capacity

144. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to inform that a new legal body has been formalized in the Civil Code for providing assistance in taking decisions aimed at encouraging of concluding agreements of assistance without limiting the capacity of persons in certain areas. In addition, introduction and development of community services on the national level will be promoted in the future as well. It is planned to improve the procedure of determining the capacity of individuals in taking care of themselves and taking ordinary decisions by elaborating comprehensive questionnaires for social workers and improving professional skills and competences of social workers.

146. The Ministry of Justice would like to clarify that according to the data of the Centre of Registers, as of 14 March 2017 there were 7265 persons registered as incapable in a specific area and 159 persons with limited capacity in a specific area. As of 1 January 2016, 1094 communications about court decisions were declared in the Register of incapable persons and persons with limited capacity: 918 court decisions established specific areas, in which persons were declared as incapable, or established specific areas in which person's limited capacity was declared; 176 court decisions declared persons as incapable in all areas.

156. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour would like to add that on 11 May 2016 Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended to Lithuania in its concluding observations on the initial report of Lithuania (CRPD/C/LTU/CO/1) to improve election legislation and to ensure voting rights to all persons with disabilities. Following the Order No. A1-89 of 20 February 2017 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour, an interdepartmental working group was established for preparing proposals by 28 April 2017 concerning the implementation of Article 29 (para a) of the CRPD.