

## **THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD DELINQUENCY IN BUILDING PREVENTIVE POLICY IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

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### **Apstract**

The National Council for prevention of child delinquency was established under the Law on Justice for Children as an autonomous and independent body, which has jurisdiction in the area of monitoring of preventive activities by all the institutions and civil society organizations, in order to prevent child delinquency.

The National Council was established in 2009 and is composed of 15 members who are representatives of the relevant ministries, institutions and NGOs involved in the system of justice for children and eminent scientists and experts.

The National Council has a range of responsibilities the Law: it has adopted the National Strategy for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (2010-2020); conducts research; provides initiatives to improve the legal provisions; but the basic competence is monitoring of the situation of protection and promotion of the rights of the children. For this purpose the Council prepares annual reports on the situation of the child delinquency and implementation of the law.

The report also gives an overview of the situation of the child delinquency through the data obtained based on 32 indicators submitted by 63 institutions in the justice system for children.

This paper provides an overview of one aspect of the problem which is a scope of work of the National Council. That is the process of monitoring of the situation of the child delinquency by presenting the data published in the Annual Report of the Council. As well as the monitoring of the situation in the area of Justice of the child and the child delinquency for 2015. The annual Report of the National Council is submitted to the Parliament, the Government, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council.

**Keywords:** *child delinquency, child rights, indicators, Introduction*

The national Council for the prevention of child delinquency was established under the Law on Justice for Children as an autonomous and independent body that follows the situation with the child delinquency in R. Macedonia, with particular accent on the monitoring and support of the preventive activities undertaken by all institutions and civil society organizations in the justice system for children, and in order to prevent and reduce the child delinquency. The Council was founded in 2009 and it is composed of 15 members who are representatives of the relevant ministries, institutions and non-governmental organizations as well as prominent scientists and experts.

The national Council has a range of responsibilities according to the law. It passed the National Strategy for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (2010-2020), conducts research and analyzes in the area of child delinquency, propose initiatives to improve the legal provisions and initiatives to familiarize the citizens with children's rights and discussions on healthy family, the problems of education and upbringing of the children, protection from drug abuse and other forms of addiction. One of the core competencies is monitoring the protection and promotion of the children's rights. For that purpose the Council prepares annual reports about the state of the child delinquency and implementation of the Law on Justice for Children. The reports annually, are submitted to the Parliament and the Government, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia.

This paper provides an overview of one aspect of the problem that is a scope of work of the national Council, and that is the monitoring of the situation with the child delinquency by presenting the the data published in the Annual Report of the Council on the situation in the area of Justice of the child and the child delinquency for 2015.

## **1. Analysis of the collected data on the basis of the indicators**

The Annual Report of the Council on the situation in the field of Justice and child delinquency for 2015 shows the situation with the child delinquency in the country, by implementing the Law on Justice for Children by the institutions and applying the procedures and measures which are prescribed by the law.

The report follows the situation with the child delinquency through monitoring the trend of reduction / increase the number of the children at risk, children in conflict with the law (offenders and offenses), children victims of crimes, as well as procedures undertaken for protection and treatment ranging from undertaking measures for assistance and protection, educational and alternative measures to the application of penalties. For that purpose, the Council adopted a list of thirty-two indicators for collecting data from institutions. The indicators are internationally complied measurement units by which qualitatively and quantitatively is presented the the situation with the child delinquency. The data were obtained from 63 institutions in the justice system for the children(from 8 Departments of the Interior, 30 centers for social work, 12 courts with an extended jurisdiction, 12 Main Public Prosecutions in the Republic of Macedonia and one Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for criminal acts of organized crime and corruption).

Considering that the Law on Justice for Children also applies and treats the children at risk and children in conflict with the law from 7 to 18 years of age that are at the same time a school population, in this paper we will give a review of an indicator which includes the schools and how they take certain actions relating to the protection of the rights and interests of children especially children at risk.

### **1.1. Indications for the children at risk referred to the Center for Social Work**

This indicator measures the number of children at risk who were sent in the centers for social work by other institutions or individuals in the 2015, including from the schools.

According to the Law for Justice for Children (Official Journal br.148 / 13) a child at risk is each child that reached the age of 7 and less than 18 years with physical disabilities mental

disabilities, victims of violence, educational and socially neglected, which is in such condition that it is difficult or impossible the achieving of the educational function of parents \_ the guardians \_ which it is not included in the system of education and upbringing, drawn into begging, wandering or prostitution.

A child who uses drugs and other psychotropic substances and precursors, or alcohol, and which due to these conditions is or may come into contact with the law as a victim or as a witness to an act which the law constituted as a criminal offense or an act which by law is a criminal case.

According to the Law on Justice for Children under identified conditions of risk among children, reporting to the Centre for Social Work may direct the police, primary and secondary schools or other institution in which the child is taken into care and in which the child is raised, his parent/or guardian and the child itself. Determining the degree of risk on which the children are exposed to , is very important in the context of a proper assessment in order to be planned an appropriate intervention.

For this indicator, the source of information are: 30 social work centers in the country. In all centers there are recorded children at risk.

**Table 1: Children referred to the centers for social work by gender in 2015**

Gender	Number	%
Boys	1821	85,4
Girls	310	14,5
Total	2131	100

In 2015 in the social work centers in Macedonia, by other institutions or individuals, are addressed total of 2131 children of which 86% are male and 14% are female.

**Figure 1: Number of children at risk addressed in the centers for social work compared by year**



Compared with the 2014 in the 2015 there are 69 children more. This increase is for 3% more. The largest number of children are referred to the Center for social work in Skopje (426) and Kumanovo (326) It is particularly evident the growing number of children at risk compared with 2013 when there were 1357 registered children.

The increased number of registered children at risk could mean better implementation of the law on justice for children, greater recognition and early identification of children at risk from the schools and other institutions, which reflects the growing number of notifications that are addressed to the centers For any other possible reasons for the increased number of children at risk, it is necessary to conduct further, more detailed research. In 2015 year, for 2131 children are sent total 2245 notifications to the centers for social work in which are indicated as children at risk. That is a slight increase compared to 2014 when 2,137 notices were sent.

The largest number of notifications have been sent from the Public Prosecutor's Office (702), Ministry of Interior (630) and schools (286) In 2014 were sent 384 notifications from the primary and secondary schools in the centers for social work. This legal obligation of the schools to submit notifications to the center for social work, although it is regulated by the Law on Justice for Children, also is planned with the amendments to the Law on Primary Education, Law on Secondary Education and the Low on pedagogical service (Official Gazette no. 18 of 14.02.2011).

**Table 2: Notices sent to the Centers for social work from institutions**

Institution	Number
Public Prosecution	702
Schools (primary and secondary)	286
The Minister of Internal Affairs	630
Parent / guardian	68
Child	4
Damaged person	21
Health	33
Civil organizations	12
Other	501
Total	2245

By notification from the schools to the center for social work for the existence of a risk of the pupil and his family, initiate cooperation between the two institutions in order to provide of most appropriate assistance and child protection. The cooperation between the two expert teams are scheduled in the Plan for individual work with the child which is prepared by the Centre for Social Work, and here the school is an important resource, of course with the involvement of the family.

The schools accept children with delinquent behavior who are perpetrators of crimes. The longer the risk and the intensity of a child's risk situation last, the more comes to the cumulative effect of the consequences of the risk which are ranging from arbitrary abandonment of the teaching, weak assess, damaging the school inventory, grade repetition, various forms of violence against teachers and peers that could culminate in the termination of the education and dropping out of school. Therefore the assistance that the children should receive in the school is very important, and it is reflected through the early detection of the risks, immediate intervention and continued work with them and their parents in cooperation with the Center for Social Work and other institutions in the system of justice for children. Due to these reasons it is important for the schools to implement prevention activities to prevent early entry of children in the children's delinquency. The legal framework includes primary, and secondary prevention in schools.

There are arguments which emphasize that the prevention of the child delinquency in the school environment is necessary and crucial for the reason that the primary and secondary education is compulsory for all children and covers the largest child population. In daily teaching process, through the teaching contents are recognized elements of the preventive action of the teacher to the student, as well as in the class of class community, extracurricular activities, debates and workshops on specific topics, school events and projects wich are often in cooperation with the parents and the local community and so on. Another type of preventive activity are the the provision of content for a certain phenomena that we want to prevent at

school that can be cater for students and parents, such as printing leaflets, brochures, video presentations, forming teams with specific tasks , participation of children and so on. (Petrovska, 2016)

The preventive programs in the school should not be conducted only when it appears a problem in school, they need not only mitigate risk conditions, but should be implemented continuously in order to develop and support positive growth of the children, strengthening their skills, developing appropriate social skills among them, life skills, resistance, problem solving and decision making and prevention of the first manifestations of the risky behavior. This requires more „inputs of different preventive programs. "

## **Conclusion**

1. The National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency conclude that in 2015, compared with 2014, is noticed increasing of the number of children at risk for 3.34%. According to the territorial belonging, the largest number of the children are from Skopje and Kumanovo. Skopje showed doubled increasing in the number of children at risk;
2. The National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency conclude that in 2015 the schools submitted 286 notifications to the centers for social work for children at risk;
3. The national Council in accordance with its responsibilities advocates and initiated a training of the staff in all primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia for the Law on Justice for Children and their responsibilities deriving from it. As well as for early identification of children at risk, working with them and their families, but also for greater cooperation with other institutions in the system of justice for children;
4. The national Council affirmatively declares and gave support to all preventive activities and programs undertaken from the schools in cooperation with the ministries, institutions, NGOs, etc, In the area of justice and protection of children and families. In 2014, the national Council financially support the project of the United Nations Office for the Drug Enforcement and the crime - UNODC - „ Strengthening Families program „ (SFP10-14), which was conducted in Skopje Region, and in education were included twenty-one mentor from 10 primary schools.

The program is a successful tool for the prevention of the child delinquency in Macedonia, which can be expanded into other schools by training teaching staff and its implementation.

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