



18/10/2023

RAP/Cha/HRV/14(2023)

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

14th National Report on the implementation of the
European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF CROATIA

Articles 7, 8, 16, and 17

for the period 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021

Report registered by the Secretariat on

18 October 2023

CYCLE 2023



Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy

**16th Report on the Application of the European Social Charter in the Republic of
Croatia
for the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2021**

August 2023

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REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Report submitted by the Republic of Croatia pursuant to Article 21 of the European Social Charter on the measures taken with an aim of application of the accepted provisions of the European Social Charter, whose ratification or approval document was deposited on 26 February 2003, includes the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019 and refers to Articles 7, 8, 16 and 17 of the Charter.

In accordance with Article 23 of the Charter, the copies of this report have been sent to the following:

- *Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia,*
- *Independent Trade Unions of Croatia,*
- *Association of Croatian Trade Unions,*
- *Croatian Employers' Association.*

Legislation of the Republic of Croatia

The right of children, families and migrants in the Republic of Croatia is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 41/01 - consolidated text and 55/01 - correction of consolidated text) and laws and by-laws.

Acts

- Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19 and 84/21)
- Criminal Procedure Act (Official Gazette No. 70/17 and 126/19)
- Labour Act (Official Gazette No. 93/14, 127/17 and 98/19)
- Family Act (Official Gazette No. 103/15 and 98/19)
- Pension Insurance Act (Official Gazette No. 157/13, 151/14, 33/15, 93/15, 120/16, 18/18, 62/18, 115/18 and 102/19)
- Compulsory Health Insurance Act (Official Gazette No. 80/13, 137/13 and 98/19)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (Official Gazette No. 71/14, 118/14, 94/18 and 96/18)
- State Inspectorate Act (Official Gazette No. 115/18 and 117/21)
- Protection against Domestic Violence Act (Official Gazette No. 31/18, 126/19 and 84/21)
- Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (Official Gazette No. 106/18 and 98/19)
- Child Allowance Act (Official Gazette No. 94/01, 138/06, 107/07, 37/08, 61/11, 112/12, 82/15 and 58/18)
- Act on Compulsory Health Insurance and Health Care of Aliens in the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 80/13, 15/18, 26/21 and 46/22)
- State Registers Act (Official Gazette No. 96/93, 76/13 and 98/19)
- Act on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 70/15 and 127/17)
- Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (Official Gazette No. 106/18 and 98/19)
- Minimum Wage Act (Official Gazette No. 118/18 and 120/21)
- Primary and Secondary School Education Act (Official Gazette No. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14, 07/17, 68/18, 98/19, 64/20)
- Foster Care Act (Official Gazette No. 115/18)
- Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (Official Gazette No. 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 174/04, 02/07, 46/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14, 60/15 and 131/17)

By-laws

- Ordinance on Prohibiting Employment of Minors in Certain Jobs (Official Gazette No. 89/15, 94/16 and 109/19)
- Ordinance on Permitting Employment of Minors in Certain Jobs and Participation in Certain Activities (Official Gazette No. 62/10)
- Ordinance on the Performance of Activities Related to Employment (Official Gazette No. 28/19)
- Regulation on the Procedures and Methods of Issuing Permits/Licenses for Carrying Out Practical Training and Apprenticeship (Official Gazette No. 37/15)
- Regulation on the Procedure and Methods of Issuing Permits/Licenses for Carrying Out Apprenticeships (Official Gazette No. 107/20)
- Ordinance on the Manner of Conducting an Individual Assessment of the Victim (Official Gazette No. 106/17)
- Ordinance on Health Care Standards for International Protection Applicants and Aliens under Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 28/20)
- Regulations on Minimum Conditions for Apprenticeship Contracts (Official Gazette No. 63/14 and 107/20)

Other

- Instruction on the Implementation of the State Registers Act (Official Gazette No. 117/21)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (Official Gazette - International Treaties No. 12/93 - based on the succession notification)
- Convention No. 138 - Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (Official Gazette No. 3/02)
- Convention No. 182 - concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Official Gazette, No. 5/01)
- Council Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work
- Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography
- Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (OJ L 335, 17 December 2011).
- Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA
- Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA OJ L L 315/57 of 14 November 2012

List of abbreviations

- **CEPOL** - EU agency for law enforcement officials training development, implementation and coordination
- **COVID-19** - an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus
- **ECSR** - European Committee of Social Rights
- **EMPACT CSA/CSE** - European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats CSA - child sexual abuse/ CSE - child sexual exploitation
- **EMPACT**- European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
- **EUROPOL** - European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- **CIPH** - Croatian Institute of Public Health
- **CHIF** - Croatian Health Insurance Fund
- **ICSE data base** - International Child Sexual Exploitation
- **LSGU** - Local self-government units
- **minor** - a person younger than fifteen or a person between fifteen and eighteen who attends compulsory primary education
- **NEETs** - persons between 15 and 29 not in education, employment, or training
- **FA** - Family Act (Official Gazette No. 103/15 and 98/19)
- **UNHCR** - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- **UNICEF** - United Nations agency for quality of life of children and youth
- **PIA** - Pension Insurance Act
- **LA** - Labour Act
- **CHIA** - Compulsory Health Insurance Act

PROVISIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER 1961

Questions on Group 4 provisions - "Children, Families and Migrants"

Conclusions 2023

Given the size, implications and expected long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Committee for Social Rights (ECSR) paid particular attention to issues related to the pandemic.

Article 7 - The right of children and young persons to protection

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to protection, the Parties undertake:

Paragraph 1 - to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education;

a) Please provide information on the measures taken by the authorities (e.g. Labour Inspectorates and social services) to detect child labour, including children working in the informal economy. In this regard, please provide information on the number of children actually working (either from existing statistics on this issue or from surveys to be conducted to obtain such information), as well as on measures taken to identify and monitor sectors where it is strongly suspected that children are working illegally (General question, Conclusions 2019).

The State Inspectorate is a state administration body mandated primarily for inspection tasks in the Republic of Croatia. It also has certain powers in the protection of children and minors, primarily through the suppression of various forms of illegal child labour.

Labour inspectors in the field of labour relations, hold specific powers for overseeing the implementation of regulations that govern certain forms of work and the employment of minors. Consequently, the crucial issue of labour and the employment of minors is addressed by various regulations, including conventions from the International Labour Organization: No. 138 - Minimum Age Convention (Official Gazette No. 3/02) and Convention No. 182 - Convention on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Official Gazette No. 5/01). These conventions are legally binding on the Republic of Croatia, with their provisions being largely incorporated into our national legislation. Additionally, the Council Directive 94/33/EC outlines measures for protecting young people at work, complemented by several other regulations within national legislation.

There are various legal frameworks and types of work and employment for minors in the Republic of Croatia. The Labour Act (Official Gazette No. 93/14, 127/17, and 98/19, hereinafter referred to as LA) governs some of these forms, specifically the employment of minors through an employment contract or within an employment relationship. The Labour Act includes provisions on the minimum age for employment, the legal capacity of minors to enter employment contracts, prohibitions on certain jobs for minors, restrictions on overtime, night work, and work exceeding eight hours within a 24-hour period. It also outlines the minimum duration of annual leave for minors. Labour inspectors are authorised to prohibit the employment of minors in specific jobs and can prevent employers from instructing minors to work overtime or for durations exceeding eight hours in a 24-hour period, especially during the night. The Act includes penal provisions for violations of these regulations.

To shield minors from specific hazards to their safety, health, morality, or development, the Ordinance on Prohibiting Employment of Minors in Certain Jobs (Official Gazette No. 89/15, 94/16, and 109/19) identifies jobs where minors cannot be employed due to factors such as lack of experience, awareness of potential dangers, or insufficient maturity. Moreover, the Ordinance on Permitting Employment of Minors in Certain Jobs and Participation in Certain Activities (Official Gazette No. 62/10) safeguards health, safety, and development. It specifies jobs where a minor may work only after determining their medical fitness, including the process of determining medical fitness, deadlines for re-evaluation, and the issuance of a medical certificate. This ordinance also addresses activities where a person under the age of fifteen or a person between fifteen and eighteen attending compulsory primary education may participate with the prior approval of the labour inspector, for a remuneration.

In 2018, labour inspectors in the field of labour relations, operating from all regional offices of the Labour Inspectorate (renamed the State Inspectorate since 1 April 2019), conducted a total of 10,109 inspections (10,100 inspections in 2019, 8,101 inspections in 2020, and 8,247 inspections in 2021). These inspections focused on ensuring compliance with regulations in the field of labour and employment. Out of the total inspections, 20 cases (8 in 2019, 8 in 2020, and 8 in 2021) revealed violations related to 24 minors (9 in 2019, 8 in 2020, and 18 in 2021). These violations raised reasonable suspicion of a total of 48 violations (35 in 2019, 14 in 2020, and 22 in 2021), leading to misdemeanour sanctions LA, Pension Insurance Act (Official Gazette No. 157/13, 151/14, 33/15, 93/15, 120/16, 18/18, 62/18, 115/18 and 102/19, hereinafter: PIA) and the Compulsory Health Insurance Act (Official Gazette No. 80/13, 137/13 and 98/19, hereinafter: MHIA) relating to the employment of minors. Most of these violations involving minors were identified in the hospitality industry. However, instances of non-compliance with labour and employment regulations related to minors were also found in other sectors, including trade, bakery, construction, and various service activities.

Regarding the implementation of Article 7 of the Ordinance on Permitting Employment of Minors in Certain Jobs and Participation in Certain Activities, it is stipulated that a person under the age of fifteen or a person aged fifteen to less than eighteen who attends compulsory primary education (hereinafter referred to as 'minor') may, with the prior approval of the

labour inspector, participate for remuneration in the production of films, the preparation and performance of artistic, stage, or similar works. This participation should be in a manner, scope, and tasks that do not endanger their health, safety, morals, education, or development. The legal representative of the minor submits the request for approval to the labour inspector within fifteen days before the minor's participation in the specified activities. In 2018, labour inspectors received 260 requests (in 2019 - 202, in 2020 - 171, and in 2021 - 167) from legal representatives of minors for their participation, for remuneration, in various artistic activities, including shooting music videos, TV commercials, series, etc. Acting within their jurisdiction on these requests, labour inspectors granted approval for the participation of 260 minors (in 2019 - 195, in 2020 - 171, and in 2021 - 167) in these activities. In accordance with the mentioned provision, inspectors also sent copies of the approvals to the relevant social welfare centres. It should be noted that on November 1, 2015, the Family Act (Official Gazette No. 103/15 and 98/19, hereinafter referred to as 'FA'), came into force. It stipulates that the minister responsible for social care, with the consent of the minister for culture and the minister responsible for health, will, within three months from the date of entry into force of the Family Act, adopt an implementing regulation from Article 94, paragraph 7 of FA. This regulation will regulate the participation of children in artistic, audio-visual, promotional, sports, and similar activities. As of now, this regulation has not yet been adopted, so the labour inspection of the State Inspectorate continued to act on the aforementioned requests from the legal representatives of minors.

Regarding the implementation of Article 10 of the Ordinance on the Performance of Activities Related to Employment (Official Gazette No. 28/19), which stipulates that intermediaries for the employment of a minor regular secondary school student must have written consent from their legal representative or guardian, and for a student under the age of 15, written consent from the competent inspector, labour inspectors in 2021 issued 3 written consents (decisions) to secondary school institutions for mediating the employment of students under the age of 15.

Through direct observation, information obtained from encountered minors or their legal representatives (parents), statements from other workers and employers, examination of the labour and employment documentation of minor workers, records of employed workers, and other business documentation, labour inspectors in the inspections conducted in 2018 found a well-founded suspicion that violations had occurred. Consequently, they submitted 16 misdemeanour charges against employers and responsible persons to the competent misdemeanour courts (8 in 2019, 7 in 2020, and 7 in 2021) and issued 1 misdemeanour order (in 2021). The most frequently identified violations during the reporting period related to overtime and night work for minors, work longer than 8 hours within a twenty-four-hour period, failure to issue a written confirmation of the employment contract before commencing work in cases where the employment contract was not concluded in writing, entering into employment contracts without the written consent of the legal representative, failure to report to compulsory pension insurance, and employing individuals under the age of fifteen or individuals aged fifteen and older than fifteen but younger than eighteen covered by compulsory health insurance.

In addition to initiating misdemeanour proceedings against employers and responsible persons, labour inspectors have implemented various administrative measures in cases where material regulations dictate. In 2018, a total of 10 administrative measures were taken, with subsequent years witnessing 9 in 2019, 6 in 2020, and 12 in 2021. The most common administrative actions during this period included prohibiting the assignment of overtime and night work to minors, temporarily halting activities if minors were employed without reporting to compulsory pension insurance, restricting work for minors in roles requiring health fitness determination, prohibiting work for individuals under the age of fifteen or those aged fifteen to eighteen attending compulsory health insurance, and preventing the employment of regular students under the age of eighteen, contravening the provisions of the Ordinance on the Performance of Activities Related to Employment.

Inspectors of labour, who oversee the implementation of regulations in the field of occupational safety and health, have certain powers in supervising the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Official Gazette No. 71/14, 118/14, 94/18 and 96/18).

Under Article 37 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employer shall be obliged to provide special protection at work for particularly vulnerable groups for whom the employer shall be obliged to provide special protection at work such as underage employees, pregnant employees, employees who have recently given birth and employees who are breastfeeding, employees suffering from occupational diseases and employees identified with a partial work capacity and a partial loss of work capacity or if there is an immediate risk of reduction of work capacity. For implementation of special protection at work, the employer shall be obliged to indicate potentially risky works for particularly vulnerable groups of employees in the risk assessment.

Furthermore, under Article 38 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the employer shall be obliged to provide special occupational health and safety for a minor for the purpose of preserving his or her unimpaired mental and physical development. A minor may not perform work with special conditions, except for minors who have completed vocational secondary education for this work and who meet other prescribed requirements. For the purpose of minors' safety and health protection at work, the employer shall be obliged to: adjust conditions and working time organization for the purpose of eliminating safety and health risks; ensure other appropriate work i.e. a workplace, if adjustments are not feasible or justifiable; ensure the implementation of other occupational health and safety rules, in accordance with a special regulation.

Under Article 91, paragraph 3, subparagraph 1 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, in conducting an inspection of occupational health and safety, an inspector shall, by means of an oral decision and until such time as the identified deficiency has been remedied, order the employer to remove from the workplace any employee for whom it fails to provide evidence showing that this employee meets all the requirements prescribed by this Act and other regulations

Labour inspectors in the field of occupational health and safety, acting within their competence, performed a total of 7,120 inspections of the implementation of regulations in the field of occupational health and safety in 2018 (7,635 in 2019, 6,355 in 2020 and 6,069 in 2021). In the inspections, a total of 9 minors (seven male minors and two female minors) were found in 2018, 17 minors (fourteen male minors and three female minors) in 2019, 5 minors in 2020 and 5 in 2021). Regarding injuries to minors, inspectors conducted a total of 4 inspections in 2018 (4 in 2019, 3 in 2020, and 1 in 2021).

Due to identified irregularities, labour inspectors imposed prescribed inspection measures, including 3 administrative measures in 2018 (5 in 2019, 6 in 2020, and 2 in 2021). At the location of the violation, they issued 3 fines in 2019. Additionally, due to well-founded suspicions of committing criminal offences, they filed 2 criminal reports with the competent state prosecutor's offices in 2019. One criminal report was filed against an employer who failed to prevent unauthorised access to a scaffold, leading to a minor climbing the scaffold, falling, and suffering fatal injuries. The second criminal report was filed against an employer who, contrary to regulations, allowed a minor to operate a tractor in a forest worksite, resulting in the overturning of the tractor and causing severe injuries to the minor.

In order to comprehensively protect students during the implementation of practical training and apprenticeship exercises, labour inspectors, acting within the scope prescribed by the provisions of Article 24 of the State Inspectorate Act (Official Gazette No. 115/18 and 117/21), conducted a total of 634 inspections in 2021 at the request of the Croatian Chamber of Crafts, related to the implementation of Article 8 of the Regulation on the Procedure and Methods of Issuing Permits/Licenses for Carrying Out Apprenticeships (Official Gazette No. 107/20). Inspections based on the requests of the Croatian Chamber of Crafts, regarding the protection of students during practical training and apprenticeship exercises, have been conducted since 2015, in accordance with the provisions of Article 9 of the then-applicable Regulation on the Procedures and Methods of Issuing Permits/Licenses for Carrying Out Practical Training and Apprenticeship (Official Gazette No. 37/15). In 2018, 367 such inspections were carried out, 372 in 2019 and 311 in 2020. In these inspections, compliance with the prescribed material and personnel conditions for conducting practical training and apprenticeship exercises by craftsmen and companies was verified. If any irregularity in the implementation of occupational safety was identified during the inspection, consent for the implementation of practical training or apprenticeship exercises was issued after all identified irregularities were rectified. Regulation on the Procedure and Methods of Issuing Permits/Licenses for Carrying Out Apprenticeships

Paragraph 5 - to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair wage or other appropriate allowances;

a) Please provide updated information on net minimum wages and allowances payable to persons under 18 years of age. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that fair remuneration is guaranteed to young workers:

- i) In atypical jobs (part-time work, temporary work, fixed-term work, casual and seasonal work, self-employed people, independent workers and homeworkers.)**
- ii) in the gig or platform economy and**
- iii) having zero hours contracts.**

The legal system in the Republic of Croatia treats all workers, including those under 18, in the same way as all other mentioned categories when it comes to the right to the minimum wage and the wage in general.

Also, the minimum wage is prescribed in the monthly gross amount, the amount is determined annually by a regulation of the Government and currently amounts to EUR 700 gross.

The Minimum Wage Act (Official Gazette No. 118/18 and 120/21) stipulates that the minimum wage is also considered to be the wage from the extended collective agreement, according to the level of complexity of work.

In the Republic of Croatia, collective expanded agreements in the field of construction and catering are in force.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 5 of the Apprenticeship Agreement referred to in the Regulations on Minimum Conditions for Apprenticeship Contracts (Official Gazette No. 63/14), the basis for the monthly compensation paid to the student is:

- 10% in their first year of apprenticeship
- 20% in their second year of apprenticeship
- 25% in their third year of apprenticeship – the percentage is taken from an average net salary in economy for the previous year in the Republic of Croatia.

The average net wage in the Republic of Croatia for the year 2017 was EUR 794.35 (HRK 5,985).

The average monthly paid net wage per employee in legal entities of the Republic of Croatia for the year 2018 was EUR 828.46 (HRK 6242).

The average monthly paid net wage per employee in legal entities of the Republic of Croatia for the year 2019 was EUR 857.00 (HRK 6,457).

In accordance with Article 5 of the Apprenticeship Contract referred to in the Regulations on Minimum Conditions for Apprenticeship Contracts (Official Gazette No. 107/20), the basis for the monthly compensation to the apprentice remained the same as in the above-mentioned case.

The average net wage in the Republic of Croatia in 2020 was EUR 897.60 (HRK 6,763.00). Zero-hours contracts are not allowed in the Republic of Croatia.

b) Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that this right is effectively enforced (e.g., through Labour Inspectorates and similar enforcement authorities, trade unions)

The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia is actively implementing the preventive project "Together," with the primary objective of raising awareness among children and young people regarding the risks and dangers associated with trafficking in human beings. The overarching goal is to prevent them from falling victim to such criminal activities. Recognizing that labour exploitation is a prevalent motive behind trafficking in human beings, the project specifically addresses the illegal employment of children under the age of 15.

Targeting students in the final grades of both primary and secondary schools, the project aims to foster collaboration among relevant institutions, organizations, the private sector (showcasing professions), local communities, civil society organizations, and citizens. The collective effort seeks to enhance awareness surrounding the prevention of trafficking in human beings and encourages active societal involvement to contribute to the reduction and prevention of trafficking in human beings. Through awareness-raising, informing, providing education, taking a proactive approach to knowledge multiplication, and the identification of potential criminal hotspots, the project aims to reduce human trafficking at all stages (recruitment, transportation, and exploitation).

Paragraph 10 to ensure special protection against physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed, and particularly against those resulting directly or indirectly from their work.

a) Please provide updated information on the measures taken to strengthen the protection of children, including migrant, refugees, and displaced children, from sexual exploitation and abuse (in particular in response to the risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic) during the reference period, including information on the incidence of such abuse and exploitation.

At its session on 30 August 2018, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Protocol on the Treatment of Unaccompanied Children. The development of this protocol was a collaborative effort involving various government departments and non-governmental organizations. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, the Office of the UNHCR High Commissioner, UNICEF, and the Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

The primary objective of the protocol is to establish a robust and effective national system for the treatment of unaccompanied children. It emphasises interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration with relevant organizations to ensure the timely and effective protection of the well-being and best interests of unaccompanied children.

In addition, within the Republic of Croatia, applicants for international protection are granted access to the national mechanism for the prevention and treatment of sexual and gender-based

violence. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, including children. To enhance the quality and speed of referral for survivors of gender-based violence, the Standard Operating Procedure for Prevention and Response in Cases of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Reception Centres for Seekers of International Protection was adopted in 2021. The procedure underscores the importance of early identification of gender-based and sexual violence, involving individuals responsible for reception and accommodation, initial medical examination, medical counselling, psychosocial counselling, hearings in the international protection procedure, provision of legal information, and other social activities.

b) Please provide information on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the monitoring of the exploitation and abuse of children, as well as measures taken to strengthen monitoring mechanisms.

The Ministry of Health in Croatia consolidates data received from healthcare institutions related to domestic violence victims who sought healthcare due to physical injuries resulting from domestic violence. This includes the number of victims referred for hospital or outpatient treatment in psychiatric institutions. The collection of this data follows a standardised form specified by the Regulation on the Method of Collection, Processing, and Submission of Statistical Data and Reports in the Field of the Implementation of the Act on the Protection against Domestic Violence (Official Gazette No. 31/18). These data are classified by age (including children aged 0-18) and gender. Croatian Health Insurance Fund (hereinafter: CHIF) receives reports on injuries inflicted on a child by a family member. Notably, in 2020, there was a significant increase in the number of reports compared to the previous year, amounting to approximately 50%. Conversely, in 2019, there was a decrease of around 40% in the number of reports compared to the preceding year. In 2021, there was a subsequent decrease of about 35% compared to 2020, bringing the reported cases back to an average level observed before 2020.

In 2020, the number of child victims and child perpetrators of domestic violence referred for psychiatric treatment was even lower compared to 2019 and 2021.

The Croatian Institute of Public Health (hereinafter: CIPH) is actively involved in preventive programmes and mental health care through initiatives focused on education for both children and adults. Specifically, there is a programme designed to enhance the mental health literacy of educational workers, with a primary emphasis on understanding and recognizing mental health problems in children and youth. This programme also imparts the skill of psychological first aid, which is particularly crucial in crisis situations, including those resulting from domestic violence. The goal is to ensure timely protection for victims of violence and provide them with essential emotional support. To facilitate this educational effort, two manuals with accompanying educational materials, were developed—one for teachers and another for educators. Additionally, an online education platform was established on the CARNET MOOC system. This platform provides all the necessary materials for public health institutes to conduct three-day workshops with educational staff.

Moreover, the Croatian police received a total of 515 online reports concerning various forms of child abuse and domestic violence through <https://redbutton.gov.hr/online-prijava/7>, marking a substantial increase of 262% compared to 2019 when 142 reports were received.

Official websites of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Croatia contain information aimed at raising awareness and preventing risky behaviours among youth. They provide advice on ways to protect oneself and guidance on where individuals can seek help in situations involving online abuse, domestic violence, violence against young people, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of violence or threats.

Links: <https://mup.gov.hr/online-prijave/online-prijava-zlostavljanja-djeteta-red-button/281667> and <https://mup.gov.hr/online-prijave/zastita-djece-i-obitelji/281668>.

The victimization of children due to sexual abuse and exploitation in the Republic of Croatia from 2018 to 2021 is summarised in Table 1. The presentation encompasses sexual offences committed against children, including various criminal acts and more severe forms of punishable behaviour by individuals. These include offences classified under the specific chapters of the Criminal Code, specifically Title XVI (Criminal Offences Against Sexual Freedom) and Title XVII (Criminal Offences of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children).

In addition, for a comprehensive overview of this crime, a separate criminal offence of "Exploitation of Children for Pornography" is included. This offense, as defined in Article 163, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code, addresses the specific crime of sexual abuse of children facilitated through modern technologies (child pornography).

Table 1. Number of criminal offences against sexual freedoms of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the Republic of Croatia

Year/Number of criminal offences	2018	2019	2020	2021
Title XVI of the Criminal Code	81	113	99	133
Title XVII of the Criminal Code (without the criminal offence described in Art. 163, paragraph 2 of CC)	475	632	474	671
Criminal offences of technology-facilitated sexual violence of a child (CO Art. 163, para. 2 of CC)	55	98	142	261
TOTAL:	611	843	715	1065

Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, Statistical Overview of Basic Indicators for Public Safety in the Republic of Croatia and Work Results from 2018 to 2021

During 2020 and 2021, police officers undertook intensive actions to combat **child beggary**, especially in areas inhabited by marginalised groups more exposed to child abuse in beggary activities due to socio-economic reasons. The intensified efforts related to street beggary as a form of labour exploitation or exploitation for the commission of unlawful acts aimed to timely discover criminal offences, identify victims, and prosecute perpetrators of crimes such as "Trafficking in Human Beings" under Article 106 and "Violations of the Rights of a Child" under Article 177 of the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19 and 84/21).

Furthermore, we emphasize the collaborative efforts of relevant police administrations and other partners at the national, regional, and local levels in implementing a systematic preventive programme named **Safety and Protection of Children on the Internet and Social Networks**. Under this umbrella, various preventive projects and activities are conducted, including educational lectures, interactive workshops, information campaigns, public forums, panel discussions, round tables, public events, multimedia content, educational and informative publications, as well as websites and mobile applications.

Notably, we highlight the collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Education on the newly established model of preventive and educational work through 'virtual police officers.' These officers, integrated into classes, especially during online sessions, actively raise awareness among children on various topics related to online safety. As part of this preventive programme, a play titled '(DIS)LIKE' has been performed since 2021, addressing the issue of cyberbullying and intended for students from the 5th to the 8th grade of primary school.

The commitment to addressing this topic is further demonstrated through collaborative efforts with the Centre for Safe Internet. The Ministry of the Interior actively participates in implementing preventive programmes such as "**Web Detectives**" and "**Internet Alphabet**."

The "Web Detectives" project is designed to educate and train children, equipping them with the skills to recognize inappropriate and potentially harmful content on the Internet. Upon completion of the training, students from the 5th to 8th grade of primary school are awarded diplomas and web detective IDs, empowering them to report inappropriate content or incidents of cyberbullying.

The "Internet Alphabet" preventive programme involves a play for students in higher grades of primary school, aiming to increase awareness about the risks and benefits of Internet use. The programme encourages students to discuss their online experiences with school counsellors and seek professional help if necessary. Furthermore, educational sessions for parents, both of higher and lower grades of primary school, are conducted to address the topic of protecting children from unwanted online content.

In 2021, as part of EMPACT activities and in collaboration with EUROPOL, there was an intensified implementation of the "Say No" campaign. This campaign, ongoing since 2017, focuses on providing information to children who are or may become victims of abuse. Its objectives include strengthening mechanisms for reporting such cases and supporting victims in the Republic of Croatia. The "Say No" campaign specifically addresses the alarming rise of online child sexual abuse, employing preventive activities to combat this widespread issue.

c) Please provide information on the protection of children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse in the digital environment, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse and solicitation for sexual purposes (grooming).

The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 118/18) signifies a strengthened legal and criminal policy addressing offences related to child sexual abuse and exploitation outlined in Title XVII of the Criminal Code. The primary objective of these

amendments is to enhance the overall deterrent impact against sexual offences committed against children. In pursuit of this goal, an analysis of the legal distinctions between basic and aggravated forms and stages of criminal offences outlined in Title XVII of the Criminal Code was conducted, leading to a proposal for heightened legal sentencing.

The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 126/19), which took effect on January 1, 2020, represents a significant step towards aligning national criminal legislation more closely with Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (OJ L 335, 17 December 2011).

Article 161, paragraph 1, (Child Enticement for the Purpose of Satisfying Sexual Needs), introduces a substantive modification to the criminal offence. This amendment expands the scope of the perpetrator's intention to encompass criminal offences related to the exploitation of children for pornography, specifically outlined in Article 163, paragraphs 1 and 2, as well as exploitation of children for pornographic performances as per Article 164, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code.

The definition of child pornography in Article 163, paragraph 6 of the Criminal Code has been modified in such a way that the artistic, medical or scientific material shall not exclude unlawfulness for the criminal offence of exploiting children for pornography if that material depicts a real child or a realistic image of a non-existent child or a person appearing to be a child, involved or engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct.

The criminal offence of exploiting children for pornographic performances, as defined in Article 164 of the Criminal Code, undergoes supplementation with the inclusion of a definition of a "pornographic performance." A pornographic performance is the live or through means of communication of a real child or a realistically depicted non-existent child or a person who looks like a child in real or simulated sexually explicit behaviour or the sexual organs of a real child, a realistically depicted non-existent child or a person who looks like a child for sexual purposes.

The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act (Official Gazette No. 70/17), effective from 1 January 2018, transposed into national law the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (OJ L 315/57 of 14 October 2012).

The introduction of the individual assessment of victims into the criminal procedural legislation of the Republic of Croatia ensures an individual approach by competent authorities to victims. The goal of the individual assessment of victims is to evaluate the potential risks of secondary and repeated victimization, as well as the risks of intimidation and retaliation during criminal proceedings. If such risks are identified, specific measures are determined, including but not limited to special examination methods, the use of

communication technologies to prevent visual contact with the perpetrator, and other measures mandated by law.

In this regard, the minister responsible for judicial affairs has issued an Ordinance on the Manner of Conducting an Individual Assessment of the Victim (Official Gazette No. 106/17). According to the provisions of this Ordinance, the assessment of the victim's needs is carried out by all entities involved in preliminary and criminal proceedings including police officers, state attorneys, and judges who deals with the victim from the investigation stage to the conclusion of the criminal proceedings. Notably, in cases involving child victims, there is a presumption that the application of special protective measures is necessary (Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Ordinance).

With the enactment of the previously mentioned Act on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act (Official Gazette No. 126/19), effective from 1 January 2020, there has been a reinforcement of precautionary measures. A notable addition to these measures is the prescription of a new precautionary measure - the prohibition of internet access.

It's crucial to highlight that the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation of children holds a paramount position in the annual operational plans of the Ministry of the Interior. The focus is on exposing the dark aspects of these crimes, recognizing the severe victimization of children, and ultimately prosecuting the perpetrators.

During the period from 2018 to 2021, the Croatian police intensified both operational and preventive activities in response to security insights and assumptions, initially related to the migration crisis (migration from the Middle East to Western Europe) and later, in 2020, due to the health crisis caused by the spread of the coronavirus. There has been a particular emphasis on recording, analysing, and monitoring instances of sexual victimization of children and associated trends in this domain.

The increased movement of foreign nationals, including children such as migrants, combined with significant lifestyle changes due to the introduction of anti-pandemic measures, has led to a rise in the abuse of vulnerable groups, particularly children.

The Ministry of the Interior has acknowledged the critical importance of collaboration and continuous training for law enforcement officials, including the police, in the effective fight against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. This collaboration extends beyond national boundaries and requires a multidisciplinary approach involving joint investigations and training efforts across different criminal justice systems and other entities dedicated to the treatment and protection of children from sexual abuse. In this context, the Ministry actively participated in international educational activities organised by CEPOL, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, and other agencies throughout 2020 and 2021. Operational cooperation has been strengthened through the exchange and utilization of common tools, as well as the sharing of information and experiences, leading to enhancements in police procedures for the protection of children from sexual abuse. Croatia also actively participates in and strongly supports EMPACT CSA/CSE activities, as well as work on the ICSE database, which enables faster and more efficient identification of child victims.

Croatia's commitment to combatting the sexual exploitation and abuse of children was evident during its presidency of the Council of the EU in the first semester of 2020. The country identified this issue as a top priority, resulting in the preparation of a document titled 'Follow-Up to the Council Conclusions on Combating the Sexual Abuse of Children - Identifying Priority Actions.' Member states were urged to contribute their identified national priority actions to help shape the EU strategy for preventing the sexual exploitation of children, drafted by the European Commission.

In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior initiated the formation of an interdepartmental working group. This group developed a plan of priority activities for implementing the Council of the European Union's conclusions on combating the sexual abuse of children. This plan encompasses regulating the responsibilities of internet service providers, implementing preventive intervention programmes and measures, monitoring traveling offenders of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, establishing joint interdepartmental and international education efforts, and creating a national database of materials on child sexual abuse, among other measures. The ongoing implementation of these activities demonstrates the dedication to achieving set priority goals.

To raise awareness among the public, citizens, and victims about the heightened risks of victimization during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the realm of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and forms of violence against children and domestic violence, the Ministry of the Interior has actively promoted and encouraged citizens to report any knowledge of child abuse and domestic violence. In addition to calling 192, the reports can be carried out through information and communication channels, primarily the online Red Button application. Promotion and visibility of online mechanisms for reporting suspicions of child abuse and domestic violence are crucial in conditions of reduced social contact related to pandemic control measures.

Article 8 - The right of employed women to protection of maternity

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of employed women to the protection of maternity, the Parties undertake:

Paragraph 1 - to provide either by paid leave, by adequate social security benefits or by benefits from public funds for employed women to take leave before and after childbirth up to a total of at least fourteen weeks;

a) Please provide information on whether the Covid-19 crisis had an impact on the right to paid maternity leave (in particular whether all employed women concerned – in the private as in the public sector - continue to receive at least 70% of their salary during the whole length of the compulsory maternity leave during the Covid-19 crisis).

The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic did not affect the right to compulsory maternity leave in the Republic of Croatia. In accordance with the Maternity and Parental Benefits Act

(Official Gazette No. 85/08, 110/08, 34/11, 54/13, 152/14 and 59/17), maternity leave lasts continuously for 98 days. This duration comprises 28 days before the expected date of childbirth and 70 days after the birth of the child. Exceptionally, depending on the pregnancy's condition and the pregnant woman's health, maternity leave can start 45 days before the expected date of childbirth.

Maternity Leave Article 12

(1) An employed or self-employed pregnant woman, or an employed or self-employed mother during pregnancy, childbirth and care of a newborn child, shall be entitled to maternity leave for 28 days before the day of expected birth until the child reaches the age of 6 months, which consists of compulsory and additional maternity leave.

(2) An employed or self-employed pregnant woman or an employed or self-employed mother shall be entitled to compulsory maternity leave for a continuous period of 98 days, of which 28 prior to the expected date of birth until 70 days after the child's birth.

(3) The day of the expected birth is determined by the selected gynecologist from the compulsory health insurance

(4) By way of derogation from paragraph 2 of this Article, an employed or self-employed pregnant woman, depending on the state of pregnancy and health, may start using maternity leave from paragraph 2 of this Article 45 days before the day of the expected birth, according to the findings and assessment of the selected gynecologist from paragraph 3 of this Article.

(5) After the expiration of the compulsory maternity leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, an employed or self-employed mother shall be entitled to additional maternity leave up to the age of 6 months of the child's life, which she may transfer to the father of the child, with his prior consent, in full or for a limited period of time. After the expiration of the mandatory maternity leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, if the parents so agree, the right to maternity leave may be exercised by the child's father until the completion of 6 months of the child's life.

(6) If the child was born prematurely, the mandatory maternity leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article or the additional maternity leave referred to in paragraph 5 of this Article shall be extended by the amount of time for which the child was born prematurely.

(7) A premature child within the meaning of paragraph 6 of this Article shall be a child born before the age of 37 weeks or 259 days of pregnancy, in accordance with the assessment of the competent body of the Institute on the basis of an expert opinion based on medical documentation.

Parental leave
Article 13

(1) An employed parent or a self-employed parent, after the child has reached the age of 6 months or after the expiration of the maternity leave referred to in Article 15, paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Act, has the right to parental leave.

(2) An employed parent or a self-employed parent may use parental leave until the child is eight years old in the manner and for the duration prescribed by Article 14 of this Act.

(3) The right to parental leave is a personal right of both employed parents or self-employed parents and they use it, as a rule, in equal parts, unless otherwise prescribed by this Act.

Article 14

(1) An employed parent or a self-employed parent has the right to parental leave for a duration of 8 or 30 months, depending on the number of children born and the manner of its use.

(2) An employed or self-employed parent has the right to parental leave for eight months (for the first and second born child) or 30 months (for the twins born, the third and each subsequent child).

(3) As a rule, the right to parental leave from paragraph 2 of this Article is used by both parents from paragraph 1 of this Article, for an equal duration of 4 or 15 months.

(4) If the parental leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article is used by only one parent, in accordance with the agreement, it shall be used for a period of 6 months for the first and second born child, or 30 months for born twins, the third and each subsequent child.

(5) An employed parent or self-employed parent may use parental leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article in its entirety or in parts.

(6) In the event that an employed or self-employed parent uses the parental leave referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article in parts, they may use it at most twice a year, each time for at least 30 days.

(7) The number of children born referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article shall also include stillborn and deceased children, adopted children, minor children to whom the beneficiary has been appointed as a guardian, minor children to whom the beneficiary has been appointed as a foster parent, as well as children entrusted to the custody or upbringing of the beneficiary by a decision of the competent authority.

Furthermore, the provisions of the Labour Act (Official Gazette No. 93/14, 127/17 and 98/19) regulate the protection of pregnant women or women who have given birth or who are breastfeeding a child.

Protection of a pregnant woman or a woman who has given birth or who is breastfeeding a child

Article 31

(1) A pregnant worker, a worker who has given birth or a worker who is breastfeeding a child within the meaning of a special regulation, and who works on a job that endangers her life or health, or the child's life or health, shall be offered by the employer during the exercise of rights in accordance with a special regulation, an addition to the employment contract by which other corresponding jobs shall be contracted for a certain period of time.

(2) In a dispute between an employer and a worker, only a doctor specializing in occupational medicine shall be competent to assess whether the job on which the worker works or other job offered in the case referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is corresponding.

(3) If the employer is unable to act in the manner prescribed in paragraph 1 of this Article, the worker shall be entitled to leave in accordance with a special regulation.

(4) Upon termination of the exercise of rights in accordance with a special regulation, the addition referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall cease and the worker shall continue to perform the tasks on which she previously worked on the basis of the employment contract.

(5) The addition of the employment contract referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall not result in a reduction in the salary of the worker.

Regarding the question of salary compensation during parental leave and other maternity and parental benefits, below is a breakdown for the period from 2018 to 2021, expressed in millions of euros and paid from the state budget.

2018	2019	2020	2021
194.56	201.53	222.35	234.22

Of the mentioned amounts, for salary compensation during maternity leave, payments were made in the following breakdown, expressed in millions of euros:

2018	2019	2020	2021
127.62	134.20	146.25	157.30

Paragraph 2 - to consider it as unlawful for an employer to give a woman notice of dismissal during her maternity leave, or at such a time that the notice would expire during such a period;

a) Please provide information:

i) whether the Covid-19 crisis had an impact on the possibility of dismissing pregnant employees and employees on maternity leave and

ii) whether there were any exceptions to the prohibition of dismissal during pregnancy and maternity leave during the pandemic.

In accordance with Article 34 of the Labour Act (Official Gazette No. 93/14 and 127/17), the employer is prohibited from terminating the employment contract of a pregnant woman or a person exercising specific rights. Additionally, this article outlines permissible ways of terminating the employment contract, including the death of the employer, the termination or cessation of the sole proprietorship by force of law, or the deletion of the individual trader from the register.

Article 34

(1) During pregnancy, use of maternal, parental, adoptive, paternity leave or leave which is equivalent in terms of content and manner of use to the right to paternity leave, part-time work, part-time work for the purpose of increased child care, leave of a pregnant worker, leave of a worker who has given birth or a worker who is breastfeeding a child and leave or part-time work for the purposes of nursing care and care of a child with severe developmental disabilities, or within 15 days from the cessation of pregnancy or cessation of the use of these rights in accordance with the regulation on maternal and parental benefits, the employer may not dismiss from work a pregnant woman and a person exercising any of these right.

(2) The dismissal referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be null and void if, on the day of the dismissal, the employer was aware of the existence of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article or if the worker informs the employer of the existence of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article within fifteen days from the date of the dismissal and submits an appropriate certificate of the authorised doctor or other authorised body.

(3) The employment contract of the person referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be terminated upon the death of the employer who is a natural person, by the cessation of the sole proprietorship by force of law or by the deletion of the individual trader from the register.

(4) The employment contract of the person referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article may be subject to dismissal for business-conditioned reasons during the implementation of the liquidation procedure in accordance with a special regulation.

Paragraph 4 to regulate the employment in night work of women in industry

In the Republic of Croatia, the regulation of women's night work is not explicitly addressed. However, the Labour Act contains provisions that govern the broader issue of night work. These provisions encompass the employer's obligations towards workers engaged in shifts and those who perform night work.

Night work

Article 69

(1) Night work denotes work carried out between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. the following day, and in agriculture between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. the following day, unless otherwise provided for in a specific case, by this or other act, other regulation, collective agreement or agreement concluded between the employer and the workers' council.

(2) For minors employed in industry, work in the period between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. the following day shall be considered night work.

(3) For minors employed outside industry, work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. the following day shall be considered night work.

(4) The minister shall prescribe in an ordinance which activities within the meaning of paragraph 2 of this Article are considered to be an industry.

(5) A night worker is a worker who, according to his or her daily schedule of working time, works regularly for at least three hours during the night work or who, during a consecutive twelve months, spends at least one third of his or her working time during the night work.

(6) A night worker must not work longer than the average of eight hours during a four-month period in a twenty-four hour period.

(7) If, on the basis of a danger assessment made in accordance with special occupational health and safety regulations, the night worker is exposed to special danger or severe physical or mental exertion, the employer shall determine the pattern of working time of such worker so that he or she does not work more than eight hours during the period of twenty-four hours in which he or she works during the night.

Obligations of the employer towards night and shift workers

Article 72

- (1) When organising night work or shift work, the employer shall take special care of the organisation of work adapted to the worker and of safety and health conditions in accordance with the nature of work performed at night or shift work.
- (2) The employer shall ensure the protection of health and safety of night and shift workers in accordance with the nature of the work performed, as well as the means of protection and prevention available at any time that correspond and are applicable to all other workers.
- (3) Prior to the commencement of such work, as well as regularly during the period of work of the night worker, the employer shall provide the night worker with medical examinations in accordance with the regulation referred to in paragraph 8 of this Article.
- (4) By way of derogation from paragraph 3 of this Article, a night worker who works in jobs with special working conditions in accordance with occupational health and safety regulations shall perform a medical examination in accordance with those regulations.
- (5) The costs of the medical examination referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article shall be borne by the employer.
- (6) If the medical examination referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article establishes that the night worker has health problems due to night work, the employer shall ensure by the schedule of working time that he or she performs the same work outside night work.
- (7) If the employer cannot provide the worker referred to in paragraph 6 of this Article with the performance of work outside night work, he or she shall be obliged to offer him or her the conclusion of an employment contract for the performance of work outside night work for which he or she is capable, and which, as much as possible, must correspond to the jobs on which the worker previously worked.
- (8) The Minister shall prescribe in an ordinance the content, manner and deadlines of medical examinations referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article.

a) Please provide updated information to confirm that no loss of pay results from the changes in the working conditions or reassignment to a different post and that in case of exemption from work related to pregnancy and maternity, the woman concerned is entitled to paid leave.

In accordance with the provisions of the Labour Act, the right to reinstatement to the former or and equivalent position after the expiration of maternity or parental leave is regulated.

The right to reinstatement to the former or an equivalent position

Article 36

(1) After the expiry of maternal, parental, adoptive and paternity leave or leave for the care of a child with severe developmental disabilities and the suspension of employment until the third year of age of the child in accordance with the special regulation, the worker who used one of these rights shall have the right to return to a job on which he or she worked before exercising that right.

(2) If the need to perform a job performed by the worker before the exercise of the right referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article has ceased, the employer shall offer him or her the conclusion of an employment contract for the performance of another equivalent work, the working conditions of which must not be less favourable than the working conditions of the job performed before the exercise of that right.

(3) A worker who has exercised the right referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be entitled to additional vocational training if there has been a change in the technique or manner of work, as well as any other benefits arising from improved working conditions to which he or she would be entitled.

Paragraph 5 - to prohibit the employment of women in underground mining and, if necessary, in all other work which is unsuitable by reason of its dangerous, unhealthy or arduous nature

a) Please provide updated information to confirm that no loss of pay results from the changes in the working conditions or reassignment to a different post and that the women concerned retain the right to return to their previous employment at the end of the protected period.

During the supervision of the application of the provisions of the Labour Act relating to the protection of pregnant women, i.e. women who have given birth or are nursing a child, labour inspectors in the specified period initiated misdemeanour proceedings because in the performed inspections they established a well-founded suspicion of the commission of the following offenses potentially related to subject issue:

Violations of the regulations	2018	2019	2020	2021	total
Art. 30 para. 1 of LA, punishable under Art. 229, item 8 and para. 2 of LA (Art. 30, para 1 - unequal treatment of women who have given birth, or are breastfeeding)	-	1	-	-	1
Article 34 para. 1 of LA, punishable under Art. 229, item 9 and para. 2 of LA (Art. 34 para. 1 - prohibition of dismissal)	8	3	5	6	22
Art. 30 para. 2 of LA, punishable under Art. 228, item 5 and para. 2 of LA	-	-	-	-	-

,(Art. 30 para. 2 - any information about the pregnancy may not be requested)					
Art. 36 para 1 and 2 of LA, punishable under Art. 228, item 6 and para. 2 of LA (Art. 36, para 1 and 2 - the right to reinstatement to the former or an equivalent position)	1	-	1	-	2

Article 16 - The right of the family to social, legal and economic protection

To ensure the necessary conditions for the full development of the family as the fundamental unit of society, the contracting parties commit to promoting economic, legal, and social protection of family life, particularly through social and family support, tax benefits, encouragement of family-oriented housing construction, assistance to young families, and other appropriate measures.

a) Please provide updated information on measures taken to reduce all forms of domestic violence against women including information on incidence and conviction rates.

The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 126/19), which came into force on 1 January 2020, intensified the legal policy for sanctioning various criminal offenses, particularly those where the commission against a close person (family members, former spouse or life partner, former life partner or informal life partner, current or former intimate partner, persons who have a child together, and persons living in a shared household) is deemed a qualified form of the offense. This includes the criminal offense of domestic violence. The described amendment restricted the possibility of imposing alternative sentences (community service and suspended sentences) for offences committed against a close person. Additionally, the legal description of the criminal offence of domestic violence was expanded to include a state of long-term suffering as a new consequence of the commission.

The concept of the criminal offense of rape in Article 153 of the Criminal Code was revised to include any non-consensual sexual intercourse or equivalent sexual act, even when force or threat to the life and body of the victim or another person is absent. Consequently, this change led to the removal of the criminal offense of sexual intercourse without consent in Article 152 of the Criminal Code.

The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 84/21), effective from 31 July 2021, broadened the definition of the term "close person" in Article 87, paragraph 9 of the Criminal Code. The term now encompasses a current or former partner in an intimate relationship. This extension results in enhanced criminal protection, allowing for *ex officio* prosecution or a higher prescribed prison sentence when an offense against a close person is committed (e.g., in cases of bodily injury, serious bodily injury, threats, etc.).

These amendments redefine the procedural presumption for prosecution of the criminal offence of sexual harassment outlined in Article 156, paragraph 3 of the Criminal Code. This alteration ensures that the criminal offense of sexual harassment is prosecuted *ex officio* for all categories of victims.

In conclusion, the abuse of a recording of sexually explicit content, as outlined in Article 144a of the Criminal Code, is now established as a new criminal offense. The perpetrator of this offense is defined as an individual who exploits a relationship of trust, making available to a third party a recording of sexually explicit content without the consent of the recorded person. Such recordings are originally made with the consent of the person for personal use, and the act violates the individual's privacy, commonly referred to as 'revenge pornography.' Additionally, this offence encompasses those who use a computer system or other means to create a new or altered existing recording of sexually explicit content and use that recording as truthful, thereby violating the privacy of the person depicted ('deep fake pornography').

In the context of the Criminal Procedure Act, what is written concerning Article 7, paragraph 10 c) is applicable.

Act on Protection Against Domestic violence entered into force 1 January 2018 (Official Gazette No. 31/18, 126/19 and 84/21).

Regarding Article 16, question a), the following provides an overview of the legislative changes to misdemeanour legislation.

In formulating the aforementioned act, due regard was given to the standards and obligations set forth in international documents governing the protection against violence. These include the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which condemns all forms of violence against women and underscores the imperative of creating a Europe free of violence against women and domestic violence. Furthermore, the act aligns with Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. This Act broadens the existing definition of domestic violence, encompassing various forms such as physical violence, corporal punishment or other degrading treatment of children, psychological violence leading to a violation of dignity or anxiety, sexual harassment, and economic violence. Economic violence includes actions like prohibiting or disabling the use of joint or personal property, disposing of personal income or property acquired through personal work or inheritance, disabling employment, and denying funds for the maintenance of a joint household and childcare. The Act also addresses neglecting the needs of individuals with disabilities or elderly persons, leading to their distress, or insulting their dignity and thereby inflicting physical or mental suffering upon them.

The Act on Amendments to the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence (Official Gazette No. 126/19) came into effect on 1 January 2020. This amendment establishes a clear distinction between violent behaviours within the family, differentiating those falling under misdemeanour responsibility from those constituting a criminal offense. Physical violence is specifically defined as physical force that does not result in bodily injury. The scope of individuals covered by the law has been expanded to align with the scope of individuals receiving additional protection under the Criminal Code as family members or close persons in cases of criminal offenses related to domestic violence. Moreover, to enhance the preventive impact of punishing domestic violence misdemeanours, the statutory penalties, both fines and imprisonment, have been strengthened.

Under the Act on Amendments to the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence (Official Gazette No. 84/21), which became effective on 31 July 2021, the application of the Act was extended to include current or former partners in an intimate relationship. This change aligns with the amendments to the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 84/21), broadening the meaning of the term 'close persons.'

Since 1999, the Croatian police have actively worked on improving preventive-repressive mechanisms and operative-tactical approaches to combat domestic violence and related issues affecting the sustainability and functionality of families. In addressing these concerns, the police response is fundamentally centered on immediately halting violent acts, promptly separating the perpetrator (aggressor) from the victim/victims, and providing or initiating assistance to the victim/victims of violence. This often involves collaboration with representatives from related institutions and services in other sectors, such as social services and healthcare.

As part of their obligations to act *ex officio*, the police submit reports (criminal charges, indictment) to judicial bodies (State Attorneys' Offices, Misdemeanour Departments of the Municipal Courts). Additionally, the Croatian police implement and supervise the execution of specific court decisions, particularly those related to monitoring measures aimed at preventing the recurrence of violent behaviour (protective measures, precautionary measures, security measures). Simultaneously, they document and monitor these actions. A crucial aspect of police work in combating domestic violence involves monitoring and analysing data on criminal offenses committed through domestic violence, including misdemeanours and criminal offenses.

Over the observed four-year period, the dynamics of domestic violence can be assessed through the recorded number of perpetrators/victims of misdemeanour domestic violence, the most common unlawful behaviour in this area of disturbed interpersonal relationships (Table 2). An analysis of the presented data clearly shows a reduction in the number of victims and perpetrators of these criminal acts, as well as the predominance of females as victims and males as perpetrators of domestic violence misdemeanours.

Table 2 Overview of the number of perpetrators/injured persons of domestic violence misdemeanours in the Republic of Croatia according to the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence

year	perpetrators			injured		
	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL
2018	7,983	2,289	10,272	3,986	7,284	11,270
2019	7,503	2,123	9,626	3,745	6,929	10,674
2020	6,601	1,938	8,539	3,618	6,270	9,888
2021	6,402	1,966	8,368	3,442	6,122	9,564

The victimization of women in the period from 2018 to 2021 in Croatia is presented through data on severe abuse of women resulting in fatal outcomes (murders), as shown in Table 3. Over the past four years, there has been a consistent trend in the fatal victimization of women as a result of committed criminal acts of murder and aggravated murder. The proportion of murdered women in the total recorded number of murders, as well as women victims of murders committed by close persons, from 2018 to 2021, is almost uniform. However, in 2021, compared to previous years, there is a significantly lower proportion of criminal offences of murdering women committed by their intimate partners.

Table 3 Overview of the number of criminal offences with fatal consequences (murders) in the Republic of Croatia where the victims are women, with an indication of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

year	total murders	total murders of women	total number of murders by close persons	total murders of women by close persons	total murders of women by intimate partners	proportion of murders of women by intimate partners in relation to the total number of homicides of women
2018	22	8	13	5	4	50%
2019	31	13	12	7	6	46.2%
2020	36	19	16	14	9	47.4%
2021	30	14	18	11	4	28.6%

The dynamics of the most severe forms of violence and police engagement in detecting and prosecuting these criminal acts can be observed through the most serious criminal offences committed among close persons (Table 4), predominantly involving crimes committed against persons classified as 'family members.' Comparing the presented data over a four-year period, it is evident that there is a continuous increase in the detection and prosecution of domestic violence crimes through criminal categories, representing more serious offences compared to the prosecution of these criminal behaviours through misdemeanour offences (Table 2). The latter, during the same period, shows a decrease in processing/reporting. This approach stems from the strategic redirection of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Croatia and

police, its operative component in the field of combating domestic violence, where, following legislative changes in the period from 2018 to 2021, the intention is precisely to prosecute violent behaviours in families through more serious criminal acts, namely criminal offences.

Table 4 The most common violent criminal offences committed against close persons

The most common criminal offences with elements of violence against close persons	2018	2019	2020	2021
Murder	13	12	16	18
Bodily injury	485	605	1,055	1,142
Serious bodily injury	91	111	135	154
Threats	1,832	2,371	2,740	3,088
Domestic violence	623	1,134	1,578	1,661

To prevent all forms of domestic violence against women, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in collaboration with relevant police administrations and other pertinent bodies, has been systematically conducting the preventive campaign "**Lily**" since June 2019. The goal of this campaign is to network all relevant state bodies, civil society organizations, legal entities, and other socially responsible entities to collectively find a coordinated response in preventing all forms of violence against women. This preventive project includes components with activities designed for male individuals, aiming to raise their awareness about the gender equality issues and eliminate all forms of violent behaviour.

As part of the 'Lily' project, the play '**Abused**' is performed, addressing violence against women and encouraging spectators to react appropriately to this type of violence. Additionally, the play '**Behind the Door**' focuses on the issue of domestic violence.

In cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, to prevent all forms of violence against women, domestic violence, violence among youth and to build a culture of non-violence and tolerance "**Living a Life without Violence**" has been implemented.

Through the organisation of various thematic events, expert lectures, thematic workshops, public campaigns, roundtable discussions, and other similar activities, the police annually mark the National Day of Combating Violence against Women (September 22) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25).

Furthermore, the legislative framework in the field of protection against domestic violence has been regulated by the enactment of the Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (Official Gazette No. 106/18 and 98/19), which prescribes the provision of housing to the victims of domestic violence (Chapter XI 'Victims of Domestic Violence,' Article 45 of the Act). In 2019, the by-law Regulation on Criteria for Scoring Housing Applications stipulates that "an application listing a household member who has a recognised status of a victim of domestic violence is awarded a one-time score of 40 points." By providing housing for victims of domestic violence, the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care contributes

to the adequate protection of mothers and children, regardless of marital status and family relationships. In the Republic of Croatia, the housing for victims of domestic violence who have been recognised as victims of domestic violence is temporary and lasts for a maximum of two years from the moment the beneficiary first starts using the housing unit.

Statistically, by counties, in terms of received decisions in the period from 1 January 2019, to 31 December 2021, a total of 47 decisions were received (11 decisions in 2019, 12 decisions in 2020, and 24 decisions in 2022):

- Vukovar-Srijem County - 16
- Osijek-Baranja County - 8
- Virovitica-Podravina County - 1
- Lika-Senj County - 1
- Brod-Posavina County - 1
- Dubrovnik-Neretva County - 1
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar County - 2
- Karlovac County - 1
- Sisak-Moslavina County - 4
- City of Zagreb - 4
- Šibenik-Knin County - 5
- Zadar County - 3

The Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care provides for utility costs and monthly rent in private apartments, while in state-owned apartments, beneficiaries have their utility costs covered, and they are exempt from paying monthly rent.

It is noted that the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care does not keep records of beneficiaries based on gender. Instead, they keep records of received positive decisions. The total number of submitted requests for housing care based on the status of victims of domestic violence, which are currently in the process, is separately managed by each administrative body in the counties or the relevant administrative body of the City of Zagreb. Reports on victims of domestic violence provided with housing are forwarded semi-annually and annually.

b) For States Parties not having accepted Article 31, please provide updated information on the availability of adequate affordable housing for families

Since the beginning of the implementation of the Socially-Promoted Housing Programme (hereinafter: POS Programme) until today, a total of 8,356 apartments in 260 buildings have been constructed by the State Agency for Legal Transactions and Real Estate Mediation (hereinafter: APN), the Public Institution City Apartments Varaždin, the Subsidised Housing Agency of the City of Rijeka, the Subsidised Housing Agency of the City of Dubrovnik, and APOS of the City of Koprivnica. The total investment value for the 8,356 apartments is EUR

574,689,760 (HRK 4,330,000,000.00), of which the Republic of Croatia has invested EUR 149,776,362 (HRK 1,128,490,000.00) through incentive funds.

c) Are family or child benefits provided subject to a means-test? If so, what is the percentage of families covered?

The child allowance at the national level is utilised by 70.79% of Roma, with the highest frequency in Northern Croatia (84.88%) and Međimurje (81.65%), followed by Slavonia (69.91%), Istria and Primorje (63.48%), then Zagreb and its surroundings (54.49%), and Central Croatia (46.02%).

d) Please provide information about the amounts paid in child/family benefit as well as the median equivalised income for the reference period. (from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2021).

Below, we provide a table with data on the child allowance based on the verification of the financial situation, expressed in millions of euros:

2018	2019	2020	2021
148.84	153.90	144.73	138.71

Below we provide a table with the data on the child allowance without verification of the financial situation, expressed in millions of euros:

2018	2019	2020	2021
24.55	24.86	26.13	27.48

In 2018, the average disposable income per household was EUR 12,989, while the average equivalent disposable income was EUR 7,302.

In 2019, the average disposable income per household was EUR 14,059, while the average equivalent disposable income was EUR 7,964.

In 2020, the average disposable income per household was EUR 15,066, while the average equivalent disposable income was EUR 8,509.

In 2021, the average disposable income per household was EUR 15,573, while the average equivalent disposable income was EUR 8,864.

e) Is there a length of residence requirement imposed on nationals of other States Parties lawfully resident in your country for eligibility to child/family benefits?

The Child Allowance Act (Official Gazette No. 94/01, 138/06, 107/07, 37/08, 61/11, 112/12, 82/15, 58/18) stipulates the following requirements to qualify for child allowance:

- The applicant has to have Croatian citizenship or the status of a foreigner with approved permanent stay, and has to have resided in the Republic of Croatia for at least three (3) years prior to filing the application
- The applicant must have the status of an asylee, foreigner under subsidiary protection or the status of an asylee's family member in accordance with the asylum regulations, without the requirement of citizenship and length of permanent residence or stay in the territory of the Republic of Croatia
- The total income generated in the previous calendar year per household member may not exceed 70% of the budget base per month
- The applicant has to live in the same household with the child
- The applicant must live support the child.

f) What measures have been taken to ensure that vulnerable families can meet their energy needs, in order to ensure their right to adequate housing (which includes access to essential services)?

More than half of the Roma population in the Republic of Croatia (53.7%) receives a guaranteed minimum benefit, while 43.3% are eligible for heating cost allowance, and 22.1% benefit from a housing allowance. Notably, the guaranteed minimum benefit and housing allowance are more frequently utilised by Roma members in Slavonia, whereas the right to heating cost allowance is most accessed in Northern Croatia. On average, the Slavonia region stands out in terms of the number of utilised forms of social assistance, while Roma living in the Zagreb area, Istria, and Primorje overall utilise the least social assistance.

On 23 December 2021, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Energy Poverty Reduction Programme, emphasising the use of renewable energy sources in residential buildings in assisted areas and areas of special state concern until 2025.

The Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care has taken steps to ensure that families with children at risk of poverty can meet their energy needs to secure their right to adequate housing. Accordingly, EUR 47,116,596.98 (HRK 355,000,000.00) was allocated for the energy renovation of buildings. This includes EUR 19,908,421.26 (HRK 150,000,000.00) from the National Resilience and Recovery Programme and EUR 27,208,175.72 (HRK 205,000,000.00) from the state budget, covering the implementation period from 2022 to 2030.

g) If specific temporary measures were taken to financially support vulnerable families during the Covid-19 pandemic, will they or are they expected to they been maintained or withdrawn? If they have been withdrawn, what effect is this expected to have on vulnerable families?

The COVID-19 pandemic, while not posing a serious health threat to children, has brought about substantial disruptions in their lives, significantly impacting their daily routines and, in some cases, social support systems. Preschool children faced challenges attending

kindergarten consistently, and school-age children had to adapt to online classes or television programmes during various phases of the pandemic. Prolonged internet use, a consequence of increased time spent at home, potentially exposed children to online dangers.

Isolation from close family members, extended family, peers, and friends hindered children's participation in continuous sports, recreational, artistic, and cultural activities. Spending more time surrounded by families became a new norm, which, in cases of children growing up in troubled family relationships, may have increased their exposure to violence. For children of separated parents, irregular contact with the non-custodial parent became more pronounced. This irregularity was partly due to pandemic-related lockdown measures and social distancing, and sometimes due to abuse by the custodial parent who took advantage of the situation to prevent contact with the other parent.

The pandemic has impacted vulnerable children and families already facing socio-economic exclusion, residing in impoverished conditions, or belonging to at-risk groups. According to the 'Protection of Children during the Coronavirus Pandemic'¹ document, the pandemic has socio-ecological impacts on children's lives in several ways including limited access to essential services, restricted access to community support services, education, and recreational spaces, family separation, reduced access to social support, challenges for caregivers, increased risk of domestic violence, increased risk of violence against children, neglect, abuse, psychological neglect, and negative effects on child development, impact on daily life with difficulties in maintaining family connections and support and fear of illness, stigmatization of certain ethnic groups. Children in alternative care also experienced reduced or entirely restricted contacts with their parents during the pandemic. All these factors have influenced children's mental health. Research indicates a notable level of concern among children, posing risk for anxiety, depression, and aggression. The document highlights children's distress concerning death, illness, separation from family members, or fear of illness. Quarantine measures have contributed to fear and panic in communities, affecting children who may have not fully comprehended the situation. Subjective well-being indicators are particularly unfavourable for students who have endured additional stress and harm from earthquakes.

Article 17 - The right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to grow up in an environment which encourages the full development of their personality and of their physical and mental capacities, the Parties undertake, either directly or in co-operation with public and private organisations, to take all appropriate and necessary measures designed:

¹ The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action: 'Technical note: Protection of Children during the Coronavirus Pandemic', [https://www.unicef.org/media/65991/file/Technical%20note:%20Protection%20of%20children%20during%20the%20coronavirus%20disease%202019%20\(COVID-19\)%20pandemic.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/65991/file/Technical%20note:%20Protection%20of%20children%20during%20the%20coronavirus%20disease%202019%20(COVID-19)%20pandemic.pdf) ; translation into Croatian by UNICEF - 'Zaštita djece tijekom pandemije Covid-19 virusa', <https://www.unicef.org/croatia/media/3296/file/Za%C5%A1tita%20djece%20tijekom%20pandemije%20COVI D-19%20.pdf>

Paragraph 1 (REV):

a) to ensure that children and young persons, taking account of the rights and duties of their parents, have the care, the assistance, the education and the training they need, in particular by providing for the establishment or maintenance of institutions and services sufficient and adequate for this purpose;

b) to protect children and young persons against negligence, violence or exploitation;

All children up to the age of 18 who are domiciled residence or have been granted permanent stay in the Republic of Croatia are covered by the Compulsory Health Insurance Act (Official Gazette No. 80/13, 137/13, and 98/19), irrespective of their parents' compulsory health insurance status.

The rights provided under compulsory health insurance encompass both the entitlement to health care and the entitlement to cash benefits.

The right to health care includes access to primary health care, specialist and consultative health care, hospital health care, prescribed medicinal products listed in the CHIF's (Croatian Health Insurance Fund) basic and supplementary reimbursement lists, dental devices listed in the CHIF's basic and supplementary reimbursement lists of dental devices, orthopedic aids, and other devices listed in the CHIF's basic and supplementary reimbursement lists of orthopaedic aids and other devices. Additionally, the right extends to health care services in other Member States and third countries.

The right to cash benefits that can be used for children includes:

- the right to salary compensation during temporary inability to work due to caring for the child,
- right to compensation for transportation costs related to the exercise of the right to health care under compulsory health insurance,
- the right to compensation for accommodation costs for one of a child's parents or person taking care of a child during the hospitalisation of a child suffering from a life-threatening malignant or related disease.

The Act on Compulsory Health Insurance and Health Care of Aliens in the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 80/13, 15/18, 26/21 and 46/22) also prescribes the rights to health care of aliens. Article 17 of the Act lists the aliens who may receive health care in the Republic of Croatia, while Article 19 exhaustively lists the categories of aliens to whom the Republic of Croatia allocates funds for health care in the State Budget.

Articles 20 - 24a of the same Act prescribes the scope of rights for applicants for international protection, asylum seekers, aliens under subsidiary protection and aliens under temporary protection, unaccompanied children, Aliens staying in the Republic of Croatia at the invitation of a Croatian state authority or a body of a local or regional self-government unit, aliens

staying illegally in the Republic of Croatia, aliens' victims of trafficking in human beings. Unaccompanied children, according to the Act, have the right to healthcare to the same extent as insured persons under compulsory health insurance.

Considering that the specified categories of aliens are deemed vulnerable, the Ordinance on Health Care Standards for International Protection Applicants and Aliens under Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 28/20) delineates the extent of healthcare and the procedures for exercising healthcare rights for these vulnerable groups. Notably, children under the age of 18 are entitled to comprehensive healthcare in accordance with regulations governing the right to healthcare under compulsory health insurance.

CIPH is the holder of public health databases and registers. These databases and registers enable the comparison of data, utilizing personal identification numbers (OIB), with information from other databases and registers. This approach aims to enhance the monitoring of health statuses and social determinants of health in the population. The overarching goal is to develop future strategic frameworks that improve health outcomes and promote equal opportunities among the population. By systematically collating data from various sources, real-time monitoring of the health situation becomes feasible, facilitating the creation of high-quality public health policies with a specific focus on vulnerable groups.

c) to provide protection and special aid from the state for children and young persons temporarily or definitively deprived of their family's support;

a) Please provide information on measures taken by the State to:

i) reduce statelessness (e.g., ensuring that every stateless migrant child is identified, simplifying procedures to ensure the acquisition of nationality, and taking measures to identify those children who were not registered at birth) and

Croatian citizenship is held by over 98% of the Roma population, while 1.8% of Roma in the Republic of Croatia do not have Croatian citizenship. Among them, 23 individuals have been identified as stateless (Rašić, N., Lucić, D., Galić, B., Karajić, N. (2020): Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: Identity, Social Distance and the Experience of Discrimination). Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of Croatia Zagreb., p. 154-158).

ii) facilitate birth registration, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as Roma, asylum seekers and children in an irregular situation. (General question posed in Conclusions 2019).

According to the data available to the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, which is responsible for coordinating the development, monitoring implementation, and reporting on the national strategic framework aimed at the integration of the Roma, it is observed that the majority of Roma women give birth in hospitals. This implicitly leads to the conclusion that birth registration occurs as part of the regular procedure.

In the Republic of Croatia, the registration of the fact of birth in the register of births is mandated by the State Registers Act (Official Gazette No. 96/93, 76/13, and 98/19). This Act does not differentiate the registration of the fact of birth on a national basis, and there is no specific regulation exclusively for national minorities concerning registration in state registers. The rules are uniform for all individuals born in the Republic of Croatia. As per Article 10 of the Act, the registration of a child's birth in the birth registry is carried out based on an oral or written report submitted to the registrar of the respective registry area to which the place where the child was born belongs. In the case of a child born in a vehicle, the birth is reported to the registrar of the registry area where the journey concludes.

Article 11 of the same Act specifies that the birth of a child in a healthcare institution must be reported by the healthcare institution within 15 days from the day of the child's birth. Conversely, if a child is born outside a healthcare institution, the responsibility for reporting falls on the child's father, the person in whose residence the child was born, the mother when she becomes capable, a midwife, or a doctor who participated in the delivery. In cases where these individuals are not present or unable to report the birth, the obligation falls on the person who learned about the birth. When reporting the birth of a child born outside a healthcare institution, the involved individuals must furnish medical documentation on the birth or proof of maternity. The absence of these documents prevents the registrar from registering the newborn in the birth registry.

Parents are required to personally report the child's given name to the competent registrar within 30 days from the day of the child's birth, as mandated by Article 13 of the State Registers Act. Should the parents fail to determine the child's given name within this stipulated period, the registrar proceeds to register the child in the birth registry without the given name. Subsequently, the registrar informs the social welfare centre to facilitate the determination of the given name. Once the centre establishes the child's given name, it is recorded in the birth registry.

It is possible to report the birth of a child to the registrar after the legal deadline has passed. However, in such cases, the registrar cannot autonomously register the birth in the birth registry. Instead, a decision from the competent administrative body for registration is required.

When registering the birth of a child, the identity of the parents is established based on valid identification documents. If the parents lack identification documents or if their identity has not been previously established, the child will be registered in the birth registry solely with information from the hospital report or based on medical documentation on the birth. Data entered in the birth registry based on parents' statements, such as given name and nationality, will not be filled in. Furthermore, before registration, the registrar will, *ex officio*, verify the parents' data in records directly maintained or officially kept by public authorities in the Republic of Croatia, as outlined in Article 10 of the Instruction on the Implementation of the

State Registers Act (Official Gazette No. 117/21). While the State Registers Act permits the addition of data not initially registered, the registrar can only make such additions based on a decision from the competent authority.

Please provide information on the measures taken to:

child poverty (including non-monetary measures such as ensuring access to quality and affordable services in the areas of health, education, housing etc.) and

Under the 2014-2020 financial envelope, the implementation of the project within the Programme of Integrated Physical, Economic, and Social Regeneration of Small Towns Affected by War in the Municipality of Darda has commenced. Construction work is currently in progress for houses (87 residential units for 87 families) and playgrounds (for children and sports), with the project expected to be completed in May 2023. In 2020, 30 residential units were constructed, granted occupancy permits, and handed over to and occupied by 30 families. The sports hall for handball, indoor football, and basketball, was completed in 2019.

Since 2019, the annual programme of providing housing and improving living conditions for the Roma has been executed. Through the donation of household appliances, furniture, and construction materials for renovation or construction of family houses, the programme aims to enhance the living conditions of the Roma national minority. In 2019 and 2020, a total of 1,583 appliances or household items were donated to Roma families, with an expenditure of approximately EUR 428,429.22 (HRK 3,228,000.00). This comprised EUR 217,752.28 (HRK 1,640,654.56) in 2019 and EUR 210,702.37 (HRK 1,587,537.04) in 2020. In 2021, the annual programme introduced two models - equipping bathrooms/sanitary facilities and delivering household appliances. A total of 381 applications were approved, consisting of 235 for the allocation of household appliances and 146 for the allocation of materials for equipping bathrooms or sanitary facilities.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES:

From 2023, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities has outlined the plans for the following activities to ensure the availability of quality services for members of the Roma national minority:

- 1) Pilot project - Centres for Community Work entitled Equality, Inclusion, Participation and Integration of Roma - Pilot Centres in Communities (the so-called JUPI PILOT, implementation time June/2023-June/2030) has the potential to address indirectly all challenges identified above.

The project involves the establishment of Centres equipped with a team of experts dedicated to daily work with the Roma in selected localities within Međimurje County. The activities of this expert team are rooted in the principles of community social work, emphasizing the establishment of trust within the community. Working collaboratively with the local Roma population, the team addresses priority issues, typically starting with simpler problems that can be resolved through collective

community interventions, such as small social actions to enhance specific issues of the community. As time progresses, the team broadens its efforts to tackle more complex issues requiring extended implementation and the involvement of various community stakeholders. Throughout this process, the expert team serves as a mediator between the local Roma population and other stakeholders, including municipal authorities, schools, social care institutions, and similar entities.

In addition to community work, the expert team assumes responsibility for coordinating the implementation of activities and practices established during "Phase III - Testing the Child Guarantee in Croatia." These activities, developed over the past years, are conducted in an integrated manner, targeting both Roma children and other children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Međimurje County.

- 2) The JUPI O project (Equality, Inclusion, Participation and Integration of Roma through Education, implementation time March/2023-March/2026) will build upon the ongoing efforts of the national campaign "Start the Wheel of Knowledge." The project aims to promote positive role models, including the dissemination of the previously filmed documentary "Yours." It will also conduct workshops focusing on:
 - a) parents - with the goal of influencing parental attitudes towards the participation of children in early childhood education and care education and encouraging the continuation of secondary and higher education.
 - b) children and youth - aiming to increase the completion rates of primary school and reduce the occurrence of high school dropout.
- 3) The JUPI ZA project (Equality, Inclusion, Participation, and Integration of Roma through Employment, implementation time March/2024-March/2028), will focus on activities designed to integrate young people from the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) group into the labour market through on-the-job training. Key activities include the development of an on-the-job training programme in collaboration with selected employers; outreach efforts in settlements to identify young individuals and familiarize them with the training program; conducting motivation testing and selecting participants; implementation of the programme with mentorship support and continuous feedback during training; and the overall evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness.
- 4) Within the YUPI ZDRAV Project, the Office intends to address the issue of underage marriage by organizing workshops on women's reproductive health. These workshops are tailored for both women and men in the community, focusing on the appropriate age group. The goal is to raise awareness about the risks associated with underage pregnancies, emphasizing the potential impact on the life outcomes of young parents and the well-being of children born in underage cohabitations. Additionally, as part of the same project, preventive health examinations are planned for 1500 representatives of the Roma minority, including 750 children. Following the data processing from these health examinations, health counselling sessions will be conducted for the study

participants. During these counselling sessions, participants will receive general information about their health, and if necessary, they will be referred for further examinations.

In addition, through an open call under the JUPI I project, targeted at civil society organizations, local self-government units (LSGU), and public institutions, the Office plans to offer financial support for initiatives contributing to the educational outcomes of children while simultaneously fostering social integration. These initiatives may include creative, sports, and educational programmes, including those that enhance personal skills such as learning foreign languages, computer literacy, financial literacy, civic education, etc. The support will cover the provision of necessary equipment, materials, and human resources for implementing these activities. A prerequisite for financial support is that these activities are carried out in integrated groups of adults and/or children. Examples of such activities include winter and summer integrated camps for children and programmes supporting Roma students, such as peer mentoring and other mentoring/tutoring programmes.

ii) combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities for children from particularly vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, Roma children, children with disabilities, and children in care.

To enhance the social inclusion of minority groups in the community, with a focus on promoting a culture of tolerance, non-violence, non-discrimination, and gender equality, while also preventing all forms of hatred, the Croatian police systematically implement a preventive project called "I Have a Choice." Through this initiative, the police have established effective collaboration with Roma associations, civil society organizations, and educational institutions to conduct joint activities. The project primarily targets children aged 10 and 11, including some from the Roma community.

Moreover, to prevent underage marriages, prostitution, and trafficking in human beings, the police collaborate with educational institutions to engage with students in higher grades of primary schools. They present educational and preventive video material titled "Get Married When You're Ready," specifically addressing the issues of underage marriages within the Roma community.

Since 1 January 2018, when the responsibility for accommodating individuals with granted international protection was transferred to the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, over 800 individuals who were granted international protection have been accommodated as of 31 December 2021. In addition to addressing the needs of refugees, there is a prioritised focus on fostering a societal environment that respects human rights.

Moreover, living conditions for members of the Roma national minority have been improved through assistance with household appliances (white goods) and household items (furniture). According to official data from the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2021 they delivered: 1,672 pieces of white goods

(777 pieces in 2019, 660 pieces in 2020, and 235 pieces in 2021), 148 kitchens and pieces of furniture parts (96 kitchens and pieces of furniture in 2019, 52 kitchens and pieces of furniture in 2020), and 133 bathrooms were equipped in 2021. At the same time, 11 beneficiaries were included for the allocation of construction materials to improve living conditions.

As part of the ESF project "Roma Inclusion - Meeting the Preconditions for the Effective Implementation of Policies Targeting National Minorities", the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities launched a national campaign entitled "Start the Wheel of Education". The campaign aimed to raise awareness among the general and professional public about the specific position of Roma children and the importance of early childhood care and completing secondary and higher education. The campaign (2020 - 2022) included media activities (billboards, YouTube, radio stations, national and commercial television) and educational activities (national conference and 6 regional round tables discussing priorities in the education of Roma children at the regional level). The discussions at the regional round tables were also part of the consultative processes for the development of a new national strategic framework for the integration of Roma.

Furthermore, living conditions for members of the Roma national minority have seen improvement through assistance with household appliances (white goods) and household items (furniture). According to official data from the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2021, they delivered: 1,672 pieces of white goods (777 pieces in 2019, 660 pieces in 2020, and 235 pieces in 2021), 148 kitchens and pieces of furniture parts (96 kitchens and pieces of furniture in 2019, 52 kitchens and pieces of furniture in 2020), and 133 bathrooms were equipped in 2021. Additionally, 11 beneficiaries were included for the allocation of construction materials to improve living conditions.

As part of the campaign, a video material on a day in the life of Roma Children and youth was created and promoted as an exhibition. The exhibition named "My Day - The Life of Roma Children and Youth" was displayed in 2020 and 2021 in Osijek (Cultural Centre), Varaždin (City Museum), Zagreb (Forum Gallery, Cultural Information Centre).

Additionally, a documentary film called "Svoje" was produced and promoted as part of the campaign. The film follows the stories of three successful young Roma women, aiming to raise public awareness about the disadvantaged position of Roma women facing intersectional discrimination. The film premiered on 30 May 2020 on the First Channel of the Croatian Radiotelevision in the Prizma show.

In 2021, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities created an informative infographic with the aim of promoting education for Roma students attending the final grades of primary school. The infographic aims to inform Roma children about their rights in the education system and encourage them to enrol and complete secondary school as a prerequisite for acquiring qualifications or entering university. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNULolNtcD4>.

From the perspective of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities as the coordinating body in the process of integrating asylum seekers and aliens under subsidiary protection into society, in accordance with Article 76 of the Act on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 70/15 and 127/17), below we list the activities that could contribute to reporting on this issue.

As part of the project "Support for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in Need of International Protection," co-financed by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund, educational and awareness-raising activities were conducted in 2018. The primary goal was to facilitate the inclusion of children in need of or granted international protection into the educational system and their immediate surroundings. In this context, activities were designed and implemented to enhance the capacities of professionals working in public institutions, focusing on key areas of integration: social welfare, health care, language learning, education, and employment. These services, mandated by law, are crucial for individuals in need of international protection and significantly contribute to their integration into society. Regional forums were organised for this purpose, attracting teachers and representatives of school professional services. These participants acquired knowledge about the prescribed procedures within the education system concerning this vulnerable group. The forums provided a platform to discuss common challenges faced in practice and explore strategies to overcome them. Attendees were familiarised with examples of good practices, received recommendations for their work, and gained insights into the general role of educational institutions in integrating children in need of international protection. These forums took place in Sisak, Slavonski Brod, Zadar, Karlovac, Varaždin, and Rijeka, attracting a total of 235 participants from various departments.

As part of the mentioned project, various public events were organised to engage children and young people. These events included educational and awareness-raising workshops conducted for both lower and upper grades of primary schools and secondary schools. The focus was on fostering acceptance of children and young people in need of international protection. The workshops aimed to contribute to the promotion of inclusive education, preparing students to welcome new schoolmates who require assistance in adapting to a new school environment. Experienced facilitators in the field of refugees conducted these workshops, with a total of 963 children and young people participating across Zadar, Slavonski Brod, Sisak, and Karlovac.

As an outcome of these workshops, an awareness-raising brochure titled "Children's Questions about Refugees - and How to Answer Them" was created. This brochure addresses the challenges in communicating with children and youth on the topic of refugees, multiculturalism, and fostering positive contact with individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Organised into six thematic areas, the brochure provides answers to the most common questions children and youth have about refugees, supporting parents, guardians, and all those involved in these issues to provide age-appropriate and supportive responses.

Additionally, as part of the awareness-raising activities for children and youth, an exhibition of drawings created by children seeking international protection from reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. These drawings focused on the children's past, present, and future, presenting their perspectives. The exhibition, named *Colours of a Journey*, was implemented by the Balkon Association, and was attended by 144 students from schools in Zagreb as part of public events for children and youth.

Furthermore, a panel discussion titled "Inclusion of Asylum-Seeking Children and Beneficiaries of International Protection in the Educational System: Policy Analysis and Best Practice Examples" took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art on 19 June 2018. The panel aimed to showcase progress in the development of policies for educational integration, discuss challenges and opportunities for further development, and share examples of best practices. Representatives from state bodies, local government units, educational institutions, and civil society organizations, totalling 48 participants, attended the panel.

In 2018, an ATL media campaign was executed to enhance the preparedness of Croatian citizens to welcome third-country nationals in need of international protection. The anticipated outcome of this campaign was to foster the development of a "welcoming society" that recognises the significance of embracing and integrating individuals from third countries who have been granted international protection. The campaign aimed to cultivate an understanding of their contributions to post-migration dynamics, promote the establishment of an inclusive society, and actively discourage intolerance, discrimination, and xenophobia. The media campaign encompassed a variety of channels, including indoor and outdoor advertising, internet, television, and radio advertising. The thematic focus of the campaign centered on the inclusion of a girl granted international protection in the school environment. The narrative highlighted her need for support from her peers to fully participate in the school community and build relationships that would aid her adaptation to the new environment. As part of the promotional activities, materials from this campaign designed for primary school children were distributed at the Gustav Krklec Primary School in Zagreb. This school is attended by children who are third-country nationals seeking for or have been granted international protection.

In 2021, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, as part of the ongoing project "INCLuDE - Interdepartmental Cooperation on the Empowerment of Third Country Nationals," organised training sessions for teachers and other professionals in school services. The training aimed to share best practices for the integration of individuals granted international protection, combat discrimination, and explore the potential role and activities of educational institutions in fostering the social inclusion of individuals granted international protection and other third-country nationals. This training, delivered through two interconnected modules, involved 25 representatives from 18 schools in cities across Croatia, where persons under international protection are accommodated or likely to be accommodated. To facilitate the training, a handbook for trainers titled "Empowering School

Collaborators and Teachers for Better Integration of Refugee Students through Social Action in the Community" was developed and published. The handbook is accessible at the following link: <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/projekti/fond-za-azil-migracije-i-integraciju-amif/include-medjuresorna-suradnja-u-osnazivanju-drzavljana-trecih-zemalja/938>.

In 2022, with financial support from the Office, the implementation of 19 local actions commenced through schools that participated in the education. The aim was to enhance social contacts between third-country nationals and the local population, involving both children and adults. This initiative acknowledged the role of educational institutions as catalysts for both initial and long-term integration efforts.

Based on the feasibility study results from 2018, a research study titled "Abuse of Substances in Roma Communities in Međimurje County" was conducted from 1 July to 1 December 2019. The main aim was to explore the needs and social risks among Roma children and youth in Međimurje County, with a focus on substance abuse. Recommendations and guidelines for creating appropriate socio-culturally adapted prevention interventions were derived from this study. The study employed qualitative methods (focus groups, interviews, qualitative observation) and a smaller quantitative part through a questionnaire. For the qualitative part of the research, two Roma communities (Parag and Kuršanec) were selected, along with the Student Dormitory of the School of Building and Crafts of Čakovec. A total of 5 focus groups were conducted with children and young people aged 14 to 21, along with two structured interviews with leaders/representatives of Roma communities. Within the framework of the qualitative observation method, insights from accompanying study activities, such as visits to the community in Kuršanec, a visit to the children's kindergarten in Kuršanec Cipelica, and discussions with employees of the social welfare centre, police officers, and Roma assistants, were used. Considering the survey objectives, one of which was to research risk and protective factors at the individual, family, school, and broader community levels among school children aged 10 to 12 and to make comparisons with the non-Roma population of children, a part of this research was conducted using a quantitative method through a survey questionnaire specially created for this research. The questionnaire covered 146 children, of which 98 (67.1%) were from the primary school in Macinec, predominantly attended by Roma children, and 48 (32.9%) were students from the primary school in Štrigova, mostly attended by Croatian children. Based on the analysis of the results of this survey, several key risks and needs of children and young people, as well as risk and protective factors at the level of the narrower and broader community, family, school, peer groups, and as individuals, can be identified. The analysis of the survey questionnaire results shows that there is many protective factors in the family, and the majority of children assess their family positively.

Regarding risk factors, it was most assessed that parents often and very often quarrel with their children (8.9%) and do not take care of their children (8.3%). According to the results of the qualitative part of the research, the identified risks primarily relate to issues at the level of the Roma community and Roma families, such as insecurity in the community due to a high occurrence of drugs, alcohol, theft, and other crimes, frequent drug use, especially Galaxia, conflicts and violence in the community among neighbors and residents, alcoholism and

violence in families, loss of livelihoods due to drugs, gambling, and alcohol, as well as usury, lack of content for the leisure time of young people, untidiness of the place (garbage, houses, roads, lack of infrastructure for all residents in the settlement), insufficient employment, and insufficient involvement of young people in secondary education, as well as insufficient involvement of young people in community life and decision-making important for the community. At the community level, there is a pronounced perception, both among children and young people and representatives of Roma communities, of intolerance from the majority standpoint in Međimurje, causing children and young people to feel discriminated against in their everyday lives, especially regarding the availability of facilities for young people such as cafes, sports clubs, cultural activities, and the like. According to all participants in the research, a key problem in Roma communities is the insufficient work of the repressive system in suppressing crime in Roma settlements, especially the suppression of all forms of drug-related crime. Positive aspects highlighted in the Roma community include the connectedness of the community, which has a clear informal management structure, emotional connectedness between children and parents in Roma families, and the description of Roma families as a source of support and security. Also, a significant advantage is that children and young people perceive school positively, considering the school environment stimulating, safe, and extremely important for their future. They also have a high level of awareness of the harmfulness of addictive substances, especially legal ones such as alcohol and tobacco. To implement effective preventive programmes aimed at preventing addiction among children and young people and strengthening resources to improve the quality of life for all children and young people, especially Roma, CIPH plans to collaborate with Međimurje County and relevant institutions from the county in the coming period².

Based on the study results, in 2020, in coordination with the Croatian Institute of Public Health, the project team developed the Pilot Project for the Prevention of Addiction aimed at children and young Roma in the Međimurje County. In 2021, in collaboration with the Međimurje County, the CIPH commenced the implementation of the Pilot Project for the Prevention of Addiction aimed at children and young Roma in the Međimurje County. The main goal of this pilot project is to reduce the use of addictive substances among children and young Roma, by empowering the skills of children and youth, their parents, and the local community, as well as creating opportunities for prosocial inclusion in community life. The implementation of planned activities was temporarily discontinued due to the epidemiological situation caused by COVID-19, and the continuation of the project is planned for the second semester of 2022. The planned activities are aimed at increasing awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse, developing critical thinking skills about normative beliefs and social influences, resisting peer pressure, improving the competencies of parents regarding addiction prevention and risky behaviours, increasing opportunities for the participation of children and youth in community activities, and empowering at-risk youth to make healthy life decisions. Through the implementation of thematic workshops, training, and counselling,

² Ivandić Zimić, J. (2019). Study: 'Substance Abuse among Roma Communities in Međimurje County' Final report Zagreb, CIPH)

the community will gain empowered parents and at-risk youth who will successfully cope with challenges in the community.

iii) States should also make clear the extent to which child participation is ensured in work directed towards combatting child poverty and social exclusion.

Children have the right to express their opinions and should be involved in the decision-making processes that are important to them, demonstrating that they are considered active participants in social processes. Children's participation is a significant form of various activities involving children in social processes and expressing their opinions, contributing to children's well-being and active citizenship. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Official Gazette - International Treaties No. 12/93 - based on the notification of succession) states in Article 12 that the child has the right to express views on all matters affecting him/her. Child participation is seen as part of civic participation^[1] and the development of civil rights. It is a fundamental human (civil) right, and likewise a child's right and a means of realizing other rights.

Within the social welfare system, beneficiary councils operate within service providers for accommodation, regulated by the institution's statute and implementing regulations that govern record-keeping and documentation. The Foster Care Act^[2] provides the possibility for the social welfare centre to organize a Council for Fostered Children and Youth for beneficiaries under their local jurisdiction, promoting their interests, the right to family life, and integration into the community.

Within the social welfare system, beneficiary councils operate within service providers for accommodation, regulated by the institution's statute and implementing regulations that govern record-keeping and documentation.^[3] The Foster Care Act^[4] provides the possibility for the social welfare centre to organize a Council for Fostered Children and Youth for beneficiaries under their local jurisdiction, promoting their interests, the right to family life, and integration into the community.

The tasks of the Council include monitoring the achievement of goals outlined in the national document related to the rights and protection of children, coordinating and aligning the work of state and other bodies in the implementation of planned measures and activities; monitoring the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international documents related to the protection and promotion of children's rights; proposing measures to the Croatian Government to improve the work of bodies responsible for child protection and the realisation of their right; suggesting improvements to the legal framework in the field of child protection and the realisation of their rights; proposing funding for specific programmes significant for children from the state budget and other sources to the Croatian Government;

^[1] "Participation of children in school", Ombudsperson for Children of the Republic of Croatia, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Zagreb, 2019

^[2] Official Gazette 115/18

^[3] Ordinance on Keeping Records and Documentation of Social Service Providers, and the Manner and Deadlines for Submitting Reports, Official Gazette 100/15

^[4] Official Gazette 115/18

monitoring the implementation of national programmes for children in other EU member states; monitoring the work of the National Committee for Ethical Research Involving Children, which serves as an advisory body to the Council, to promote and monitor the implementation and interpretation of the provisions of the Ethical Research Involving Children in the Republic of Croatia in disputed cases.

c) Please provide information on any measures adopted to protect and assist children in crisis situations and emergencies.

Programme of the Croatian Institute of Public Health "PoMoZi Da - promoting mental health of children":

The Croatian Institute of Public Health's programme, "PoMoZi Da - Promoting Mental Health of Children," is part of the National "Live Healthy" Programme, co-financed by the European Social Fund. This initiative focuses on the protection and assistance of children, emphasizing early recognition and intervention in the field of mental health. "PoMoZi Da" is the first Croatian educational programme dedicated to empowering educational professionals in the field of mental health for children and youth. The primary objective is to equip educational professionals with a comprehensive set of knowledge and skills to facilitate the identification of mental health problems. The advanced level of the programme emphasises the acquisition of psychological first aid skills, aiming to enable appropriate approaches and provide necessary support to students exhibiting signs of mental difficulties while encouraging them to seek professional help. To facilitate the implementation of this programme, two manuals, along with accompanying educational materials, have been developed: 1) PoMoZiDa for primary and high school teachers and 2) Implementation Manual for educators - experts from county public health institutes. So far, 45 mental health professionals from county public health institutes have participated, and 2,350 educational professionals have successfully completed the e-course on the basic level of mental health literacy. Additionally, 26 three-day training sessions have been conducted, with the participation of 478 educational professionals.

Mental Health Risk Screening in Systematic Student Examinations Conducted by School Doctors:

The World Health Organization reports that mental health difficulties in children and young people contribute to 16% of the disease burden. One in five young individuals experiences these challenges, and over 50% of mental illnesses and disorders commence before the age of 14. If left untreated, these issues persist into adulthood, impeding academic progress and work capacity. It is estimated that only 20% of children and young people globally, including in Croatia, have their difficulties detected. The Twinning project "Ensuring Optimal Health Care for Persons with Mental Health Disorders" Cro MHD recommends the need for early detection of mental health risks through screening.

The mental health risk screening for students was initiated as a pilot project at the end of 2019, following the protocol outlined in the document. Key strategic prerequisites for implementing the screening were developed during the observed period. The screening was incorporated into the Health Protection Measures Programme, providing a legal basis for its

implementation within systematic examinations. Additionally, the screening was integrated into the computer application of school medicine, enabling monitoring and evaluation.

By the decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia dated 4 January 2021, the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care undertakes activities to provide temporary accommodation for individuals who have lost their housing in earthquake-affected areas and are unable to secure suitable accommodation independently. In the period from 4 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care took care of 96 families (275 individuals) granted the right to temporary accommodation in state-owned apartments. During the temporary accommodation, users were exempted from all costs related to accommodation, including rent and utility expenses.

In 2,477 mobile housing units, 5,206 individuals/beneficiaries are accommodated. Out of these, 4,653 individuals/beneficiaries are families accommodated directly adjacent to their damaged residential buildings in 1,842 mobile units. Additionally, 553 individuals/beneficiaries are accommodated in 362 mobile units in container settlements, and 273 legal entities are also housed in mobile units. Local self-government units are responsible for maintaining housing units in container settlements, while the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care maintains mobile housing units allocated outside container settlements. This includes electrical, plumbing, and municipal works (connections to water, municipality utilities, and electricity) and tasks related to the assembly, disassembly, and maintenance of air conditioning units.

Pursuant to the legislative framework related to extraordinary housing care (Chapter XII. "Extraordinary Housing Care", Article 46 of the Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (Official Gazette No. 106/18 and 98/19), the provision of housing care is prescribed in individual cases when an individual or family loses their only housing unit suitable for habitation due to extraordinary circumstances such as floods, fires, landslides, earthquakes, explosions, and other similar circumstances. According to official data from the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care, in the period since the responsibilities of extraordinary housing care were transferred to the Office, from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2021, 105 requests for housing care were received. Out of these, 11 were resolved positively, 72 negatively, while 22 requests lacked the required documentation.

Statistically, broken down by years: in 2019, 54 requests for extraordinary housing care were received (four resolved positively, 33 negatively, and 17 lacked the requested documentation). In 2020, a total of 29 requests were received (three resolved positively, 25 negatively, and one lacked the requested documentation), while in 2021, 22 requests were received (four resolved positively, 14 negatively, and four lacked the requested documentation).

Paragraph 2 (REV) - to provide to children and young persons a free primary and secondary education as well as to encourage regular attendance at schools.

a) What measures have been taken to introduce anti-bullying policies in schools, i.e. measures relating to awareness raising, prevention and intervention? (General question, Conclusions 2019).

Since 2002, CIPH has conducted the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey every four years. This international research is carried out in collaboration with the World Health Organization - Regional Office for Europe in 50 countries and regions across Europe and North America, including Croatia. In the observed period, the survey was conducted in 2018, and in 2021, preparations for a new wave of research were underway to conduct the survey in spring 2022. This survey collects data on a wide range of health behaviours of students, including peer violence. To raise awareness, in spring 2020, CIPH published a national publication on the survey results and publicly presented and published the results with the support of the media. The public presentation of the results of the HBSC survey on 19 May 2020, can be found at this link: - <https://www.hzjz.hr/aktualnosti/medunarodno-istrazivanje-o-zdravstvenom-ponasanju-ucenika-hbsc-2017-2018/>, where the following is stated:

On 19 May 2020, supported by the World Health Organization, was released, providing comprehensive data for the year 2018 for all countries included in the study (links to published publications: Vol 1, Vol 2). There is a national publication with data for Croatia from 2002 to 2018, including a comparison with other countries (link to the [publication](#)).

International situation

On the international level, the following trends have been observed:

- an increase in mental health risks,
- a rise in school-related stress and a decrease in the proportion of students who greatly enjoy school,
- a rise in the use of digital technology and violence related to digital technology,
- risky behaviours, improper nutrition, and physical inactivity remain significant challenges,
- smoking and alcohol consumption continue to decrease, but the percentage of fifteen-year-olds who smoke and drink remains high, with alcohol being the most frequently used substance and
- overweight and obesity are on the rise.

Situation in the Republic of Croatia

Indicators for Croatia that we can be satisfied with:

Family is the fundamental social unit. Croatia ranks fifth in the percentage of students living with both parents.

In terms of life satisfaction, in 2014, Croatia was around the middle of the countries included in the study. According to data from 2018, Croatia ranks tenth for 11-year-old students, ninth for 13-year-olds, and eighth for 15-year-olds.

Croatia is the seventh country for 11 and 15-year-olds and the sixth for 13-year-olds in terms of students reporting excellent health.

Regarding body mass, there are only five countries with a lower percentage of students with low body mass at age 11, three countries at age 13, and four countries at age 15.

On the scale of participating countries, in 2014, Croatia was second to last regarding the number of fifteen-year-olds who had sexual intercourse. According to data from 2018, nine countries had fewer students reporting having had sexual intercourse than Croatia.

Alcohol and smoking - concerning results, but better than in 2014.

In 2018, Croatia is still above the HBSC average in terms of alcohol consumption, but it is no longer at the top among leading countries. However, there are also some concerning results. Students aged 13 ranks eleventh in lifetime alcohol consumption and twelfth in alcohol consumption in the last 30 days. Students in all three age groups rank thirteenth or fourteenth in responses indicating having been drunk two or more times in their lives, and 15-year-old students rank twelfth in responses indicating having been drunk in the last 30 days.

Smoking is still prevalent among students, but Croatia is not as high on the scale as in the previous survey. According to data on cigarette smoking in the last 30 days, Croatia ranks ninth for 13-year-old students and an exceptionally high fourth for 15-year-old students. Regarding smoking in their lifetime, our country ranks twelfth for 11-year-olds, ninth for 13-year-olds, and seventh for 15-year-olds.

Indicators that require consideration:

Concerning data includes that, for 13-year-old students, in 2014, the Republic of Croatia was second to last, and in 2018 it is last with the lowest percentage of students who responded that they really enjoy school.

Croatia is the tenth country for 13-year-old students in the percentage of students who reported bullying others at least two or three times in the last few months.

At the age of 13, our country is the eighth country with the highest percentage of students who have sent mean instant messages, posts, emails, or text messages at least once in the last few months.

Croatia is the thirteenth country with problematic social media use for 11-year-old students, fifteenth for 13-year-olds, and eleventh for 15-year-olds.

Breakfast as the first meal of the day plays an extremely important role for children in providing energy for their activities, but at the age of 11, the Republic of Croatia is the ninth country with the lowest percentage of students who have breakfast every working day. At the age of 15, our students are among the ten countries with the lowest daily fruit consumption. There are also poor results related to vegetable consumption: we are sixth with the lowest

daily vegetable consumption at the age of 11, ninth at the age of 13, and the worst on the scale at the age of 15. According to data on family meal consumption, Croatia is also low on the scale for 11 and 15-year-old students. There are only about ten countries where there are fewer students who do not eat a meal with their family every day. Also, it is important to emphasize that our country is eighth for 13-year-olds with overweight and obesity.

The Republic of Croatia is at the bottom of the scale for data on condom and contraceptive pill use. In seven countries, there is a lower percentage of students who reported that they or their partners used a condom during the last sexual intercourse, and in eight countries, there is a lower percentage of students who reported that they or their partners used contraceptive pills.

In summary, Croatia exhibits positive standings in several indicators, positioning among the top 10 countries with favourable conditions including a high percentage of students living with both parents, elevated life satisfaction levels, a subjective assessment of excellent health, a low prevalence of students with low body mass, and a reduced percentage of sexually active fifteen-year-olds. On the other hand, thirteen-year-olds are at the lower end due to a low percentage of students expressing a liking for school. Unfavourable situations are also observed in dietary habits across all age groups, with a notable percentage of thirteen-year-olds experiencing excess body weight. Additionally, there is a considerable presence of problematic social media use. Data on risky behaviours - smoking and alcohol consumption show a concerning situation, but still better than in 2014.

About HBSC:

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is an international study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization - Regional Office for Europe in 50 countries and regions of Europe and North America, including Croatia.

The study commenced in 1982 in three countries - Finland, Norway, and England, and its exceptional significance has been recognised by many other countries that have since joined or sought to participate. Conducted every four years, the study has been ongoing in Croatia since 2002, with the CIPH serving as the study holder, approved by the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports, and supported by the Ministry of Health.

The most recent iteration of the study occurred in 2018 across 45 countries, surveying 227,441 students globally, including 5,169 students from Croatia, spanning ages 11, 13, and 15.

The research's importance lies in providing insights into Croatia's standing relative to other countries. Identifying indicators where Croatia excels or lags compared to other nations is crucial. These indicators should be acknowledged as areas of success, forming the foundation for strategies to protect and enhance the health of children and young people. Simultaneously, areas requiring increased caution and societal care can be recognised. The survey conducted in 2018 will serve as a baseline against which the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of young people can be measured.

Downloads:

You can download the international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children in pdf [HERE](#).

Publication with data for Croatia "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children - HBSC 2017/2018" [HERE](#).

An international publication related to this research can be found at these links: Vol 1, Vol 2.

Map with the marked countries participating in this study (jpg).

About the international study on the WHO website.

The Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, has been implementing the preventive project "Living a Life Without Violence" for many years. The project is aimed at preventing violence among youth and building a culture of non-violence and tolerance, specifically designed for sixth and seventh-grade primary school students. The European Crime Prevention Network - EUCPN has recognised this project as the best crime prevention project among EU countries.

As part of this project, a yearly educational and preventive programme called "Living a Life Without violence - In memoriam: Miroslav Tunjić" is organised. This programme is held in memory of the tragically deceased Miroslav Tunjić, a victim of peer violence in 2010, and in memory of all other victims of peer violence. The programme encourages young people to actively promote a culture of non-violence, with a particular focus on primary school students recognised by their peers for their efforts in fostering dialogue, resolving conflicts peacefully, promoting collaboration among peers, assisting students facing learning difficulties or behavioural challenges, and taking responsibility.

To convey public messages aimed at preventing hate speech in all its forms, promoting positive lifestyles, non-violence, mutual tolerance, and a culture of dialogue, as well as preventing family violence and violence against women, the preventive project "Together Against Hate Speech" is consistently carried out. This project includes the "Prevention of Hooliganism", tailored for first-grade secondary school students. It encourages young people to develop healthy lifestyles devoid of violence and promotes a fair-play sports culture in cheering.

As part of the project, a package of preventive-educational tools has been developed, featuring two videos titled "Be Tolerant." In these videos, influencers convey educational messages to primary and secondary school students, emphasizing the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, cultural diversity, dialogue, and the prevention of hate speech. The package also includes a test designed for students and their parents to assess their level of tolerance. With the approval and support of the Ministry of Science and Education and the Education and Teacher Training Agency, these videos have been presented in primary and secondary schools throughout the Republic of Croatia. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the videos have successfully reached many students.

"Together We Can Do More" - is a targeted preventive programme aimed at preventing

substance abuse, especially drug abuse, vandalism, peer violence, and all other forms of risky behaviours in children. It targets students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades of primary schools, involving parents as well. The police collaborate with educational institutions and other socially responsible entities for the implementation of this program.

In the context of the “Sports Games of Youth” held from 2019 to 2021, the Ministry of the Interior, together with the Organizational Committee of the “Sports Games of Youth” and in collaboration with partners, conducted preventive activities and animation events specifically aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles in the spirit of sports. Additionally, the promotion of a positive culture of cheering that excludes any form of hooliganism, violence, discrimination, and hate speech was emphasised. A prepared package of preventive activities aimed at fostering healthy habits and creating conditions for the safe upbringing of children and youth (a life without drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc.) was encouraged, addressing potential risk factors.

Additionally, in collaboration with partners, the Ministry of the Interior initiated a preventive project entitled "Be a Fan, not a Trouble-Maker." This project educates young people on building a social climate based on tolerance, acceptance of diversity, a culture of dialogue, respect for others, and fair-play cheering at sports competitions while discouraging violence.

With the goal of establishing and maintaining a favourable state of safety, especially regarding peer violence, vandalism, hooliganism, risky and socially unacceptable behaviours of young people, drug abuse, and other forms of addiction, focusing on dialogue and respecting cultural similarities and differences through the culture of tolerance, non-violence, and non-discrimination, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with relevant police administrations, developed and implemented preventive and proactive activity programmes:

- Programme of preventive and proactive police activities aimed at improving safety in the city of Vukovar and Vukovar-Srijem County,
- Programme of preventive and proactive police activities aimed at improving safety in the area of Međimurje County and
- Plan of preventive and proactive police activities aimed at reducing the negative perception of the safety in the city of Split.

Continuing these efforts, in 2021, a series of preventive activities were held within the multimodal preventive project "Together Against Hate Speech," based on the programme of preventive and proactive activities of the police and partners aimed at improving the safety in the city of Vukovar and Vukovar-Srijem County. Supported by the Ministry of Science and Education and the Council for Prevention, students from the Higher Grades of the Technical School "Nikola Tesla" actively participated in these activities. The purpose was to promote positive lifestyles, non-violence, mutual tolerance, non-discrimination, and prevent all forms of hate speech at sports competitions.

b) What measures have been taken by the State to facilitate child participation across a broad range of decision-making and activities related to education (including in the context of children's specific learning environments)? (General question, Conclusions 2019).

From an educational perspective, children's development is examined through an integrative approach that considers not only academic achievements but also the individuality and identity of each child. The publication "Participation of Children in School" presents research on children's participation in the education system, involving 2,720 students. The research concludes that the concept of participation is relatively unclear and unknown to primary school children. However, for secondary school students, participation seems as important as grades, representing both a right and a responsibility. It is concluded that better relationships with adults, specifically teachers and professors, should encourage children to participate more in school.

In the process of improving a healthcare system tailored to children, public policy emphasises ensuring quality healthcare, involving children in decision-making processes, protecting them from infectious and non-infectious diseases, and working on prevention and education. Within the social welfare system, the right and possibilities of children's participation related to the actions of the SWC and other institutions are protected. For example, the participation of the child in deciding on the choice of the form of accommodation in situations of separation from the family, preparation for leaving care, etc.

In the education system, student councils have been established. Their activities are regulated by the Primary and Secondary Schools Act (Official Gazette No. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14, 07/17, 68/18, 98/19 and 64/20). Local self-government units establish student councils, and at the national level, there is the National Student Council, established by the Ministry responsible for science and education.

c) What measures have been taken to address the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the education of children (including in particular disabled children, Roma and Traveller children, children with health issues and other vulnerable children)?

Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities does not possess objective comprehensive data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of children belonging to the Roma national minority. Therefore, within the framework of the ESF+ project, a scientific research study is planned for 2023 that should address this question and based on empirical evidence, offer proposals for action.

In 2021, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities equipped five existing playrooms, social centres, or spaces designed for children's activities in Roma settlements with equipment necessary for distance learning (televisions and tablets with headphones) and pedagogical and didactic materials. This initiative enabled the implementation of pre-school

activities in circumstances where children could not attend early childhood education and care institutions outside the settlements. The settlements include Kuršanec, Nedelišće, Slavonski Brod, Beli Manastir, and Jagodnjak.

To generally mitigate the impact of the pandemic on members of the Roma national minority, within the PRO HEALTH FOR ROMA project, which has been implemented in the Međimurje County since November 2019, good practices have been developed for informing, counselling, and providing support in realizing the rights and services of health care. Roma collaborators employed in the project, in collaboration with the Croatian Institute of Public Health of Međimurje County, Međimurje County, and the City Society of the Red Cross Čakovec, participated in the translation of educational leaflets on maintaining hygiene and reducing the spread of the virus, as well as other essential information, into the Romani language. Through the project, a vehicle for a mobile office and visits to Roma settlements has been procured for conducting educational and informational activities. Since the implementation of the first epidemiological measures aimed at preventing and suppressing the pandemic, representatives of the Croatian Institute of Public Health of Međimurje County have been in regular contact with representatives of Roma communities. In collaboration with family medicine physicians, written material on procedures in case of health problems and contacts of health services they can turn to was prepared. The same material was translated into the Bayash Romanian language and disseminated in all settlements. Other materials related to proper handwashing and instructions for self-isolation have also been adapted and distributed to the Roma community. A helpline for psychosocial support has been made available to all residents of Međimurje County, as part of the Mental Health Protection Service. Additionally, the City Society of the Red Cross Čakovec has provided a telephone line for providing psychosocial support.

Note: for more information on the realisation of the rights of the Roma national minority, please visit the website of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/ostvarivanje-prava-romske-nacionalne-manjine/584>
<https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/izrada-nacionalnog-plana-za-ukljucivanje-roma-2021-2027/973>

For more information in the field of integration of persons granted international protection, please visit the following links:

<https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/projekti/fond-za-azil-migracije-i-integraciju-amif/include-medjuresorna-suradnja-u-osnazivanju-drzavljana-trecih-zemalja/938>
<https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/projekti/fond-za-azil-migracije-i-integraciju-amif/podrska-integraciji-drzavljana-trecih-zemalja-kojima-je-potrebna-medjunarodna-zastita/939>

Furthermore, measures taken to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of children (including specifically children with disabilities, Roma and Traveller children, children with health issues, and other vulnerable children):

CIPH, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Education, has been issuing recommendations and guidelines for educational institutions since the beginning of the pandemic, tailored to the current epidemiological situation. The goal is to enable children to

stay in classrooms or kindergartens and to maintain all educational, rehabilitative, health, sports, nutritional, and other activities for children to the greatest extent possible, considering the current epidemiological situation.

From the beginning of the pandemic until 31 December 2021, the following guidelines were published to combat the pandemic in educational institutions, aiming to maintain teaching and the presence of children in educational institutions to the greatest extent possible, with the highest possible level of safety, considering the constant adaptation to the current epidemiological situation:

- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2021//2022](#) (15 November 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2021//2022](#) (5 November 2021)
- [Recommendations on conducting classes at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of anti-pandemic measures for the academic year 2021/2022](#) (7 October 2021)
- [Procedure for a student infected with COVID-19 who attended classes during the contagious period](#) (25 September 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in student dormitories for the school year 2021/2022](#) (23 September 2021)
- [Handling Close Contacts in Educational Institutions – Health Control Measures during Self-Isolation](#) (7 September 2021)
- [Recommendations on conducting classes at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of anti-pandemic measures for the academic year 2021/2022](#) (2 September 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2021//2022](#) (26 August 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2020//2021](#) (18 June 2021)
- [Possibilities of conducting classes outside the classroom related to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (02 June 2021)
- [Recommendations on conducting classes at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of anti-pandemic measures](#) (28 May 2021)

- [Guidelines for conducting state graduation exams during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (03 May 2021)
- [Special conditions for students under a measure of self-isolation during the state graduation exam](#) (03 May 2021)
- [Recommendations on the operation of language schools and other similar forms of education during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (15 February 2021)
- [Recommendations on manufacturers of textile masks intended for schools – Version 2.](#) (09 December 2020)
- [Recommendations on conducting classes at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of anti-pandemic measures](#) (PDF, 52.9 KB) - update to the recommendations of 31 August 2020 (27 November 2020)
- [Instructions for the work of student dormitories regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in the school year 2020/2021](#) - updated (30 October 2020)
- [Terms of use of school sports halls by external users](#) (22 September 2020)
- [Instructions for the work of student dormitories regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in the school year 2020/2021](#) (24 September 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in student dormitories for the school year 2020/2021](#) (24 September 2020)
- [Visors cannot replace masks except a student/person with hearing impairment is present](#) – Operation of early childhood education and care institutions, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2020/2021 - additional clarifications (12 September 2020)
- [Organisation of breaks and meals – Operation of early childhood education and care institutions, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2020/2021](#) - additional clarifications (12 September 2020)
- [Recommendations on conducting classes at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of anti-pandemic measures](#) (28 May 2021)
- [Selected health and organizational issues related to the operation of early childhood education and care, and primary and secondary schools in the school year 2020/2021](#) (02 September 2020)
- [Recommendations on the operation of art schools during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (29 August 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in student dormitories for the school year 2020/2021](#) (27 August 2020)

- [Recommendations on the operation of dance schools during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (27 August 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2020//2021](#) (24 August 2020)
- [Possibilities of conducting classes outside the classroom related to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (21 August 2020)
- [Guidelines for conducting state graduation exams during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - Autumn exam schedule – August and September 2020](#) (12 August 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for the operation of schools for the purpose of improving negative grades and "additional" classes](#) (10 June 2020)
- [Amendment of guidelines and additional recommendations on kindergartens and schools](#) (05 June 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary school grades 1 to 4 and special classrooms and work with children with disabilities who have a teaching assistant – additional clarification](#) (29 May 2020)
- [Guidelines for conducting state graduation exams during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - Summer exam schedule – June 2020](#) (27 May 2020)
- [Guidelines on conducting practical exercises, supplementary classes, corrective and differential examinations in secondary schools and the defence of final project in secondary vocational schools May/June 2020 – Amendments](#) (26 May 2020)
- [Tips for parents – related to the work of kindergartens and schools from 25 May 2020\).](#) (22 May 2020)
- [Additional recommendations on kindergarten and school administrations](#) (22 May 2020)
- [Recommendations on undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate teaching at higher education institutions \(universities, polytechnics and colleges\) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (20 May 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary school grades 1 to 4 and special classrooms and work with children with disabilities who have a teaching assistant](#) (20 May 2020)
- [Recommendations on the work of music schools during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (19 May 2020)

- [Recommendations on the operation of language schools and other similar forms of education during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (15 February 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in student dormitories during vocational exams and state graduation exams with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (18 May 2020)
- [Guidelines on conducting practical exercises, supplementary classes, corrective and differential examinations in secondary schools and the defence of final project in secondary vocational schools May/June 2020](#) (May 13 2020)

In the [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for institutions of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schools in the school year 2021/2022](#) (26 August 2021), a special chapter refers to children with developmental difficulties and reads as follows:

Children and youth with developmental difficulties

For children and youth in an appropriate education programme, all educational, rehabilitation, and therapeutic programmes shall continue, with encouragement for the vaccination of children aged 12 and older who are at an increased risk of infection and severe consequences of coronavirus, as well as of all individuals providing care to them while adhering to these guidelines.

The following guidelines shall apply to children/students/users who benefit from accommodation services and other services within the social care system in early childhood education and care and school institutions:

- Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of non-institutional social services in the social care system (26 July 2021)
- Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system (26 July 2021).

It is recommended to separate children who benefit from accommodation services from those who come to institutions daily or occasionally. If possible, it is recommended to establish at least somewhat unchanged groups for children who come to institutions daily or occasionally.

Support for Children/Students with Developmental Difficulties

The third educator in early childhood education and care institutions, assistant for the care and well-being of children in early and preschool age, teaching assistant, and professional communication mediator are included in the total number of individuals in an educational group/class. In relation to other children/students and adults in the institution, they are obliged to:

- adhere to all rules of physical distancing,
- consistently practice enhanced personal hygiene and
- encourage enhanced hygiene and physical distancing for all children/students.

These individuals cannot maintain distance from the child/student due to the nature of their work, and they are required to wear masks, while the professional communication mediator wears a visor, and their vaccination is strongly encouraged. When assisting the child/student with personal hygiene, disposable gloves are used. For students with developmental difficulties in special classes and/or educational groups, classes are held in the school. For students with developmental difficulties who have designated teaching assistants or professional communication mediators, classes are held in the school. Educational work for students with developmental difficulties included in special programmes following the model of partial integration, in accordance with the decision on an appropriate education programme, is conducted partly in regular class units and partly in a special setting, while adhering to prescribed epidemiological measures.

CIPH together with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy and the Teaching Institute of Public Health dr. Andrija Štampar, has been issuing special guidelines for accommodation service providers for children throughout the pandemic. The aim is to maintain intensive educational, rehabilitative, and health programmes and services, accommodation and stay services, with as few restrictions as possible. From the beginning of the pandemic until 31 December 2021, the following guidelines were published:

- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system](#) (17 November 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system](#) (7 October 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims](#)

[of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system](#) (29 September 2021)

- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system](#) (26 July 2021)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for providers of accommodation services for children without appropriate parental care, children with behavioural problems, developmental difficulties, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and unaccompanied children and adults who are pregnant women or parents with children up to one year of age, homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings, and addicts in the social care system](#) (30 March 2021))
- [Amendments to the Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for the social service providers in the social welfare system - ver. 8/2](#) (30 July 2020)
- [Amendments to the Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for the social service providers in the social welfare system - ver. 8/1](#) (17 July 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for the social service providers in the social welfare system - ver. 8](#) (02 July 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for the non-institutional social service providers in the social welfare system](#) - (29 May 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for social welfare accommodation providers](#) (29 May 2020)
- [Guidelines on preventing and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic for Social Welfare Centers and the Centre for Guardianship Ad litem](#) (08 May 2020)

Special attention has been paid to the availability of voluntary vaccination of children against COVID-19, including special care for the vaccination of children with disabilities and serious health problems:

- [Vaccination of adults and children aged 5 years and older at the Rockefeller 4 vaccination point](#) (15 December 2021)
- [Voluntary vaccination of children against COVID-19 aged 5 years and older](#) (6 December 2021)
- [Application of the third \(additional\) booster dose](#) (25 November 2021)

- [Provisional COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations – Amended and Unified](#) (10 November 2021)
- [Recommendations on the third dose in immunocompromised persons and booster vaccination against COVID-19](#) (12 October 2021)
- [Guidelines regarding the EU digital COVID certificate or presentation of appropriate other evidence of vaccination, recovery or testing in the healthcare system for patients](#) (7 October 2021)
- [Treatment of patients, close contacts of patients and termination of isolation and quarantine](#) (01 October 2021)
- [Guidelines regarding the EU digital COVID certificate or presentation of appropriate other evidence of vaccination, recovery or testing in the healthcare system for patients](#) (29 September 2021)
- [Guidelines regarding the application of the EU digital COVID certificate or the presentation of appropriate other evidence of vaccination, recovery or testing for employees in the health system](#) (29 September 2021)
- [Recommendations on the prevention of COVID-19 infection during election gatherings](#) (02 September 2021)
- [Recommendations on the prevention of COVID-19 infection during professional meetings and business events](#) (01 September 2021)
- [Working hours and locations of vaccination points in the Republic of Croatia](#) (28 August 2021)
- [Working hours and locations of vaccination points during August](#) (21 August 2021)
- [Ensuring the application of epidemiological measures during the electoral process – work of electoral bodies](#) (17 August 2021)
- [Ensuring the application of epidemiological measures during the electoral process – collecting voters' signatures](#) (17 August 2021)
- [List of countries subject to special epidemiological measures upon arrival to the border of the Republic of Croatia](#) (26 July 2021)
- [Procedures for travellers crossing the borders of the Republic of Croatia – health monitoring of travellers](#) (26 July 2021)
- [Procedures for travellers crossing the borders of the Republic of Croatia – health monitoring of travellers](#) (26 July 2021)
- [Important notice for citizens regarding vaccination without an appointment](#) (19 July 2021)
- [Celebrities in the vaccination campaign](#) (19 July 2021)

- [Treatment of patients, close contacts of patients and termination of isolation and quarantine](#) (01 October 2021)
- [Temporary amendment to the COVID-19 vaccination recommendations](#) (06 July 2021)
- [Additional information and Provisional COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations](#) (25 June 2021)
- [Priority vaccination of children aged 12 years and older suffering from diseases that increase the risk of severe forms of COVID-19 with Pfizer vaccine](#) (31 May 2021)
- [Vaccination of bedridden and low mobile persons and other highly vulnerable groups of patients, including persons with disabilities, which increases the risk of developing severe forms of COVID-19](#) (01 March 2021)

Appendix 1 YP-CORE questionnaire

Sometimes students feel depressed, unhappy, or worried, so talking to a doctor can help. This questionnaire will help your school doctor determine how you feel.

These questions are about how you have been feeling – over the last week. Please read each question carefully. Think how often you have felt like that in the last week and then select the answer that fits best for you. Please mark your estimate by circling the appropriate number. At any time, you can choose to stop filling out the questionnaire.

	Not at all	Only occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Most or all the time
I've felt edgy or nervous	0	1	2	3	4
I haven't felt like talking to anyone	0	1	2	3	4
I've felt able to cope when things go wrong	4	3	2	1	0
I've thought of hurting myself	0	1	2	3	4
There's been someone I felt able to ask for help	4	3	2	1	0
My thoughts and feelings distressed me	0	1	2	3	4
My problems have felt too much for me	0	1	2	3	4
It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	0	1	2	3	4
I've felt unhappy	0	1	2	3	4
I've done all the things I wanted to	4	3	2	1	0
Total (sum):					

Interpretation of the YP-CORE questionnaire for school doctors:

1st grade of secondary school	Students (M)	Sudents (F)
Risk not identified	≤ 16 and 0 on the 4th item (I've never thought of hurting myself)	≤ 16 and 0 on the 4th item (It never occurred to me to hurt myself)
Risk identified	≥ 17 or 1-4 on the 4th item (I've thought of hurting myself)*	≥ 20 or 1-4 to the 4th item (I've thought of hurting myself)*
	Note: Answer 3 and 4 to item 4 requires urgency in action.	

Appendix 2 Clinical Satisfaction Assessment (a tool to assist in clinical assessment and counselling):

In the case of identified risk on the YP-CORE questionnaire, to determine whether a student needs to be further invited to counselling with their parent or if intervention is required or not, the school doctor orally asks the student questions about risk behaviours (smoking, alcohol consumption, drugs, and sexual behaviours) and school results, which is an integral part of the systematic examination during the same examination. In addition to the above, the doctor verbally asks these questions, and records the answers in the student's medical record:

How satisfied are you with yourself as a student?

- I am satisfied, I just need to continue this way.
- I am satisfied, but I could do better.
- I am dissatisfied, I need to try harder. *
- I am dissatisfied, but I do not have the will to try harder. *

How satisfied do you think your parents are with you as a student?

- They are very satisfied, they constantly praise me.
- They are satisfied, but they keep saying that I need to try harder.
- I don't know if they are satisfied.*
- They are dissatisfied, they constantly criticize me.*

How do you feel in your class?






- Excellent, I have good company in the class.
- I have few friends in the class.*
- I don't really have friends in class, but I do have outside of class (from other classes or outside of school).*
- I have no friends at all, but I would like to have.*
- I have no friends nor would I like to have them.*

*Result indicating a possible need for intervention; 20% of children provide indicative answers that are associated with suicidal ideation and an increase in depression

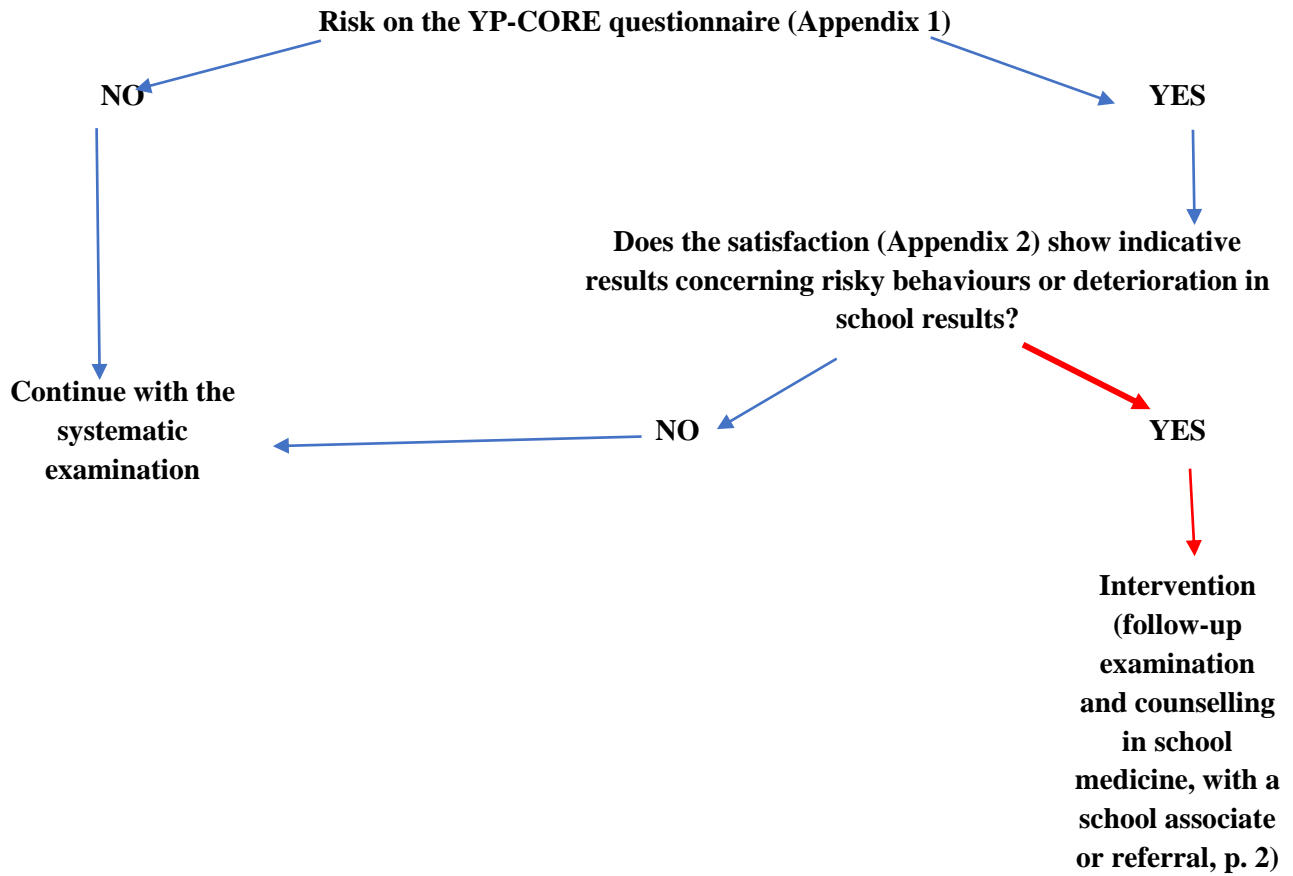
Appendix 3 Tool for clinical assessment and counselling by the school doctor – searching for the source of the problem:

Each of us has some problems with school, parents, learning, and the like. Please mark how many problems you have had with school, friends, parents, siblings, and appearance in the last month. To make it easier for you to assess, we have provided emojis to help you with how much something is a problem for you. If something is a big problem for you, then you will circle the number that indicates one of the sad emojis (4 or 5). If there is another source of the problem, write it down and mark it as something else.

IT IS NECESSARY TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT AREAS WHERE THE ANSWERS ARE 4 OR 5!

	Uopće mi nije problem			Veliki mi je problem	
					
Škola	1	2	3	4	5
Roditelji	1	2	3	4	5
Prijatelji	1	2	3	4	5
Braća i/ili sestre	1	2	3	4	5
Izgled	1	2	3	4	5
Nešto drugo:	1	2	3	4	5

Schematic view



Appendix 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Report for heads of services: the head of service reports for the entire county and submits it to CIPH at skolska.medicina@hzjz.hr by 15.07.2020.

County:		
Total number of students in the 1st grade of secondary school with whom you applied screening	Number of male students:	Number of female students:
Total number of students identified as at risk in the YP-CORE questionnaire	Number of male students:	Number of female students:
Total number of students who underwent the intervention (counselling in school medicine, with a school associate or referral)	Number of male students:	Number of female students:
How do you generally rate this screening on a scale from 1 (not good at all) to 5 (excellent)		
How do you generally rate this protocol on a scale from 1 (not good at all) to 5 (excellent)		
What would you improve about the protocol?		
What obstacles did you encounter when conducting the screening?		
What would you specifically highlight as positive?		
What would you specifically highlight as negative?		
What should be changed in the screening process?		
Do you recommend continuing this screening? Please rate with a score from 1-5; 1 (strongly recommend against continuing) to 5 (strongly recommend continuing).		

Appendix 5

Institute of the Public Health _____	Outpatient clinic (address and e-mail address, telephone):
CALL AND NOTICE TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS – Regular Systematic Examination for 1st Grade Secondary School Students <i>(This document does not need to be returned to the doctor)</i>	
Student's name: _____ Location: _____	School: _____ Time: _____
<p>The purpose of the systematic examination is to assess the health condition and adjustment to school. The examination includes taking personal and family history, reviewing medical documentation, a comprehensive somatic examination, and assessing the risk of mental health issues. Emotional and psychological difficulties are common during the period of intense growth and development in children. This school year, school doctors assess the risk of mental health using the international standardised questionnaire YP-CORE, in addition to the usual professional discussion. Each student completes the questionnaire during the systematic examination with the necessary level of discretion. The completed questionnaire becomes an integral part of the health record. If necessary, the school doctor will inform you of the results and, in consultation with you, consider further steps. You can learn more about the mental health risk screening at skolska.medicina@hzjz.hr.</p>	
<p>Please ensure that the student brings the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health insurance card - vaccination card - Medical documentation if they have any illnesses, take medications, or have undergone surgery. 	<p>Any additional notes and explanations for the doctor can be written on the back of the referral. You can obtain additional information about the systematic examination at the mentioned clinic, so please contact them as soon as possible if the child missed the examination to arrange a new appointment.</p>

d) Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that state allocation of resources to private education does not negatively impact on the right of all children to access free, quality public education (based on a Statement of Interpretation from Conclusions 2019).

The planning of the development of the education system in the Republic of Croatia directs the quality of education equally to private and public schools and institutions, all of which are subject to the control of prescribed standards.

In the context of public higher education, public universities, polytechnics, and colleges are financed from the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia, county, city, and municipal budgets, tuition fees, revenues from scientific, research, artistic, and professional projects, scientific and professional papers and expert opinions, foundations, donations and aid, revenues from publishing activities, market-generated revenues, property revenues, shares in business companies, as well as revenues from investments by individuals and legal entities and other sources.

The dominant funding source is from the state budget, considering criteria such as the capacity of individual higher education institutions, the cost of specific studies, and assessments of their quality based on evaluation procedures. Universities, polytechnics, and colleges can only

be financed from sources that do not affect their independence and dignity. As part of this funding system, the proposal for budgetary funds for science and higher education is prepared by the minister, respecting the criteria for the distribution of funds determined by the National Council for Science, Higher Education, and Technological Development based on the proposal of the Council for Financing Scientific Activities and Higher Education and based on the budget proposal of universities, polytechnics, and colleges. Funds from the state budget of the Republic of Croatia allocated to universities, polytechnics, and colleges are disbursed to budget beneficiaries in the total amount, and they are planned in the state budget by type of expenditure, such as personnel expenses, material expenses, etc., and beneficiaries allocate them for specific purposes according to the statute and other general acts.

On the other hand, private higher education includes all private higher education institutions that are privately owned or owned by private organizations. They are funded predominantly or exclusively from tuition fees, and funding sources can also include various donations, funds from founders, or third parties. Private higher education institutions may exceptionally be financed from the state budget, on the basis of a previously concluded contract, provided that they: a) perform an activity in which social needs exceed the available possibilities of public higher education institutions or their activity is of special state interest, b) meet the conditions prescribed by the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (Official Gazette No. 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 174/04, 02/07, 46/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14, 60/15 and 131/17), c) meet the criteria and priorities established by the National Council, taking into account the available funds and the quality of these institutions.