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Committee on the Rights of the Child**Concluding observations on the combined six and seventh periodic reports of Romania*****I. Introduction**

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Romania¹ at its 2890th and 2891st meetings,² held on 20 and 21 May 2025, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2906th meeting, held on 30 May 2025.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the State party, under the simplified reporting procedure,³ which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the multisectoral delegation of the State party.

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State party in various areas and the legislative and policy measures taken to support children left behind by parents working abroad and Ukrainian children, the deinstitutionalisation process and children leaving care, as well as to prevent family separation, to reform the social assistance system and promote child participation.

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (para. 21); children deprived of a family environment (para. 26); children with disabilities (para. 31); health (para. 33); standard of living (para. 38) and asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children (para. 44).

5. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-ninth session (12 – 30 May 2025).

¹ CRC/C/ROU/6-7.

² See CRC/C/SR.2890 and 2891.

³ CRC/C/ROU/6-7

involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation

6. The Committee welcomes the amendments to Law No. 272/2004 on the promotion and protection of child rights, in particular the addition of asylum-seeking children and children under international protection among beneficiaries and the obligation on authorities to ensure child participation in decision-making. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the effective implementation of the amended law, including by providing adequate resources and adopting secondary legislation, and develop a child-rights impact assessment procedure for national legislation and policies relevant for children.

Comprehensive policy, strategy and coordination

7. The Committee welcomes the National Strategy “Protected Children, Safe Romania” (2023-2027) covering all areas under the Convention, and the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee (2023-2030) aiming to improve access to basic services for the most vulnerable children. It recommends that the State party ensure effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy and action plan at all levels and put in place an inter-institutional coordination mechanism to avoid duplication.

Allocation of resources

8. The Committee notes the increased allocations to primary healthcare, education and child allowances. Recalling its general comment No.19(2016) and its previous recommendations,⁴ the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Maintain its social expenditure despite the fiscal challenges;
- (b) Establish a child-friendly budgeting process with clear allocations to children, including those in vulnerable situations, specific indicators and monitoring and evaluation systems;
- (c) Decentralise the distribution of resources and strengthen measures to combat corruption.

Data collection

9. Noting the existence of sectoral databases, including the National Adoption Information System on Child Protection, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2003) and recommends that the State party:

- (a) Improve the collection and analysis of disaggregated data, including by unifying terminology and reporting methods, strengthening data sharing and integrating databases managed by different sectors, to ensure that all areas of the Convention are covered and to fully reflect the situation of children in vulnerable situations, including Roma children, children living in poverty, children with disabilities, refugee and asylum-seeking children, including Ukrainian children, adolescent pregnancy and mental health;

⁴ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 10.

(b) Seek UNICEF support to conduct the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey to close the disaggregated data gaps on vulnerable groups.

Access to justice and remedy

10. Welcoming the establishment of hearing rooms for children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that all children have access to: (i) confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and detention for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights; and (ii) legal support and age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation;

(b) Raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under existing mechanisms;

(c) Ensure systematic and mandatory training for all relevant professionals working with children on child-friendly procedures and remedies, children's rights and the Convention.

Independent monitoring

11. Welcoming the establishment of the Child Ombudsperson in 2018, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen the capacity of the Child Ombudsperson's Office to promote and protect children's rights, including through staff training on the rights of the child and related matters;

(b) Increase the visibility of the Child Ombudsperson, particularly via regular awareness-raising activities in schools and enhanced dialogue with civil society;

(c) Create a platform using a simple language accessible to children to encourage them to directly submit complaints.

Dissemination of the Convention and awareness-raising

12. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's awareness-raising activities about the Convention and the translation of its general comments into Romanian. It encourages the State party to undertake such efforts systematically and ensure that children in vulnerable situations, including children with disabilities, those living in rural areas and in residential care, benefit from awareness-raising activities on the same footing as other children.

Cooperation with civil society

13. Noting the State party's reliance on civil society to deliver social services, the Committee recommends that the State party implement its new mechanism for financing social services under Law No. 100/2024, ensure its transparency and flexibility, and build the capacity of civil society in this regard to ensure access to sustainable funding.

Children's rights and the business sector

14. The Committee notes the option for companies, under government ordinance no. 20/2022, to sponsor or redirect their fiscal credit to civil society organisations. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Committee recommends that the State party establish a regulatory child protection framework for companies operating under its jurisdiction, including policies, legislation, regulations and mechanisms for conducting child rights impact assessments, monitoring, evaluation and access to justice, in order to report and address children's rights violations, with particular attention to online gambling.

B. General principles (arts. 2–3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

15. The Committee welcomes the measures taken to desegregate schools, including Law No. 198/2023 prohibiting school segregation and the methodology to monitor it. Recalling its previous recommendations,⁵ the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Effectively address discrimination against children in vulnerable situations, including girls, children in rural areas, children living in poverty, Roma children, children with disabilities, children in institutions, asylum-seeking and refugee children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, LGBTQ children, and ensure that they have access to education, healthcare and a decent standard of living on an equal basis with other children;

(b) Implement measures to promote inclusion of Roma children in mainstream schooling;

(c) Continue training to professionals to apply the principle of non-discrimination in their line of work;

(d) Implement the legal framework on school desegregation and finalise the monitoring of schools in this regard with a view to generating data to inform the national strategy and action plan for school desegregation;

(e) Review with a view to rejecting proposed amendment No. 243/2022 to Law 272/2004, suggesting protecting children “against popularization of homosexuality or of sex change,” which is discriminatory against LGBTQ children.

Best interests of the child

16. Noting that the principle of the best interests of the child is integrated in the national legislation, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 14 (2013) and calls on the State party to ensure that the principle is used to assess new policies and legislation, including by:

(a) Developing best interests determination guidelines and an impact assessment mechanism;

(b) Providing systematic training to relevant professionals to be able to understand and apply the principle in administrative and judicial proceedings, including in relation to:

(i) determining care settings for children deprived of a family environment, (ii) family reunification and appointment of guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children, (iii) assessing the needs of refugee children, and (iv) ensuring children’s access to services.

Respect for the views of the child

17. The Committee welcomes the amendment to Law 272/2004 providing, among others, for at least one annual consultation with children for policy-makers at national and local levels with a view to formulating legislation and policies. Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009) and its previous recommendations,⁶ the Committee recommends that the State party encourage, promote and support meaningful child participation in decision-making, in the family and in schools, and in particular to:

(a) Ensure the implementation of the amended Law 272/2004 with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations and establish regulatory frameworks and effective mechanisms in this regard ;

(b) Establish detailed procedures to ensure that asylum-seeking, refugee, unaccompanied and separated children are systematically consulted on protection decisions or any other decisions that in some way affect them;

⁵ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 17.

⁶ CRC/C/ROU/6-7, para. 20.

(c) Ensure that all children are provided with information as to what their rights are so they can come forward and be heard and ensure the provision of free legal aid to assist the children express their views before any competent authority;

(d) Strengthen the National Students' Council and child-led groups, including with capacity-building and financial resources, and raise awareness of the children's right to be heard in the family, community and schools, among children, parents and teachers.

C. Civil and political rights (arts. 7–8 and 13–17)

Birth registration, name and nationality

18. The Committee notes as positive Law no. 105/2022 providing for the automatic birth registration for Romanian and foreign citizens and proposed amendments to Law No. 21/1991 on Citizenship to prevent statelessness such as not to withdraw Romanian citizenship from a person if that would entail the loss of citizenship of his/her spouse and children. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that all children have access to birth registration and birth certificates without delay, with particular attention to Roma children, Ukrainian children born in Romania since February 2022 and children born to refugee mothers;

(b) Continue to review Law No. 21/1991 in compliance with article 7 of the Convention, to include safeguards against statelessness at birth, including for children born to stateless parents and parents who cannot transmit their nationality to their children, and to establish a dedicated statelessness determination procedure;

(c) Collect disaggregated data on stateless children.

Access to appropriate information

19. Noting the campaign for the digital education of children and young people, including with respect to Artificial Intelligence, and the measures taken to implement EU regulation 2022/2065, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Encourage companies to comply with the Committee's general comment No. 25, including by protecting children's personal data, creating accessible complaint processes and developing policies and mechanisms to protect children from violence, excessive screen use and online bullying;

(b) Ensure access to appropriate information and protection from harmful contents, including disinformation and false news, harmful products and online risks including with respect to Artificial Intelligence;

(c) Strengthen access to internet and technologies countrywide, as well as digital skills and access to media literacy education for children, their parents/caregivers and teachers, with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations, and ensure safe and meaningful participation of children in online environment;

(d) Build the capacity of the media to support child participation and promote children's rights and by encouraging the media to create spaces and opportunities for children to be heard.

D. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a), and 39 of the Convention)

Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation

20. Recalling Romania's status as a pathfinding country in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children since 2016, the Committee welcomes the creation of the 119

helpline to report violence against children and the measures taken to combat violence in the family and in schools. However, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Insufficient data to assess the prevalence of violence against children, particularly for children with disabilities, while reports demonstrate a higher incidence of cases of violence for girls, particularly sexual abuse, and in rural areas, and increasing trends of violence in schools, in the judicial system and online;
- (b) The absence of a dedicated policy framework to address violence against children;
- (c) The lack of coordination between the two agencies working on violence against children and domestic violence at the national level, namely the National Authority for the protection of Child Rights and Adoption and the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, and between the national and local levels;
- (d) Unequal distribution of and funding for social services throughout the country;
- (e) The adoption of Law No. 123/2024, amending Law No. 272/2004 by introducing among others, the concept of “*înstăinare parentală*” (parental alienation), which lacks a clear definition and may therefore be misused in custody disputes, with negative impact on the wellbeing of children and the assessment of their best interest, and which has not been included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or WHO's International Classification of Diseases. The Committee also notes with concern the absence of consultations with children, appropriate safeguards, and adequate training for professionals responsible for monitoring contact;
- (f) Insufficient reporting mechanisms;
- (g) The lack of professional capacity to identify and respond to different forms of violence;
- (h) The lack of data on investigation and prosecution of cases of violence against children and reportedly milder penalties for cases of rape resulting in adolescent pregnancy.

21. With reference to its general comment No. 13 (2011) and to the pledges formulated by the State Party at the 2024 Interministerial conference on ending violence against children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Undertake a study on the extent, causes and nature of violence against children and, on its basis, develop and implement a comprehensive policy and strategy for prevention and intervention in cases of violence, addressing its gender dimension, with particular attention to vulnerable groups;**
- (b) Strengthen cooperation and case management coordination between the relevant authorities at the national, regional and local levels, and continue the cooperation between the two existing child protection helplines (116 111 and 119);**
- (c) Ensure the provision of integrated community-based services throughout the country and allocate sustainable financial, human and technical resources to that end;**
- (d) Guarantee sustainable investment and funding for social and child protection services throughout the country and that they are not subject to austerity measures;**
- (e) Immediately repeal the provisions of Law No. 123/2024 related to “înstăinare parentală” (parental alienation) and conduct a comprehensive, child rights-based review of any future legal reforms affecting custody and contact arrangements;**
- (f) Strengthen the capacity of the social workers, teachers, health professionals, law-enforcement and judicial officials to timely identify, refer and respond to cases of child abuse and violence, including online;**
- (g) Ensure the mandatory reporting of all forms of violence against children, identify accessible focal points to receive reports, and promote awareness among**

parents, professionals and children on the importance of reporting and on early intervention in cases of child abuse and violence;

(h) Ensure that victims or witnesses of violence have prompt access to comprehensive support, including healthcare, legal and trauma-focused support services, to ensure their recovery and reintegration, and that they are not subjected to revictimization;

(i) Pursue awareness-raising measures, educational programmes and professional training to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, including online;

(j) Ensure that all cases of violence against children, including sexual abuse, are promptly investigated, applying a child- and gender-sensitive and multisectoral approach with the aim of avoiding the revictimization of the child, that perpetrators are prosecuted and sanctioned with commensurate penalties, and that reparations are provided to victims, as appropriate.

Corporal punishment

22. Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2006) and its previous recommendation,⁷ the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) End the practice and social acceptance of corporal punishment in all settings;

(b) Ensure that the prohibition of corporal punishment is properly enforced and monitored,

(c) Promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline, including through awareness-raising and education programmes for parents, teachers and care professionals invoking the adverse consequences of corporal punishment;

(d) Adopt a national parental education strategy and train staff and parents to prevent physical punishment.

Harmful practices

23. Noting the prevalence of child marriage in Romania, the Committee reiterates that the State Party should amend the Civil Code to remove all exceptions that allow marriage below 18 years of age. It also recommends that the State party:

(a) Take measures to tackle social norms and cultural practices that allow child marriage;

(b) Ensure that intersex children are not subjected to unnecessary medical or surgical treatment, undertake investigation of incidents of surgical and other medical treatment of intersex children without informed consent and adopt legal provisions to provide redress to the victims, including adequate compensation.

E. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1)–(2), 20–21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

24. The Committee welcomes the reform of the social assistance system, including the development of integrated social services, the 2022 amendments to Law 202/2002 introducing caregiver leave and flexible working arrangements, Law 156/2023 providing for activities to prevent family separation and the establishment of the Child Observer information system to support the identification of children at risk of separation and recommending relevant services in this regard. Noting with concern the

⁷ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, par. 24.

high number of children left behind by parents working abroad, the Committee refers to its statement under article 5 of the Convention⁸ and recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure the implementation of the legislation and other measures to prevent family separation and provide incentives for parents to live and work in Romania, while taking care of their children;
- (b) In case of parents working abroad, ensure that temporary delegation of parental rights is activated before leaving so as to ensure that the children concerned have proper access to education, healthcare, social benefits and identity documents;
- (c) Promote equal sharing of family responsibilities and support parents in taking care of children, especially young children, and in spending quality time with them;
- (d) Collect data to assess the needs and develop capacity development plans regarding community-based and social services, including day care and recovery centers, particularly with regard to children with disabilities and other children in vulnerable situations.

Children deprived of a family environment

25. The Committee welcomes the progress in deinstitutionalisation, which resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children in residential facilities and the expansion of foster care. It also welcomes Law 191/2022 that prohibited placing children below 3 years of age in residential care, stimulated family placements and provided support to young people leaving care. However, the Committee is seriously concerned that:

- (a) The closure of all institutions, foreseen by the end of 2024 according to the State party's report,⁹ has not been implemented, and a high number of children still reside in institutions;
- (b) Children between 3 and 7 years of age can be institutionalised under certain conditions, particularly children with disabilities;
- (c) The number and training of professionals, including social workers, psychologists and service providers, to support to families and children to prevent family separation, remains insufficient, especially in vulnerable communities;
- (d) Children in institutions, particularly children with disabilities, are reportedly subjected to maltreatment, with recent cases of children tied up "for their own good" in the Casa Alexandra center for children in Ialomița.

26. **Recalling the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children¹⁰ and its previous recommendations,¹¹ the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Allocate the necessary human, financial and technical resources to finalise the deinstitutionalisation process as a matter of priority, by reducing the number of entries into the system and supporting the transition to community-based services, particularly for children below 7 years of age, children with disabilities and Roma children;**
- (b) **Ensure sufficient alternative family-based and community-based care options for children who cannot stay with their families, including by allocating sufficient financial resources for foster care, training foster and adoptive parents to care for children with special needs, regularly reviewing placements and facilitating the reunification of children with their families when in their best interests;**
- (c) **Ensure the application of adequate safeguards and clear criteria, based on the needs as well as best interests of the child, for determining whether a child should**

⁸ Article 5

⁹ CRC/C/ROU/6-7, para. 165.

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex.

¹¹ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 29.

be placed in alternative care and that decisions on child removal are subject to judicial review;

(d) Consider implementing other protection orders such as supervision orders where children are left with their family, however under supervision by social workers to also carry out unexpected visits and report to the relevant authority;

(e) Consider implementing permanency plans leading to adoption for children in alternative care with no chance of being reintegrated with their family environment;

(f) Ensure that poverty, disability and social origins are not the sole criteria for removing a child from parental care, receiving a child into alternative care or for preventing a child's family reintegration;

(g) Allocate adequate resources and increase the number and training of the social service workforce to early identify or detect families at risk, to provide family support services to prevent family separation, and to facilitate the reintegration of children from the childcare system, with particular attention to rural, remote and marginalised communities and economically deprived families and families at risk of poverty;

(h) Train and ensure an adequate number of service providers, psychologists and other relevant professionals to provide support to families and caretakers and enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of children deprived of a family environment;

(i) Establish quality standards for all alternative care settings, ensure periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and institutions, including by an independent body, and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children;

(j) Address violations of the rights of children living in care, and investigate and bring to justice those responsible;

(k) Ensure the implementation of the support measures for children leaving care to help them start independent lives.

Adoption

27. Noting the amendments to Law 273/2004 to streamline the adoption procedure and the measures taken to promote adoption, the Committee recommends that the State party pursue its efforts in this regard, while ensuring access to adoption for children with disabilities and Roma children and considering international adoption, as previously recommended.¹²

Illicit transfer and non-return

28. The Committee recommends that the State party duly implement the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, consider concluding bilateral agreements in this regard and undertake specific measures to combat illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

Children of incarcerated parents

29. Noting the measures taken to improve visits, the Committee recommends that the State party implement specific measures, such as therapeutic intervention programs and joint family sessions, to support children's emotional development and further encourage rehabilitative ties and family reintegration post release.

¹² CRC/C/ROU/5, para. 30.

F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

30. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The persistent use of medical and charity approaches to disability, which influence legislation, policies and access to services;
- (b) The lack of a comprehensive system for diagnosing disability, which hinders data collection on disability;
- (c) Insufficient access to healthcare, including early identification, intervention and rehabilitation;
- (d) High risk of poverty and social exclusion for children with disabilities;
- (e) Widespread discrimination against children with disabilities.

31. **Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006), the Committee urges the State party to :**

- (a) **Adopt a human rights-based approach to disability, including by reviewing legislation;**
- (b) **Develop a coordinated approach for disability assessment with a view to facilitating access for children with all types of disabilities to services, including to education, health, social protection and support services;**
- (c) **Organize the collection of disaggregated data on children with disabilities and conduct a study on their situation, including on the violence and deprivation affecting them;**
- (d) **Based on the above, develop a policy and strategy on children with disabilities, with the participation of children, including from rural regions and children belonging to minority communities, allocate adequate resources to its implementation and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;**
- (e) **Allocate adequate resources to ensure access to quality healthcare, including early identification, intervention and rehabilitation programmes and an adequate number of trained health-care personnel throughout the country;**
- (f) **Provide specialised support services to reduce the risks of poverty and social exclusion of children with disabilities;**
- (g) **Undertake awareness-raising campaigns to combat the stigmatization of, and prejudice against, children with disabilities and promote their positive image as rights-holders.**

G. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

Health and health services

32. While noting the measures to improve the quality of maternal care, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The still high new-born, infant and maternal mortality rates;
- (b) The lack of access to quality healthcare, including for oncological and rare diseases, and discrepancies between urban and rural communities in this respect;
- (c) The number of children who died during the 2023 measles epidemic, which revealed the lack of vaccination coverage;
- (d) Overweight and obesity among children.

33. Recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) and its previous recommendations,¹³ the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Allocate adequate resources to strengthen the quality of care and ensure the availability of trained doctors and healthcare personnel for antenatal, neonatal and postnatal care, especially in rural and remote areas and for vulnerable communities, with a view to further reducing maternal, new-born and under-five mortality;

(b) Improve access to quality and affordable healthcare and health insurance, including by providing qualified specialists, equipment and facilities for oncological and rare diseases, reducing urban/rural disparities and strengthening the coverage and capacity of the school health network;

(c) Ensure that all children receive all necessary vaccinations, in accordance with WHO standards, and develop strategies to combat false information regarding vaccination;

(d) Further promote exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, implement the baby-friendly hospital initiative and collect data in these respects;

(e) Increase efforts to combat obesity and overweight, including by monitoring the implementation of the legislation banning selling unhealthy food in school vicinity, further expanding the “hot school meal programme” and promoting healthy nutrition.

Mental health

34. Noting the State party’s efforts to improve the provision of, and access to, mental community-based health services, the Committee notes with concern that girls in particular present high levels of depression and that the prevalence of suicide among adolescents under 15 appears higher than the European average, in the light of limited data on children’s needs in psychosocial support and visibly insufficient mental health services. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Collect data on mental health issues, including suicide, among children and adolescents;

(b) Strengthen the implementation of the Mental Health Action Plan (2024-2029);

(c) Increase the number of trained psychologists and psychiatrists, particularly in the regions, rural areas and in schools, including by allocating sufficient budget and providing quality training for them;

(d) Ensure quality and timely mental health support services and programmes across the country, which should be accessible for all children, including at schools;

(e) Raise awareness of the wider society on the importance of mental health with the view to encouraging seeking mental health services if needed and that those applying to services are not exposed to stigmatization.

Adolescent health

35. Noting the plans to develop a reproductive health strategy and family planning clinics, the Committee is concerned about the State party having the largest number of adolescent mothers in the European Union, the obstacles to accessing contraception, abortion and reproductive health information, and the requirement of parental consent to attend health education in schools. Recalling its general comments No.4 (2003) and No.20 (2016), the Committee recommends that the State party:

¹³ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 34.

(a) Prevent and address adolescent pregnancies and ensure access to confidential counselling and contraception, without parental consent, in accordance with the child's evolving capacities;

(b) Continue to work to prevent STI, HIV and mother-to-child transmission;

(c) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health strategy for adolescents and ensure that age appropriate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and is accessible without parental consent, including for children of parents working abroad;

(d) Ensure that all adolescents, including those who are out of school and those in rural areas, receive age-appropriate, confidential and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives and safe abortion and post-abortion services.

Drug and other substance abuse

36. Noting the steps taken to prevent drug and other substance abuse, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its measures to address tobacco, alcohol and drug use by children and adolescents, especially binge drinking, including by addressing their root causes, reinforcing preventive campaigns and ensuring access to substance-dependence treatment.

H. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))

37. The Committee notes the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (2022-2027), the specific target to reduce the number of children affected by poverty and social exclusion by 400,000 by 2027 under the National Strategy "Protected Children, Strong Romania" (2023-2027), as well as the introduction of a minimum social assistance package under Law 100/2024. The Committee is however concerned about:

(a) The persistently high poverty risks, with one in five children affected by severe material and social deprivation, especially those in vulnerable situations, which is almost three times higher than the EU average;

(b) Uneven distribution and development of social assistance services, especially for children and families, throughout the State party, with low concentration of services in rural areas and small towns.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Strengthen its measures to end child poverty, including by raising social expenditure, strengthening the capacity of social protection, developing integrated social services and increasing their availability throughout the country and improving the identification and targeting of the most vulnerable families in the provision of benefits, with particular attention to rural areas, single-parent families and large families, Roma families, families with children with disabilities, children left behind by parents working abroad and refugee and migrant children;

(b) Assess the effectiveness of the national social protection benefit programmes in addressing child poverty and optimize the design and delivery of such programmes to better address the needs of the most vulnerable children.

J. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2-3, 6, 12-13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 26-31)

39. The Committee notes the National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change (2023-2030) aiming to increase environmental and climate change awareness among students. Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023), the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Safeguard and monitor children's environmental health, assess the effects of environmental pollution on children's health and ensure that health professionals receive training in the diagnosis and treatment of environment-caused health conditions;
- (b) Ensure the implementation of environmental education in schools, which should include modules on preparedness for climate change and natural disasters;
- (c) Ensure that children's special vulnerabilities, needs and views are taken into account in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of specific policies and programmes, including disaster preparedness plans.

K. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education: aims and coverage

40. The Committee takes note of Law No. 198/2023 on pre-university education and Law No. 199/2023 on higher education, the early warning mechanism, and the grant schemes and social package aimed at reducing school dropout and supporting transition to tertiary education, especially for children in disadvantaged situations. Noting with concern that 45 per cent of adolescents lack basic skills, according to the 2022 PISA tests, and school segregation of Roma children and children with disabilities is persisting, the Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to:

- (a) Ensure the implementation of the Laws No. 198/2023 and 199/2023 and other educational measures by providing adequate funding and developing secondary legislation, and regularly monitor and evaluate their impact;
- (b) Increase the enrolment and retention rates for primary and secondary education and transition to high school, including by expanding access to “after school” and “hot school meals” programmes, ensuring accessible and reliable school transportation, in particular in rural areas, eliminating hidden costs of education and regulating private tutoring, and paying particular attention to Roma children, children from economically-disadvantaged families, children in rural and remote areas and children left behind by parents working abroad;
- (c) Improve the educational quality at all levels, including by improving teacher training, hiring support staff, accelerating the development of the competency-based curriculum for high school, and providing opportunities for volunteering, participation and extracurricular activities;
- (d) Establish and operationalise early warning and monitoring systems to identify children at risk of dropping out or not enrolled and ensure timely intervention and individualized support to keep them in school or to enrol in school;
- (e) Increase the capacity of, and access to, early childhood education, especially in rural areas and for children in vulnerable situations.

Inclusive education

41. Noting that the provisions on inclusive education and 4-levels' intensity support to children with special education needs were integrated into Law No. 198/2023 on pre-university education, with children requiring 4-level support being relegated to special schools, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure that all children with disabilities have access to inclusive education in mainstream schools, with schools equipped with trained teachers, accessible infrastructure and teaching materials adapted to the needs of children with disabilities;
- (b) Review legislation accordingly and make sure that the definition of inclusive education goes beyond special education and encompasses all vulnerabilities, not only disability and special education needs;

(c) **Train and assign specialized teachers and professionals in integrated classes providing individual support and all due attention to children with learning difficulties.**

Vocational training and guidance

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party pursues its measures to develop and promote quality vocational training to enhance the skills of children and young people, especially those who drop out of school.**

L. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32–33, 35–36, 37 (b)–(d), and 38–40 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)

Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children

43. The Committee welcomes the measures taken to support children and their families fleeing the war in Ukraine, including the National Action Plan on the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine, the PRIMERO registration platform, Blue Dot services at the border crossings, and order No.119/20643/2023 regarding the appointment of representatives for unaccompanied and separated children. It also notes that detention of unaccompanied migrant children is prohibited. However, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The delay in the enrolment of refugee children into the social protection system;
- (b) The detention of migrant children, which is authorised if they accompany their family members;
- (c) The precarious situation and the harmful lifestyle of unaccompanied children and their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, including disappearance and trafficking;
- (d) The uncertainty in legislation between the role and responsibilities of legal representatives (guardians) and procedural representatives appointed to unaccompanied and separated children;
- (e) The lack of specific support services for asylum-seeking refugee and migrant children with disabilities;
- (f) The barriers to accessing education, including for Ukrainian students, and the reported insufficiency of the one-year course in Romanian, of teacher and of classroom capacity and infrastructure;
- (g) Discrimination against asylum seeker, refugee and migrant children.

44. **Recalling the joint general comments No. 6 (2005), No.22-No. 23(2017), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Develop and adopt a policy and legislative framework to promote long-term integration of refugees, asylum seeking and migrant families and children;**
- (b) **Ensure timely enrolment of refugee children and their families into the social protection system and provide cash assistance pending enrolment, as per the government ordinance, put in place monitoring and complaints mechanisms and conduct an evaluation of the enrolment to inform future decisions;**
- (c) **End the detention of families with children, implement non-custodial measures in cases of asylum-seeking and refugee families with children and revise the Asylum Law, the Aliens Law and relevant regulations accordingly;**
- (d) **Harmonise the provisions of Law No. 122/2006 on Asylum and Law No. 272/2004 (amended by Law 191/2022) regarding the role and responsibilities of legal representatives (guardians) who are meant to assist unaccompanied and separated children in fully exerting their rights and obligations beyond asylum procedures;**

(e) Adopt the appointment conditions, roles, duties, and experience requirements for representatives of unaccompanied and separated children in the asylum procedure;

(f) Strengthen the protection of unaccompanied migrant children, ensure their access to essential services, including psychosocial support, and information about their rights and take measures to improve their well-being;

(g) Allocate adequate financial, human and technical resources to provide comprehensive support to children with disabilities in situation of migration;

(h) Eliminate barriers that hinder access to education and offer Romanian language support beyond the mandatory one-year course when needed, including for Ukrainian children, provide adequate classrooms and an adequate number of trained teachers and assistants;

(i) Facilitate access to education for Ukrainian students to the Ukrainian curriculum and/or in their mother tongue;

(j) Develop campaigns to counter hate speech against asylum seeker, refugee and migrant children.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

45. Noting with concern the persistence of child labour, including forced begging involving Roma children, and exploitation of children in family environment, agriculture and construction, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake the necessary measures to determine the scope and to prevent and eradicate economic exploitation of children, as previously recommended,¹⁴ and raise awareness about this practice and its consequences.

Children in street situations

46. Recalling its general comment No. 21(2017), the Committee recommends that the State party conduct an in-depth study to determine the number and condition of children in street situations and provide such children with the needed support, including access to essential services, identification documentation and their reintegration, as previously recommended,¹⁵ with particular attention to children leaving alternative care.

Trafficking

47. Noting with concern that child trafficking remains widespread, particularly with regard to children with disabilities and children in alternative care, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement the National Anti-trafficking Action Plan (2024-2028) with dedicated resources;

(b) Effectively investigate, prosecute and convict perpetrators with commensurate penalties, including for complicity;

(c) Strengthen training for professionals on child-responsive and gender-responsive approaches to handling trafficking cases to avoid re-traumatisation of victims;

(d) Strengthen the identification and referral of child victims of trafficking, particularly among girls, Roma children, children of migrant parents working abroad, children in institutions, children with disabilities, asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, addressing both offline and online recruitment;

¹⁴ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 41.

¹⁵ CRC/C/ROU/CO/5, para. 42.

(e) Provide quality services for child victims of trafficking, including healthcare, psychological counselling, legal aid and safe shelters, and allocate sufficient funding to NGOs delivering such assistance;

(f) Strengthen efforts to prevent child trafficking, in particular by intensifying monitoring in institutions, strictly implementing child labour legislation, especially in rural areas, increasing online safety and awareness-raising campaigns.

Administration of child justice

48. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019), the Committee urges the State party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant standards, and in particular, to:

(a) Strengthen child justice system across the country, including by allocating adequate resources to its effective functioning;

(b) Ensure training on children's rights and child-friendly justice for police officers, prosecutors and judges;

(c) Ensure access to and information about free legal aid for children alleged as, accused of or recognised as having infringed criminal law from the very early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings;

(d) Continue effective promotion of non-judicial measures, such as diversion and mediation for children alleged as, accused of or recognised as having infringed criminal law, and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service, and ensure that health and psycho-social services are provided to such children; strengthen community-based reintegration services and ensure that children are informed about them;

(e) Ensure that detention is used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to releasing the child;

(f) For the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort ensure that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education, recreation and health services.

M. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure

49. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

N. Ratification of international human rights instruments

50. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

O. Cooperation with regional bodies

51. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe and the European Union on the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State party and in other States members of the Council of Europe.

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

52. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

B. National mechanism for reporting and follow-up

53. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a standing government structure and ensure that it has the mandate and adequate human, technical and financial resources to coordinate and engage with, and prepare reports to, international and regional human rights mechanisms and to coordinate and track national follow-up to, and the implementation of, treaty obligations and the recommendations and decisions emanating from such mechanisms effectively. The Committee emphasizes that such a structure should be adequately and continuously supported by dedicated staff and should have the capacity to consult systematically with the Ombudsperson and civil society.

C. Next report

54. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the State party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines¹⁶ and should not exceed 21,200 words.¹⁷ In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

¹⁶ [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

¹⁷ General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.