**Shadow report - Association Hors la Rue**

**Periodic Review of France - Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**INTRODUCTION**

Hors la Rue (HLR) is an NGO whose teams identify and accompany foreign juveniles at risk not seeking protection.

HLR wishes to bring to the attention of the Committee the specific situation of children in migratory and aggravated vagrancy circumstances in the Île-de-France region, and throughout France and Europe . France has but very partially addressed this question, neglecting Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) issues certain children suffer from.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET AND ITS ISSUES**

Since the end of 2016, Hors la Rue has witnessed an increase in the number of vagrant Unaccompanied Minors (UM) from Morocco and Algeria :

- Aged 10 to 18 ;

- Mismatch between their behaviours, the aims of age assessment procedures and child protection sheltering facilities ;

- National and international mobility ;

- Extremely precarious living conditions ;

- High rate of delinquency (snatching, burglary) ;

- Intensive consumption of psychotropic substances (medicines, cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, alcohol) ;

- Highly deteriorated physical and psychological states ;

- Permanent climate of violence (physical and sexual)

In 2020, 2021 and 2022, Hors la Rue has identified 495 young people who fit this profile. Among them, 274 have been monitored by our teams. Almost all of these situations show signs of exploitation.

In the last three years, young French girls have begun to adopt their behaviour, suffering serious harm equally : physical, psychological and sexual violence, THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation. HLR would like to point out that its observations on young Romanians forced to commit offences, previously submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, remain accurate.

**MINORS VICTIMS OF THB**

These risk factors fuel exploitative relationships, forcing many juveniles into crime to support their chemical dependency .

- Use of benzodiazepine and pregabalin to bear criminal activity

- Dependency, habituation and drug tolerance resulting in the need to escalate doses

- Intensive delinquent activities, causes and consequences of exploitative situations

**UNSUITABLE WELFARE INITIATIVES**

These children are often arrested, prosecuted and detained in juvenile quarters or penal institutions . The issues of such exploitation remain under-addressed : in the eyes of institutions and of the public, these young people are primarily seen as delinquents.

Educational assistance (and penal) measures hit some snags :

- The participation of young people remain fragile ;

- Addictions are a major obstacle to their access to protection : fear of drug craving creates states of high anxiety, tackled by the use of cannabis whose supply is impossible in welfare structures;

- There is too little inclination to prescribe and dispense benzodiazepine and pregabalin, as part of the child welfare strategy to help the necessarily progressive reduction of use ;

- Child protection detention and welfare measures rarely result in permanent protection that could allow to address the traumatic experiences of exploitation and to gather testimonies for further criminal investigations. Such investigations still often fail to guarantee effective protection of victims.

**OVERINCARCERATION**

In 2015, the French ministry of justice issued a circular to encourage the legal qualification of THB. Yet, we still observe massive use of incarceration for UM alleged victims of trafficking to the detriment of effective protection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Strengthen and develop "street work" actions to detect and identify THB victims ;

- Encourage the use of criminalisation of THB to tackle the coercion to commit crime;

- Implement a protection policy for minors victims of THB used to commit offences : training of professionals (police, justice, child protection), implementation of a national registration mechanism, provision of dedicated accommodation places ;

- Secure continuous territorial action to better consider these issues within jurisdictions (protocoles) and to limit internal movements within the judiciary ;

- Support national and European investigations related to benzodiazepine and pregabalin trafficking ;

- Strengthen capacity and specialization in addictology for minors ;

- Establish medical protocols adapted to young people's dependency paths ;

- Implement a transnational follow-up protocol to ensure ongoing support for young migrants in danger ;

- Encourage experience-sharing among the European countries involved ;

- Approach such issues with Morocco and Algeria, not exclusively through return policy, irregular immigration and fighting crime matters, but by taking into account the best interest of children.

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