



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports submitted by Romania under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2024*, **, ***

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** The present document was submitted pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure. It contains the responses of the State party to the Committee's list of issues prior to reporting ([CRC/C/ROU/QPR/6-7](#)).

*** The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Abbreviations

ANA	The National Anti-Drug Agency
ANITP	The National Agency against Trafficking in Persons
ANPDCA	The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption
CNE	The National Council of Students
CSM	The Superior Council of Magistracy
DGASPC	The General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Rights Protection
DIICOT	The Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism
IGI	General Inspectorate for Immigration
IGPR	General Inspectorate of Romanian Police
IGSU	General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations
INM	National Institute of Magistracy
ISR	Social Reference Indicator
MAI	Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs
MEd	Ministry of Education
MFTES	Ministry of Family, Youth, and Equal Opportunities
MS	Ministry of Health
PICCJ	Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice
PNA-GC	National Action Plan for implementing the Guarantee for Children
PNMS	National Healthy Meal Program
PNRAS	National Program for Reducing School Dropout
PNRR	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
SIIR	Integrated Information System of Education in Romania
SINA	National Information System for Adoption
SPAS	Public Social Assistance Service
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings

I. New developments

1. The Government Decision No. 969/2023 approved the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights "Protected Children, Safe Romania" 2023–2027. One of the criteria that formed the basis for establishing the priorities of the strategy was alignment with the international and national strategic framework: the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child; the Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding Romania's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals; other strategic documents, such as the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2022–2027.
2. The vision of the Strategy is to ensure the effective realization of children's rights, including those of the most vulnerable, in all areas of life, by fully ensuring access to quality public services. The expected results are presented in the form of 20 targets set for the 2027 horizon.
3. Through Law No. 191/2022 for the amendment and completion of Law No. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of children's rights, additions and modifications were made, aimed at including children who are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of a form of international protection in the categories of children benefiting from the provisions of the law.
4. The conditions for appointment, role, responsibilities, and requirements for preparation, training, and professional experience for persons designated as representatives for unaccompanied foreign minors seeking or obtaining a form of international protection were approved by the joint order of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities No. 119/20643/2023.
5. Legislative measures dedicated to children with parents working abroad, young people who are about to leave the special protection system, and support for the deinstitutionalization process were introduced through Law No. 191/2022:
 - (a) Designation of a person responsible for the upbringing and care of the child with parents working abroad, including relatives up to the fourth degree and individuals who are part of the child's social network;
 - (b) Prohibition of moving a child from a family-type service to a residential-type service. This prohibition does not apply in thoroughly justified situations, specifically situations that endanger the child's life and security;
 - (c) Granting, upon leaving the special protection system, an allowance for young people for whom a special protection measure has been established, the amount of which represents three times the gross minimum basic salary guaranteed in payment, established according to the law;
 - (d) Introducing, for young people who have benefited from a special protection measure, the possibility to opt for the continuation of the special protection measure or to receive a monthly allowance of 4.8 ISR, i.e., 3,168 lei. This allowance is granted until the age of 26 for young people who can prove that they are attending a full-time educational program or have a job;
 - (e) The elimination of the exception for the placement of children with disabilities under the age of three, which is maintained for children aged 3–7 years who cannot be provided habilitation-rehabilitation in other types of services if they have both complete functional impairment and complete activity limitations and participation restrictions, confirmed by the complex evaluation service within the general directorate of social assistance and child protection;
 - (f) The redefinition of residential-type services, namely family-type homes, apartments, emergency reception centers, and maternal centers;
 - (g) The introduction of a measure to incentivize families/persons/relatives who take in a child separated from their family, by providing a monthly support allowance;

(h) The prohibition of placing children in residential-type services that do not meet the above-mentioned minimum standards;

(i) The prohibition of the operation of placement centers, except for those in the process of closure and having a funding agreement to that effect, non-compliance with this provision is considered a contravention, and the determination and imposition of fines are proposed to be carried out by the prefect;

(j) The introduction of the obligation for the general directorate of social assistance and child protection to support young people in finding a job and accommodation during their last year of stay in the special protection system and the obligation for these young people to be monitored by the public special assistance service for a period of two years.

6. The Ministry of Internal Affairs contributed to mitigating the effects of the pandemic through the purchase and distribution of sanitary materials and medical equipment. For children, 70,000,000 saliva tests were purchased for school testing, and 2,792 Epipen Junior kits were distributed to healthcare units within the Ministry of Health.

7. Starting in March 2020, the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption established a Crisis Situation Coordination Group to ensure the coordination process for the situation generated by the COVID-19 epidemic. The group ensured a continuous flow of public information regarding the COVID-19 epidemic in the social assistance and child protection system, facilitated inter-institutional cooperation at the local level, collected real-time data and information, and identified systemic measures, providing 24/7 direct communication with DGASPCs across the country.

8. In 2020, the Guide on the Management and Prevention of the Spread of COVID-19 in easy-to-understand language was developed. Some of ANPDCA's recommendations were adopted by the United Nations system for implementation in other regions/states around the world. Additionally, a Common Methodology INSP-ANPDCA was developed for the prevention, prophylaxis, and treatment of COVID-19.

9. Internal procedures were established to facilitate the registration of civil status documents by civil status officers, through the electronic transmission of official extracts from civil status registers or other specific documents to competent public authorities, as well as by accepting online receipt of certain applications and declarations from citizens.

10. Starting from the second semester of the 2020–2021 school year, Emergency Ordinance No. 6/2021 established that the state finances and ensures the implementation of the national pilot program "School after School" for students up to and including the eighth grade. The main aim of this program was to organize remedial activities, increase the chances of academic success and access to higher levels of education, and reduce the risk of early school dropout.

11. In the context of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, from the early days, joint orders were developed and approved by the Minister of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Health (No. 20360/3366/776/2022) to approve the Regulation on the organization and functioning and the responsibilities of the Task Force for unaccompanied minors, as well as the joint order of the Minister of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Development, Public Works and Administration (No. 20362/31/3386/812/400/2022) to approve the cooperation procedure between authorities regarding the entry, registration, transit, stay, and protection of the rights of unaccompanied minors from the conflict area in Ukraine.

12. At the level of each county/sector of Bucharest Municipality, a Task Force for unaccompanied minors was established to ensure coordination and cooperation between public institutions and non-governmental organizations to ensure the respect of the rights of unaccompanied children.

13. Through collaboration between ANPDCA and UNICEF, Blue Dot services were established at major border crossing points, which provided friendly and decent conditions for receiving and checking the situation of each refugee child. Additionally, with UNICEF's

support, an IT application (KidsUkraine) was implemented to manage the availability of places in Romania's special protection system that could be allocated urgently to ensure the protection of unaccompanied minors or those from the Ukrainian protection system.

14. Starting in July 2022, with financial support from SERA Romania within an IT platform, PRIMERO, developed with technical assistance from UNICEF Romania and managed by ANPDCA, the registration of children from Ukraine began. By December 2023, 33,000 children were registered in PRIMERO, of whom over 50% were living with their parents at host families, 119 children were in the special protection system, and according to statements made by the children or their guardians, the immediate concerns were related to access to education (4%), health services (6.5%), safety (1%), and transportation (0.9%).

15. ANPDCA organized several training sessions together with non-governmental organizations for 300 specialists from DGASPCs (mobile intervention teams or staff working directly at border crossing points with Ukraine) who work directly with refugee children. These were organized in collaboration with Save the Children, the European Center for Legal Education and Research, E-liberare Association, and JRS Romania.

16. The Regional Centers of ANITP located at the border with Moldova and Ukraine were immediately mobilized to be part of mixed teams formed at the border to ensure the fulfillment of training, support, and assistance initiatives.

17. From the perspective of IGI, the response to the humanitarian crisis was structured on two levels of intervention: primary, aimed at emergency assistance for displaced persons from Ukraine, and secondary, aimed at medium and long-term protection and inclusion measures for persons from Ukraine who choose to live in Romania.

18. To ensure a secondary response, the Romanian Government adopted Emergency Ordinance no. 100/2022 approving and implementing the National Action Plan on the protection and inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania, as well as amending and supplementing certain legislative acts. The plan aimed to ensure an integrated package of protection measures in the areas of employment, housing, education, health care for children and youth, and vulnerable individuals.

19. The measures focused on identifying the needs of vulnerable individuals from Ukraine, informing them about their social assistance rights, simplifying and adapting legislative acts to facilitate access to social services and benefits, including by expanding the capacity of existing services and developing the management capacity of social service providers.

20. Specialists were trained on the National Mechanism for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in Persons, as well as on measures and actions regarding the early identification of victims of trafficking in persons, identification of risk situations, recognition of operating modes, and referral to protection and assistance services.

21. Through Law no. 105/2022 amending and supplementing Law No. 119/1996 on civil status acts, as well as repealing Government Ordinance No. 41/2003 on the administrative acquisition and change of names of natural persons, the regulatory framework concerning the field of civil status was modified to enable the automatic registration of the birth of Romanian or foreign citizens by competent authorities. Regarding policies aimed at supporting refugee children from Ukraine, minors are registered in civil status records similar to Romanian citizens.

22. The Romanian Police have intensified activities aimed at preventing and early detection of cases of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, both at local/regional and international levels. Efforts have been made operationally to promptly investigate any reports regarding potential cases of recruitment of these vulnerable individuals for exploitation, as well as strategically, through inter-institutional and international cooperation.

23. The issue of identifying potential minor victims has been included in the Cooperation Protocol between the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police and the National Authority for the Rights of Children and Adoption signed in 2021. This protocol aims to establish a framework for cooperation between the two institutions in the field of protecting the rights of children in the special protection system. The MAI/IGPR has instructed

territorial structures to locate and permanently monitor minors from Ukraine who are in the special protection system in Romania, to prevent their victimization.

24. In 2023, the approach to professional training within police-prosecutor teams or multidisciplinary teams was maintained. Training sessions were held in 2023 for police officers and border police officers from Romania and Ukraine, focusing on exchanging best practices in combating organized crime.

25. A methodology regarding the schooling, organization, and conduct of Romanian language initiation courses for minors who have obtained a form of international protection or residence rights in Romania, as well as for minors who are citizens of EU and EEA member states and the Swiss Confederation, has been approved.

26. During the development of the Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights 2014–2020, the Millennium Development Goals were in effect, and the consultation process for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had begun. The analysis conducted at the end of its implementation period, with the support of UNICEF Romania, indicates that the Strategy, through its objectives and measures, contributed to the achievement of several sustainable goals in Romania, including SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 16.

II. Rights under the Convention

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

Legislation

27. Law No. 191/2022 has clearly defined the services that can be categorized as residential services: family-type homes, apartments, emergency reception centers, and maternal centers.

28. To support the deinstitutionalization process, the new law includes measures aimed at supporting this process. In order to encourage more individuals, families, and relatives to take care of a child separated from their family, a monthly support allowance has been introduced, amounting to 0.8 ISR, which is a value of 528 lei.

29. To support the deinstitutionalization process, ANPDCA implemented the “TEAM-UP: Progress in the Quality of Alternative Care for Children” project during the period 2018–2023, in partnership with the 47 County Departments of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) in the country.

30. The results of the implemented measures are reflected in the deinstitutionalization process as follows: in 2024, 45 out of the 167 residential care centers operational at the beginning of 2017 were in the final stages of closure. In the centers that were in the process of closure, 1,161 children were protected compared to 6,513 children who were protected in such services in 2017. The closure process of all residential care centers will be completed by the end of 2024.

31. The organization of activities aimed at preventing the separation of a child from their family was regulated by Law No. 156/2023, ensuring the conditions for streamlining the prevention of child separation from the family, with direct consequences on reducing the number of children entering the special protection system, while also strengthening the role and intervention of local authorities responsible for this area.

32. Through Law No. 100/2024 amending and supplementing certain normative acts in the field of social assistance, the reform of the social assistance system continues, aiming to improve the quality of services provided, including to children. The accreditation criteria for social service providers and licensing, evaluation, monitoring, and control of social service providers are being revised. A pillar of the reform concerns ensuring the minimum social assistance package and its financing from the state budget, progressively starting from 2026.

33. In 2023, Law No. 198/2023 on pre-university education and Law No. 199/2023 on higher education were approved. Both laws are based on principles ensuring compliance with the provisions of the UN Convention, with a focus on respecting the best interests of the child.

34. In 2019, ANPDCA together with UNICEF and the Children's Board, hosted the first European conference on child participation. Children from across the European Union gathered in Bucharest to affirm their commitment and appeal to European leaders to turn children's right to participate in decision-making processes into reality and to consider this issue a priority, resulting in the "Bucharest Declaration of Children from the European Union."¹

35. The Children's Board presented the Declaration at the Informal Summit of Leaders in Sibiu and handed copies to the President of the European Commission, the President of Romania, and the President of the European People's Party. Copies were sent to all heads of state of the European Union and were presented by the Children's Board at two meetings of the EU Council of Ministers, namely the Education Council and the Youth and Sports Council.

36. In the development of the National Strategy "Protected Children, Safe Romania" 2023–2027 special emphasis was placed on children's participation as direct beneficiaries of the strategy. Twenty-one children, representatives of structures and organizations promoting children's rights and participation in decision-making, including the National Child Rights Council (CNE), UNICEF, the Children's Board of Romania, Save the Children, World Vision, the Council of Institutionalized Youth, and Terre des Hommes, participated in the elaboration of the strategy as part of inter-institutional working groups. Moreover, the suggestions made by nearly 1,500 children from Romania, who were involved in the consultation process for the European Strategy for Children's Rights 2021–2024, were taken into account.

37. Increasing awareness of children's right to participate in decisions affecting them and increasing active and inclusive participation of children in all decision-making stages are the two objectives assumed at the governmental level through the new "Protected Children, Safe Romania" Strategy.

38. The commitment to promoting children's rights through their involvement in public and decision-making life is also reflected in a legislative proposal currently undergoing parliamentary debate in the Senate, namely B314/2024. Starting from 2025, the Parliament, the Presidential Administration, the Government, local public administration authorities, as well as institutions under their supervision or coordination, will annually organize at least one consultation session with children. They will also publish on their websites a general presentation of the institution, objectives for the current year, and opportunities for involvement, in child-friendly language, and designate a person responsible for children's participation.

39. Romania signed the Optional Protocol on the communication procedure in 2012.

Comprehensive policy, strategy and coordination

40. The National Strategy "Protected Children, Safe Romania" 2023–2027 and its action plan for implementation were approved by Government Decision No. 969/2023. The document covers all areas of interest provided for by the Convention.

41. The implementation of the Strategy is carried out within the fiscal-budgetary strategies for the period 2023–2027.

42. In order to achieve the objectives of the strategy, in addition to the state budget and local budgets, alternative sources of funding have been considered, such as European funds for the period 2021–2027, EEA and Norwegian grants, and those assumed through the PNRR.

¹ Bucharest Declaration of Children from the European Union is available on URL: <https://www.unicef.org/romania/ro/declara%C5%A3ia-de-la-bucure%C5%9Fti-copiilor-din-uniunea-european%C4%83>.

43. The PNA-GC, approved in 2023, is a reflection of the measures and objectives already included in the “Protected Children, Safe Romania” Strategy, whose implementation is planned until 2030.

44. The first reporting exercise on the progress of implementing the PNA-GC to the EC in March 2024 confirmed that the monitoring and evaluation mechanism is functional. The reporting had a good qualitative level, with 34 indicators reported for the PNA-GC and 49 in total for the Plan and Strategy, even though many indicators were proxy-type or showed intermediate progress.

45. There is a high degree of overlap between the two programmatic documents, namely the PNA-GC and the Action Plan of the “Protected Children, Safe Romania” Strategy. Both documents underpin interventions in all relevant thematic areas for children’s rights, in accordance with the Convention, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, and the EC Recommendation on establishing a European Child Guarantee.

46. Building on the commitments assumed through both General Objective 8 of the “Protected Children, Safe Romania” Strategy and General Objective 7 of the PNA-GC, the ANPDCA, with support and technical and financial assistance from UNICEF, has initiated the development of a unique Monitoring and Evaluation system for public policies in the field of child protection and promotion of children’s rights, as well as an inter-institutional coordination mechanism.

Independent monitoring

47. Taking into account the criteria provided in the Paris Principles, within the framework of the Ombudsman’s Office, the Department for the Defense, Protection, and Promotion of Children’s Rights was established through Law No. 9/2018 amending and supplementing Law No. 35/1997.

48. The Child Advocate defends the rights of children, including children with disabilities, and supports and encourages the respect and promotion of children’s rights. They intervene when their rights are violated and propose solutions for sanctioning such acts.

49. The Child Advocate brings to the attention of the Ombudsman proposals for official notifications and initiates specific intervention procedures whenever they become aware, through any means (media, online environment etc.), of possible violations of children’s rights.

50. Periodic awareness-raising activities are carried out to present the duties of the Child Advocate, as well as other topics related to the promotion of children’s rights. These activities take place in educational institutions, targeting children directly, as well as specialized personnel responsible for their care and education.

51. The website of the Ombudsman’s Office is designed in an accessible format, adapted for children.

Allocation of resources

52. The “Protected Children, Safe Romania” Strategy 2023–2027 includes a preliminary cost estimation exercise for all measures and activities included in the Action Plan. The methods for calculating costs – including various techniques based on available information and the nature of the activity – were explained, discussed, and validated in consultative meetings organized with diverse stakeholders, including children. For all actions included in the Action Plan, disaggregated cost elements were established, and the most appropriate method of cost calculation was chosen. Direct costs, indirect costs, incremental costs, marginal costs, and opportunity costs were taken into account. This budgeting process, monitored and evaluated in conjunction with specific indicators for measures and activities of the Action Plan, will facilitate the assessment of adequacy, efficiency, and equity in budgeting and public expenditure for children.

53. ANPDCA, with technical assistance from UNICEF Romania, has initiated the development and implementation of a mechanism for tracking the allocation and execution of budgetary funds, including European funds initially earmarked for the implementation of

the PNA-GC. This exercise was subjected to analysis by the Coordination Council and involves: validating estimated costs and available sources of funding for PNA-GC measures, developing and implementing a monitoring system for budget allocations and expenditures based on EU procedures and in line with national expenditure reporting procedures, and reporting on fund availability, budget gaps, contracted projects/amounts, and expenditures.

54. The “Protected Children, Safe Romania” Strategy has an estimated budget for the period 2022–2027 of over 26,000,000 million lei. For the PNA-GC, Romania has allocated over 5% of the ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus) for combating child poverty. The active use of the monitoring and evaluation framework, combined with budgetary elements for measures and activities in the Action Plan, will facilitate understanding the effectiveness of certain measures, justify reallocating budgets to activities with the greatest impact, and prioritize budget allocations and/or investment of structural funds or other external financing.

55. The funds allocated for primary healthcare have increased from 1,620.214 million lei in 2017 to 3,940.976 million lei in 2023.

56. According to data from MMSS, total payments related to child allowances have doubled as a percentage of GDP in the last 7 years (from 0.4% in 2014 to 0.8% in 2020).

57. The budget allocated for education increased from 25.2 billion in 2007 to 49.5 billion in 2023.

Data collection

58. Through the National Adoption Information System (SINA) project, implemented by ANPDCA from 2021 to 2023, a national-level information system has been developed to allow citizens and institutions responsible for child protection and adoption to access electronic services, information, and bidirectional data exchange. The system provides accurate data on all children in vulnerable situations, including Roma children, children living in poverty, children with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, including Ukrainian children, minor mothers in the special protection system, including those who may be adopted.

59. With SINA, launched in December 2023, the electronic child file is established, including in the pre-adoption stages: prevention, special protection, adoption, as well as in the post-adoption monitoring stage.

60. Data regarding the participation of Roma children in the education system are periodically collected through Med own system, the “Integrated Information System of Education in Romania” (SIIR), providing a clear picture of Roma beneficiaries within various national programs implemented by the ministry, such as School after School, Hot Meal, Social Tickets, and Scholarships.

61. Beneficiaries of community healthcare services are actively and continuously identified through the mapping of the local community population and its monthly updating in the online application managed by MS at AMCMSR.gov.ro.

Dissemination, awareness-raising and training

62. In order to increase the safety of students and prevent juvenile delinquency within and around pre-university educational institutions, MAI conducted prevention campaigns mainly along the routes where students gather or disperse, during the hours when educational activities begin or end. The objectives were to prevent and combat antisocial acts and increase the safety of participants in the educational process.

63. Between 2017 and 2023, through the Romanian Gendarmerie structures, 7,027 prevention actions were carried out in 14,342 educational institutions, involving 891,868 students and teachers.

64. MAI, through IGSU, fosters preventive behaviour among all categories of the public, including the younger generation. From 2017 to 2023, activities such as “Open Doors” events (3,634 activities with 334,719 participants), preventive information points (7,837 activities with 1,373,168 participants), open lessons (5,390 activities with 428,884 participants),

technical exhibitions, and other public events were organized, targeting children living in vulnerable communities as well.

65. During the period 2022-2023, IGSU organized training sessions through the Mobile Training Center for Population Response to Emergency Situations and the SMURD Caravan “Be Prepared,” attended by 67,603 students, as well as 1,529 Technical Application Circles for students (prevention and firefighting and civil protection).

66. In 2017, MAI implemented the “Safe Romania” project, targeting children, youth, and adults from both urban and rural areas. Through social media platforms, information campaigns were conducted to raise awareness about the risks associated with improper use of electrical or natural gas installations in everyday life.

67. Between 2021 and 2022, safety lessons with “Dadcool and Princess Sofia” were initiated, addressing, in terms understandable to children, situations that could endanger their lives and health. As part of the project, the podcast “Safe Listening” was created – 6 video clips aimed at parents and supervisors, presenting essential situations for child safety, and “Safe Summer Sports” – 3 video clips using TikTok influencers to draw attention to the dangers faced by teenagers during the summer.

68. From 2019 to 2023, campaigns focused on children’s safety were conducted:

(a) “Say STOP to household accidents” – developing the concept of “A safe home for your child,” presenting the dangers children face due to negligence and measures to prevent such accidents;

(b) “Take care of your greatest care: your child’s safety” – raising awareness among adults about safety measures in homes;

(c) “Safe Vacation” – “Selfie Safety!”, addressing the risk of taking selfies in dangerous places such as climbing on train cars, bridges, buildings etc., by young people for social media;

(d) “Safe Vacation” – The “Be careful where you swim!” Project aimed to prevent drowning accidents in unattended areas. Children and camp staff were trained on appropriate behaviour in emergency situations;

(e) “It can’t happen to me!” – Promotion materials were created to emphasize adherence to measures to prevent drowning in unattended areas.

69. MAI, through the General Inspectorate of Border Police, conducted campaigns to raise awareness among the population regarding the vulnerability of children, such as the annual campaign “Stay Close to Your Child!” which informed parents and caregivers about the effects that parents working abroad can have on children left at home.

70. The project “No Discrimination!”, implemented by MAI/IGPR and started in 2018, aimed to increase awareness among police officers and various social categories regarding discrimination prevention. Within this project, in the years 2019, 2022, and 2023, during the summer workshops of the “OvidiuRo” Association, the “Hopscotch” Campaign was conducted to reduce the risks of victimization among children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and multi-ethnic communities.

71. In 2023, in collaboration with the Association for the Promotion of Roma Women’s Rights (E-Romnja), workshops were organized with 50 police officers from crime prevention, school safety, and public order structures.

72. In 2023, activities were carried out during the summer vacation for minors in the special protection system who were reported missing or voluntarily leaving care, under the initiative “The Street is Not Home”. The beneficiaries were minors institutionalized within the services administered by the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection, Sectors 1–6, Bucharest, in partnership with the Administration of Hospitals and Medical Services Bucharest – “Prof. Dr. Alexandru Obregia” Clinical Hospital and ANITP.

73. The National Anti-Drug Agency (ANA) provided training between 2017–2023 for personnel working with minors, offering them the necessary skills in providing services

sensitive to children's needs and drug-related issues – 50 training sessions with 900 direct beneficiaries – DGASPC specialists, school counsellors, foster carers, school doctors.

74. MAI, through ANA, implemented a series of projects and campaigns aimed at preventing drug consumption:

(a) “Fred Goes Net – Early Interventions for Drug Users Identified/Detected for the First Time” – 187 courses were organized, with 1,919 participating students aged between 14 and 19 who were detected for the first time in connection with drug use;

(b) “19 Days of Prevention of Abuse and Violence against Children and Young People”, implemented by FICE – Romania in partnership with ANA. 66 activities were organized to change social behavior, educate, and mobilize children. The campaign involved 209,252 students, students, and young people, 23,322 teachers, psychologists, police officers, social workers, journalists, doctors, and 122 parents;

(c) “Me and My Child”, in 2017, included 1,058 interventions/activities with 45,946 parents, foster carers, children, young people, and representatives of institutions and non-governmental organizations for child protection;

(d) “Pinocchio”, aimed at increasing the level of awareness and accountability of specialists from emergency reception centers for minors, in order to provide positive role models for children in the residential system, through programs on the effects of drug use;

(e) “Creativ”, aimed at beneficiaries of services provided by ANA's territorial structures regarding the importance of family protective factors in preventing tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drug use among pre-adolescents, adolescents, and young people;

(f) “How to Grow Healthy”, “The ABCs of Emotions”, “Uncensored”, “My Anti-Drug Message” involved 32,552 students and preschoolers, 15,045 parents, and 1,989-trained teachers;

(g) “Serenity II”, 36 children were involved in thematic activities, interactive workshops on the consequences of substance use and ways to avoid or resist peer pressure;

(h) The campaign “Drug Consumption Concerns Us All,” dedicated to students, was conducted in partnership with the Bucharest School Inspectorate, the National Confederation for Female Entrepreneurship, and the College of Psychologists of Romania, reaching 400 classes with over 8,000 students.

75. In February 2023, the awareness campaign “Roma for Romania” was launched by the National Agency for Roma in collaboration with institutional partners, continuing throughout 2024.

76. To encourage programs for the participation of Roma parents in the educational process both in and outside of school, Med conducted 303 actions at the county level and within school units, involving 8,835 parents.

77. In 2023, 206 school mediators and 220 teachers were trained for teaching Romanian language and literature, history, and Roma traditions.

78. An accredited course approved by Med, aimed at the professional development of teaching staff in pre-university education, focusing on specific themes such as Intercultural Education, Inclusive Education, Equal Opportunities in Education, Education for Disadvantaged Groups, and other topics proposed by Med, was included in the curriculum of all teaching staff. In 2023, 64 courses were conducted, with the participation of 4,030 teaching staff members.

79. In pre-university educational institutions during the period 2021–2024, 6,527 campaigns were conducted to raise awareness of the benefits of inclusive education for all students.

80. Between 2019–2024, in the thematic areas of inclusive education and non-discrimination/education of children with SEN, 35 continuous professional development programs were accredited and 1 complementary continuous professional development program was approved, within which 16,332 individuals were certified.

81. At the level of INSP, the project “Consolidation of the national network of primary health care providers to improve the health status of the population, children, and adults (including vulnerable populations)” was implemented, aiming to strengthen primary health care, to bring health services closer to people with needs, especially in rural areas, through interventions at the level of family doctors, in schools, and at individual and community levels.

82. An integrated model of community services has been developed, aiming to provide necessary tools to community healthcare professionals (community health nurses, midwives, and health mediators) for carrying out their daily activities based on guidelines, at a higher quality standard.

83. The general comments of the Committee were translated into Romanian and posted on the website of the ANPDCA.

Cooperation with civil society

84. Through amendments to Social Assistance Law No. 292/2011, by Law No. 100/2024, a new mechanism for financing social services has been regulated, based on the principle of “financial resource follows the beneficiary,” under which the budget allocation for a beneficiary of social services, determined by the public social assistance service or, where applicable, by the complex evaluation commission, is transferred to the social service provider with whom the beneficiary/legal representative has concluded a social services contract.

85. Starting from 2026, the amounts allocated from the state budget as funding for social services are ensured through the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity budget, through the National Agency for Payments and Social Inspection, and are based on the requests of local administration authorities.

86. The allocation of funds from the state budget intended for the functioning of social services organized at the level of administrative-territorial units is made based on the justifications made according to the cost standards for administrated, contracted, or subsidized social services under the law, as well as based on the estimation of costs necessary for the functioning of newly established services in the respective budget year.

Children’s rights and the business sector

87. Organizers of gambling activities are required to expressly include in the game regulations the prohibition of minors’ access to locations designated for gambling. The prohibition of minors participating in gambling must be displayed prominently at locations or on the homepage of their own website, in the case of remote gambling activities.

88. According to the law governing the establishment of gambling activities, the proposed space must not be located within the premises of an educational institution, including its campuses, cultural and art institutions, healthcare facilities, social institutions, religious sites, and similar establishments, or within their delimited perimeter.

89. Recent legislative amendments in the year 2023 stipulate that slot machine games must be located in an administrative-territorial unit with a population of more than 15,000 inhabitants.

90. In the parliamentary debate procedure, there are 2 parliamentary initiatives aiming to impose both a distance of 300 meters between gambling agencies and schools, as well as rules regarding advertising – Plx No. 495/2023 and Plx No. 709/2023.

B. Art. 1 Definition of the child

Minimum age for marriage

91. In Romania, marriage can be contracted if the future spouses have reached the age of 18. For substantial reasons, a minor who has reached the age of 16 can marry based on a

medical opinion, with the consent of their parents or, if applicable, their legal guardian, and with the authorization of the guardianship court. If one of the parents refuses to consent to the marriage, the guardianship court decides on this disagreement, taking into account the best interests of the child.

C. Arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12

General principles

Non-discrimination

92. The principle of non-discrimination, under which access to and participation in quality education is ensured without discrimination, including by prohibiting school segregation, governs pre-university education according to the new law.

93. Discrimination is prohibited in pre-university educational institutions and in all spaces dedicated to education and vocational training, as well as in activities conducted in the online environment, with the exception of affirmative measures prescribed by law, as well as political manifestations and religious proselytism.

94. To ensure compliance with the principle of school desegregation and the combating of any form of discrimination, at the beginning of the educational level, study groups are formed through the random distribution of students, where there are multiple classes per study year.

95. Those at risk of school exclusion include beneficiaries who are at risk of stigmatization, discrimination, disregard for their cultural identity, segregation, or dropping out of school due to their belonging to one or more categories, such as: social, economic, or cultural status, national minority, immigrants or audiences, refugees, marginalized rural or urban areas, children with special educational needs, disabilities, Roma children and youth etc.

96. The Romanian state guarantees equal access to education, including for pregnant students and students who have become parents, without discrimination from members of the school community.

97. Educational policies for Roma have been developed within two general frameworks: one concerning national minorities and the other concerning access to education for disadvantaged groups.

98. Methodology for monitoring school segregation in pre-university education was developed through Ministry of Education Order No. 5633/2019.

99. Law No. 198/2023 stipulates that school segregation based on ethnic criteria, disability or SEN, socioeconomic status of families, belonging to a disadvantaged category, residential environment, or academic performance is prohibited in pre-university education.

100. Through the Technical Support Instrument of the European Commission, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF Romania, developed the Methodology for monitoring school segregation in Romanian schools. The methodology was piloted in a sample of 43 school units at all levels of pre-university education. In parallel, the SIIIR module dedicated to data collection on school segregation at the student and school unit level was developed, and 2 technical guides on data collection were elaborated. Training packages were also developed for professionals in the educational system regarding the new legal framework and policies on combating school segregation, and information and training sessions were delivered for the implementation of the methodology for monitoring school segregation.

101. In 2023, SIIIR was updated with a module on segregation, which was tested and completed by some of the school units, with all schools in the country scheduled to complete it in 2024, marking the first year of nationwide monitoring.

102. Also, in 2023, the National Commission for School Desegregation was established by ministerial order, and its Rules of Organization and Functioning were adopted by the Minister

of Education through an order approving the Regulations for the Organization and Functioning of the National Commission for School Desegregation.

103. The Commission has an advisory and intervention role, elaborates and implements the Action Plan for desegregation, coordinates the preparation of an Annual Report on school segregation and the quality of educational services in Romania.

104. Throughout the year 2024, the National Strategy for School Desegregation will be developed, along with the National Action Plan.

105. According to the Regulations for the organization and functioning of pre-university education units, at the level of each educational unit, a permanent commission for the prevention and elimination of violence, corruption, and discrimination in the school environment and the promotion of interculturality is established and operates.

106. Regarding the legislative proposal to amend Law No. 272/2004, it is initiated by a group of parliamentarians. At the time of drafting this report, the legislative proposal is in the parliamentary debate procedure in the Chamber of Deputies. It was tacitly adopted by the Senate due to the expiration of the adoption deadline and was unfavourably reviewed by the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Gender Equality in the Chamber of Deputies, favourably with the reservation of considering some observations and proposals from the Legislative Council, and favourably by the Committee for Health and Family in the Chamber of Deputies.

107. The proposal is sent for consultation to the Committee for Public Administration and Territorial Planning, the Committee for Education, and the report is to be prepared by the Committee for Human Rights, Cults, and National Minorities, the Committee for Labor and Social Protection, and the Legal, Discipline, and Immunities Committee.

Best interests of the child

108. According to the assessment report on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights 2014–2020, conducted in 2021 with financial assistance from UNICEF, the principle of the best interests of the child was integrated into the Strategy as a cross-cutting principle.

109. The “Protected Children – Safe Romania” Strategy 2023–2027 is built around the principle of promoting and respecting the best interests of the child, as the basis for any decision in public policy, both in its development and implementation stages.

Respect for the views of the child

110. Pre-University Education Law, a special section dedicated to student representation has been included.

111. CNE is a partner of the MEd, with a consultative role in the decision-making process. Students can also be represented by other nationally representative associations with advisory roles. CNE operates according to regulations of organization and functioning approved by ministerial order.

112. In order to fulfill its mission, CNE oversees county student councils, established in each county/sector of Bucharest. Additionally, student school councils are formed at each pre-university educational institution.

113. To ensure the right to participation, the role of CNE has been strengthened by law, which will have a representative, with observer status, participating in the activities of the Advisory Council for Pre-University Education, established at the level of each county/municipality of Bucharest, as a consultative structure with responsibilities to support the administration and development of the school network, monitor the capacity of local authorities to support education, and provide the necessary resources.

114. Government Decision No. 59/2023 approved the National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change. Recognizing the importance and severity of the climate and environmental crisis, students and teachers will familiarize themselves with its causes and effects and improve society's response to these challenges. In accordance with the provisions

of the National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023–2030, the Ministry of Education implements the “Green Week” program.

115. Within this program, educational activities are carried out that contribute to preventing climate change and protecting the environment, developing the investigative inter and transdisciplinary skills of preschoolers/preschoolers/students regarding their surrounding reality, and fostering responsible behaviours towards the environment.

116. The program aims to inform students, teachers, parents, and school authorities about environmental issues, change the way young people engage in solving environmental problems, and provide teachers with an educational model through which young people have the opportunity to develop a direct relationship with nature.

D. Arts. 7, 8 and 13–17 Civil rights and freedoms

Birth registration, name and nationality

117. In 2023, the possibility of requesting and registering in the civil status registers was regulated for two categories of children: Romanian citizen children born abroad for whom a special protection measure has been ordered, and Romanian citizen children born abroad and residing in the country with their parents/person designated under the law.

118. Thus, the scope of competence and resolution of the registration with a gratuitous title for the targeted categories of children was expanded, falling under the responsibility of the mayor of the administrative-territorial unit of the person’s domicile or institutions with responsibilities in child rights protection, unlike the old regulations, according to which only parents, legal representatives, or authorized persons could request their registration.

119. Taking into account the reservations formulated by Romania through Article 3 of Ratification Law No. 396/2002, stating that “Romania reserves the right to grant its citizenship to stateless persons and recognized refugees, upon request, respecting the conditions provided by domestic legislation,” we consider that Romanian law is in line with the provisions of the aforementioned convention.

120. Although national legislation is based on the principle of jus sanguinis, it also contains elements of jus soli, as is the case for children born on Romanian territory whose parents are unknown.

121. If it cannot be established whether the minor was conceived by at least one Romanian citizen, they are considered Romanian citizens until proven otherwise. They will lose Romanian citizenship if, before reaching the age of 18, filiation has been established at least with one parent, and that parent/parents are foreign citizens.

122. The child who has at least one parent who is a Romanian citizen, regardless of the citizenship or statelessness of the other parent or the place of birth within or outside the territory of the Romanian state, is a Romanian citizen according to the law.

123. Additionally, Romanian citizenship cannot be withdrawn from a person who acquired it by birth, thus preventing the potential statelessness of someone who only holds Romanian citizenship acquired by birth.

124. Another measure to prevent cases of statelessness is conditioning the approval of renunciation of Romanian citizenship on prior acquisition or at least prior request for another citizenship, accompanied by assurance that the person renouncing Romanian citizenship will acquire another citizenship.

125. The draft amendment and completion of Law No. 21/1991, republished, was approved in a government meeting and transmitted for debate in Parliament. According to the new amendments, the procedure for granting or regaining Romanian citizenship will be expedited for cases based on applications submitted by stateless persons.

126. For the same reasons of protecting stateless persons, in the context of regulating the loss of Romanian citizenship acquired by the spouse or minor children of the person from

whom citizenship has been withdrawn due to fraudulent acquisition, it has been proposed that this effect should not occur if the spouse or children of the person from whom citizenship has been withdrawn would become stateless.

Access to appropriate information

127. In 2022, the National Cyber Security Directorate, in partnership with the Romanian Banking Association, the Romanian Police, and Microsoft, along with the Embassy of Switzerland in Romania and Swiss WebAcadem, conducted a campaign for the digital education of children and young people. The campaign aimed to provide best practices in cybersecurity through accessing the secureonline.ro platform, to prevent them from becoming victims of cyber fraud, child pornography, or malware attacks.

128. In 2024, DNSC, together with the Association of Privacy and Data Protection Specialists, developed a Guide to raise awareness of the importance of personal data protection and cybersecurity for children, parents, and teachers.

129. According to Law No. 50/2024 on the establishment of measures for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 (...), the National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications was designated as the coordinator of digital services, becoming responsible for supervising and ensuring compliance with the Regulation at the national level. Authorities are obliged to pronounce on illegal content existing online, reported within the scope of their competencies.

130. Authorities with responsibilities in supervising a specific sector of activity have the competence to issue orders to act against illegal content and orders to provide certain information, in accordance with the provisions of the current regulatory framework.

131. Orders can also be issued by judicial authorities within the actions, activities, or procedures carried out by them according to the legal competencies conferred.

E. Arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39 Violence against children

Corporal punishment

132. In 2023, through a Ministerial Order, the Procedure regarding the management of cases of violence against preschoolers/preschoolers/students and the staff of educational institutions, as well as other related situations, in the school environment and suspicions of violence against children outside the school environment, was approved.

133. The Procedure regulates the working methods, rules, and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the inter-institutional and multidisciplinary management of cases of mild violence committed in the school environment, cases of violence against the staff of educational institutions committed by students, suspicions of violence committed against the child outside the school environment, suspicions of substance abuse among students, suspicions of carrying or using dangerous objects without permission, or suspicions of committing a crime by students in the school environment.

134. Through the National Mechanism for Supporting Crime Prevention, established in 2023, the Program for the prevention of violence and crimes in the school environment “Together We Gather Courage” was developed, within which projects for the prevention and combating of school violence in a minimum of 5 educational units per county were funded. The minimum budget for one educational unit is 4,000 lei, and the total project budget is 1,407,473.51 lei.

Freedom of the child from all forms of violence

135. ANPDCA in partnership with the UNICEF Romania, the Institutionalized Youth Council (CTI), and the Legal Resources Center, implemented the emergency hotline Telverde 0800500550 from 2020 to 2022, aimed at children and adults in institutionalized centers.

136. This instrument was operationalized to reduce the feeling of insecurity among children and adults in centers, to provide them with counselling and psychosocial assistance, and also to prevent and identify any potential abuses they may fall victim to.

137. DGASPC staff and staff from residential centers were able to call Tolverde for additional information or guidance in certain pandemic-related situations, and they could also benefit from psychosocial and emotional support to better respond to the challenges of their daily activities.

138. Established in 2022, under the “From Care for Children” program, the unique number 119 represents a national premiere aimed at ensuring, for the first time, the use of a single channel for reporting cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any other form of violence against children, as well as guidance and support for all those in need of information related to such situations.

139. The National Unique Number 119 is available on all public communication networks in Romania and can be accessed by any adult who has suspicions about the existence of abuse against a child, whether they are a parent, a professional who interacts with the child, or any other person concerned about the child’s safety, as well as by the children themselves.

140. The key elements defining the National Unique Number – 119 are accessibility – the phone number is permanently accessible, including during legal holidays; the call is toll-free, easy to remember, and available nationwide, callable from any area, region, remote or marginalized location.

141. Since its establishment until the time of report preparation, over 250,000 calls have been received.

142. In 2023, ANPDCA, together with the Special Telecommunications Service, initiated the development of the project “Development and modernization of digital tools for alerting, identification, and intervention for children, associated with the national unique number 119, a number designated for reporting cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any other form of violence against children – Next Generation 119 System.”

143. The specific objectives of the project aim to expand the facilities offered by Number 119 through the development of new applications and platforms necessary to ensure assistance for children who are victims of any form of abuse, to provide support applications and programs for specialists involved in managing the unique number 119, and to ensure training sessions for employees in child protection institutions.

144. The project was submitted for funding under the Smart Growth, Digitization, and Financial Instruments Program. At the time of report preparation, the project is in the final stage of evaluation.

145. In 2021, the National Institute of Magistracy (INM) organized a seminar on the theme “Assessment of the validity of statements,” with financial support from the Association for Victims of Sexual Offenses. The seminar was attended by prosecutors, legally specialized personnel akin to judges, prosecutors from the INM, and psychologists.

146. In 2023, INM organized a Conference on the theme “Legal framework for acts of sexual aggression committed against minors,” which brought together 66 participants (judges, Romanian prosecutors, and participants from the Republic of Moldova).

147. The Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM), together with INM, the National School for Court Clerks, and the Courts Administration of Norway, implemented a project from 2019 to 2024. Within this project, 15 professional training sessions were held in the field of child interviewing techniques, with a focus on the specific needs of the Roma population. A total of 353 professionals were trained, a guide and curriculum were drafted, 51 interview rooms were developed within the courts, and 8 sessions were organized to raise awareness about the use of child interview rooms.

148. Additionally, 24 interview rooms dedicated to minors were set up within territorial prosecutor’s offices, one within D.I.I.C.O.T. (central structure), and 4 rooms at D.G.A.S.P.C (sectors 2–5). The audio-video equipment allows real-time connection with the courtroom

via videoconference and audio-video recording of the interview, both in criminal and civil matters.

149. Through Order No. 144/2017 issued by the Prosecutor General of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice (PICCJ), the mechanism for ensuring access to justice, effective exercise of the right to defense, and guaranteeing the right to a fair trial for institutionalized persons in vulnerable situations was established and operationalized.

150. Among these are minors with mental disabilities in public residential facilities, including educational or recreational ones, in privately managed residential facilities, as well as minors temporarily or permanently deprived of parental care in placement, residential care services, or under foster care.

151. Monitoring under this order involves verifying the duration of the procedure and preparing semi-annual analyses at the level of the prosecutor's offices attached to the courts of appeal and annual analyses at the level of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice. These analyses assess the effectiveness and completeness of investigations, the legality of decisions not to prosecute, and aspects relevant to respecting the right to defense of the victims.

Harmful practices

152. In the school system, there are 461 school mediators working in schools within compact Roma communities, which are at risk of social vulnerability. Their role is to ensure communication between the school and the family and to facilitate this communication. One of the most important themes addressed in the relationship with traditional communities is the necessity of Roma children's participation in compulsory education, thus aiming to delay the age of marriage.

153. Additionally, in the healthcare system, there are 462 health mediators, Roma women, who ensure the connection and communication between members of disadvantaged Roma communities and family doctors' offices. Health education promoted by health mediators in relation to Roma communities includes and emphasizes the necessity of children reaching maturity before marriage, as well as the prevention of child marriage.

F. Arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4)

Family environment and alternative care

Family environment

154. Regarding the situation of children whose parents work abroad, the identity document is issued by the communal public service for personal records at the place of domicile or residence of the individual, based on their request or that of their legal representative. Minors aged between 14 and 18 submit the application for the issuance of the identity document accompanied by one of the parents or, if applicable, by their legal representative.

155. Individuals who do not possess an identity document and are institutionalized or received for care or accommodation in care institutions, social service centers, or educational centers are issued identity documents indicating their domicile or residence at the address of the respective institution or center. For individuals in vulnerable situations unable to visit the competent authorities to request the issuance of an identity document, communal public services for personal records can travel to isolated localities, healthcare facilities, or social care units to take the application.

156. In 2022, by amending Law No. 202/2002, the concepts of caregiver leave and flexible working arrangements were introduced.

157. By Government Decision No. 1547/2022, the National Strategy for promoting gender equality and treatment and preventing and combating domestic violence for the period 2022–2027 was approved. Under the pillar of gender equality, it includes a series of measures: information campaigns regarding the conditions and benefits of accessing paternal leave; organization of awareness campaigns about the use of alternative work tools, such as flexible

working hours and telecommuting for parents; increasing awareness about the need for alternative and/or complementary formal education services in childcare facilities.

158. The entry into force of Law No. 156/2023 ensures the streamlining of activities aimed at preventing the separation of a child from their family, with direct consequences on reducing the number of children entering the state's special protection system, while also strengthening the role and intervention of local authorities responsible for this area.

159. The new law establishes clear norms under which the intervention of local public administration authorities will be carried out to fulfill the task of preventing the separation of the child from their family, namely the maintenance of the child within the family. It regulates aspects to be analyzed for determining the risk of separation in which the child is located, as well as the assessment of the risk situation of a child at risk of separation from their family.

160. Additionally, the Child Observer was established, through which all children at risk of separation from their families are identified and registered.

161. The Child Observer is the prevention module within the National Adoption Information System developed and managed by ANPDCA, which is made available to local public administration authorities.

162. The module within the National Adoption Information System aimed at preventing the separation of the child from the family is based on a software application developed by UNICEF – Aurora and taken over by ANPDCA, which ensures the collection of data from the field by social workers.

163. The Child Observer supports social workers in identifying children at risk of separation from their families and in recommending a minimum package of interventions and services for them.

164. The module has two distinct components – a mobile application, software for Android, which is installed on a tablet and used in fieldwork by social workers, and a web platform, the core application of the system. Through the platform, the data and their aggregates are available to users who can view the data at different levels, and at the national level, ANPDCA can see everything.

Children deprived of a family environment

165. At the beginning of the year, 45 out of the 167 placement centers included in the Deinstitutionalization Plan developed in 2017 were in the final stages of closure. These centers housed 1,161 children, compared to 6,513 children protected in such services in 2017. The closure process of all placement centers will be completed by the end of 2024.

166. To support the acceleration of the deinstitutionalization process through family-type alternatives, ANPDCA implemented the TEAM UP project in partnership with the 47 DGASPCs from 2018 to 2023. Additionally, through Law No. 191/2022, a measure was introduced to stimulate placement with families.

167. Starting in 2020, ANPDCA implemented a series of legislative measures aimed at promoting adoption. As a result of the measures implemented at the end of 2023, the number of adoptable children reached 7,057 compared to 3,250 in 2017, an increase of 117%. Additionally, the number of families certified for adoption increased from 1,881 at the beginning of 2017 to 3,119 at the end of June 2021, a 65% increase.

168. Child placement is a special protection measure, of a temporary nature, which can be ordered in the following order: with a person or family, with a foster parent, or in a licensed residential service.

169. In 2018, the legal framework was modified, raising the age at which children can be placed in residential services from 2 years to 7 years. At that time, as an exception, children under 7 years of age can be placed in a residential service if they have severe disabilities and require care in specialized residential services.

170. Starting from 2022, placement in residential services is prohibited for children under 3 years of age. For children aged between 3 and under 7 years, placement in residential services is only permitted if they cannot be rehabilitated in other types of services and exhibit

both complete functional impairment and full activity limitations and participation restrictions, as confirmed by the comprehensive evaluation service within the general directorate of social assistance and child protection.

171. Therefore, the criteria for determining placement in residential services in accordance with the best interests of the child are: age, the child's needs, and the child's opinion, based on their age and level of maturity.

172. As a result of implementing these measures, the number of children under 7 years of age cared for in residential services decreased from 2,024 at the beginning of 2017 to 484 at the end of 2023.

173. In order to strengthen the foster care network from 2018 to 2023, ANPDCA, in partnership with the 47 DGASPCs, implemented the Team-up project, "Progress in the quality of alternative child care." The project aimed to improve the quality of the social assistance system and increase the number of foster parents within the community by introducing tools, procedures, and enhancing the level of competence of professionals in the system.

174. Through the project, the foster care network was expanded by an additional 4,036 foster parents, who took care of a total of 7,739 children, including 1,022 children with disabilities.

175. Over 11,000 foster parents have participated in professional training courses, conducted based on a course support developed within the project.

176. Within the special protection system in Romania, placement reviews are conducted quarterly and focus on two aspects. Firstly, they verify the circumstances that led to the establishment of the special protection measures, ordered by the child protection committee or the court. Secondly, they assess the implementation of these special protection measures, focusing on the child's development and care during the application of the measures.

177. The verification of the implementation of special protection measures is carried out whenever there is suspicion of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any other form of violence against the child. Therefore, reports regarding the physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of the child and how they are cared for are compiled quarterly or whenever a situation arises that necessitates it. Based on the report, if there is a need to modify or, if necessary, terminate the measure, the general directorate of social assistance and child protection is obliged to promptly notify the child protection committee or, as appropriate, the court.

178. In 2022, legislation was introduced to support young people leaving the special protection system in embarking on a new stage of life:

(a) The possibility of monitoring the situation of young people after they leave the special protection system, if they agree to it. The social assistance and child protection service (SPAS) from the young person's place of residence, or where they declare they will reside, is obligated to monitor their situation semi-annually for a period of 2 years;

(b) In the last year before young people leave the special protection system, the DGASPC is required to assist them in finding employment and accommodation;

(c) Providing an allowance upon exiting the special protection system, equivalent to three times the minimum gross national base salary, guaranteed for payment;

(d) The option to choose between remaining in the special protection system or receiving a monthly allowance until the age of 26, if they can demonstrate they are attending full-time education or have employment.

179. Through Government Decision No. 850/2023 amending and supplementing the Regulation for the Implementation of Law No. 254/2013 regarding the execution of sentences and measures depriving of liberty ordered by the judicial authorities during criminal proceedings, changes have been made to the manner of granting the right to visit with the minor child of the person deprived of liberty. Specifically, as an exception, to categories of persons deprived of liberty for whom the legislation provides for the granting of the right to visit with a separation device, the visit with the minor child without a separation device is

granted, if they do not fall under the categories of persons exempted from this facility, as provided by law.

180. Furthermore, at the level of all penitentiary units, spaces of the “mother/father and child” type have been arranged within the visitation sector to grant the right to visit between parents and children.

Adoption

181. Starting from 2020, nationally, based on an action plan “CHILDREN, NOT CASES!”, the information in the public profile of adoptable children has been reviewed, and guidance and counselling sessions have been organized for specialists in the adoption departments within the DGASPC.

182. Law No. 273/2004 regarding the adoption procedure was completed and modified by introducing provisions aimed at streamlining adoption procedures, by clarifying and logically sequencing the activities and obligations assigned to DGASPC specialists.

183. The validity of the adoptive family certificate has been extended from two years to five years, with the obligation to annually verify the fulfillment of the conditions that formed the basis for issuing the certificate, under the responsibility of DGASPC. Financial incentives have been introduced to support a family’s decision to adopt. Financial incentives increase progressively and aim to support families adopting older children, those with disabilities, or those who are part of a sibling group.

G. Art. 23 Children with disabilities

184. Regarding the organization of special education, therapies, and intervention services, by Law No. 198/2023, in preschool education, special education is organized in the form of early intervention groups for children with SEN due to physical, intellectual, and/or sensory disabilities, emotional disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders, social maladjustment, or any other disease, disorder, or chronic condition, genetic or otherwise, ensuring specific recovery and compensatory therapies, as well as specialized social, medical, psychological, psychopedagogical counselling, audiometry, and speech therapy services, correlated and appropriate to specific educational needs.

185. Starting from the small group in preschool education, special education is carried out based on a 4-level support system (I–IV): basal, supplementary, intensive, and special.

186. The National Center for Inclusive Education together with the County/Bucharest Municipality Center for Educational Resources and Assistance and the County/ Bucharest Municipality Directorates for Pre-University Education will have responsibilities regarding the assessment for determining the level of support. The National Center for Inclusive Education is expected to be established starting from the 2025–2026 school year.

187. According to statistical data transmitted by the school inspectorates, in the current school year, there are 3,354 positions of school counsellors in the psycho-pedagogical assistance cabinets.

H. Basic health and welfare arts. 6, 18 (3), 24, 26, 27(1–3) and 33

Health and health-care services

188. MS technically and methodologically coordinates the activity of 1,913 community nurses and 460 health mediators, ensuring national coverage of approximately 50% of Romania.

189. By Order No. 1617/2021 of the Minister of Health approving the protocol regarding the methodology documented in the pregnancy booklet, a new methodology for conducting

prenatal and postnatal consultations was approved, both at the primary care level and at the specialist care level.

190. In Romania, pregnant women, regardless of whether they contribute to the insurance system or not, have access to preventive consultations with the family doctor and the obstetrician (8 preventive consultations in primary care and 4 preventive consultations with the obstetrician), have unlimited access based on medical recommendations to specialists in case of conditions related to or concurrent with pregnancy, benefit from specific laboratory investigations for monitoring the pregnancy, and undergo ultrasound examinations to detect defects and malformations.

191. A new methodology has been developed regarding the prioritization of obstetrics-gynecology and neonatology departments, in relation to their capacity to respond to the pathology presented by the pregnant woman and/or the fetus/newborn, establishing equipment and staffing norms and criteria for childbirth assistance in healthcare units capable of addressing any morbidity presented by the pregnant woman and/or the fetus and newborn.

192. Through PNRR, financial resources have been allocated for expanding capacity and technology in regional neonatal intensive care units, organizing regional training centers for specialized medical personnel, organizing and rehabilitating the neonatal transport system for critically ill newborns, as well as organizing regional centers for specialized neonatal transport.

193. Highly specialized services and human resources have been developed to address newborns with malformations, especially cardiac ones, significantly increasing the number of surgical interventions performed in the country over the last 5 years and reducing infant mortality due to defects and malformations by approximately 15% over the last 5 years.

194. Since 2017, the National Health Program for Women and Children of the Ministry of Health has been structured into 2 subprograms: the Child Nutrition and Health Subprogram and the Women's Health Subprogram.

195. The Ministry of Health has developed a Manual for School Health Care aimed at the two categories of health professionals working in schools: the school doctor and the school nurse. The chapter "Interventions for promoting health and behaviour change in communities of children and young people" provides recommendations regarding the adherence to quality standards for sexual and reproductive health services to prevent, detect, and manage gender-based violence.

196. According to WHO data, in 2023, Romania recorded 3,497 cases of measles and three deaths caused by this disease, representing a quarter of the deaths recorded in the region.

197. Under the slogan "Say NO to measles, say YES to vaccination!" in April 2023, activities were carried out to engage medical staff and inform the population, reminding parents to vaccinate their children and encouraging dialogue between parents and medical personnel to address questions or concerns about vaccination.

198. Since family planning is included in the basic service package of primary healthcare and specialized outpatient medical care from which insured individuals benefit, as well as in the minimal package of primary healthcare services available to uninsured individuals, the insured can benefit from family planning consultations provided by the family doctor. These consultations ensure counselling on family planning, the recommendation of a contraceptive method, and an assessment of reproductive health risks. At the level of specialized outpatient medical care, consultations for providing family planning services are ensured, allowing direct access to the outpatient specialist. Uninsured individuals can benefit from family planning consultations at the level of the family doctor, in accordance with the minimal package of primary healthcare services.

199. Through PNRR, a measure has been undertaken to develop the prehospital medical infrastructure for family planning clinics. The plan includes equipping and renovating at least 119 family planning clinics, as well as running a health education campaign, particularly reproductive health education, which will be implemented nationally with priority in vulnerable areas with a high number of adolescent pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

200. Under the coordination of MS, a working group including representatives from the National Institute of Public Health is developing the Reproductive Health Strategy.
201. In the annual calendar of national specific health priority topics, information, education, and awareness campaigns on reproductive health were conducted in 2022 and 2023 to prevent young women from becoming victims of unwanted pregnancies and to protect against sexually transmitted infections.
202. As part of a national health subprogram for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, starting from 2023, children and adults diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders benefit from psychotherapy services and/or clinical psychological counselling and/or special psychopedagogical-logopedic counselling/intervention, including the development of a personalized intervention plan, funded by the Social Health Insurance Fund. It is estimated that about 13,471 children and 2,660 adults diagnosed by a psychiatrist/pediatric psychiatrist with autism spectrum disorders will benefit from these services.
203. The national program “For the Care of Children” aimed to protect the psycho-emotional integrity of children by creating mechanisms for evaluation and intervention to ensure their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period.
204. Approximately 70,000 hours of psychological counselling and psychotherapy were provided for children identified with psycho-emotional disorders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resource platform “dingrijapentru copii.gov.ro” was developed, dedicated to children, specialists, and parents.
205. Between 2020–2023, the National Center for Mental Health and Drug Prevention implemented the project “Support for the development of community mental health services for children and adolescents” – OPEN MINDS, which aimed primarily to improve prevention and reduce health inequalities. Through this project, a positive parenting education program was developed and implemented. The resources thus developed formed the basis of the 150 parenting education workshops organized within the project, benefiting at least 1,500 parents.
206. Additionally, the “Let’s Talk About Children” project was implemented, which included an awareness campaign aimed at improving the capacities of community members: parents, primary care providers, educators, and social protection professionals to support children in families at risk of developing a mental health disorder or already manifesting one. It also involved the training of 120 professionals from education, health, and social assistance.
207. Under the Subprogram for Health Evaluation, Promotion, and Health Education, campaigns were conducted to inform, educate, and raise awareness on topics related to alcohol consumption prevention. These were dedicated to adolescents, teachers, and parents to change social perceptions about alcohol consumption among young people and its consequences. In 2023, a campaign was carried out to promote healthy eating for children, along with informational activities during World Breastfeeding Week. Informational materials on promoting breastfeeding and the “Baby-Friendly Hospital” initiative for hospitals were prepared.
208. Promoting breastfeeding is a medical service provided both prenatally and postnatally in specialized medical structures. Specific guides were developed and distributed, especially at the primary care level. The national objective is exclusive breastfeeding until the age of 6 months, with continued breastfeeding until at least 1 year.
209. In 2017, a commercial began airing, which continues to this day, on national television networks, highlighting the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of a child’s life. The message “Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months is essential for a healthy life” is included at the end of all commercial breaks containing advertisements for products that might undermine breastfeeding.
210. Government Decision No. 59/2023 approved the National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023–2030, which includes solutions to increase education and awareness about the environment and climate change among students. The objectives and measures span multiple levels: formal and non-formal education; human resources, including teacher training; investments; open resources; and partnerships.

Standard of living

211. Starting in 2022, Romania has planned an extensive framework for reform in social policies to reduce poverty. In this regard, the implementation of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2022–2027 includes measures to combat poverty, ensure the right to social assistance, increase access to general public interest services, stimulate the social and economic participation of vulnerable groups, and strengthen the resilience of the social services system in special situations, such as the COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, starting in 2023, the National Strategy “Protected Children, Safe Romania” 2023–2027 is being implemented. This strategy aims to ensure, with the involvement of children, the effective realization of the rights of all children, including the most vulnerable, in all areas of life by fully ensuring access to quality public services. The strategy includes a target to reduce the number of children affected by poverty and social exclusion by 400,000 by the end of 2027, compared to the 2019 baseline of 11,323,000 children.

212. Budgetary or legislative reform measures to combat child poverty and social exclusion are also being implemented or planned for the coming period. These measures include, for example, increasing investment in local public social assistance services by applying the provisions of Law No. 156/2023 on the organization of activities to prevent the separation of children from their families and Law No. 100/2024 for the amendment and completion of certain normative acts in the field of social assistance.

213. Through Law No. 100/2024, a minimum social assistance package was introduced to reduce the risks of poverty and social exclusion.

214. Other budgetary and legislative reform measures aimed at addressing poverty and social exclusion among the most vulnerable children and their families also include implementing other legislative changes that aim to increase allowances and benefits linked to the Social Reference Indicator (ISR), which is updated annually on March 1st with the previous year’s average annual inflation rate. Thus, starting from March 1, 2024, the value of the SRI was increased from 598 lei to 660 lei (an increase of 10.4%).

215. Since 2021, MEd has been implementing the Grant Scheme under the National Program for Reducing School Dropout, funded by the PNRR. PNRAS aims to reduce the risk of school dropout in at least 25% of the educational units participating in the program during the period 2021–2026, by categorizing the educational unit into a lower-risk category, improving students’ results in national evaluations, increasing the percentage of students who complete middle school, increasing the participation of middle school graduates in the National Evaluation for 8th-grade graduates, and the transition rate from lower secondary education to upper secondary education. A total of 3,235 educational units were identified as eligible for the National Program for Reducing School Dropout based on data from the SIIIR in 2020.

216. Another important initiative by MEd is the Early Warning Mechanism in Education, which provides a coherent and unified framework for the early detection, identification, and monitoring of students at risk of dropping out and early school leaving. This framework is based on the real-time collection of data on early warning signs – low academic performance, history of grade repetition, absences, inappropriate school behaviour – allowing school staff and decision-makers at the county and central levels to coordinate, plan, and implement appropriate and immediate measures to mitigate the risks and problems identified at the student, class, and school levels. By the end of September 2023, over 50,000 participants from 6,950 institutions had gone through various phases of the program. Of these, over 45,800 completed the training program. The course design, content, and structure follow the characteristics of the Early Warning Mechanism, in accordance with the regulations approved by OME No. 6.000/2021 regarding the approval of the Early Warning Mechanism in Education, the implementation methodology, and the use of the EWM module to prevent school dropout.

217. Under the Secondary Education Project, which supports the transition of students from upper secondary education to tertiary education and uses a decentralized approach based on granting individual grants to high schools, MEd has continued the implementation of 420 grants. The objectives of the grants are to reduce the dropout rate in high schools, increase

graduation rates, and improve performance in the baccalaureate exam. High schools carry out activities aimed at achieving these objectives, such as remedial activities, counselling, guidance and career orientation, coaching, personal development, and the development of socio-emotional skills (at least 50% of direct costs), extracurricular and informational activities, as well as minor renovation works, interior school building arrangements, and procurement of goods. The average dropout rate in final-year classes in grant beneficiary high schools decreased from 6.5% (baseline indicator in 2015) to 1.96% in 2022, and the percentage of grant beneficiary high schools with a dropout rate higher than 7% decreased from 23.10% (baseline indicator) to 11.56% in 2022. Additionally, the average graduation rate in eligible/grant beneficiary high schools increased from 86.9% (baseline indicator) to 95.65% in 2022, and the average baccalaureate exam pass rate in grant beneficiary high schools increased from 49.6% (baseline indicator) to 67.76% in 2022.

I. Arts. 28–31

Education, leisure and cultural activities

Education, including vocational training and guidance

218. Regarding the strengthening of the social package for education aimed at students from at-risk groups, MEd has continued to run annual national social programs: Euro 200, High School Money, School Supplies, School Scholarships, and the School Program.

219. The “Euro 200” program, with the main objective of establishing measures to encourage the purchase of computers by providing financial aid based on social criteria to develop students’ and pupils’ competencies in using computer technology, continued in 2023.

220. At the beginning of each school year, school supplies specific to each class are distributed through the “School Supplies” Program. A total of 167,674 students received free school supplies in the 2022–2023 school year.

221. MEd also continued the “High School Money” Program in the 2022–2023 school year. In the 2022–2023 school year, the number of beneficiaries was 20,509. Starting with the 2023–2024 school year, the program has been replaced with other forms of consolidated social intervention, according to Law No. 198/2023.

222. The vocational scholarship was, until the beginning of the 2023–2024 school year, a national program aimed at all students attending vocational education, providing a monthly financial support of 200 lei. In the 2022–2023 school year, the total number of students who benefited from scholarships was 751,551, including 9,493 performance scholarship recipients, 260,562 merit scholarship recipients, 92,004 study scholarship recipients, and 389,492 social aid scholarship recipients.

223. Starting in 2024, MEd, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is implementing the National Program “Healthy Meal” (PNMS), which represents a crucial initiative to ensure access to proper nutrition for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This initiative comes as a natural continuation of the results of the pilot program “Hot Meal” and from the concern for students at risk of academic failure or early school dropout due to unfavourable socio-economic and geographical conditions.

224. The program aims to include pre-university educational units facing difficult socio-economic and geographical conditions, in an effort to facilitate access to education and prevent school dropout.

225. In 2024, a total of 458,833 students from 1,223 schools will benefit from PNMS, receiving daily food support worth 15 lei per beneficiary, including value-added tax.

226. The “Second Chance” Program in secondary education, implemented starting from the 2023–2024 school year, is an educational initiative aimed at providing learning opportunities for individuals who have exceeded the age corresponding to the classes they should have been enrolled in mainstream education.

227. Individuals eligible to participate in the program are those who are at least 4 years older than the age corresponding to the class they should have been enrolled in. They must

be in one of the following situations: have completed primary education or have completed the corresponding grades of lower secondary education (5th, 6th, 7th grade).

228. In order to mitigate the risk of early school dropout, focusing on supporting disadvantaged children in public preschool, primary, and lower secondary education, the Inclusion and Social Dignity Program launched the call “Educational Support for Preschoolers and Disadvantaged Students in Public Preschool, Primary, and Lower Secondary Education” in 2023.

229. The target group of the project consists of: disadvantaged children in public preschool education enrolled in public education who meet the conditions, in July of each year, to obtain educational support provided to children from disadvantaged families, disadvantaged children in public primary education enrolled in public primary education who meet the income criteria established in the National School Supplies Program, namely those who are maintained by families whose average net monthly income per family member, achieved in July of each year, is maximum 50% of the gross minimum wage per country, and disadvantaged children in public lower secondary education enrolled in public lower secondary education, who meet the income criteria established in the National School Supplies Program, namely those who are maintained by families whose average net monthly income per family member, achieved in July of each year, is maximum 50% of the gross minimum wage per country.

230. Through the Early Education Reform Project, co-financed by the Government of Romania and the Council of Europe Development Bank, which ran from 2009 to 2023, work was completed on 358 kindergartens, work is in progress for 31 kindergartens, for 10 kindergartens the procedure for outstanding works to be executed is to be launched, and 3 kindergartens are in the design phase.

231. In 2023, MEd launched, within the framework of the PNRR, the competitive call for projects for “Development of Complementary Early Education Services”, aimed at improving the quality of early education services, improving participation rates, both at the pre-preschool and preschool levels, by serving up to 20,000 children from disadvantaged groups. In addition to equipping the services, funding will be provided for a period of at least 12 months for information, counselling, and support services for parents/legal guardians/persons in charge of the child.

232. The Roma human resource in the educational system consists of: 263 teachers who teach the Romani language, 13 educators who teach in the Romani mother tongue, 22 primary school teachers who teach in the Romani mother tongue, 75 teachers of Roma ethnicity who teach other disciplines, 115 teachers who teach Roma history and traditions, and 3 teachers who teach music in the Romani language.

233. Additionally, within MEd, there is a position of undersecretary of state dedicated primarily to issues related to the Roma minority.

234. Regarding the allocation of places specifically designated for Roma students, in the academic year 2023–2024, 6,151 places were allocated for high school and 1,963 places were allocated for vocational and dual education. For university education, 479 places were allocated for undergraduate studies, 214 places for master’s studies, and 75 places were allocated for doctoral studies.

Rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities

235. In recent years, there has been an increase in efforts to provide child-friendly leisure spaces. Notably, the initiative “Child-Friendly Communities” by UNICEF Romania has engaged local authorities, the private sector, and importantly, children themselves.

236. Simultaneously, at the beginning of 2024, the Romanian Senate adopted a bill stipulating that playgrounds should be built according to specific rules to make them accessible and friendly for children in general, as well as for children with disabilities in particular. The bill has been forwarded to the Chamber of Deputies for further debate.

J. Arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b–d) and 38–40
Special protection measures

Asylum-seeking and refugee children

237. Through the joint order of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Family, Youth, and Equal Opportunities No. 119/20643/2023, the conditions for appointment, role, duties, and requirements for training, education, and professional experience were approved for individuals designated as representatives for unaccompanied foreign minors who request or obtain a form of international protection.

238. The situations in which a minor can be subjected to restrictive measures during the asylum procedure are specifically provided for in Law No. 122/2004 regarding asylum in Romania and are accompanied by various procedural guarantees.

239. In the case of minors, temporary restriction of freedom of movement or placement in specially arranged spaces is prohibited, except in certain situations expressly provided for by law.

240. IGI may allow family members of the applicant for whom placement in specially arranged enclosed spaces has been ordered to live with them.

241. According to the provisions of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 194/2002 regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania, the measure of placement in public custody cannot be ordered for unaccompanied minors. However, families with children can be accommodated in such centers, with the mention that the minors are the companions of one of the parents or the legal representative, and they themselves are not taken into custody. In situations where family members do not want minors to be housed in public custody centers, children can be taken and accommodated in special centers for the protection of minors, under the same conditions as Romanian minors.

242. According to legal provisions, if an asylum seeker or foreigner declares that they are a minor and there are no serious doubts about their minority, they are considered a minor.

243. In cases where an unaccompanied minor cannot prove their age and there are serious doubts about their minority status, IGI may request a medico-legal expertise to assess the age of the applicant/foreigner, with the prior written consent of the minor and their legal representative. If the minor refuses to undergo the medico-legal expertise to determine their age and no conclusive evidence is provided regarding the age of the minor, they will be considered an adult (it will be considered that the person in question reached the age of 18 at the time of asylum application).

244. Regarding the development of the mechanism for identification, referral, and assistance of children in the asylum application process, IGI applies the Procedure for the identification, assessment of needs, assistance, and referral of vulnerable persons, which establishes a unified set of rules regarding the identification, assessment of needs, assistance, referral, and reporting of vulnerable persons among asylum seekers.

245. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, in March 2022, children from Ukrainian institutions accompanied by the institution's staff as legal guardians have been taken into the special protection system.

246. According to legal provisions on asylum, the identification of the families of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers is carried out as soon as possible. The opinion of the unaccompanied minor asylum seeker regarding the identification of their family is taken into account and given due importance, considering their age and level of maturity.

247. IGI undertakes steps through diplomatic missions/the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, national and international organizations, to identify the minor's parents, other family members, appointed guardians, or suitable reception centers and obtain their agreement for family reunification/placement of the minor.

248. The removal of the unaccompanied minor foreigner from Romanian territory is carried out after obtaining the agreement for family reunification from the parents or other

family members who are not present in Romania, the appointed guardian, or the agreement of a specialized institution in the return state to receive the minor in placement.

249. Asylum-seeking minors participate in Romanian language learning courses for one school year, after which they are enrolled in the compulsory school education system under the same conditions as Romanian citizen minors.

250. Regarding addressing barriers related to Romanian language courses, in 2020, through a Government Decision, the intensive teaching method of Romanian language learning courses and the extension of the registration period for the Romanian language course were regulated.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

251. Beyond the continued monitoring of the local implementation of the multidisciplinary and interinstitutional intervention methodology regarding exploited children and those at risk of labour exploitation, children victims of human trafficking, essential measures to prevent and eradicate the economic exploitation of children have been incorporated into Law No. 156/2023. Through the Child Observer and the support provided to social workers at the level of SPAS (Social Assistance and Child Protection Services) to use this tool, the capacity to identify children at risk of separation from their families is strengthened, including in an “abusive, violent environment existing within the family and at-risk behaviours that can negatively affect relationships between adults, children, and between adults and children,” also incorporating the economic exploitation of children. The Child Observer will facilitate the provision of individualized services to prevent or address identified situations and will be able to generate situations/reports with aggregated data at the local level to complement other information, based on which interventions to prevent and eradicate the economic exploitation of children, including in the family environment, agriculture, construction, and forced begging, can be adjusted.

Children in street situations

252. Government Decision No. 1491/2022 approved the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Homeless People for the period 2022–2027 and the Action Plan for the period 2022–2027.

253. A joint initiative involving the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, the Administration of Hospitals and Medical Services in Bucharest, the Bucharest Police, and the General Directorates of Child Protection in Bucharest consisted of implementing the project “Home is not on the streets,” dedicated to the protection of institutionalized minors for whom there were reports of voluntary departures or disappearances.

Sale, trafficking and abduction

254. Between 2017 and 2023, the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism investigated a total of 4,525 cases involving the crime of trafficking in minors.

255. During the same period, 460 indictments and 24 guilty plea agreements were drawn up for this offense, with 1,136 defendants sent to trial, including 652 held in pre-trial detention and 83 minor defendants.

256. Out of the total number of cases brought before the courts, 378 cases were definitively resolved, resulting in the conviction of 756 defendants, with sentences of up to 15 years in prison.

257. The participation and involvement of governmental, non-governmental partners, and those from the private sector in activities dedicated to combating human trafficking were notable. Between 2017 and 2023, over 4,400 collaborative activities were conducted within existing partnerships.

258. From 2017 to 2023, ANITP utilized available resources to support over 1,000 training sessions. These sessions were aimed at 25,500 specialists from various socio-professional categories who may come into contact with victims or potential victims of human trafficking.

259. Through partnerships with organizations such as Save the Children, the Child Helpline Association, and “The Social Incubator” Association, four prevention campaigns against human trafficking have been conducted. These campaigns include “Get Informed to Stay Protected,” aimed at preventing the trafficking of minors by increasing awareness of this phenomenon, and “Work Abroad Safely,” which focuses on protecting children whose parents work abroad. Additionally, an online campaign called “Happy Hands, Not Hurt Hands” was launched to prevent the trafficking of minors, along with the “Your Safety is Not a Game” prevention campaign, targeting children, youth, and professionals involved in the fight against trafficking who may come into contact with victims or potential victims of child trafficking.

260. Preventive actions have also been organized in partnership with the National Company Bucharest Airports and the “Gheorghe Lazăr” National College, along with the “Smile of Angels” Association, the “Floria Capsali” Choreography High School, and the “Footprint of Goodness” Association.

261. ANITP and its partners have implemented over 850 national and local projects/campaigns/educational projects to prevent human trafficking. Within these initiatives, over 15,500 prevention activities have been conducted, benefiting approximately 1,020,000 direct beneficiaries. Posts containing anti-trafficking messages and useful recommendations on ANITP’s Facebook page have reached over 12,600,000 people. The majority of these informative actions have been aimed at children: students, minors in placement centers, underage mothers with institutionalized children, children from socially assisted families etc.

262. Among the most important prevention actions carried out by ANITP and Regional Centers during the period 2017–2023 aimed at reducing risks and vulnerabilities among minors, the following campaigns can be mentioned: “#10 for Safety,” “Break the Wall of Indifference! Human Trafficking Can Be Prevented,” “Give Them Freedom! Don’t Pay for Exploitation,” “Blind Bets,” “United, We Offer Freedom!” “Spread Your Wings! Awareness Means Freedom,” and “You Too Can Be a Victim of Human Trafficking.”

263. One of the most significant preventive initiatives in 2023 is the national campaign “Looking for a Job? Be Aware of Human Trafficking Traps!” The project activities aimed at reducing the vulnerability of children left alone at home due to their parents working abroad by providing anti-victimization training. The implementation of the online component of the campaign involved promoting anti-trafficking messages both organically and through targeted ads on Facebook and TikTok, using beneficiary profiles developed based on characteristics such as location, spoken language, age range, gender, behaviours, interests, studies etc. As a result of paid/targeted promotion of materials online, an impact of over 755,000 unique users on Facebook and Instagram and over 752,000 views on TikTok was achieved. To support the outdoor component, 315,000 informative-preventive materials were produced (200,000 of these for dissemination at border crossing points by the General Inspectorate of Border Police). During the campaign implementation period, over 340 informative-preventive activities were conducted, reaching over 21,000 direct beneficiaries.

264. ANITP and DIICOT implemented a national Action Plan in the field of combating human trafficking. The initiative aimed to improve the level of information and awareness among at-risk groups, professionals in the field, and the population as a whole regarding the risks and implications of human trafficking. Joint actions were particularly addressed to students aged between 8 and 18 in educational institutions, as well as professionals who may come into contact with victims of human trafficking.

265. Within the EMPACT project – Joint Action Days on THB – Child Trafficking, representatives from ANITP, IGPR, and IGPF conducted a series of information, awareness, and attention-grabbing actions focusing on the vulnerabilities and risks of child trafficking. These activities included prevention activities with increased visibility, information gathering operations, and monitoring of trafficking risk indicators at several border points used for entry and exit of travellers from the country, aiming to better inform the population about child trafficking.

266. Romania participated in the European campaign to prevent human trafficking “Are you a victim of human trafficking? You have rights!”, which aimed at distributing preventive

materials to reduce victimization and protect minors, and to educate them on how to protect themselves. These materials were promoted on social media through ANITP's communication channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

267. During the year 2023, at the national level, 275 specialists in THB were trained through 41 activities (courses, webinars, working groups, briefings, workshops, and experience exchanges) in the field of human trafficking.

Administration of child justice

268. The National Institute of Magistracy (INM) aimed to create a juvenile justice system by specializing judges and prosecutors in areas relevant to defending the rights and interests of children. During the reference period, it organized courses focused on three main directions: juvenile justice, combating domestic violence, and combating human trafficking, under its own projects or in collaboration with other entities.

269. In the field of Juvenile Justice, the following activities were organized in the course of the year 2017:

(a) A seminar on "Hearing Children and Interacting with Them during Judicial Procedures," attended by 12 judges and 6 prosecutors. The objectives were to train judges and prosecutors in child hearing procedures in civil and criminal proceedings, standardize child hearing procedures in judicial proceedings, and extend good practices identified at the level of certain courts;

(b) A seminar on "Aspects Related to Parental Responsibility in the EU," included in the Catalog Plus of the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), attended by 11 Romanian judges and 11 foreign judges;

(c) Implementation of the Project "Assistance for Strengthening Institutional Capacity in the Field of Training Judges and Prosecutors for the Application of New Laws," funded under the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program for Reducing Economic and Social Disparities within the European Union. Six seminars were organized, covering topics related to child protection and techniques for hearing minors, attended by 103 judges, 21 prosecutors, and 1 person assimilated to judges and prosecutors.

270. Within the Project "Better Applying the EU Regulations on Family and Succession Law," coordinated by the Academy of European Law in Trier (ERA), a national seminar was organized, attended by 24 judges. The project developed a set of materials regarding EU legal instruments on judicial cooperation in civil matters. The seminar addressed aspects related to divorce and maintenance obligations, parental responsibility in a cross-border context, including child abduction, and cross-border successions.

271. During the year 2018, within the EJTN Plus 2018 Catalog, a seminar on "Aspects Related to Parental Responsibility in the EU" was organized, attended by 15 Romanian judges and 2 judges from Latvia.

272. In the year 2019, 2 seminars were organized, attended by 16 judges and 16 prosecutors. The following topics were addressed: proper registration and identification of children as victims of crimes and their specific vulnerabilities (Roma, migrant origin, disabilities, gender etc.), the rights and conduct of judicial procedures in a child-friendly and adapted manner, including child interviewing techniques and establishing appropriate frameworks.

273. During the period 2019–2023, INM implemented the Project "Justice 2020: Professionalism and Integrity." Within the project, 8 seminars were organized in the field of Juvenile Justice – civil aspects, and 8 seminars in the field of Juvenile Justice – criminal aspects. A total of 63 judges and prosecutors specializing in resolving cases involving minors, civil aspects, and 114 judges and prosecutors specializing in resolving cases involving minors, criminal aspects, were trained during the training sessions.

274. Within the project, 14 seminars were organized in the field of Interview Techniques in Criminal Proceedings, out of which 6 had an agenda dedicated to the particularities of interviewing vulnerable persons (children, adults, persons with mental disabilities).

275. An event replicated every year by the INM is the Summer School, held in areas that allow extensive participation from Romanian magistrates. Thus, in the years 2021 and 2022, editions of the Summer School on the topic of Juvenile Justice were organized, with the participation of 57 judges, prosecutors, judicial auditors, assistant magistrates from the High Court of Cassation and Justice, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice of Romania.

276. INM coordinated in 2021 the pilot program on Efficient Handling of Criminal Cases involving crimes against the freedom and sexual integrity of minor victims. The program aimed to strengthen the capacity of its own unit and the subordinate prosecutor's offices of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Tribunal to handle criminal cases involving these types of crimes, in light of identifying any non-uniform practices and the latest judgments of the ECHR against Romania. The program was dedicated to a total of 16 prosecutors from the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Tribunal and from the prosecutor's offices attached to the courts of sectors 1–6, specifically designated to handle these types of cases. The training focused on acquiring interviewing techniques for minors according to the rules outlined in the NICHD Interview Protocol.

277. The program continued in 2022 with a follow-up activity, attended by 19 prosecutors from the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Tribunal, as well as from the prosecutor's offices attached to the sector courts, and a psychologist.

278. Within INM's Continuous Training Program for 2021, 2 training seminars were organized, each lasting for 2 days, in Bucharest on the topic of Sexual Abuse of Minor Victims, with the participation of 22 judges and 15 prosecutors.

279. With the support of the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for Children, INM organized a seminar in 2021 on Investigating Crimes of Sexual Abuse against Minor Victims. The seminar was dedicated to training 12 prosecutors and 12 police officers specialized in investigating crimes against the freedom and sexual integrity of minors.

280. During the period 2021–2023, in order to achieve the objective regarding the professional training of human resources, 353 professionals from the system were trained in 15 seminars: judges, prosecutors, DGASPC counsellors, probation counsellors, and police officers.

281. In 2023, 5 training seminars were organized as part of the project "Setting National Standards in Science-Based Investigation of Child Sexual Violence – a Training of Trainers Program and Strengthening the National Network of Professionals," funded by UNICEF Romania and conducted by the Association for Victims of Sexual Offenses, in collaboration with INM. The 5 seminars on the topic of Evidence Specific to the Interviewing of Child Victims of Sexual Abuse were intended for prosecutors specifically designated from multiple counties and DIICOT, as well as police officers. The training focused on modern techniques for interviewing minors and presenting the NICHD Protocol, revised in 2018. A total of 62 participants, including prosecutors, police officers, and other experts, attended the seminars.

282. In the field of combating human trafficking, in 2017, INM participated as a co-beneficiary partner in the project "Combating Human Trafficking and Migration in the European Context," financed by non-reimbursable European funding, coordinated by the Pro Refugiu Association from Romania, proposed for funding by the European Commission. In this capacity, INM selected expert magistrates from within the project, as well as participants for 2 conferences: 4 judges and 4 prosecutors. In 2018, 3 judges participated in the final conference of the project.

283. In 2019, INM organized a seminar in Bucharest on the theme of Combating Human Trafficking, attended by 7 judges and 7 prosecutors, as well as 1 judge and 1 prosecutor from the Republic of Moldova.

284. Starting in 2020, INM initiated the Project "Justice 2020: Professionalism and Integrity," with the code SIPOCA 453, which also included the organization of 6 seminars in Bucharest in the field of "Combating Human Trafficking," aimed at judges and prosecutors with expertise in handling cases related to human trafficking. Thus, the 6 seminars organized during the period 2021–2023 gathered a total of 39 judges and 56 prosecutors. Additionally, 3 seminars in this field were organized in 2023, as part of the project "Strengthening the proactive response of the justice system to human trafficking in Romania," carried out by the

International Justice Mission with the support of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and were intended for 42 judges handling cases related to human trafficking-specific offenses.

285. Regarding the professional training of prosecutors in the field of protecting minor victims, this has been carried out within projects implemented by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, through professional training programs developed at the National Institute of Magistracy, as well as at the decentralized level, within training sessions organized at the prosecutor's offices attached to the courts of appeal.

286. Within the project "Protection of Victims of Crime," implemented by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice in partnership with FRA, on the topic of minor victims of crimes and victims of hate/prejudice-motivated crimes, it is envisaged to provide training sessions on children as victims of crimes to prosecutors and other professionals, for a total of 60 participants, prosecutors, and other professionals.

287. In 2023, the National Agency for Equality between Women and Men, as the promoter of the "VioGen-RoJust" project, implemented in partnership with several non-governmental organizations in the field, organized a series of professional training activities in the field of domestic violence and sexual abuse, attended by 148 prosecutors.

288. At the level of the Public Ministry, several continuous professional training programs have been conducted, addressing various topics, including violence against children. Thus, at the level of the Prosecutor's Offices, seminars have been organized on topics such as: "Financial exploitation of vulnerable persons", "Prevention and combating of sexual violence in all its forms, including acts committed in the cyber environment", "Sexual assault", "Investigation of crimes against the freedom and sexual integrity committed against minors", "The New Criminal Code", "The New Code of Criminal Procedure", addressing the field of combating domestic violence, including violence against minors, "Justice for minors", "Regime of responsibility for minors, exercising ex officio/complaint of criminal action in cases with minor victims where there is a conflict of interest between the minor and their legal representative", "Techniques for interviewing minors", "Family violence. Article 199 of the Criminal Code", "Offenses committed against a family member. Protection order – Law No. 217/2003 for the prevention and combating of family violence. Judicial practice", "Offenses of violence (including those directed against minors)", "Protection order in light of new legal provisions", "Protection order regulated by Law No. 217/2003 with amendments and completions through Law No. 174/2018", and "Provisional protection order", "Handling cases involving minors/Rights of minor victims in the criminal process", "Justice for minors. Legislative amendments", "Termination of criminal proceedings in cases of family violence", "Justice for minors. Legislative amendments", "Hearing minor victims in criminal proceedings", and "Crime of rape. Doctrine and jurisprudence", "Criminal procedure in cases involving minors" etc.

289. In 2023, at the Border Police Training School in Drobeta-Turnu Severin, the "Border Police Academy" Campaign Camp was held, attended by 20 children, including 2 Ukrainian refugee children.

290. In 2023–2024, the Training School established partnerships with the Constantin Pufan School Center for Inclusive Education, where joint activities were conducted involving children with special needs from the mentioned institution. The courses organized addressed the theme "Respect for human rights in specific Border Police activities. The right not to be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, prohibition of discrimination".

291. Additionally, a training program titled "Respecting the ethnic-linguistic identity of Roma in specific Border Police activities" was conducted. The course addressed issues of discrimination, Roma children, the situation of Roma women, specific vulnerabilities of Roma minority members, as well as aspects related to culture, education, and traditions, among others.

292. At the Henri Coandă Airport Border Police Point, information campaigns and brochure dissemination activities regarding the rights of minors were conducted in collaboration with representatives of the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons.

293. Within MAI/IGPR, the Curriculum for the professional qualification of level 5 police officer – Military, order, and public safety training domain includes aspects related to minors in the content of several training themes.

294. The Center for Training and Improvement of Police Officers “Nicolae Golescu” in Slatina conducted courses on relevant issues, including a training session on the prevention and detection of crimes involving children and vulnerable persons.

295. Reconciliation between the parties is no longer considered a cause that eliminates criminal liability in cases of domestic violence, regardless of whether the victim is a minor or an adult.

296. Prior to this amendment, Article 199 paragraph 2 of the Penal Code stipulated that in the case of offenses under Article 193 and Article 196 committed against a family member, criminal action could be initiated ex officio, and reconciliation would eliminate criminal liability.

297. After the amendments brought by Law No. 233/2020, Article 199 paragraph 2 of the Penal Code provides that in the case of offenses under Article 193 and Article 196 committed against a family member, criminal action can be initiated ex officio.

298. Therefore, the possibility of withdrawing the complaint remains if criminal action has been initiated upon the prior complaint of the victim. However, if criminal action has been initiated ex officio, it cannot be prevented by the victim’s expression of intent to withdraw the prior complaint or reconcile with the perpetrator.

299. Law No. 186/2021 introduced, in Article 266 paragraph 11 of the Penal Code, an assimilated variant of the offense of failure to report, incriminating the act of a person who, becoming aware of the commission of an offense under criminal law, trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable persons, or offenses against the liberty and sexual integrity committed against a minor, fails to immediately notify the authorities.

300. Law No. 186/2021 extended the scope of the obligation to report to offenses specifically indicated in Article 266 paragraph 11 of the Penal Code, committed against a minor.

301. Law No. 217/2023 introduced as standalone offenses rape committed against a minor and sexual assault committed against a minor. The new regulations presume the absence of consent of a minor who has not reached the age of 16 at the time of the sexual act committed by an adult, as well as of a minor who has not reached the age of 14 at the time of the sexual act committed by a minor over 14 years old, except when the age difference between the victim and the perpetrator does not exceed 5 years.

302. Also, regarding the statute of limitations for criminal liability, in the case of offenses of trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable persons and offenses against liberty and sexual integrity, other than those provided for in Article 153 paragraph (2) letter c) of the Penal Code, as well as the offense of child pornography committed against a minor, the statute of limitations begins to run from the date the minor reaches adulthood. If the minor has died before reaching adulthood, the statute of limitations begins to run from the date of death.

303. Law 248/2023 provided as an aggravating circumstance (resulting in the increase of penalty limits by one third) the commission of the offense against a minor victim in the case of offenses such as assault or other violence, bodily harm, and harassment under the Penal Code.

304. By Law No. 217/2023, new amendments were made to the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, aiming to increase the protection afforded to minors in criminal proceedings. According to Article 93 paragraph 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, legal assistance is mandatory when the injured party or civil party is a person lacking legal capacity or with restricted legal capacity, or when the injured party or civil party is the victim of one of the following crimes: mistreatment of a minor, domestic violence, slavery, human trafficking, trafficking of minors, forced or compulsory labour, pimping, exploitation of begging, using a minor for begging, using the services of an exploited person, child prostitution, rape, rape of a minor, sexual assault, sexual assault committed against a minor,

sexual corruption of minors, soliciting minors for sexual purposes, sexual harassment, and child pornography.

305. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides that ex officio or at the express request of the injured party or the prosecutor, the court session is declared non-public for its entire course if the injured party is a minor and is the victim of one of the crimes provided for in Articles 197, 199, 209–2161, 218, 2181, 219, 2191, 221, 222, 223, and 374 of the Penal Code.

306. According to Article 3551 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, newly introduced by Law No. 217/2023, cases involving minor victims of one of the crimes provided for in Articles 197, 199, 209–2161, 218, 2181, 219, 2191, 221, 222, 223, and 374 of the Penal Code are tried urgently and as a priority. In these situations, trial deadlines are usually set for 7 days, and for well-founded reasons, the court may set shorter or longer deadlines.

307. In order to reform the way criminal cases involving minor victims are handled by law enforcement agencies, the National Network of Prosecutors Specialized in Investigating Cases involving Crimes Committed by or Against Minors was established by Order No. 294/2018 issued by the Prosecutor General of the PICCJ. This network consists of one prosecutor from each prosecutor's office attached to a tribunal, one military prosecutor from the Military Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Military Tribunal, and prosecutors from the DIICOT.

308. The network of prosecutors became operational in 2019, and its members were designated by the heads of the prosecutor's offices where they work to participate in various professional training activities focusing on the protection of minors' rights and juvenile justice in general.

309. By Order No. 64/2023 issued by the Prosecutor General of PICCJ, prosecutors from DIICOT who carry out criminal investigations or participate in resolving cases involving crimes under the jurisdiction of this directorate, committed by or against minors, were designated.

310. In the prosecutor's offices of sectors 1–6 in Bucharest, activities are mainly carried out by designated and specialized prosecutors.

311. Minor victims are interviewed in specially designed rooms, primarily by specialized prosecutors or police officers. During the interviews, the NICHD protocol or its revised version is typically used, or elements from these protocols.

312. Starting from 2022, PICCJ implements the project "Protecting Victims of Crime" alongside institutional partners: the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Ministry of Justice through the Directorate for Crime Prevention, and four DGASPC in Bucharest, sectors 2, 3, 4, and 5. The project aims to improve the protection of victims, with a special focus on children, victims of hate crimes, and the Roma population.

313. During the year 2023, the draft Guide for interviewing child victims of crimes and the Guide for investigating and prosecuting crimes against children were developed.

314. In order to implement the provisions of Article 37, paragraphs 1 and 2 of Law No. 211/2004 on certain measures to ensure the information, support, and protection of victims of crimes, and Article 5, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of the Methodology for the multidisciplinary and interinstitutional assessment and intervention in providing support and protection services for victims of crimes, approved by the Joint Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Solidarity, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Minister of Justice No. 173/65/3042/C/2021, in 2023, the Criminal Prosecution Section of PICCJ developed a standardized form for informing victims during criminal investigations, done in the context of the integrated management system project for hearings.

315. According to the provisions of the Penal Code, minors who commit crimes can only be subject to educational measures: non-deprivation of liberty measures (civic training stage, supervision, weekend confinement, and daily assistance) and deprivation of liberty measures (internment in an educational center and internment in a detention center).

316. The educational measure of civic training stage entails the minor's obligation to participate in a program lasting up to 4 months to help them understand the legal and social

consequences of committing crimes and to make them accountable for their future behaviour. The organization, participation, and supervision of the minor are coordinated by the probation service, without affecting the minor's school or professional program.

317. The educational measure of supervision involves monitoring and guiding the minor in their daily program for a duration ranging from two to 6 months, under the coordination of the probation service, to ensure participation in school or vocational training courses and prevent engaging in activities or associating with individuals that could impede their rehabilitation process.

318. The educational measure of weekend confinement requires the minor not to leave their residence on Saturdays and Sundays for a period ranging from 4 to 12 weeks, except when they are obligated to participate in certain programs or activities imposed by the court during this period. Supervision is conducted under the coordination of the probation service.

319. The educational measure of daily assistance involves the minor's obligation to adhere to a schedule established by the probation service, containing the timetable and conditions for carrying out activities, as well as any prohibitions imposed on the minor. This measure is implemented for a duration ranging from 3 to 6 months, with supervision conducted under the coordination of the probation service.

320. Regarding ensuring that the detention of minors is used as a last resort and for the shortest possible period, it should be noted that both the educational measures that can be taken concerning minors who have committed offenses and their duration are determined by the court.

321. Educational measures involving deprivation of liberty are carried out under conditions that do not unduly restrict the right to privacy more than is inherently necessary for their execution. The regimes for the execution of educational measures involving deprivation of liberty encompass the set of rules underlying the execution of these measures.

322. During the trial, minors under pretrial detention serve the preventive measure in detention centers or pretrial detention centers. For appearances before judicial authorities, minors under pretrial detention may be transferred to special pretrial detention sections within prisons for a maximum period of 10 days, being housed separately from adults.

323. During the aforementioned interval, minors under pretrial detention serve the preventive measure while considering the specificities of their age, ensuring the necessary psychosocial assistance to prevent any harm to their physical, psychological, or moral development.

324. Upon reaching the age of 18, the detained minor either remains or is transferred to a detention center.

325. The regime for implementing the educational measure of internment in an educational center is common to all individuals interned, being individualized based on the rehabilitative efforts aimed at addressing their physical and psychological development needs.

326. Individuals interned in an educational center are accommodated together, can move unaccompanied within the center, in areas specified by the internal regulations, and can engage in educational, cultural, moral-religious, psychological assistance, and specific social assistance activities or work both inside and outside the center without supervision.

327. In each educational center, an educational council is established, aiming to individualize the regime for implementing the educational measure of internment in an educational center by determining the educational, psychological, and social assistance provided to each interned person.

328. The educational council individualizes the execution of the internment educational measure, taking into account the specific educational, psychological, and social assistance to be provided to the interned person.

329. The center's administration ensures supervision, observation, and assistance to the interned individuals by surveillance personnel, educators, psychologists, social workers, teachers, doctors, priests, and administrative staff.

330. Interned individuals are involved in specific activities related to work, school education, vocational training, education, cultural, moral-religious, psychological assistance, and social.

331. The accommodation of minors is usually done collectively, typically separated from adults, respecting the principle of gender segregation.

332. The centers are equipped with suitable spaces for accommodation, food preparation and serving, school education and vocational training activities, social and psychological assistance, educational, moral-religious, cultural, sports, and recreational activities, ensuring medical assistance and treatments, as well as receiving visitors.

333. Each interned individual has an individual sleeping space and the opportunity to engage in activities in the courtyard, based on an approved schedule by the unit's management.

334. Interned individuals can spend most of their time in common areas within the accommodation pavilions, as well as outside the accommodation pavilions (cultural-sports complex, sports grounds, school, work activities, or administrative-household activities).

335. Minors subject to the open regime in a detention center are entitled to 8 visits/month, while minors subject to the closed regime are entitled to 6 visits/month.

336. Before reaching the age of 18, interned individuals may have their internment measure in the detention center or educational center replaced with the daily assistance measure if they meet the conditions provided by law.

337. The educational council or commission, as provided by law, with the participation of the supervising judge, as president, and a probation officer from the probation service, determines if the minor has shown a consistent interest in acquiring educational and professional knowledge and has made progress towards social reintegration, in the presence of the minor, and makes a proposal to replace internment with the daily assistance measure. The proposal also takes into account any previous periods of internment.

338. Activities and social reintegration programs are conducted by specialized personnel, including educators, psychologists, social workers, priests, sports monitors, and technical agents. These activities are organized and carried out both within the detention facility and in the community, taking into account the behaviour of the inmates.

339. Each educational and detention center has an Educational Project that structures and organizes the education and psychosocial assistance provided to the inmates based on their individual needs. Collaboration with the community conditions the development and implementation of all components of the educational project, aiming to involve families and communities in the social reintegration process of individuals who have undergone educational measures. Information exchange between institutions and decision-makers is also pursued.

340. The minimum time spent by inmates outside their rooms in activities and programs is 6 hours to ensure an adequate level of social interaction.

341. Inmates participate daily in physical education or sports activities, and on a weekly basis, they engage in occupational or hobby-related activities. At least once a month, an educational contest is organized. Access to the library is provided weekly for all inmates, and monthly book-related activities are organized for them. Additionally, minors receive moral and religious assistance provided by the unit's priest and collaborators from legally recognized religious denominations. Monthly artistic or cultural dissemination activities are organized in collaboration with community partners, either within the center or in the community.

342. Specialized personnel meet with representatives from the support environment of the inmates at least semi-annually in educational and detention centers.

Children who are victims and witnesses of crimes

343. In accordance with the provisions of Law No. 682/2002 on the protection of witnesses, when necessary, specific techniques and methods adapted to the age and the investigated

issue may be used, while respecting the current legislation, in the presence of parents/guardians.

344. Minor victims or witnesses of crimes are entitled to effective guarantees regarding the provision of procedures adapted to them and access to protection, recovery, and reintegration services.

345. The hearing of minor victims of crimes takes place under special conditions, and they are entitled to mandatory legal assistance in all cases, as provided for in Article 93(4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. During the hearing, the procedural rights of the minor victim are made known to them.

346. Within MAI/IGPR, efforts have been made to disseminate the provisions of the two mentioned legislative acts to the criminal investigation structures within the Bucharest Metropolitan Police Directorate and the county police inspectorates. Standardized forms of the two documents have been distributed to the territorial structures. Similar guarantees are provided for the hearing of minor witnesses according to Article 124 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

347. The activities of hearing minors, whether they are in conflict with criminal law or are victims or witnesses of crimes, take place under specific conditions adapted to the age of the minor being interviewed. This is done to reduce the risks of secondary and repeated victimization or of intimidation and retaliation by ensuring an appropriate framework for conducting the activity and using special interview techniques by police officers who have been specially trained for this purpose.

348. Within the Ministry of Internal Affairs/National Police Inspectorate General, efforts have been made to implement the National Support Program for Children, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – “Caring for Children,” approved by Government Emergency Ordinance No. 105/2021. Forty-nine rooms for interviewing minors have been set up nationwide, covering 41 administrative-territorial units.

349. Regarding the handling of reports of victim intimidation, in cases where minor victims of crimes are targeted by acts of intimidation, they have several avenues through which they can request the assistance of state authorities in protecting them. Victims have the possibility to file a criminal complaint, which will be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Joint Order of the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 56/2014.

350. Among the tools and measures available to law enforcement agencies, we refer to the issuance of a provisional protection order according to the provisions of Law No. 217/2003 for the prevention and combating of domestic violence with subsequent amendments and completions. This order may impose one or more protective measures for a period of 5 days, aimed at reducing the imminent risk identified.

351. Another tool available to the prosecutor is provided for in Articles 125 and 126 of the Code of Criminal Procedure regarding the threatened witness and the conditions for granting this status.

Statistical information and data are presented in the annex
