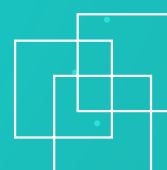




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**facilitating consultations
on the Roadmap to
eliminate child labour
including its worst forms**
in the Republic of Serbia _____



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Abbreviations

CLEAR	Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour (ILO Project)
CSW	Center for Social Work
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ESRP	Employment and Social reform programme
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
LSG	Local Self-Government
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NES	National Employment Service
PPP	Preparatory pre-school programme
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard
RS	Republic of Serbia
SIPRU	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1. Introduction

The Roadmap to Eliminate Child Labour including its Worst Forms (the Roadmap) is being prepared as part of a project of the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s *Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour* (CLEAR), which is financially supported by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL).

The development of the Roadmap is a participatory process that envisages: 1) data collection and analysis; 2) desk research through a review of regulations, strategies, action plans, and other documents that articulate national-level policies expressly or implicitly concerning child labour and protection of children in this regard; 3) facilitation of consultative process for confirmation/validation of proposals for the Roadmap through meetings/interviews, focus group discussion and peer reviews; and 4) organization of a conference to present the validated Roadmap.

These activities aim to facilitate the creation of the framework and contents of the Roadmap, as well as its promotion. In essence, the Roadmap entails activities that will contribute to the prevention and elimination of child labour including its worst forms, during the period 2018 - 2022. Its development has been envisaged as a broad-based consultative process that includes tripartite dialogue¹ and consensus-building between the key stakeholders: Government, ministries, national authorities and councils, social partners and civil society organizations. The complexity of the issue requires additional effort in putting the existing policies, legislation (bylaws and other regulations) and plans produced by different systems into a framework that would allow more efficient and effective action to prevent and combat child labour and protect vulnerable children potentially exposed to child labour in Serbia.

International documents, including International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and its global *Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, as well as recommendations made by the CLEAR Project, provide the basic set of guidelines informing the structure and content of the Roadmap. The Report, *Review of the Existing Policies, Strategies, and Programmes with Recommendations on how to Integrate the Child Labour Component into Existing Policies, Programmes and Referral Systems* (Status Report), prepared by the CLEAR Project, has served as the starting point for drafting this Background Document aimed at facilitating consultations for the Roadmap. In addition to the Status Report, in developing this document other materials produced by CLEAR were used, as well as other available research and data.

This Background Document focuses on an overview and enhancement of the legislative, strategic, and programming framework, and indicates the changes to be achieved. This wording, 'changes to be achieved', is used in this document in order to facilitate the formulation of goals/objectives/outcomes in the Roadmap.

Terminology / Notion of 'child labour'

The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) defines such forms as 'a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.'

According to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment that are harmful to or injure the physical, mental, and moral integrity of a child constitute violations of a fundamental right of the child: the right to life, survival and development. The provisions of the UNCRC protect the child from physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment (Article 19); economic exploitation (Article 32); all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Article 34); abduction, sale, or trafficking (Article 35); all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare (Article 36); and inhumane and degrading

¹ Through the Social and Economic Council of the Republic of Serbia (comprised of trade unions, employers, and the Government).

treatment or punishment (Article 37).

Apart from the clearly defined worst forms of child labour and economic exploitation as a form of violence against children, documents that refer to child labour also employ the expressions ‘hazardous work’ performed by children (comprehensively defined in Chapter II: Hazardous Work of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No.190), which supplements ILO Convention No. 182), as well as ‘undesirable child labour’ and ‘illicit child labour’.

In essence, all these expressions denote work performed by a child that is physically, mentally, socially or morally harmful to the child. Not only is there economic exploitation of the child but the work also prevents the child from attending school or creates substantial difficulties for the education of the child, and/or seriously limits the use of leisure time by the child — all this comes under the term of ‘child labour’.

Appropriate employment of a child in household work or work outside the home during school holidays allowing the child to earn wages for personal use, i.e., work that is appropriate to the age of the child and to his/her physical and mental abilities and that does not hinder the child’s education or use of leisure time, cannot be considered child labour.

2. Context

The Republic of Serbia is an upper middle-income country with a per capita GDP of EUR 4,700, or PPS² 10,500, in 2015.³

In 2015, the average monthly household budget amounted to EUR 482,⁴ whilst the average net wage stood at EUR 370.

The estimated population stood at slightly over 7 million in 2015; the country’s demographics are characterized by an ageing and declining population.

Living standards in Serbia are low, and poverty is widespread. The absolute poverty rate, measured by consumption patterns, shows that between 6 and 9 per cent of the total population in recent years have been unable to meet even their most basic needs.⁵

The at-risk-of-poverty rate stood at 25.4 per cent in 2015, whilst the extreme material deprivation rate was 24 per cent.

2.1 Data relevant to child labour

The child labour phenomenon in Serbia and its worst forms have not been explored sufficiently. There are no reliable data about the extent of child labour and a lack of record keeping and child labour statistics have had a significant adverse impact on developing policies and taking concrete action to protect children from child labour. Nevertheless, some data gathered from a number of different surveys and reports do exist, allowing a broader picture of the exposure of children to child labour, as well as of the groups that may be at risk.

2 The purchasing power standard, abbreviated as PPS, is an artificial (common) currency unit. Theoretically, one PPS can buy the same amount of goods and services in each country.

3 Eurostat *Main GDP aggregated per capita* (dataset nama_10_pc).

4 Available at: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G2015/pdfE/G20151154.pdf>.

5 Mladenović. 2017.

Findings of the 2014 *Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey* (MICS)⁶ show that some 10 per cent of children aged 5 to 17 are involved in economic activity for a number of hours which would classify their work as child labour. Boys are more likely to be involved in economic activities, as are the children from non-urban areas and children living in the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia. Most children who perform an economic activity classified as child labour come from the poorest families (9.3 per cent). According to the MICS data, 3 per cent of children work in hazardous conditions: this is primarily true of children from poor households. Some 5 per cent of children from urban areas are involved in child labour, as opposed to 16 per cent of children from non-urban communities. Children whose mothers have only primary education are more likely to be involved in child labour (17 per cent), as are the children from families living in poverty (15 per cent).

According to the same survey, the picture is somewhat different for children from Roma settlements. Here, 5 per cent of children aged 5 to 17 are involved in work classified as child labour, which is twice as much as compared to the general child population. Boys are more likely to be subjected to child labour than girls (8 per cent vs. 2 per cent, respectively). There is also a difference in involvement in child labour between Roma children living in urban areas (4 per cent) and non-urban areas (9 per cent). Similar to the general child population, 9 per cent of Roma children from the poorest families are involved in child labour, and 4 per cent of them perform hazardous work. The key difference between the general population and the Roma lies in the involvement of children aged between 12 and 14 in hazardous work, with a share five times higher of Roma children from Roma settlements working under hazardous conditions.

According to the MICS, of the total number of children in Serbia involved in child labour, one-half are not enrolled in education. Enrolment is much lower for children from Roma settlements, particularly for those working under hazardous conditions. Only 69 per cent of children from Roma settlements who are of primary school entry age (6 years old) actually attend the first grade of primary school (as opposed to 97 per cent amongst the general child population). As many as 15 per cent of children from Roma settlements aged 6 to 13 remain outside of the education system, whilst the average for Serbia is 1 per cent⁷.

Only a small number of children active in the labour market can be captured by the Labour Force Survey (data include children aged 15 to 17), so some indicators must be treated with caution. A review of the key labour market indicators shows that children aged 15 to 17 are insignificantly active in the labour market and that the rate of their involvement increases with age (for instance, the activity rate for children aged 15 stood at 2.5 per cent, rising to 2.9 per cent for those aged 16, and 5.1 per cent for children aged 17). The inactivity rate is greater for girls than for boys; children in urban areas are more likely to be inactive; and those active are most commonly engaged in unpaid work for informal family-run businesses/households in the agriculture sector.

The 2011 Census captured homeless persons for the first time.⁸ Ethnic Roma account for 5,800 or about one-third of all registered homeless persons.⁹ Worryingly, children aged up to 14 are the largest age group here.

According to data of the Center for Human Trafficking Victims Protection, a total of 55 victims of human trafficking were identified in 2016, 21 of whom were underage and 19 of them girls, representing a 90 per cent share. Data from the 2016 Consolidated Report for Centres for Social Work (CSWs) show that, in the group of beneficiaries aged 0 to 17, CSWs had registered some 13,000 children in conflict with the law, 9,300 victims of neglect and abuse, 1,420 victims of human trafficking, 610 unaccompanied children, and 405 children returnees on the basis of readmission agreements. Children from these groups can be considered as the potential victims of child labour.

6 UNICEF's 2014 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey. The child labour module was administered for children aged between 5 and 17 and included questions on the type of work a child did and the number of hours he or she was engaged in it. Data were collected on both economic activities (paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, work for a family farm or business) and domestic work (household chores such as cooking, cleaning or caring for children, as well as collecting firewood or fetching water). The module also collected information on hazardous working conditions. In addition, a threshold was applied for each age group for the number of hours a child could perform economic activity without it being classified as child labour.

7 UNICEF. 2014, p.189.

8 The 2011 Census defined homeless persons as persons without either a permanent or temporary residence, those living rough outdoors in the streets or parks, etc.

9 A total of 18,287 persons were registered as homeless in Census 2011.

These data indicate that ethnic Roma children from substandard settlements and children from the poorest families are most at risk from child labour. This is additionally borne out by the findings of the Status Report.

Particularly vulnerable subgroups of children at risk from child labour are children with developmental difficulties, children in conflict with the law, children in street situations (children living and working in the streets),¹⁰ migrant children (including children from the families of returnees under readmission agreements), and children from rural areas doing agricultural work. The findings of the *Rapid Assessment in Agriculture* (undertaken by the CLEAR Project) are expected to shed more light on the nature of child labour in agriculture.

The key challenge here is to create a framework to monitor the phenomenon of child labour, define indicators and data on the number of children at risk and give a clear mandate to a national-level institution tasked with coordinating the process of consolidating and publishing these data.

2.2 Legal framework to prevent, address and eliminate child labour

The Republic of Serbia has ratified all key international conventions that pertain to child labour:¹¹ ILO Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, Convention, 1973 (No. 138) ; ILO Recommendation on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973 (No. 146) ; ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) concerning forced or compulsory labour ; ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour; ILO Worst Forms Of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) ; UNCRC Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and UNCRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Serbia has also ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol).

National legislation governs the position of children in connection with work and their illicit exploitation through the Labour Law, Criminal Code, Family Law, Anti-Discrimination Law, Law on Public Peace and Order, Education Law, Law on Primary Education, Law on Secondary Education, Healthcare Law, Law on the Prevention of Abuse in the Workplace, Law on Health and Safety in the Workplace, Youth Law, Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Social Protection Law, Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, and Law on Sports. As child labour is perceived as a form of violence against children, the Law on the Prevention of Family Violence can also be seen as relevant; this piece of legislation entered into effect in June 2017.

All ILO member states that have signed Convention No. 182 are required to adhere to a set of standards set by this document and to incorporate them into their respective national legal framework.

The Serbian legislation has fully incorporated the standards on the age threshold for admission to employment, as well as the types – including a list of hazardous work – the nature or circumstances of which make them likely hazards to the health, security or morals of children, as well as standards that pertain to sanctioning of the worst forms of child labour.

- The minimum threshold for admission to employment of 15 years of age is mandated under the Serbian Labour Law.
- The types and list of hazardous work are set forth in the Labour Law and appropriate byelaws.

The Labour Law (Articles 86 to 88) clearly stipulates the types of work that an underage person can perform, as well as protective measures that can be imposed. The Law limits working hours for those under the age of

¹⁰ General comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations, published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, defines 'children in street situations' as: (a) children who depend on the streets to live and/or work, whether alone, with peers or with family; and (b) a wider population of children who have formed strong connections with public spaces and for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities. This expression will be used hereinafter for children who live and work in the streets.

¹¹ Serbia has also ratified other international documents relevant for the issue of child labour, including the Young Workers Directive (Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work, *Official Journal of the European Communities* L216/12), the European Social Charter (1961), and the Revised European Social Charter (1995).

18 (no more than 35 hours per week, no more than eight hours per day, no overtime or night work),¹² and also mandates medical check-ups for children to assess their fitness for performing particular work. In addition, a child may be admitted to employment only with the written consent of their parent or legal guardian.

In 2017 the Serbian Government also enacted the Regulation on Hazardous Labour of Children,¹³ which includes a list of hazardous activities that is subject to periodic review.

The Regulation has been aligned with Chapter II (Hazardous Work) of ILO Recommendation No. 190 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.¹⁴ The list of occupations, subject to periodic review, comprises all hazardous work.

This Regulation is also complementary to the *Rulebook on Preventive Measures for Safe and Healthy Work by Young People* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 102/16). This byelaw stipulates the requirements that an employer must meet when applying preventive measures to prevent or minimize health hazards for young people in the workplace, especially when these pertain to their mental or physical development. The Rulebook applies to both young people in formal employment as well as those performing work for an employer in any other capacity.

The worst forms of child labour that use children for illicit gain are prohibited under and sanctioned by the criminal law.

- The Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia stipulates that causing, inducing or handing over a child for the purpose of prostitution is a criminal offence penalized by imprisonment of between one and ten years.
- The same piece of legislation criminalizes the use of children for pornography, which carries a prison term of between six months and five years.
- Recruitment, transportation, transfer, sale, purchase, acting as intermediary in sale, concealment, or holding of a minor with intent to exploit such person's labour, forced labour, commission of criminal offences, prostitution or other form of sexual exploitation, begging, use for pornography, enslavement or establishment of similar slavery status, removal of organs or body parts or service in armed conflicts are all criminal offences under the Criminal Code and carry a prison term of at least three years, even in cases where the perpetrator has not used coercion, threat, or other form of pressure or abuse of trust or relationship of dependency.

Serbia is highly ranked in accordance to Child Protection Index¹⁵ for indicators that pertain to the legislative framework for protection of children from all forms of physical or psychological abuse, corporal punishment, and any other forms of cruel or degrading treatment in any setting. Serbia's high score is primarily due to the alignment of national law with most articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹² Working at night is permitted in two situations and under a restricted set of conditions. It is allowed for jobs in culture, sports, the arts, and advertising, and in objective circumstances where work interrupted due to force majeure must continue.

¹³ This Regulation stipulates the forms of work that are hazardous to children in view of Articles 3 and 4 of ILO Recommendation No. 190 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - International Treaties, No. 2/03). The purpose of the Regulation is to protect children from hazardous work in accordance with legislation governing the rights of the child, labour, health and safety in the workplace, healthcare, and education. Apart from hazards set out in the Rulebook on Preventive Measures for Safe and Healthy Work by Young People, work hazardous to children also includes hazards, circumstances, and activities listed in a separate schedule attached to and forming a constituent part of the Rulebook. This schedule contains: 1) list of (physical and chemical) hazards to children; 2) list of circumstances hazardous to children; 3) list of activities hazardous to children; 4) list of activities hazardous to children under 15 years of age; and 5) list of activities hazardous to children undergoing professional training (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 53/2017).

¹⁴ Hazardous work is here defined as (a) work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; (b) work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; (c) work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; (d) work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; (e) work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

¹⁵ Findings are available online at www.childpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CPI-Serbia.pdf.

Enhancements to the legislative framework

A number of initiatives were launched in 2016 and 2017 to amend regulations and thus enhance the legislative framework that protects children from child labour.

- Amendment of Article 25, Paragraph 1 and of Article 175, Item 5 of the Labour Law has been proposed to allow admission to employment of persons under the age of 18 without the consent of their parent (or guardian). The proposed amendments would also prevent termination of employment at the request of the parent (or guardian).¹⁶
- In 2015, the Government amended the Inspection Surveillance Law to broaden the mandate of inspectors in controlling unregistered businesses.
- The following amendments to the Law on Public Peace and Order have been proposed:¹⁷
 - Article 3, where ‘begging’ is defined as a number of activities ‘whereby a person seeks money or other valuable items, irrevocably and without consideration, by eliciting feelings of compassion due to their state of poverty or by referring to health-related, religious, or other reasons’. The same article stipulates that a minor accompanied by a parent or adult engaged in begging is also considered to be begging, even if he or she does not do so explicitly.
 - A new article has been proposed to introduce a fine or imprisonment as penalty for anyone who uses an underage person for purposes of begging. This provision is intended to ensure clear sanctions for the procurement of a child for begging and will create a more appropriate legal framework to protect minors (i.e., children) from being used for begging and as a result becoming victims of this practice. The proposed provision would sanction persons using children as a means to obtain significant gain from begging, as well as those engaging in begging as a lifestyle choice or who are dependent on begging for their survival, including when this applies to the children in question. This will both protect children and combat begging as an undesirable form of behaviour. The proposed provision has been developed in view of the difference between human trafficking (Article 388 of the Criminal Code) and begging.
- The Law on the Prevention of Family Violence (2016) regulates the prevention of family violence, as well as actions by government authorities and institutions in the prevention of family violence and provision of protection and support for victims. This Law does not apply to minors who perpetrate family violence. Its aim is to comprehensively and uniformly govern the organization of, and actions by, government authorities and institutions and so ensure effective prevention of family violence and ensure urgent, timely, and effective protection of the victims of family violence. Prevention of family violence takes the form of a set of measures to uncover any immediate threat of family violence, and a set of measures to be applied should such a threat be detected. The Law defines family violence as any act of physical, sexual, mental, or economic violence by a perpetrator against a person currently or formerly married to the perpetrator, or currently or formerly in a common-law marriage or partnership with the perpetrator, or against a person related to the perpetrator by consanguinity directly or indirectly up to the second degree of kinship, or related to the perpetrator by affinity up to the second degree of kinship, or an adoptive parent, adoptive child, foster parent, or foster child, or any other person with whom the perpetrator lives or has lived in the same household. The Law entered into effect on 1 June 2017. When child protection protocols are amended, they must also be aligned with the Law on the Prevention of Family Violence.
- The Regulation on Hazardous Labour of Children was enacted in 2017.¹⁸ This regulation includes lists of hazards to children; circumstances hazardous to children; activities hazardous to children; activities hazardous to children under 15 years of age; and activities hazardous to children undergoing professional training.

¹⁶ This is an initiative of the CLEAR Project. Opinion of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs has been solicited in order to finalize the proposal.

¹⁷ This is an initiative of the CLEAR Project Ibid. Opinion of the Ministry of Interior has been solicited in order to finalize the proposal.

¹⁸ Developed with the support of CLEAR project.

Other legislation with relevance to the detection of child labour and protection of children from this practice

- A *Special protocol of labour inspection on protection of children from child labour*¹⁹ was adopted. This protocol aims to enable labour inspectors to detect and record child labour and prevent or eliminate any instances of abuse or non-compliance whilst removing children from any place of work where they are involved in child labour. The Labour Inspectorate coordinates its activities and collaborates with other stakeholders, such as CSWs and police (law enforcement departments), to ensure efficient, timely, and complete protection of the rights and interests of children exposed to this form of abuse.
- A *Checklist for labour inspectors on child labour* has been adopted.²⁰ This document is an integral part of formal records of the oversight of inspections that are conducted and allows labour inspectors to notify other appropriate government authorities and institutions of child labour they may uncover.
- An *Official instruction on conduct of labour inspection in the protection of children from child labour*²¹ has been produced. This instruction aims to enhance labour inspectors' knowledge of child labour, given the Labour Inspectorate's central role in overseeing the enforcement of labour law and controlling both formal and informal businesses.
- Also developed and adopted was an *Official instruction on conduct of centres for social work in protection of children from child labour*,²² including protection from the worst forms of child labour. This instruction is intended to significantly improve the protection of children from child labour.
- Changes have been proposed to the *General protocol on protection of children from abuse and neglect* to better and more comprehensively define obligations in inter-sectoral cooperation and facilitate the establishment of a framework for the implementation of a Special protocol intended to aid the Labour Inspectorate in protecting children from child labour.²³ A clearer definition of child labour has also been proposed.
- A draft *Special protocol for healthcare services to protect children from abuse and neglect* has also been prepared.

Challenges

Law enforcement related to child labour must be seen as a precondition for the protection of all children equally; in addition, significant challenges exist in the following areas:

1. Detection and reporting of criminal offences and misdemeanours, as well as efficiency of intersectoral cooperation. Serbian legislation provides for sanctions for all worst forms of child labour, but their detection and prosecution are not always efficient. One of the reasons for inefficiency in this area is the traditionally low level of intersectoral cooperation.
2. Monitoring of the implementation of protocols is insufficient. The mechanisms for monitoring and control of implementation of the *General Protocol on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect* as well as special (sectoral) protocols have not been developed, apart from the special protocol for police officers' conduct.
3. Lack of ban on corporal punishment of children. There is no general legal provision that explicitly bans corporal punishment of children which would either directly or indirectly contribute to the prevention of physical punishment as a means of coercing children to do work defined as child labour.²⁴

Changes to be achieved

1. Detection of criminal offences and misdemeanours is improved through enhanced intersectoral cooperation of the healthcare, education, social protection, employment and police sectors.
2. Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the *General Protocol on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect* and *Special Protocols* on protection of children from violence.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Available online at www.minrzs.gov.rs/lat/kontrolne-liste-ir.html (in Serbian).

²¹ Developed by CLEAR project.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Coalition for Child Rights' Monitoring in Serbia. 2017.

3. Provisions banning physical abuse of children should be incorporated into Serbian legislation.²⁵

2.3 National strategic framework to prevent, address and eliminate child labour

The comprehensive assessment of the strategic framework presented in the Status Report concludes that Serbia lacks a stand-alone strategy to eliminate child labour, whilst current strategies indirectly relevant to the elimination of child labour do not explicitly refer to it. An exception here is provided by the recently enacted *Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, especially women and children and protect its victims* ('Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking'): this document puts a special focus on protecting children victims through the development of specialized programmes aimed at safeguarding the best interests of the child.

The Status Report highlights the fact that in mid-2016 the Government adopted the *National Employment and Social Reform Programme (ESRP)*, which created a framework of comprehensive policies for future advancements in this area, but not specifically highlighting the issues of child labour.

Serbia's *Education Development Strategy to 2020* is also cited as a strategic document of exceptional significance. It refers to education as 'the foundation of the life and knowledge-based development of each individual, society and nation', with the following objectives to achieve this mission: education quality, coverage of the population at all levels of education, as well as relevance and efficiency of education. The strategy particularly highlights the importance of social care for children within pre-school education in 'preventing poverty and social exclusion through inclusive education'. It emphasizes the low pre-school coverage of Roma children and calls for their greater inclusion. Local authorities can play a key role in supporting the development of programmes in local pre-school institutions, in order to 'develop and foster an inclusive educational policy, render them flexible in their organization, apply interactive and active child-focused methods of education, persist in being focused on the exercise of the rights of the child, remain open towards the local community, organize activities for children from the local community that are not directly covered by pre-school education and closely work with parents and other social partners in the local community.'

The *Strategy for Roma Inclusion, 2016-2025*, emphasizes that their access to education entails the following: a) all Roma children should have access to high-quality education and not be discriminated against or segregated; b) Roma children should complete at least primary school; c) their access to high-quality early education should be broadened; d) fewer students should drop out of secondary education, and Roma students should be incentivized to continue secondary and tertiary education. This strategy recognizes children working in the streets and highlights the need for a strategic approach to addressing this issue. The Action Plan to implement the Strategy for the period 2017 to 2018, explicitly states the need to develop a number of activities aimed at preventing child labour and providing support programmes for children working in street situations,²⁶ but these are not sufficiently emphasized.

The *Strategy for Safety and Health Care in the Workplace, 2013-2017*²⁷ is assessed as a significant strategic document regarding child labour due to the issues it raises, including the need for more control over the informal economy, where safety (and health care) standards are not fully implemented. The accompanying action plan, does not provide for measures or policies that could contribute to eliminating child labour. The *Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination* (2013) is dedicated to abolish discrimination and improve the position of the vulnerable groups, including children. The general goal of the strategy in the area of child rights' protection is to abolish the discrimination of children through legal and regulatory reforms, as well as to abolish the discriminatory practices towards children, especially Roma children, refugee and IDP children and those who are victims of violence and exploitation.

The Status Report recommends that the existing strategic framework should emphasize objectives and activities designed to tackle child labour. This framework is currently made up of the ESRP; the Action Plan

²⁵ This proposal has been advanced by a focus group of civil society organizations.

²⁶ Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2017.

²⁷ www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/bezbednost/Strategija%20bezbednosti%20i%20zdravlja%20na%20radu%20u%20RS%20za%20period%20od%202013%20do%202017.pdf.

for negotiating Chapter 23 of the EU *acquis* (Judiciary and fundamental rights) which address the rights of children and minorities and programmes to improve the position of Roma which are of particular significance for eliminating child labour; and the Action Plan for Chapter 24 (Justice, freedom and security) containing planned measures to address human trafficking also relevant for addressing child labour.

In addition to the recently enacted *Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking* and its accompanying Action Plan, which devotes significant attention to children victims of human trafficking, two more national strategies are in the pipeline that are relevant for combating child labour. The first is the *Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence*, which could incorporate clear objectives for both preventing and eliminating child labour. Further, in 2018 it is expected that the *Social Protection Development Strategy* will come into being. It is particularly important that this strategy include objectives and activities relevant for the prevention and elimination of child labour. Taken together, these three strategies should create a framework for improving institutional and regulatory mechanisms to prevent and protect children from child labour in the years to come.

Challenges

- Hyper-production of national strategies and lack of implementation action plans which are sufficiently operational, as well as inadequate monitoring / reporting.
- No stand-alone strategy to prevent and address child labour is produced or planned.
- Existing strategies, indirectly relevant for child labour issues do not explicitly emphasize objectives that could contribute to the elimination of child labour.²⁸

Changes to be achieved

1. Objectives and measures to prevent and protect children from child labour should be incorporated either into strategies at the drafting stage or into periodical action plans that accompany current strategies.
 - 1.1 The strategy to protect children from violence should contain clear definitions of child labour and objectives/measures to prevent child labour and generate its elimination.
 - 1.2 A new social protection strategy should emphasize objectives and measures to prevent child labour and generate its elimination.
 - 1.3 The 2019-2020 Action Plan to implement the *Strategy for Roma Inclusion, 2016-2025*, should contain a number of measures to prevent child labour and generate its elimination.
2. Intersectoral cooperation to protect children from child labour should be clearly defined as a strategic objective and included as such in all strategies relevant for this area.

2.4 Institutional capacity

ILO Convention, No. 182, requires signatory countries to establish or designate appropriate national mechanisms to monitor the implementation of national-level provisions prohibiting or abolishing the worst forms of child labour. To date, Serbia has lacked a specific national-level body explicitly tasked with monitoring child labour and in particular its worst forms as well as coordinating data collection pertaining to child labour in Serbia. The mandate of the Serbian Government's Council for the Rights of the Child does include proposing measures which would align policies of the Government in areas pertaining to children and young people as well as monitor the exercise of children's rights and the protection of children as envisaged under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, no specific emphasis is given to child labour or any particular activity in this regard.

The Anti-Trafficking Council is an important coordinating body, whose mandate comprises work exploitation, forced work and the worst forms of child labour, but not all the issues which relate to child labour.

²⁸ Strategy of Education 2020; Strategy for Safety and Health care in the Workplace 2013-2017; National Employment and Social Reform Programme (ESRP).

The Centre for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking has emerged as a major stakeholder in terms of both its activities and the seriousness of its approach to the issue. Although the Centre has defined clear programmes and coordinates a large number of activities, an obstacle remains in terms of insufficient conditions for it to fulfil its operational capacity. Limited human and financial resources make identifying victims of human trafficking a challenging task. The Centre's shelter for victims of human trafficking is still incomplete and it is not envisaged that it will provide specialized shelter/support to protect children who are victims of trafficking.

The Serbian Government's Office of Human and Minority Rights is tasked with 'technical duties as required by the Government and line ministries that pertain to the protection and enhancement of human and minority rights; monitoring the alignment between Serbian legislation and international treaties and other international legal documents concerning human and minority rights, and instigate changes to national legislation (...)'.²⁹ From the aspect of the protection of human rights, this Office is involved in proposing measures that would further advance children's rights.

The National Anti-Trafficking Coordination Office at the Serbian Ministry of the Interior has a mandate to 'monitor, coordinate, supervise, and guide the implementation of measures and actions aimed at combating human trafficking'. This coordinating body plays a particularly important role in advancing activities defined under the *Serbian Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking*³⁰ (and its accompanying Action Plan). Although this body is a vital resource, its sphere of activity is limited as it does not have the capacity to assume a coordinating role for national policy on child labour by providing a holistic response.

The newly established Council to Combat Family Violence ought to monitor implementation of the Law on the Prevention of Family Violence and reduce any shortcomings and misunderstandings that could arise in practice. Its members are officers of government authorities and representatives of other organizations and institutions. As needed, the Council's membership can be expanded to include staff of scientific and other professional institutions and associations whose mandate/mission includes protection in cases of family violence. This Council could also prove to be a major asset in tackling child labour.

The Council for monitoring implementation of the UN Mechanism for Human Rights' Recommendations aims to carry out more efficient monitoring of the implementation of recommendations, improve inter-sectoral cooperation in their implementation, and enhance cooperation with the UN mechanisms. The Council for monitoring implementation of the action plan for the *Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination*, founded by the government in 2015 is tasked with monitoring progress of implementation of measures and activities, meeting deadlines and notifying challenges. In addition to these two councils, the Council for improving the position of Roma and implementation of Roma inclusion is also a valuable asset in combating child labour.

Two more national bodies deserve to be mentioned: The Parliamentary Committee on the Rights of the Child, mandated to ensure that Serbian legislation complies with international norms and standards and to monitor its implementation, and the Deputy Ombudsman for Children's Rights at the Ombudsman's Office.

The way in which these two entities are organized potentially prohibits them from having a coordinating role in the implementation of legal provisions to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Nevertheless, they could contribute their expertise in terms of cooperation and coordination with the aim of ensuring full application of ILO Convention No. 182.

Coordination at national level is a key precondition for preventing and eliminating child labour. A comprehensive approach to this issue is needed for: a) institutionalization of a broad-based national coordination effort; b) data collection, defining indicators and monitoring, and c) monitoring of implementation of strategies, action plans and policies relevant for the elimination of child labour. To achieve greater efficiency, the monitoring of national provisions on the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour should be established

29 See: www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs and the Serbian Government's Regulation on the Office of Human and Minority Rights (2012).

30 Information Booklet of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia, 2016.

within one of the existing councils or within those that are to be set up.³¹

3. Role of education, social protection and the labour market

Child labour occurs in an environment dominated by factors that are education-related (correlation between exposure to child labour and school attendance), social (corrosive social values, family dysfunction) and economic (poverty, labour market demand, current economic downturn, work that requires no formal qualifications, etc.). Thus, in addition to law enforcement, the judiciary and the police systems related to these three areas – education, social protection and the labour market – are crucial for the introduction and implementation of policies and measures designed to prevent and protect children from child labour.

3.1 Education

Education is indisputably important for eliminating child labour and its significance has been recognized in all international documents and conventions. Access to free, compulsory and high-quality education for all, with special emphasis on ensuring gender equality and creating appropriate preconditions for all children below the minimum age for employment to attend regular schooling are objectives that can reduce the exposure of children to child labour, and in particular its worst forms. Key measures for preventing child labour and addressing its consequences include removing barriers for access to education faced by children from particularly vulnerable groups; cutting the cost of education for children from poor families and creating a supportive school environment for all children, along with the development of plans and concrete mechanisms to prevent dropout.

Legislative framework

The 2009 Law on Foundation of Education is the umbrella law in this area and the key piece of legislation that sets out measures to improve the education and coverage of children from poor and vulnerable groups. Its measures are developed in greater detail in a number of byelaws and specific pieces of legislation.³² By introducing inclusive education – education for all children – this law has changed the paradigm of education in Serbia. Achieving the objective of such universal coverage, however, requires comprehensive support through a set of programmes and measures aimed at children from particularly vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, although the legislation provides the cornerstone for systemic support to ensure social inclusion of children at risk, cooperation between the various systems is needed, and many studies see this as the key challenge, in particular when it comes to their mutual alignment and coordination.³³

Besides advancing the quality of the education process and enhancing its outcomes and efficiency, long-term development objectives in education³⁴ also call for greater education coverage for all children.

The expectation is that, by 2020, all children of statutory attendance age (a minimum of 98 per cent of each birth cohort), regardless of their social, economic, health-related, regional, national, linguistic, ethnic, religious and other characteristics will be covered by high-quality primary education, with a drop-out rate of not more than 5 per cent;³⁵ a minimum of 95 per cent of those who graduate from primary school will go on to attend secondary school.³⁶ To achieve these objectives, the education strategy envisages mechanisms to increase both reach and measures to prevent and monitor student dropout in pre-university education. These include a major increase in the inclusion of children from vulnerable groups in pre-school institutions; development of various support programmes for vulnerable groups of children and students; increased systemic financial and human resource planning at the regional level; implementation of methodologies to track and measure early

31 The Action plan for negotiation of Chapter 23 envisages the setting up of the Council for Monitoring and Advancement of Criminal Procedures and Sanctions against Minors.

32 Law on Pre-School Education; Law on Primary Education; Law on Secondary Education; and Law on Student Welfare.

33 UNICEF, SIPRU. 2014.

34 Serbia Education Development Strategy to 2020, available online at: www.mpn.gov.rs/strategije-2020/?lng=lat (in Serbian).

35 Currently, 93 per cent of each birth cohort will graduate from primary school.

36 Currently, 88 per cent of each birth cohort graduating from primary school will go on to enrol in a secondary school.

leavers of the education system through a unified database; creation of a special team at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development to assess the impact of these and other similar measures.

A Law on Dual Education has been drafted. This concept applied to secondary education will introduce learning through work to develop competencies needed by the labour market. No safeguards against child labour have been incorporated into the proposed law.

Programmes of relevance for preventing child labour

Compulsory, free-of-charge primary education and preparatory pre-school programmes are guaranteed under the Serbian Constitution, Law on Foundation of Education, the Education Strategy and other legislation that govern education.

Pre-school education is wholly within the remit of local authorities. Local governments are expected to ensure that pre-schools are open to all and that conditions are in place for the early development of children; in doing so they provide a strong initial impetus for preventing dropout.

Local authorities are required to fund the reimbursement of costs of attending pre-school for children from families at risk of poverty.³⁷ Local governments can also elect to finance so-called diversified programmes at pre-school institutions: these are particularly significant for the early development of children from vulnerable groups, and as such, for preventing dropout. These programmes are however available in only one-third of all local self-governances (LSGs).³⁸

Local governments also play a key role in providing support for vulnerable families with children through free-of-charge textbooks, school meals and other types of in-kind assistance. This includes transportation for all children living within a particular area from the pre-school institution or school. LSGs also finance a portion of the costs incurred by schools; cultural and sports activities; programmes that provide protection from violence, abuse, and neglect; environmental protection; and other programmes as agreed between the school and the LSG. The role of the LSG in financing and providing these programmes for vulnerable families is particularly significant, but given the limited/modest local budgets, such support is primarily reaching families living in extreme poverty.³⁹

To increase the availability and inclusiveness of education at the national level support is provided for programmes to increase coverage of and promote pre-school attendance, foster inclusive education and prevent dropout (and lower enrolment rates) of Roma children.⁴⁰ The following measures have proven highly useful in practice, especially for Roma children: scholarships, mentoring for scholarship beneficiaries, and provision of pedagogical assistants.

Pedagogical assistants constitute a major support mechanism for children and students from vulnerable groups. A total of 175 pedagogical assistants have been deployed in primary schools and pre-schools throughout Serbia. An accredited training programme prepares pedagogical assistants to take on four roles: supporting children and students from vulnerable groups; supporting teachers, pre-school teachers, and educational specialists; working with parents and families; and working with the broader local community. Evaluations performed to date indicate that pedagogical assistants have greatly contributed to the successful inclusion and progress of children who require additional support, especially Roma students, and have ensured that these students are able to remain within the education system.

37 Law on Financial Assistance to Families with Children, Article 9.

38 Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2017, p. 29.

39 Centre for Social Policy. 2017.

40 Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2015.

Exposure to child labour can also be limited by efforts made at the national level to increase the relevance of the education system related to labour market demand. Key initiatives include the professional orientation programme, replacement of current qualifications for secondary vocational education with a modernized equivalent, as well as career guidance and counselling, together with activities that contribute to overcoming discrepancies between education and labour market demand.

Key challenges

There are two primary challenges in providing education for all children: increasing coverage and preventing dropout. Roma children who live in Roma settlements are particularly at risk of leaving the education system early. Data show that, for instance, the share of children from Roma communities aged between 3 and 5 included in pre-school education is very low, standing below 6 per cent.⁴¹ As few as 69 per cent of children from Roma settlements aged 6 (primary school enrolment age) actually enter the first grade of primary school (as opposed to 97 per cent for children from the general child population). Again, as many as 15 per cent of children from Roma settlements aged 6 to 13 remain outside of the education system, as opposed to the overall Serbian average of 1 per cent.⁴²

A significant number of education indicators⁴³ measure coverage and dropout; these include coverage rate, drop-out rate, continuation rate and completion rate. These data are aggregated by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, which calculates drop-out rates for primary and secondary schools for each local authority. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has been developing education indicators as part of its Dositej information system, which is yet to become completely operational. The system could make a major contribution to better understanding school dropout at both the national and local levels. Moreover, the introduction of online class registries⁴⁴ will prove especially important for children from families who migrate in search of seasonal work, as it will allow information to be tracked regardless of the actual school attended by a child.

Research has shown that dropout in primary education is mainly due to families migrating to perform seasonal work (in other municipalities) and/or emigrating abroad.⁴⁵ Early marriage is a third key reason for dropping out which is more common in secondary education.⁴⁶ According to some estimates, about 6,000 children drop out of regular education in the course of any given academic year; most do so between the fifth and sixth grade of primary school.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Education data show that between 10 and 15 per cent of children from any given birth cohort either do not enrol in primary school or fail to graduate.⁴⁸

Ensuring systemic monitoring of school dropout is essential, but the relevant mechanisms are yet to be put into place. To date, Serbia has not established either:

- a uniform methodology to monitor dropout, or
- systemic actions to implement dropout prevention measures.

A system of this kind would also be important for monitoring dropout at local level. One obstacle is the insufficiently clear role of LSGs in preventing dropout and their responsibilities which are essentially technical in this regard. This is particularly true when it comes to preventing 'enrolment dropout',⁴⁹ the practice of not enrolling children into pre-school preparatory programmes (PPPs) or primary school. LSGs are legally obliged

41 UNICEF. 2014, p. 148.

42 Ibid. p. 189.

43 National Educational Council of the Republic of Serbia. 2011.

44 www.mps.gov.rs/predstavljjen-projekat-eprosveta-i-servis-esdnevnik (in Serbian).

45 Center for Educational Policies. 2016.; UNICEF, SIPRU. 2014.; Pavlović Babić, D. et al. 2013.

46 Center for Educational Policies. 2016.

47 Ibid.

48 Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, 2012.

49 This term is used in the Serbia Education Development Strategy to 2020, p. 29.

to maintain records of children who reach the age of enrolment in PPPs and primary school, and to notify schools, pre-schools, and parents. However, in practice this process does not work exactly as such.⁵⁰ If a child has not enrolled or does not regularly attend a PPP or primary school, the Law on Foundation of Education obligates the LSGs to bring misdemeanour charges against parents or legal guardians, which is apparently quite a rare practice⁵¹ This role given to local governments by laws governing education is technical rather than substantive, regardless of whether it is performed successfully or not at all.⁵²

Clearly, children at risk from dropout come from the poorest groups of the population; children from substandard settlements are particularly vulnerable. These children are also at high risk of child labour. The following issues need to be addressed in order to minimize the risk of child labour:

1. Establishment of a uniform methodology to monitor pre-school and primary education coverage and dropout (at national level).
2. Systemic measures undertaken to prevent school dropout (at both national and local level).
3. Monitored dropout by children from poor and Roma families at the level of LSGs (including enrolment dropout).
4. Introduction of an early warning system to prevent dropout from pre-school and primary school of children from poor and Roma families at LSGs level.
 - 4.1 Prioritize the introduction of online class registers at primary schools in local communities characterized by seasonal (work) migrations.
5. Implementation of programmes that reduce the cost of transportation for children from particularly vulnerable groups in all local communities (at local level).
6. Implementation of support programmes for pupils from vulnerable groups through extra-curricular activities and extended school day.
7. Introduction of dual secondary education.

Changes to be achieved

1. A uniform methodology established at the national level to monitor pre-school and primary education coverage and dropout.
2. Systemic actions to implement measures to prevent dropout defined at national and local level.
 - 2.1 Implementation of measures to prevent dropout monitored.
3. An early warning system to prevent dropout of children from poor and Roma families established (including defined roles of local self-governments, schools, and CSWs and activated available multi-sectoral mechanisms).
 - 3.1 Implementation of the early warning system to prevent dropout from pre-school and primary school at local level to be monitored.
 - 3.2 Online class registers introduced at primary schools in LSGs in local communities characterized by seasonal (work) migrations. Intensified implementation of programmes that reduce the cost of education for children from particularly vulnerable groups in all local communities.
4. Intensified implementation of support programmes for pupils from vulnerable groups through extra-curricular activities and extended school day.
5. All potential risks of child labour in dual education identified.

50 CSP. 2017.

51 UNICEF, SIPRU. 2014. op. cit.

52 Ibid.

3.2 Social protection

Legislative and institutional framework

The mandate of the social protection system includes the detection, prevention and elimination of child labour including its worst forms. Particular emphasis is placed on the protection of vulnerable groups of children: children from poor families, children from dysfunctional families, children without parental care, children with developmental difficulties, children in conflict with the law, parents, and the community, children in street situations⁵³ and migrant children.

Article 14 of the Law on Social Protection stipulates that social protection is extended to children in danger of becoming victims or who are victims of neglect, violence, and exploitation, victims of human trafficking or who are unaccompanied foreign nationals or stateless persons.

This law defines social protection as an ‘organized social activity performed in the public interest that is aimed at providing assistance to and empowerment of individuals and families to allow them to live independent and productive lives in society’ – as well as the prevention of social exclusion.

This area is also governed by the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children, and the Family Act. Beneficiaries receive social protection through financial and in-kind support, social welfare services and family legal protection.

Centres for Social Work are the key institution of the social protection system at local level. They are tasked with providing social assistance in the narrowest sense (disbursing cash benefits, primarily for poorer individuals and referring beneficiaries for community social welfare services and residential institutions) as well as family legal protection for children (and adults), administered within the legal guardian mandate.

There had been no procedural instructions, guidelines or rulebooks applicable to the CSWs mandate, related to mandatory procedure of assessing the risk of child labour, but nevertheless, with the adoption of the new *Official Instruction on Conduct of Centres for Social Work in protection of children from child labour*, that obstacle has been removed.

Provided that mandatory procedures are introduced to detect child labour and protect children from such exploitation, the social protection system surely allows the CSWs to react in detecting, preventing and combating child labour.

Relevant programmes for the prevention and elimination of child labour

Social and family legal protection measures can significantly reduce the risk of child labour, but effective protection is possible only with the cooperation of all the systems that are relevant for the protection of children, prevention, and elimination of child labour at both national and local level.

Cash benefits for families with children: the key cash benefit programmes offer financial social assistance, child allowance and one-off cash assistance.

One can always question the sufficiency of cash benefits and their ability to address the consequences of poverty – including child labour. Many researches indicate that the amounts of cash benefits are not even enough to allow beneficiaries to reach the absolute poverty line. On the other hand, this issue raises numerous questions: whether the state can allocate more money for social assistance; how reliable the methodologies and procedures used to determine eligibility are; and whether generous cash payments can act as disincentives to beneficiaries who are fit to work from actually finding jobs.

53 General comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations, published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, defines ‘children in street situations’ as: (a) children who depend on the streets to live and/or work, whether alone, with peers or with family; and (b) a wider population of children who have formed strong connections with public spaces and for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities.

Social welfare services: the following social welfare services are particularly important in protecting children from child labour, including its worst forms: assessment and planning; shelters (including shelters for victims of human trafficking); drop-in services for children; intensified family support services (including family outreach workers and other outreach services); supported living; day care services; and residential facilities.

Byelaws stipulating minimum standards for social welfare services do not define any standards for early detection/warning of child labour or protection of children from such abuse.

Only victims of human trafficking are explicitly listed as eligible for support in terms of living services and shelters. However, abused and neglected children may benefit from a number of social welfare services, including residential facilities offering specialized programmes to protect children from abuse and neglect.

According to the findings of the study that mapped the social welfare services under the mandate of LSGs⁵⁴ in 2015 some 2,000 beneficiaries aged 0 to 17 used shelters, drop-in services and day care services for children in conflict with the law. However, these services remain underdeveloped and are only available in major cities.

The Centre for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking has emerged as a major stakeholder in terms of both its activities and the seriousness of its approach to the issue. Nevertheless, problems remain in securing the conditions that would allow it to operate according to its full capacity. The Centre's shelter for victims of human trafficking is neither functional, nor does it envisage to provide specialized support for children.

Specific programmes at local community level are important for detecting children at risk of child labour. This primarily involves existing mobile teams for Roma inclusion, whose activities range from identifying children not covered by healthcare, education or any form of social protection, to providing specialized support for children from Roma communities, children in street situations, school dropouts, etc. These teams are generally project-based; such multi-sectoral/sectoral services are yet to be fully integrated into the system.

Family legal protection: there are a number of legal measures that are relevant for protection from child labour. These include preventive and corrective measures including the follow up of parental rights, legal guardianship, or foster care, and the authority to completely or partially remove parental rights. These measures can prove highly significant for preventing child labour and its worst forms, but to ensure their complete effectiveness focus must be placed on the risk of or exposure to child labour.

Key challenges in the social protection system

In addition to the overall challenge of limited funds available for social protection in general, and for cash benefits for families with children in particular, there are a number of other issues to consider.

a) Monitoring child labour through research findings and a stable system to track relevant data

There is no specific requirement to track the number of children exposed to child labour as part of the monitoring carried out in the social protection system. That said, the system does track the number of children who are victims of human trafficking and children exposed to abuse and neglect. However, CSWs do not provide information on child labour as part of their regular reporting requirements to the Institute for Social Protection (which consolidates the reports). Monitoring child labour through collection of relevant data would raise awareness of this issue within the system and ought to be accorded particular attention.

No specific research on child labour from the social protection aspect has been conducted. Similarly, there is no indication that research has been conducted from any other perspective that can be used to inform changes to social protection practice.

⁵⁴ Matković, Stranjaković. 2016.

b) Lack of focus on protecting children from child labour. This applies equally to children living with their families and those in residential institutions, foster care and children beneficiaries of social welfare services, with a special emphasis on the plight of girls

Like other systems, social protection is insufficiently sensitized to the need to prevent child labour, partly due to the lack of awareness of child labour issues amongst both professionals and the broader public. Differences exist as to the extent and depth of the perceived problem. The public commonly sees work performed by children in the family or their immediate environment as part of growing up and a means to acquire skills, and in general as promoting growth and maturity; there is no clear distinction as to when work performed by children is believed to be detrimental to their development. These views contribute to the lack of efficient mechanisms to prevent and eliminate child labour which add to the problem. Furthermore, they are partly the reason for the absence of precise social welfare procedures addressing child labour and contribute to the lack of practice in preventing it.

c) Lack of minimum standards to protect children from child labour, including early risk detection procedures

No procedures are in place in the social protection system that would enable professionals to detect and prevent child labour, either early or otherwise. This applies equally to children living with their families and those in residential institutions, foster care, and beneficiaries of the social welfare services in the community.

The key challenge for early detection is a lack of procedures to assess the risk of child labour when determining the eligibility for cash benefits for families with children. Families who are eligible for cash benefits should be assessed from the perspective of child labour risk. If such a risk is assessed, these families should automatically be placed under the standard protection procedures applied by the CSW department for child protection. Although this assessment is in line with current rulebooks, it is more the exception than a rule carried out by CSWs.

Eligibility for child allowance is assessed by LSGs' department for child allowances. New procedures to allow early detection of child labour risk would have to be introduced into this process, possibly by means of protocols for cooperation between these departments and CSWs.

There did not used to be any procedural instructions, guidelines or rulebooks applicable to the CSWs mandate, which were related to a mandatory procedure for assessing child labour risk, but the adoption of the new *Official instruction for centres for social work in protecting children from child labour* removed that obstacle.

The CLEAR Project has developed this official instruction which includes the worst forms of child labour. This document and training for its implementation may make a significant contribution to protecting children from child labour.

Byelaws that govern minimum standards for social assistance services do not define any standards for protecting children from child labour. *The Rulebook on Standards for the Provision of Social Welfare Services* would have to define criteria for work performed by children whether they reside in social care institutions or receive a community social welfare service. This would address the maximum number of hours children are allowed to work daily, a list of prohibited activities, as well as remuneration for allowed work performed by children and for the production of goods for sale.

The same standards would also have to be introduced into the rulebook which covers children in foster care.

d) Training for professionals in protecting children from child labour

The social protection system envisages continuing professional education of social protection staff, which is mandatory for licensing and licence extension. Accredited training programmes that carry a certain number of points for licensing or licence extension, however, do not include curricula on the protection of children from child labour. One option for introducing change would be to publish targeted tenders for the accreditation of training programmes as part of the social protection system, thus motivating individuals/organizations who are active in children's rights to develop such training curricula in order to apply for accreditation.

Training in all newly enacted strategies, protocols, and instructions relevant for the protection of children from child labour would significantly improve the capacity in the area of social protection.

e) Development of social assistance services in the community aimed at children at risk or (potential) victims of child labour

Under the Law on Social Protection, social welfare services in the community are mainly the responsibility of LSGs. Very few of these are aimed so as to protect children from child labour.

Existing services ought to cover as many children as possible who are at risk of child labour and much greater effort must be invested into developing these services in the community. First and foremost, drop-in shelters for children must be opened in all big cities (apart from Belgrade and Novi Sad currently). Secondly, intensive family support services (family outreach workers and other outreach services) must be introduced in as many communities as possible and made sustainable; these services would in particular be focused on addressing child labour.

The intensive family support services, envisaged by the law and piloted, aim to provide support to children of families where their rights were neglected through abuse, violence, child labour or otherwise, but where child separation is not in the best interest of the child. The focus of these support services is on the enhancement of parental skills and inclusion of parents and children in community-based services. The draft rulebook has been prepared in this sense, defining standards for these services.

At the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the Council for Child Rights, 115 mobile teams have been formed within the CSWs with a focus on the protection of children in street situations. The main aim is to implement holistic social care for these children as well as family legal protection for them.⁵⁵ The capacities of these mobile teams should also be increased and protection from child labour included. It is important to achieve sustainability of these services while simultaneously removing barriers that could hinder the adequate response of these teams.

The requirement of noting any suspicion of child labour and the immediate notification of the CSWs should be introduced into the reports of community nurse visits, health mediators and multi-sectoral mobile teams dedicated to Roma inclusion.

In addition, the transfers that are earmarked for developing community-based services at local level could be used for funding the development of services which would be relevant for preventing child labour.

It is particularly important to ensure that the Centre for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking be rendered fully operational and firmly functional.

Changes to be achieved

- 1.** Greater coverage by cash benefits of the poorest families with children, including Roma children from substandard Roma settlements.
 - 1.1** The children from vulnerable groups, beneficiaries of the child allowance are area-based targeted; this allowance should be made as a conditional transfer (with its primary objective to promote regular school attendance, as a universal, non-means-tested programme).⁵⁶
- 2.** A record-keeping system/data base established to give evidence as to the extent of child labour distribution and allow for monitoring of implemented measures.

⁵⁵ <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/general-comment-no-21-on-children-in-street-situations-adopted>

⁵⁶ Centre for Social Policy. 2017.

3. Risk assessment of child labour and protection measures defined as the minimum functional standards for developed detection as well as protection procedures applicable to particularly vulnerable and at-risk children.
 - 3.1 The new *Instruction for Centres for Social Work* for protecting children from child labour is adopted and training for its implementation is organized.
 - 3.2 A new Instruction to be required as mandatory for CSWs to assess risk related to child labour for families with children who are entitled to cash benefits, and families at risk included in the CSW's protection procedures provided by the CSW Child Protection department/team.
 - 3.3 Protocols between LSGs department for child allowances and CSWs implemented, requiring the notification of CSWs of any risk related to child labour of families applying for child allowance.
 - 3.4 The Rulebook on Standards for the Social Welfare Services has defined criteria for work performed by children in residential institutions and who receive social welfare services: the maximum threshold for daily hours worked by a child; list of prohibited activities; remuneration for allowable work performed by children; and remuneration for allowed work performed by children and for production of goods for sale. The same standards also introduced in the rulebook for children in foster care.
4. Training for social protection staff is provided for the detection of child labour risk and protection of children.
 - 4.1 A targeted tender is published for accreditation of training programmes in child labour, including its worst forms, as part of the social protection system.
 - 4.2 Training is offered in all newly enacted strategies, protocols and instructions relevant for preventing child labour.
5. Social welfare services relevant for preventing and protecting children from child labour are improved.
 - 5.1 Earmarked transfers for the development of social welfare services are targeted for the improvement of services that address child labour; the optimum level of development and availability of services are estimated.⁵⁷
 - 5.2 Drop-in services for children are established and financed in big cities.
 - 5.3 Intensive family outreach services (family outreach workers and other outreach services) are established in all major local communities.
 - 5.4 Sustainability and development of the Centre for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking is ensured.

3.3 Labour market

Legislative framework

The Labour Law and its byelaws broadly regulate the situation of children in the labour market. Especially important is the *Regulation on Hazardous Labour of Children*, which provides a list of jobs that children should not undertake on any account. The Regulation will enter into effect on 1 January 2018 and is complementary to the *Rulebook on Preventive Measures for Safe and Healthy Work by Young People*.

The Labour Law stipulates the minimum threshold for admission to employment, the conditions for employing children and protective measures. Other labour legislation also relevant for child labour includes: the Law on the prevention of harassment at the workplace, the Law on Safety and Health at Work and the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance.

Labour inspection is primarily responsible for identifying and preventing child labour (by assessing compliance with mandatory provisions related to child labour).

A child labour checklist for inspection has been adopted; it allows labour inspectors to notify suspicions of child labour to other institutions.

⁵⁷ Matković, Stranjaković. 2016.

Programmes relevant for preventing and eliminating child labour

Active employment policy measures come under the mandate of the National Employment Service (NES); in addition, private employment agencies are regulated by the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance.

The NES can play a role in eliminating child labour by promoting the employment of the most vulnerable groups of adults, primarily those who receive cash benefits through the social welfare system. The Law on Social Protection (Article 86) stipulates the cooperation between the NES branches and CSWs and defines modalities according to which the two agencies cooperate. CSWs must notify local NES branches of any financial social assistance approved for unemployed beneficiaries, whilst the NES has to inform CSWs of changes to each beneficiary's employment status.

A Youth Employment Fund was set up at the NES in 2009; this fund receives financial support from a variety of sources. Its objective is to help young people to acquire knowledge and skills and get a job. The Fund offers a variety of programmes, which often entail a mix of training and subsidies to the employer, which has proven to give the best results.

Moreover, under the NES, an Information and Professional Advisory Centre operates by providing information about employment/jobs and training. It helps beneficiaries assess their personal capacities and professional interests, offers internet access to facilitate job-seeking, assists beneficiaries with career planning and makes available printed and online versions of the NES's publications. However, it seems that only a small number of young people (vulnerable or at risk) are aware of these programmes, and even fewer have actually used these services. There are no data to indicate that even a single child removed from illicit labour has used the services of this Centre.

Challenges

This brief overview of the employment and labour market programmes leads to the conclusion that the numerous measures that have been put into effect have remained insufficient to protect children from child labour. There are many challenges, of which the main one is related to identifying work performed by children and in particular child labour. Emphasis should also be placed on protecting children from child labour and addressing the lack of focus on child labour in social dialogue.

1. Identifying child labour

- 1.1 Identification of child labour and indicators for monitoring the phenomenon are not developed to the extent that would make them easily applicable in practice.
- 1.2 The Labour Inspectorate is not sufficiently equipped: it is understaffed, insufficiently equipped and lacking in specialized training. The Labour Inspectorate is particularly under-prepared to tackle the informal economy.
- 1.3 Neither the Labour Inspectorate nor any other inspection service has a clear mandate to detect undeclared work in the informal economy, in particular agricultural work performed by children (including seasonal work).

2. Instruments for action to protect children from child labour

- 2.1 A *Special protocol for the labour inspectorate to protect children from child labour* has been drafted but has not yet been enacted. This protocol aims to allow inspectors to detect and record child labour, to prevent abuse or non-compliance and address removal of children from any place of work where they are involved in child labour. The Labour inspection coordinates its activities and cooperates with other systems, such as CSWs and law enforcement/police, to ensure efficient, timely and complete protection of the rights and interests of children exposed to child labour.
- 2.2 The list of hazardous work is not accompanied by additional instruments; a periodic review of this list in consultation with social partners needs to be done.

3. Social dialogue

- 3.1 Trade unions and employers' associations are poorly prepared to discuss the elimination of child labour.

Changes to be achieved

General measures ought to be put into place to improve the functioning of the labour market and ensure greater employment, particularly of vulnerable adults and young people fit for work. Transition from education to employment should be facilitated and an environment free of child labour promoted. In addition, the following specific changes should be achieved:

1. Capacities of labour inspection are enhanced by a sufficient number of inspectors, technical equipment and provision of specialized training in how to uncover child labour and protect children.
2. Indicators for monitoring child labour are defined.
3. The labour inspectorate is given a clear mandate to uncover child labour in the informal economy, in particular child labour in agriculture.
4. The Special protocol for the labour inspectorate to protect children from child labour is enacted.
5. Regular, periodic review of the list of activities hazardous to children is carried out.

3.4 Social partners, civil society organizations, and the media

Trade unions and employers' associations can play a major role and make a highly significant contribution to preventing child labour. Trade unions can have a two-fold influence on employers' associations: on the one hand, they can directly motivate their membership to allow labour inspectors greater access to the workplace, which would help to prevent and discover child labour. On the other hand, their advocacy activities for preventing and eliminating child labour⁵⁸ especially regarding work in hazardous circumstances, make trade unions a pivotal ally in combating child labour. Trade unions in Serbia are a feature of the public sector, which somehow limits their range of influence. The Status Report seems to suggest that, although there is willingness to tackle this issue, trade unions are not sufficiently active in addressing child labour – which represents the most significant challenge. The importance of trade unions' lobbying and advocating for the prohibition of hazardous work by children is vital, as is their influence on the membership to enhance employment standards.⁵⁹ The value in eliminating child labour should also be promoted by trade unions.

Civil society organizations in Serbia are active in preventing and combating child labour primarily by providing services and pursuing advocacy activities for children's rights/protection. Social welfare services for children who may be victims of child labour, such as shelters, drop-in services, family outreach workers, day care centres for children in conflict with the law, etc. are particularly underdeveloped.⁶⁰ Lack of sustainable funding is the key obstacle faced by providers of these services from the non-governmental sector, even if licensed. Non-governmental organizations for child rights face similar difficulties related to sustainable funding.⁶¹ Moreover, true partnership between the state and the non-state/civil sector is often lacking at both national and local levels.

One example of good cooperation between government and civil society organizations is the recently launched online campaign against family violence, under the motto *Isključi nasilje* ('Turn the Violence Off'). This campaign is being undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Justice and four civil society organizations.⁶²

The media have not been particularly constructive when covering issues of child labour, including its worst forms. Their reporting is hampered by a lack of awareness of the problem and of children's rights in general. To become allies, the media must be sensitized and educated.

58 ILO. 2002.

59 ILO. 2017.

60 Matković, Stranjaković. 2016.

61 ILO. 2017. op. cit.

62 www.mpravde.gov.rs/vest/13475/ministarstvo-pravde-pokrenulo-je-internet-kampanju-iskljuci-nasilje-sa-porukom-da-se-nasilje-ne-tolerise.php (in Serbian).

Changes to be achieved

1. Trade unions involved to a greater extent and more systematically in addressing issues of child labour through tripartite dialogue and the promotion of values relevant to child labour elimination.
2. Lasting partnerships between government institutions and civil society organizations set; institutionalized cooperation should be established upon agreement of possible models for cooperation.
3. Media representatives involved to a greater extent in training for professionals from relevant sectors at both local and national levels.

4. Financial constraints

1. *The crucial financial challenge* is the relatively low amount of money allocated to support poor families with children. Financial social assistance is inadequate, both when compared with social welfare in other countries and when basic needs are considered. Serbia ranks above Bulgaria and Romania for financial social assistance; in 2012, these two countries disbursed the lowest portion of cash assistance in Europe. Depending on the type and characteristics of beneficiaries, monthly amounts of financial social assistance should increase by between 33 and 45 per cent to reach the poverty threshold.⁶³

There are two constraints⁶⁴ that affect financial social assistance and child allowance:

- If adequacy of these programmes is assessed from the perspective of work and employment, all types of families with two or more children receive cumulative cash benefits approaching the minimum wage, and
- Financial assistance for individuals unable to work amounts to nearly 90 per cent of the farmers' pension, which is the natural limit for any further increase in financial social assistance.

2. *Hiring restrictions in the public sector* under the Government's fiscal consolidation measures⁶⁵ are yet another challenge to the development of new, specialized or additional services and support programmes for children from families at risk. These restrictions were first introduced in 2015 and have since been extended annually; they are to remain in effect until the end of 2018. In addition, the Law on the Maximum Number of Employees in the Public Sector, enacted in 2016, limits the number of public-sector employees and introduces deadlines for downsizing to pre-determined levels.

3. *Limited funds earmarked by LSGs for social welfare services within their mandate* can also be considered a financial constraint; this has hindered the development of these services and limited their coverage. According to findings presented in *Mapping Social Care Services within the Mandate of Local Governments in the Republic of Serbia*, in 2015 total expenditures for social assistance services amounted to a total of RSD 2.6 billion or 0.065 per cent of GDP. These expenditures were insignificantly low, more than twice as low as expenditures for residential and foster care, which represent the greatest share of total consolidated expenditure for social welfare services in Serbia of RSD 5.8 billion (approximately 0.14 per cent of GDP) in 2015. Per capita expenditures for social welfare services amounted to a mere RSD 280, and were even lower in more than two-thirds of cities, towns, and municipalities.⁶⁶

Total expenditures for social assistance services relevant for the protection from and prevention of child labour amounted to slightly under RSD 300 million in 2015, accounting for about 11 per cent of all expenditure for social assistance services.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, this constraint can be bypassed by using transfers specifically earmarked for the development of shelters/drop-in services, family advisory services, and day care facilities for children in conflict with the law.

63 Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2014.

64 Ibid.

65 Amendments to the Budget System Law (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 108/2013).

66 Matković, Stranjaković. 2016. op. cit.

67 Source: Database used in research for the report Matković, Stranjaković. 2016.

5. Challenges and changes needed for coordination, inter-sectoral cooperation, data collection and monitoring, staff capacity-building and development of services

Social development – in terms of both economic growth and better social security – is bound to promote the protection of children from child labour as well as its prevention. Overall social development, poverty reduction, empowerment of families, increased access to employment, a declining informal economy, addressing discrimination and increased social security will, in the long run, have a positive impact on eliminating the root causes of child labour at the macro level.

The development of the *Roadmap* to address child labour takes the macro environment into account, but the proposed measures first and foremost relate to concrete activities in areas that are relevant for tackling child labour. Enhancements to the system for the prevention of child labour and protection of children ought to be achieved through changes within the existing macro environment and the legislative and strategic context framework already set, that can guide other sectors (judiciary, law enforcement, education, social protection and labour market) in this area, with a focus on vulnerable groups of children and girls.

In attempting to address specific challenges in education, social protection and the labour market, the key challenges generally lie in the following areas:

1. Coordination and prioritization of activities at national level.
2. Inter-sectoral cooperation and partnership-building.
3. Data collection and monitoring.
4. Training in the protection of children from child labour for professionals and representatives of civil society, trade unions, and employers.
5. Development of community-based services.

5.1 Coordination of activities at national level

Serbia currently lacks a national-level mechanism for monitoring child labour, including its worst forms. Such a mechanism would be required to coordinate policies and collect all relevant data on child labour in Serbia and include provisions at national-level to monitor and implement measures that would prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

ILO Convention No. 182 requires signatory countries to establish or designate appropriate national mechanisms to monitor the implementation of national-level provisions prohibiting or abolishing the worst forms of child labour.

Some proposals foresee that the Council for the Rights of the Child can be mandated to monitor child labour and coordinate effective actions aimed at preventing and eliminating child labour.

These proposals are based on the Council's current mandate, which includes:

- initiating measures to align policies of the Serbian Government in areas relevant to children and young people, and
- monitoring the exercise of children's rights and the protection of children as envisaged under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Changes to be achieved

- A coordinating mechanism at national level established for the purpose of coordinating the collection of all relevant data and monitoring the implementation of strategic documents which address the prevention and protection of children from child labour. For achieving greater efficiency, an existing national Council for Child Rights could be mandated to carry out this coordination. Additionally, it is important to coordinate and monitor national provisions for the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

5.2 Intersectoral cooperation and partnership building

Intersectoral cooperation and partnership-building are preconditions for the effective operation of a system to prevent and eliminate child labour.

The former is most commonly established by cooperation protocols between two or more sectors, or general protocols for the protection of a particular group of children. The *General Protocol on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect*⁶⁸ defines areas for cooperation and stipulates cooperation procedures with roles and responsibilities attributed to different actors.

In addition to the General Protocol, a key instrument in protecting children from child labour, a *Special protocol for the labour inspectorate to protect children from child labour* has also been drafted. This document defines certain elements of inter-sectoral cooperation.

Inter-sectoral cooperation in this area can be expected to improve with the adoption of a new strategy to protect children from violence, provided this document give particular attention to preventing and eliminating child labour. Also important in this regard are the new *Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking* and the above-mentioned *Special protocol for the labour inspectorate to protect children from child labour*. Cooperation can also be promoted through training for all stakeholders according to common curricula which would address the different interpretations of roles and procedures between sectors.

The establishment by government institutions of partnerships with civil society, trade unions, socially responsible businesses, employer associations, and the media is crucial in preventing and eliminating child labour.

The adoption of a model for cooperation in preventing and eliminating child labour involving all stakeholders, as defined in the Action Plan to implement the above *Strategy to prevent and combat trafficking*, would ensure a systemic solution for strengthening partnerships.

Changes to be achieved

- Intersectoral cooperation and communication must be mandatory, and the roles of each system must be clearly stated in general protocols and action plans that accompany strategies for the protection of children and young people; and the *Special protocol for the labour inspectorate* set up to protect children from child labour.
- Requirement established that any suspicion related to child labour be registered in medical reports of community nursing care providers and in reports of local health mediators as well as of mobile teams for Roma inclusion — and forwarded immediately to CSWs.
- Models of cooperation between government/sector institutions and the civil society, trade unions, socially responsible businesses, employer associations and the media to be developed to promote prevention and elimination of child labour.

5.3 Data collection and monitoring

Broader professional consensus is required to create a framework for monitoring child labour. The most appropriate method for data collecting must assess the number of exposed children and methodologically precise indicators must be developed across all systems, including the judiciary, law enforcement, education, social protection, and the labour market. This is particularly significant for developing a strategic approach in this area. Moreover, targeted and more in-depth research is needed to analyse child labour and its particular aspects.

68 A new strategy to protect children from violence is currently under development. A new General Protocol to protect children from violence is planned to be developed as part of this effort; it will call for a clearer definition of child labour and make room for greater involvement of Labour Inspection.

Changes to be achieved

- A framework created for data collection and defining indicators for monitoring child labour.
- A national-level institution given a clear mandate to coordinate the collection and monitoring of child labour data.
- The Serbian Office of Republic Statistics involved in defining how these data are consolidated and published.

5.4 Capacity building of sector professionals, and representatives of civil society and trade unions _____

Specialized training is lacking across all areas relevant for the protection of children from child labour. Newly adopted strategies, general and special protocols as well as legislation are all rarely accompanied by training for practitioners in how to apply them. Even when training in a particular process is offered, it is generally aimed at staff of only one system, rather than employees of all systems who would either be required to cooperate or otherwise involved in that process. To date, this limited inclusion of other systems in such training has proven inadequate.

Training is required to create a joint reference framework for all stakeholders active in protecting children from child labour and to avoid any misunderstanding surrounding the responsibilities, roles and procedures relevant to each system in this process.

Changes to be achieved

- Training programmes developed and implemented for civil servants who come into contact with children who are at risk of child labour or victims of it; this would include judicial officials, law enforcement officers, staff of the education, social protection, and labour market systems and employees of asylum centres.
- Trainings developed and put into practise for implementing existing and planned strategies, action plans, and (revised) general and special protocols (and other acts) with a focus on the protection of children and young people, including joint training for all stakeholders active in implementing these strategies, action plans and protocols.

5.5 Development of community-based services _____

Development of community-based services will have a significant impact on child labour. Social welfare services such as drop-in centres and family outreach workers are currently established in a small number of cities. It should be stressed that due to the lack of professional capacity, it is neither possible nor efficient for these services to exist in all local self-governments. It is therefore important to reconsider the optimal level of distribution and availability of these services at local level.⁶⁹ Apart from community-based social welfare services, the development of other support programmes is essential, including: diversified programmes in pre-school, early development programmes and support to the mobile teams for Roma inclusion, as well as similar services/mechanisms which contribute to dropout prevention and also to an increase in social and educational inclusion of children from vulnerable groups. Equally important is the development of innovative outreach services; the support for the development of such services must come from the national level.

Changes to be achieved

- Established network of services at local level that directly or indirectly protect children from child labour.
- Established and financed services in all bigger cities: drop-in shelters, family outreach workers, day care for children in conflict with the law.
- Different programmes and outreach services developed that prevent dropout and school leaving and improve social and educational inclusion of children from poor and deprived families.

69 Matković, Stranjaković. 2016. op. cit.

6. Goal, objectives, and priority target groups of the Roadmap

6.1 Goal

Reduced prevalence of child labour, including its worst forms, has been set as the goal of the *Roadmap*.

To achieve this goal and create a single/reference national framework for more efficient and effective child protection, prevention, and elimination of child labour, including its worst forms, simultaneous action is needed at both the national and local level, as well as the creation and/or improvement of the institutional setting which would allow for the abolition of child labour.

6.2 Objectives

The following strategic objectives were identified for achieving the overall goal:

1. Establish an institutional framework for the implementation of relevant policies to eliminate child labour, including its worst forms;
2. Put into operation and improve the legislative framework for the protection of children, the prevention, elimination of, and rehabilitation from child labour, including its worst forms;
3. Develop the professional capacity of relevant institutions/organizations to collaborate more efficiently in preventing and eliminating child labour and protecting children (especially girls) from child labour, including its worst forms;
4. Strengthen the education system to prevent child labour and protect children from child labour;
5. Strengthen the role of the social protection system in preventing and protecting children from child labour; and
6. Improve the protection of children from child labour in the labour market.

Sets of measures were developed to achieve the proposed objectives; these are listed in the *Roadmap Matrix*, which also specifies the expected outcomes and impacts of each objective, as well as outcome and impact indicators. The estimated costs are calculated for each measure. The estimated annual cost of measures included in the *Roadmap* is calculated in accordance with the standardized unit cost estimation – as per the methodology used in developing the Action Plans for Chapters 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) and 24 (Justice, freedom and security) in the EU accession negotiations. These estimated costs can serve as a basis and tool for prioritization, as well as for further mainstreaming of the *Roadmap* measures into existing programmes.

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