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EXCERPT FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN for 2017

Banja Luka, March 2018

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I FOREWORD

Respecting the legal obligations, on behalf of the Ombudsman for Children of the RS and on my personal behalf I submit the Annual Report for 2017 to the Republic of Srpska National Assembly.

The Report presents and the activities and expenditures of the Ombudsman for children during 2017 and contains data on violations of the rights of children in Republic of Srpska based on the cases processed in front of the Ombudsman of children whether they were individual case/appeals or ex officio work. In addition, the report contains analysis of the causes and consequences of the registered violations, points out the obstacles and suggests measures for improvement of the existing system of protection of rights of the children in the Republic of Srpska. The report gives general and specific positions regarding children's rights and suggest improvement of the children's status in all areas.

The annual report of the Ombudsman for children is a specific combination of the report on the work of the institution and report of the state of the rights of children in the Republic of Srpska. The report follows the methodology which enables collating data gathered from the cases initiated by the individual citizens and the ex officio work, but also data gathered through contacts with different subjects of children's protection including non-governmental sector, data from official databases of other bodies, institutions and departments and from direct contacts with children. Ombudsman for children is a full member of the European network of ombudspersons for children (ENOC), Network of ombudsman for children of South-eastern Europe (CRONSEE) and through this membership the Ombudsman is informed about development of children's rights at the international level. The Institution has constant cooperation and support from the UNICEF BiH as well as from the other organizations of the civil society.

The new ombudsman for children has been appointed during the reporting period. The mandate of former ombudsman expired on 28 May 2017. The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska elected the new Ombudsman, Ms. Dragica Radovic on 18 October 2017. Ms. Radovic's mandate began on 12 December 2017 when she took the oath in front of the National Assembly of Republic of Srpska.

The Ombudsman of Children has the see in Banja Luka and branch offices in Doboj and Foca. In order to be more available for citizens, the visiting's days have been organized once a month to Bijeljina and Istocno Sarajevo. The Ombudsman for children has total of 19 employees (including the ombudsman and two deputies) – with university degree – 17 employees, with advanced degree-1 employee and with the secondary education – 1 employee. During the reporting period, the Ombudsman performed with decreased capacities as three employees were on 18-month maternity leaves (twins and the third child). The Ombudsman was not able to engage temporary replacements or volunteers due to the restrictions in the budget.

I sincerely hope that our wish to understand this report exclusively as the representation of the best interest of children in the Republic of Srpska and the real situation related to the children's rights, identified obstacles and suggestions for addressing them in order to improve the system of protection of children's rights.

Ombudsman for children

Dragica Radović

II UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Convention¹ is the starting and binding basis for the harmonization of domestic legislation with its principles, but also to the needs of children in terms of enabling and protection of their rights. By accepting the Convention, states took over the responsibility to take all the necessary measures to ensure the exercise of all rights and the protection of the Convention without discrimination on any basis. All rights in the Convention are mutually conditioned and in real life they represent nothing more than the needs of children for proper growth and psychophysical development. Special significance of the Convention refers to the legal status of the child. Namely, the Convention for the first time introduces the child to the legal system as the subject of rights and establishes the basic principles that require a higher quality relationship with children, both in the area of well established rights ,even in the area of their protection. Basic principles of UN Convention are: right to life, right to survival and development, best interest of a child, right to free expression of opinion and right to protection against any kind of discrimination.

Right of the child to survival and development ²

The right of the child to life, survival and development is one of the basic rights of the child and the basic premise for the exercise of all other rights of the child. This Convention establishes the right and as one of the basic principles. This right of children belongs to them by birth. Child development should be viewed in the broadest sense as a complete concept, including the right of the child to physical, mental, moral, psychological and social development, and the implementation of the measures should be aimed at achieving the optimal development of all children³.

The best interest of the child⁴

The best interests of the child must be a priority, and this right is a condition for the exercise of any of the rights guaranteed by the Convention. This law requires that in all activities relating to children, whether you are taking them public or private institutions, the courts, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child must be in the first place. The Ombudsman for children, points out that the legislator recognizes the importance of the principle of the best interests of the child and implanted it in the Family Law⁵. However, the best interest of a child must be implemented in every area of children's lives ,not only family relationships.

The best interest of the child standard that is not defined in advance, but rather requires the need of individual approaches and determine the interest of each child individually in specific situations. The Ombudsman for children, observes that this principle is most often

¹By notification on succession RBIH Official gazette the BiH took over the UN Convention on the right of the child which is part of Annex I of the BiH Constitution. The implementation of it was differently interpreted until the ruling of the BiH Constitutional Court U-/0925 that the CCahs the authorities to examine allegations on violation of the rights regulated by the treaties listed in Annex I of the BiH Constitutions

² UN Convention on the rights of the child, article 6

³ UN Committee on the rights of the child, General Commentary No 13 – Right of the child to be free from all forms of violence, point 62

⁴ UN Convention on the right of the child, article 3

⁵Law on changes and amendments to the family law, the RS Official Gazette, No : 63/14.

insufficiently understood in practice, and that the facilities/services often only declarative, are calling for this principle without his full and real determination. The most characteristic example are centers/services for social work of the need for accommodation of a child without parental care in a particular facility shall be given preference when the material side, that is, a monetary amount that will the local community a month pick the name of the accommodation costs of the child in an institution, and not the real best interests of the child.

The Ombudsman for children has recommended to the Ministry of family, youth and sports in previous years to take the necessary measures and activities that will contribute to the principle of the best interest of the child is properly and fully secured in all proceedings, in a manner: "*Start an initiative for the appointment of a working group that will establish a list of elements that can be used to the competent authorities in the assessment of the best interests of the child, bearing in mind that the list of these elements is not final and that there is no hierarchical order, as well as that it is possible to consider the other elements that are of importance and influence on the specific circumstances of each child, and that these activities should be based on the principle of multisectoral cooperation.*" However, in this reporting period, the Ombudsman for children has no feedback of the policy of the Ministry

Right of the child to freely express opinion on all matters that affect him⁶

This principle of the Convention must be included in the exercise of any of the rights of the child, in a way to enable the child to express its opinion on all matters that concern him with what the opinion of the child is paid due attention in accordance with his years of life and maturity. This right is very important in determining the best interests of the child. The final decision in any proceedings before the competent authorities, institutions and/or services is certainly not on the child, but the appreciation of the opinions of the child in the process of establishing the relevant facts is an additional guarantee that the final decision will be in his best interest. In particular it must stress the importance of the obligations of the organs, institutions and/or service that in all cases, their all the necessary conditions to a child can feel free to express your opinion and attitude, customized way, and especially without pressure of any kind. The manipulation of the child's opinion is particularly present in the conflict of marriage in divorce cases, the part relating to the disclosure of the child, but the editing and seeing a parent with whom the child does not live anymore. It must not be forgotten that express the opinion of the child exclusively his choice and not an obligation, but the basic requirement is that the child should teach in every procedure about this right and provide him with all necessary information, in a manner suited to his age. It is necessary to determine with certainty that the child fully understand who and what the process is about and what is its role in this process, what it means to his opinion and why it is necessary, etc. The person who questioned the child must primarily to establish a relationship of trust with the child and the child to build a clear stance that it will seriously consider his opinion, and in particular to remedy all situations of abuse of his opinions.⁷

The recommendations of the UN Committee to the state point out that is necessary:

⁶ UN Convention on the rights of the child, article 12.

⁷ UN Committee on the right of the child, concluding observations and recommendations 2012, point 33 and 34.

- take measures to ensure effective implementation of legislation recognizing the right of the child to express his views in the relevant legal proceedings, including the consideration and establishment of system and/ or the procedure for social workers and the courts to monitor respect for the principles,
- undertake programmes and activities to raise awareness, to promote meaningful and powered by participation of all children, within the family, communities, and schools

Right of the child to protection against any forms of violence⁸

The rights contained in the Convention belong to every child without any discrimination on any basis. Obligation of all subjects to their protection of the child from all forms of discrimination or punishment based on the status, activities, expressed opinion or belief of the parents, trustees or members of the family of the child.

IIIGENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN TEH REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

Children as human beings have a specific position in the society. It is necessary for the society to undertake all necessary action to secure special care for children and their protection. The healthy environment and proper phyco-physical development are necessary to have children as equal and protected members of the society.

The way and methods of upbringing during the childhood directly influence the future of the child. The most important role in this fall on adults. If adults fail to recognize need of the child and situations in which the child needs protection, consequences for development of the individual could be permanent and harmful.

Many different subjects with different roles are involved in support and protection of children (parents, schools, centers and departments of social care, health care institutions, judiciary, media,...) All subjects have obligations and responsibility to act promptly and responsible in line with their role and the best interest of the child. It is necessary to follow the child continuously and mutually cooperate and exchange information. Only in this way the conditions for adequate identification of the need to protect and the way to do it. Having in mind that the consequences could be long term and very harmful for development of the child if only one subject of protection fails to react adequately, the need for mutual coordination of all relevant actors has to be emphasized at all times.

The Ombudsman for children notes that the society has indicated higher level of sensibility towards the needs of the children and recognition of the main principals of eth convention. However, a number of subject still performs inconsistently and without full understanding of the best interest of the child. This triggers reactions in the public and mistrust of citizens that the certain subject of protection would react effectively. This could be concluded from the verified fact that the number of appeals to Ombudsman submitted by citizens who have not addressed to the competent bodies/institutions/departments before coming to the Ombudsman increased in the

⁸ UN Convention on the rights of the child, article 2.

reporting period. This fact also indicates increased trust of citizens in the work of the institution of the Ombudsman for children.

Ombudsman for children deems as important to emphasize good practices in promotion and protection of children's rights but unfortunately those are have not been fully recognized by professional and public in general. Therefore, the competent bodies should direct their actions toward identification of good practices and efficiencies of institutions and departments. There is a significant number of subjects who put a maximum effort in order to properly respond to needs of the children and achieve visible results regardless their capacities, On the other side, there are number of institutions that justify their untimely and inadequate measures with lack of material and human capacities. The excuses of such kind have often been used by schools who justify their failure to act properly with lack of phycologist or lawyers.

Ombudsman for children acted upon 722 cases in 2017. Out of those 561 were appeals submitted by individuals/groups, 69 were ex officio cases and 92 were transferred from previous year. Number of individual appeals increased from 524 to 561 comparing to the previous year. Also, the number of transferred cases increased from 48 to 92. The number of ex officio cases decreased from 83 to 69. During the reporting period the Ombudsman for children acted in 47 cases related to the cooperation with children and education on their rights as well as the ways and obligations in protection of their rights and interests.

The analysis of the cases that were processed upon appeals indicates that it is difficult to find out the exact number of children whose rights were violated in each concrete case. For example, when the appeal I submitted by "group of parents" or "group of children" when the case indicate shortcomings in the system of protection. Such appeals are processed as one single case, so statistically it relates to eth violation of rights of one child. Also, in cases when Ombudsman implemented thematic research such researches do not contain the number of children whose rights were violated but only the number of children who participated in a research.

For given reasons, the statistical data in this report are only related to the cases in which the number, gender and age of children is obvious. In total, 804 children were part of the cases processed in front of the Ombudsman.

Similar to the previous reports, this report points out that children under ten years are mainly exposed to situations in which they rights have been violated. In the reporting period, the number of children in the age group 6-10 years old increased from 207 in 2016 to 234 in 2017. The boys have been more exposed to the violation of their rights also in 2017, 331 of them (in 2016 -355) comparing to 275 girls (298 in 2016).

Having in mind that the cases processed in front of the Ombudsman mainly relate to the violation of personal rights of children, which is mostly under social welfare center competence, in most cases, 335 of them, the Ombudsman addressed firstly social welfare centers in order to have an information regarding violation of the child's right the case refers to (in 2016 the number was 262 and in 2015 – 240). The number of appeals related to the work of education institutions constantly increases. There were 136 such appeals in 2017 (129 in 2016 and 106 in 2015). The number of cases involving judiciary also increased to 47 comparing to 30 in 2016 and 67 in 2015). In cases involving education institutions, Ombudsman has often requested information on proceedings from the Republic Pedagogical Institution and Education Inspection.

Out of total number of received appeals, 650 were resolved or 90%. 72 appeals or 10% are in the process of resolution. Out of 650 resolved cases, 24 or 4% are unfounded ones and 69 (11%) are the ones related to the issues which do not fall under Ombudsman competence. Mostly, it was about the cases related to adult children, rights to pension, seeking advices from the filed for which the Ombudsman for children does not have competence, financial aid, labor relations issues, etc.

The Ombudsman for children had 69 ex officio cases in 2017 and prepared two special reports "Protection of the rights of children without parental care" and "On your rights in your school". The Ombudsman submitted 25 recommendations to the relevant stakeholders at the republic and local level.

In line with the mandate, the Ombudsman for children submitted the opinion regarding the Draft Law on secondary educations, Draft Criminal Code, and Draft law on specific register for persons who perpetrated criminal offences of sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman has been contacted by a significant number of institutions which requested assistance and opinion in addressing individual cases. The Ombudsman for children does not have a mandate to give opinion in individual cases related to violation of rights and interests of children but can take position which could assist in the cases.

Members of the parents' councils have contacted Ombudsman for children frequently mainly asking for advices related to protection of children against electronic peer violence and material and other conditions in schools.

In most cases, the complaints were submitted by parents. Two complains were received directly from children.

Out of total number of complaints processed by the Ombudsman, most were related to the violation of personal rights, 183 of them. The number of complaints related to the right to protection against violence increased to 144 (from 123 in 2016, 85 in 2015 and 70 in 2014) and mainly refer to events in education. The number of complaints related to violation of socio-economic rights increased to 76 comparing to 67 in 2016, while the number of complaints regarding to the rights to education remained the almost the same, 75 comparing to 73 in earlier period. The number of complaints related to the violations of the rights of children with disabilities decreased to 38 comparing to 46 in 2016. These are mainly related to the education system.

The biggest number of complaints that point violation of the rights of child in process of divorce, cessation of the extramarital relationship, inadequate protection from different forms of violence, abuse and neglect as well as to different violations of children's right in education system, especially in cases of peer violence in schools.

Complaints that indicate violation of the rights of the child in process of divorce or cessation of the extramarital relationship mainly refer to violation of the rights to personal and direct contact with theotherparent and the right to alimony.

Ombudsman for children recognize that the problems in procedures of arrangements of personal relation with the other parents in case of divorce or cessation of the relationship are serious as the practice clearly indicates lack of efficient protection of the right of the child in such processes. Divorce is a traumatic experience for entire family, especially for the children. For that reason, it is of utmost importance that parents keep a minimum of

mutual tolerance following divorce in order to put the rights and interest of the child in the first place. In the process of divorce, parents often forget that children know and understand much more than parents think and that they for sure have their own opinion on divorce. The divorce is more harmful if entails some other changes like move, change of school, new marriage, etc. In most cases the Ombudsman for children received complaint from fathers who claimed that following divorce they lose contacts with children or such contacts are irregular and lasts less than it was planned. Fathers claim that they have been required to pay the alimony with constant other requests while mothers are not required to enable contacts between fathers and children. On the other side, mothers claim that the child is not ready to contacts with the fathers and that father does not pay the child support. They also state that fathers neglect the facts that children are sometimes ill, that they have some extracurricular activities, etc. Responding to this, fathers state that the time lost with children can not be compensated and their only right is to wait for the next meeting.

The inadequate and untimely reaction from competent reaction of centers and departments complicates these processes. Such reactions are obvious through:

- Lack of proper reactions toward the parent with whom children live, and who does not intentionally stick with the decision on arrangement of personal contacts and who put obstacles to implementation of this decision. In cases in which the maintenance of contacts with other parent is intentionally blocked, the reactions from the guardian bodies have to be effective and prompt.
- Not clear or left to interpretations decisions on maintenance of personal contact, for example
 - the time and place for meeting with the child has not been precisely established or
 - The way of contacts with children during the holidays and summer break has not been defined.
- Ineffective and long procedures related to personal contacts with other parent for consequence have restriction the child right to both parents. The centers/ departments state that this is a result of bad relations between the parents. The parents, on the other side, blame the officials for unnecessary prolonging of the processes and claim that the official bodies do not act impartial but favor one or the other side, and do not take into consideration child's opinion and his best interests.
- In some cases, the relevant bodies do not act within the legally set deadline.

The right to child support following divorce or after cessation of extramarital relations is significant right of the child and when parents avoid it, it is a serious form of negligence. Complaints to Ombudsman for children that relate to the issue of child support indicate that the existing legislation does not ensure necessary mechanisms for efficient implementation of this right. Further there is no data on number of children who receive the child support, number of court procedures related to it, assigned amounts, reasons for interruption or delaying of these procedures in the courts. Also there is no data why competent centers/ departments do not initiate such procedures before the courts for what they have authority by the law. There is lack of analysis on effects of different legal solutions in practice.

Considering current practice in the field of protection of the rights of the child, the changes of current legislation is a top requirement. The Family law, is the top priority in this sense The Ombudsman for children pointed out needs to change the Family law in previous reports. The changes are needed in the filed regulating the right of the child in the processes of divorce, right to child support, as well as the part of the law that

regulates adoption. During 2017 the activities related to the establishment of the "alimony fund" were enhanced. The establishment of such fund would ensure proper protection of children's right in the area.

Efficiency of the procedure before the bodies, institutions and departments when it concerns the right and interest of the child is still not a reality. The legal requirements related to the rules of procedure are not respected the child often does not participate in the procedure although his rights have been decided upon; the child is not represented by parents, legal guardians and other authorized persons; the explanations of decisions are contrary to decisions or decision do not contain an explanation at all, etc. Often, one can witness different approach of different approach of the bodies to the same issues which is a consequence of different interpretation of the law. Citizens often complain about unprofessional behavior of clerks and lack of information how to implement certain rights.

Data on demographics in the Republic of Srpska is worrying as the mortality rate is high since 2002. The record recession of -2,8 happened in 2007. This leads to constant decrease of number of pupils, labor force and fertile population, the population is older, etc. the natality rate is low and lower each year which is worrying fact in itself.

The **need to adequately support multi-member** families is in direct connection with the low natality rate. Analyzing data gathered through specific research⁹, Ombudsman for children deems that is necessary to undertake the measures and activities to support children from multi member families and to:

- Initiate necessary measures and activities to develop an official data on multi-member families;
- Undertake necessary measures to raise awareness of citizens that the multi member families are not an issue for the society but the most important resource of economic and social development;
- Evaluate measures and activities undertaken so far and effect of the application of these, and to identify problems of families and children from multi-member families in different areas of protection of their rights in order to define long term policies and priorities for improvement of life of children from those families;
- To establish specific criteria for scholarships for secondary and higher education for children from these families as well as for the mothers who continued their education;
- Support housing of multi-member families through favorable interest rates or subventions of the loans by the local or republic level;
- Establish realistic coverage for beneficiaries of reimbursement for children;
- Decision on donation of free text books should cover all pupils of primary schools from multi-member families and not only the one with the best grades, especially if they are pupils with special needs.

Violence against children is a serious challenge for the society and is present in different forms. Unfortunately, the practice mostly identify the physical violence which than gets exposed in the media. However, other different forms of violence with difficult physical and psychological consequences for the child victim remain in margins or do not get identified, especially when they happen in some hidden forms.

In the area of protection of children against violence in the Republic of Srpska one can witness significant improvements: the protocol on acting in cases of violence, abuse and

⁹Special report of Ombudsman for children on position of children in families with four and more children in the Republic of Srpska

neglect has been signed and applied in every day practice. The First report on violence against children has been prepared, the programs on prevention is incorporated into the Curriculum, the new Criminal Code has come into the force, there is a register of perpetrators of sexual offences against children. However, following the situation in practice closely, the Ombudsman for children notes the need to further improve the system, especially the system of prevention.

Protocol on acting in cases of violence, abuse and neglect establishes, among others, obligation of establishing and keeping the official evidence and preparation of the annual on violence against children. The First report on violence against children was prepared for 2013 when children who were victims of different forms of violence, abuse and neglect. However, at the time of preparation of this report there was no report on violence against children for 2017 nor for previous years prepared. The Ombudsman for children recommended to the ministry in charge to address this.

During 2017 the Ombudsman acted upon 144 cases on violence against children. Out of those, 42 were cases of peer violence and 16 were domestic violence with children as victims while in 11 cases the victims suffered from sexual violence.

The peer violence does not happen only in schools. However, the practice indicates that the schools are the places where most cases of peer violence take place. Often, this continues after school with the use of modern technologies and social networks. For example, when the physical violence that took place in the school extends to social networks, it triggers consequences of psychological violence by posted improper commentary in the social networks. The Ombudsman from children state that the peer violence is not timely identified and there are still cases where the authorities and subjects of children protection system failed to act promptly and adequately.

Daily development and advancement of the informative I communication system and use of available applications make possible for children to access different contents which can be useful. However, the children are often not able to recognize risks of such communication.

Development of informative – communication technologies has its advantages, but it has opened questions related to the issue of safety of the use. Protection of children against electronic violence requires multi-disciplinary approach and cooperation of all competent bodies and institutions. Parents have a specific obligation and responsibilities to teach their children from early years about content that could be search on the web and that they can find themselves in uncomfortable situations, how to prevent such situation and protect themselves.

The upbringing is a process of forming of persons with all physical, intellectual, moral, esthetic and working qualities. There are number of theories on contemporary methods of upbringing and strengthening of positive parenthood. However, in our society the corporal punishment is still considered as the "best method", while we forget that the law strictly prohibit hitting of an adults person. If we hit an adult it is a violence and if we hit the child it is considered as education. It is clear that adults and children have not been equally treated by the law in this area.

Corporal punishment violates children's rights. It is first of all violation of the right to psycho – physical integrity and human dignity, right to proper psycho- physical development, to safe environment, even the right to life. We send a message that the violence is proper way of conflict resolution or for forcing someone to do what others

want them to do. Ombudsman for children submitted an initiative for change and additions to the family law which include ban on corporal punishment.

The violation of the **child's right to privacy** can occur everywhere and under any circumstances. The Ombudsman for children notified one violation of this right in one school (the findings of the psychological examination of the student were read out loud at the beginning of the meeting with several participants). However, the most violations of this right happen in media reporting. By monitoring the media, the Ombudsman has noted more sensitivity when it comes to reporting on children comparing to previous years. However, in several cases the violation of the right to privacy happened because of the way of presenting the information of the child in concern. Most frequently it was about children who live in difficult material situation, who are sick or have disabilities. The most significant improvement in this regard is the adoption of the new Criminal Code with the introduction of a new criminal act "violation of the privacy of children".

The continuous and comprehensive education and information of children, parents and all professionals who work with children is necessary in order to ensure respect for the right to privacy. Also, the wider public needs to become more sensitive to violations of this right which is often difficult to identify.

Recommendations for general improvement of the existing system for children's protection

By accepting the UN Convention the state took over the obligation to harmonize entire legislation with requirements and principles of the Convention. The harmonization is a continuous process and requires analysis of all laws and other legislative acts. The solutions in the system have to be clear so there is no space for interpretations. At the same time, the same solutions need to be flexible enough to take into account specificity of every child and his best interest in different life situations.

Ombudsman for children emphasize that the reporting period witnessed significant improvements in process of harmonization of domestic legislation with the needs of children and international standards.

- **By adopting the law on children protection** the state recognized the need for implementation of children's rights in other fields not just in social sector. This law regulates the system of children's protection which is based on the right and duty of a parent to care for upbringing and development of their children, the right of the child to proper living conditions and obligation of the state to secure it. The law regulates the right to mother's allowance of 450 KM for unemployed mother for twelve months and for twins and every third and next child for 18 months.
- **Adoption of the Law on registers of perpetrators of sexual offences** is an important step forward in the area of necessary additional protection of children against abuse and exploitation. By establishment of the register and data of the sexual offender aims to protect children and their safety by decreasing number of perpetrator who repeat the offence. Also, it aims to prevent perpetrators of sexual offences against children to work with children in any area. The reasons for adoption of this law are related to the fact that it is very difficult to secure rehabilitation for such criminal acts, that most often perpetrators repeat the criminal act and that the time period between two offences could be extremely long.

- **Adoption of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska** incorporated all initiatives coming from the Ombudsman for Children as response to the needs of children and their right to protection against different forms of sexual abuse and exploitation: increased punishment for perpetrators of sexual offences against children; increased age limit for consent; introduction of a ban to work with children for perpetrators of sexual offences; introduction of no possibility for decrease of verdict for perpetrators of sexual offences against children; introduce psycho-social treatment for the perpetrators; the limitation of these offences starts with age of eighteen. The Criminal Code introduced new criminal act: "violation of the privacy of the child".
- The law on solidarity fund for diagnoses and treatments of diseases, conditions and injuries of children abroad was adopted in the reporting period. The adoption of this law should contribute to the better quality of health services and address inequalities in implementation of the right to health. It also provides better information for parents, faster procedures and equal access for all children regardless costs of the treatments. The children with rare diseases fight tough battles with the sickness, long treatments and therapies. The aim of this law is to provide to all children who are citizens of BiH/ RS and insured by the Fund of health insurance of the RS and who can not receive adequate treatments in the Republic of Srpska possibility for treatments in the foreign countries if there are facilities that can provide it.

Analysis of the system of protection of rights and interest of children indicates the need for further improvements and the Ombudsman for children points out following needs:

- **Adoption of a long term strategic document** for improvement of the social care for children is still a need and obligation of our society. At the same time it is response to the requirements of the Convention and other international documents to provide international standards to all children under same conditions without any discrimination. This document has to include all subjects of protection of children: family, education, relevant ministries and all the subjects from the republic level, local community, NGOs, media, etc. The basic aim of such document is definition of the policies for achieving the best interest of children in all sectors of life. The document needs to identify necessary solutions and set the timeline for implementation. Back in 2013, the RS Government had requested from relevant ministries to prepare such strategic document for improvement of the position of children in the RS. However, the activities in preparation of this document have not resulted in anything concrete except adoption of the Strategic to family development 2009-2014.
- Ombudsman for children also point out the question of **equality of children born in marriage and outside the wedlock**. When the children born outside the marriage are concerned, there is a legal competence of social security centers to decide on entrustment of children following the breakup of the relationship. In cases of entrustment of children born in marriage, the court is the body to decide within the process of divorce. Such solution causes additional problems, especially when there are tensions in relationship. The RS Constitution clearly states that the children have

the same rights regardless being born in marriage or not.¹⁰ Children who are not born in marriage should have the same right to the court protection under the same conditions as children born in marriage. In order to ensure this, there is a need to change the Family Law of the RS and to have the competences of the court for entrustment of children not born in marriage

- Ombudsman for children still emphasize the need for **additional changes and amendments to the Family law**. The fact is that this law has experienced certain changes and introduced significant improvements in developments of the child's rights, i.e. right to express opinion and right to timely information¹¹. However, there is a need to change it further in accordance to requirements of the UN Convention on the rights of the child. Among other things, the law has to strengthen responsibilities of relevant departments when conducting procedures and making decisions in the best interest of children. The best interest of the child in all individual cases has to be realistically achievable and not only declaratively. Concerning that the activities for establishment of the Alimony Fund are ongoing, the Family Law has to follow these activities by strengthening the role of the bodies of guardianship for initiation of procedures for required reimbursement of the child support. Further, it is necessary to regulate the stipulations on adoption with requirements as principals of the Convention and other international documents; to ban corporal punishment; and other necessary changes and additions about which the Ombudsman warned in previous years.
- All subjects of protection have to undertake all necessary measures and activities to provide conditions for the child to express his opinion and position in all court and administrative procedures that concern the child.
- Ombudsman for children points out the needs to adopt the new **Law on sports**, as daily practice demonstrates that the existing law is obsolete. The new law has to emphasize importance of sport for psycho-physical development of children, sports especially. The law should provide for easier access of children to this right and to adjust their regulations and needs when different sports' clubs are in questions. The law has to regulate clear obligations of individual subjects in implementations of this right. This Law and changes have been part of the National Assembly in 2016, but still has not been adopted.
- The care for **healthy development and growth of children** requires among other things that the Curriculum in school includes topics that promote health, healthy life styles, and adoption of healthy life styles of children. The children in education system from early ages should receive information and knowledge on healthy nutrition, importance of physical activity, harmfulness of alcohol abuse, drugs, nicotine, gambling.

¹⁰The RS Constitution, article 36

¹¹ Law on changes and amendment to the family Law, the RS Official gazette, No: 63/14.

- In order to have immunization and prescribed by the law, it is necessary to improve the system of education and information, strengthen the confidence in professional opinions and position. In addition, the application of the law have to secure constant oversight, so the promote reactions would prevent further consequences.
- Having in mind the causes and consequences of **the risky sexual behavior of youth**, it is necessary to incorporate into the program the education on sexuality and reproductive health which would initiate children's thinking and care for their health, reproductive in particularly, sexually transmitted diseases, risky behaviors, abortions. All this program need to have preventive function.
- In spite of **legal stipulation on prevention on participation in gambling** there are no indications of number of inspections are conducted yearly, what are the effects of controls and especially if they are preventive. The bans regulated by the Law are the measures that need to be monitored and other appropriate programs that should have their preventive functions to point out harmful consequences of gambling to children's development.
- **Children with disabilities:**
 - To prepare and adopt mandatory protocol on cooperation which establishes obligation and way of constant coordination and cooperation, including exchange of data among all institutions which are competent for offering support to children with disabilities (at local and entity level). The coordination and cooperation between the first-instance commission for evaluation of needs and directing children and youth with disabilities (social welfare centers are coordinators of activities of the commissions) and observation teams in schools;
 - The text books for specific programs for children with disabilities have to be immediately developed and following that, used in practice;
 - To establish obligatory measures for early identification and treatment for children with disabilities and their inclusion in pre-school education;
 - To widen the field of potential occupation and school for children with disabilities;
 - To undertake concrete activities in order to remove all physical obstacles for access to all education institutions asap.
- **Strategy for development of education in the Republic of Srpska** for period 2016-2021 state that the current situation requires comprehensive analysis and real projection of all key aspects of education development. It also requires coordinated and systematic approach to development and improvement of the quality in education. Considering that the Strategy does not define relevant stakeholders and timeline for implementation of defined activities to achieve set goals, it is of significant importance to define it in eth annual action plan for implementation of the Strategy.
 - **Child-beggars** need to be provided with right conditions for proper development and with respect for their dignity, therefore it is especially important:

- Ensure more efficient cooperation and coordination of all relevant bodies, institutions, especially in prevention ,
- It is necessary to ensure institutionalized gathering of data which would serve for planning and implementation of preventive programmes and identification of activities for improvement of quality of life for this category of children,
- It is necessary to include all children in education system and monitor their education, specifically these children in risk. It is also necessary to identify causes for them to leave the school.
- To strengthen cooperation of all involved in protection with the non-governmental sector, especially with the associations who deal with marginalized groups. These associations need to be involved in development of plans and programmes for prevention,
- To raise awareness on need and obligation to report all the case of exploitation of children, neglect and abuse and education of public for identification of situations that are harmful for children.
- It is important to strengthen monitoring of obligation to **adopt appropriate general bi-laws** in the education institutions. These documents need to be harmonized with the laws and other legislation. They should be published and accessible for students and parents and educators.
- The Book of rules for criteria and procedures for identification, monitoring and establishment of **talented students** needs to be prepared.
- Appropriate amendments of the **curriculum**.
 - **Gathering data and keeping the records** important for all phases of children's development is also a part of eth implementations of the Convention. The practice indicates that there is no data kept in certain areas about issues relevant to protection of the right of children. Reports on implementation of children's rights in different areas, are not the goal in itself but have the function of analysis of the current situation and development of more effective measures. The records and reports important for monitoring of violations of children's rights are:
 - Annual report on violence, abuse and neglect of children;
 - Annual report on peer violence;
 - Data on children with behavioral issues;
 - Information on marital and extramarital relations with minors. It is worrying that there is no data on real number of children leaving in extramarital relations nor the minimum age limit for such relations. The Ombudsman for children is worried about the fact that marriage requests are often submitted in cases when minor leave in relationship for a period of time. Such relationships could lead to pregnancies before 16 years old.
 - The number of children who left the school or did not start the primary education;
 - Information on talented children;
 - Any other evidence important to monitor the state of children's rights.

The ombudsman for children points out the good practice of the Ministry of Interior who keep the record on children on different basis.

- **Permanent supervision on application of current legislation and continuous monitoring of effects** in practice is the one of the requirements of the Convention which has not been fulfilled in practice. The obligation to harmonize the legislation with the requirements of the Convention the State fulfills gradually. However, the Convention requires constant monitoring of the system of protection of the rights of child and adoption of adequate and new measures in order to make the system modern and adequate.

IV ACTING OF OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

In 2017 the Ombudsman for Children processed 722 cases in 2107. Out of those: 561 were individual complaints, 69 were ex officio cases and 92 of them were transferred from previous year.

Number of cases indicates increase in number of submitted complaints from 524 to 561. The number of transferred cases increased from 48 to 92. The number of ex officio cases decreased from 83 to 69.

The Ombudsman processed 47 cases which relate to the mandate for continuous cooperation with children by informing them on ways to implement their rights and interests¹² and advise children how to implement and protect their rights and interests.

In the reporting period the Ombudsman for Children had been contacted by over 1500 citizens who came to the offices in person or reach out by the phone, email and similar. They asked for advice regarding their situation or requested information who to address in order to implement their children's rights. Most frequently asked questions were about authorities of institutions, relevant legislation, interpretation of different decisions. They also asked about possibility for Ombudsman to participate in different processes, requested assistance and advices relevant for the rights in FBiH and region. The citizens also asked about the institutions and professionals who could assess the child in processes of divorce, cases of violence, etc.

Citizens also addressed the Ombudsman in situations for which they knew the institution does not have the mandate. Regardless, they sought advice or explanation. Also, in some cases they asked for children who were over 18 years old.

A number of institutions have contacted the Ombudsman for Children asking for assistance and opinion regarding particular cases. The Ombudsman for children does not have mandate to give opinions in individual cases that point out the violation of the children's rights but in such cases the institution takes the stand which could assist in implementation of children's rights.

Members of the parents councils also had contacted the Institution mainly asking for assistance in education on how to protect children against electronic violence, the weight of the school bag, conditions in schools, and similar. They recognized importance for increased engagement of their parents in school life and also addressed the Ombudsman for children in relations to that.

The complaints submitted to the Ombudsman frequently point out the necessity to regulate certain situation within relevant legislation or by adoption of bi-laws.

¹²Law on Ombudsman for Children, the RS Official gazette number 103/08 and 70/12, Article 6.

Activities of Ombudsman in 2017	
Complaints–received	561
Ex Officio work	69
Complaints transferred from 2016	92
Recommendations	24
Opinions	2
Special reports	2
Cooperation with children and education on rights	47
Total:	797

A) Acting upon complaints

Complainant

Mainly the parents, one or both, addressed the OmbudsmanforChildren. Ost frequent reasons were right of the child to contacts with the other parent, right to child support. During 2017, 420 parents were submitted by parents or 66,7% of them.

The third parties, mainly neighbors, submitted 56 complaints, and relatives (grandparents and aunts) submitted 50 complaints related to different forms of neglect, violence against children or lack of contacts with children.

The Ombudsman acted upon small number of anonymous complaints which relate to violations of children’s rights. These appeals contained relevant elements which indicated the needs to follow-up on alleged violations of the rights.

Complaints from media mainly relate to different forms of violence, neglect and abuse of children.

Two children personally complained to the Ombudsman forChildren for the violation of their rights in education system.

Complainant		
Parents	420	66.7%
Initiative of Ombudsman for children	69	11.0%
Third parties	56	8.9%
Relatives	50	7.9%
Institutions and associations	15	2.4%
Schools	7	1.1%
Anonymous	5	0.8%
Media	3	0.5%
Legal guardian	3	0.5%

Child personally	2	0.3%
Total:	630	

The Ombudsmanforchildren had not acted upon complaints which have not provided enough elements, or were not related to children or alleged violations of their rights.

Violations of the right of the child

Rights violated		
Personal rights	183	29.0%
Protection against violence	144	22.9%
Socio-economic rights	76	12.1%
Education rights	75	11.9%
Rights of children with disabilities	38	6.0%
Rights to health care	21	3.3%
Judiciary rights	21	3.3%
Rights of children members of the society	16	2.5%
Right to culture and leisure time	4	0.6%
Other rights	52	8.3%
Total:	630	

Out of total number of complaints, 183 were related to the violation of personal rights. There is an increase in the number of complaints regarding protection against violence (*14 in 2017, 123 in 2016, 85 in 2015 and 70 in 2014). Mostly they relate to the education system. There is an increase in the number of complaints which are related to the violations of socio-economic rights (76 comparing to 67 in 2016). The number of complaints related to the education rights is 75 which is similar to 73 in 2016. There is a decrease in the number of violations of the rights of children with disabilities to 38 comparing to 46 in 2016. Mainly, they related to education system.

Number of complaints of other related to violations of other rights has not changed significantly comparing to previous reports.

Ombudsman for children received 183 complaints related to the violation of personal rights of the child:

Personal rights	183
Arrangement of personal relations and direct contacts with other parent	111
Joint responsibility of parents for upbringing and development of their children	17
Protection of the rights and interest of children, best interest of the child	8
Travel documentation	7
Protection of children without parental care	6
Entrustment of children	4

Adoption	4
Assistance t parents	4
Right to privacy, protection of privacy	4
Contact with relatives	3
Supervision over implementation of parental rights	2
Protection of children who do not enjoy family environment	2
Violations of rights in process of divorce	2
Adoption of appropriate administrative act	1
Accommodation in the safe house	1
Behavioral changes	1
Acting upon instruction of the second instance body	1
Rights of the child o adequate parental care	1
Right to insurance	1
Parental rights	1
Right to citizenship	1
Violations f the rights before education inspection	1

According to the Convention, the personal rights of the child include: right to life, right to know the heritage, right to report of birth, right to name, right to citizenship, right to preservance of identity, right to family and parental care, right to personal and direct contacts with theother parent, right to special care and alternative care, right to honor and reputation, right to protection against abduction.

Right to protection against violence, abuse and neglect is separately marked.

Unfortunately, out of total number of complaints, the biggest number relates to personal relations and direct contacts with other parent, 79 of them (arrangement of visitation, changes of existing agreements, execution of decision and agreement). However, there is a significant decrease in this number comparing to previous reports.¹³

Number of children

It is difficult to determine an exact number of children affected by the subject of appeal in each concrete case. For example, when a "group of children "group of parents" submits complaint, or when the complaint refers to certain system's regulations. These complaints gets processed as one, and then statistically indicate one child as affected. Also, when the Ombudsman for children conducts research thereis no number o children whose rights have been violated but only the number of participants in the research.

For the reasons mentioned above, the statistics in this report relates only to the cases in which the number, age andgender of children was clearly stated.

Age

¹³In 2016 -125, in 2015 – 138.

Age		
0-5	116	14.4%
6-10	234	29.1%
11-14	176	21.9%
15-18	103	12.8%
Group of children	45	5.6%
Unknown	110	13.7%
Over 18	20	2.5%
Total:	804	

As in previous reports, the children up to 10 years old are mostly exposed to the situations in which their rights get violated. The number of children affected in the age group 6-10 increased from 2017 to 234

Taking into account the number of complaints that refer to violations of rights in processes of divorce, the conclusion is that children in these ages are most affected.

For 110 children was not possible to determine the age while for 20 affected it was determined that they are over 18 years old.

Gender

The gender of children whose rights have been violated according to the complaints reveals that boys have been more affected also in 2017 – 331 boys and 275 girls. In 2016 there were 355 boys affected and 298 girls. The same was noted in previous reports. In 133 complaints the gender has not been specified. In the complaints submitted by groups of parents of children the gender also cannot be determined.

Gender		
Girls	275	34.2%
Boys	331	41.2%
Group of children	45	5.6%
Unknown	133	16.5%
Over 18	20	2.5%
Total	804	

Responsible party

Responsible party	
Social welfare centers/departments	335
Education institutions	136

Judiciary	47
City/municipal administrations	43
Ministries	30
Funds	26
Public security centers	18
Request for advice/opinion	15
Institutions	13
Other public institutions	10
Health care	10
Enterprises	9
Public enterprises	6
Bodies/departments of FBiH and other states	6
Non- governmental organizations	3
Other (handball union, tennis union)	2
Indoor playgrounds	1

Having in mind that complaints mainly relate to the violation of personal rights of the child, which is mainly under the competence of the social welfare, these institutions, 335 of them, were addressees hold responsible (in 2016 – 262 and 240 in 2015).

There is constant increase in complaints related to the education system. In 2017 there were 136 such complaints, in 2016 there were 129 and in 2015 – 106.

There is increase in complaints related to the judiciary – 47 of them in 2017 (30 in 2016 and 67 in 2014).

In number of complaints related to the education the Ombudsman requested information from the Republic education inspection and Republic pedagogical institutions as well.

Way of reception of the complaints

Ways of the reception		
Personal	277	44.0%
By phone	113	17.9%
By mail	77	12.2%
Ex officio work	69	11.0%
By e-mail	68	10.8%
By fax	23	3.7%
From media	3	0.5%
Total:	630	

The biggest number of complaints was submitted personally by citizens who came to the offices of the Ombudsman. In 2017 there were 277, (in 2016 – 265); by phone 113 (in 2016 - 103), by mail 77 (in 2016 - 57), by e-mail 68 (in 2016 - 84).

Phases of proceedings upon complaints

Complaints in 2017		
Completed	650	90%
In process	72	10%
Total:	722	

Out of total number of received complaints, 90% or 650 were processed and completed and 10% or 72 of them are transferred and have been in process of completion.

Out of 650 completed cases		
Not in mandate	69	11%
Unfounded	24	4%

Out of 650 completed cases, 24 (4%) were unfounded and 69 (11%) cases were not within the mandate of the Ombudsman for children. Most frequently it was about the rights of children over 18, rights related to the pension, seeking advice for matters outside the mandate, financial aid, labor relations cases.

B) EX OFFICIO WORK

Special reports

According to the Law¹⁴ the Ombudsman for children has the mandate to submit the special report when deems it is necessary to undertake measures important for protection of the rights and interest of children.

Special report underlines shortcomings that could be of different nature and result in violation of the right of the child. The shortcomings could be in legislation that does not ensure protection of the rights and interests of the children in accordance to the principals and requirements of the Convention and other international treaties. It also can underline wrong application of the legislation by departments and bodies as well as the procedures which are not in line with the existing legislation.

Special reports should contribute to systematic approach in addressing the issues relevant for protection of the rights of children whose rights could be violated on the basis which is the subject of the report.

In 2017 the Ombudsman for children prepared two special reports:

1. Protection of the rights and interest of children without parental care
2. On your rights in your school

¹⁴ Law on Ombudsman for Children, Article 17

Recommendations

In doing the activities within the mandate, the Ombudsman is competent to recommend measures for prevention of harmful acting which jeopardize the rights and interest of children, to warn about wrong deeds and request reports of undertaken measures from the state bodies, units of local self-governance, and other legal and physical entities who work with children.¹⁵

Recommendations issued in the reporting period relate to the individual cases and concrete situation but also were issued to the ministries to undertake necessary measures in certain areas by adopting systematic measures in order to remedy situations that violate rights and interest of children.

The recommendations are given to competent bodies in individual case in which the Ombudsman for children did not succeed to reach the compromise by applying mediation tools.

1. Ministry of health and social protection – Disposal of child's property, number: 115-1-PŽS-1/17, 30/01/2017
2. Ministry of justice – Right of the child to express opinion and participate in the process that affects him, number: 107-2-PŽS-2/17 from 01/03/2017
3. Ministry of family, youth and sports – Annual report on violations against children, number: 126-3-PŽS-3/17 from 01 March 2017
4. Ministry of education and culture – Pedagogical standards and norms for pre-school education, No: 145-1-UP-4/17 from 01 March 2017
5. Ministry of family, youth and sports – Law on sports and Book of Rule on organising sports in the RS, No: 312-2-UP-5/17 from 07 March 2017
6. Social welfare center Banjaluka – Right of the child to protection against violence, No: 1187-132-PŽ-6/17 from 10 March 2017
7. Social welfare center Prnjavor – Acting upon complaint on violence against children, No : 241-19-PŽ-7/17 from 22 March 2017. godine.
8. Social welfare center Gradiska – Appointment of legal guardian for child, No: 242-20-PŽ-8/17 from 11 April 2017
9. Ministry of family, youth and sports – Children's playground, number: 499-8-PŽS-9/17 from 06 April 2017
10. Ministry of health and social protection – best interest of the child in implementation of the right to personal contacts with other parent, No: 458-47-PŽ-10/17 from 7 April 2017
11. Social welfare center Bijeljina – Right of the child to adequate parental care, No : 474-6-PŽS-11/17 from 25 April 2017
12. Social welfare center Brod – Protection of the best interest of the child, number: 502-50-PŽ-12/17 from 03 May 2017
13. Social welfare center Brod – Protection of the right and interest of minors, No : 534-57-PŽ-13/17 from 15 May 2017
14. Government of Brcko district – department of health and other services, branch office for social protection, Implementation of the right to personal relations and direct contacts with other parent, number : 323-29-PŽ-14/17 from 25 May 2017

¹⁵ Law on Ombudsman for children, Article 9.

15. Primary School „Sveti Sava“ Doboj–Protection of eth rights and interest of child, broj:701-69-PŽ-15/17 from 20 June 2017
16. Kindergarden„Radost“Prijedor–Protection ofthe right and interest o fa minor while enrolling in preschool, broj:722-71-PŽ-16/17, od 14.07.2017.godine.
- 17.Public health institutionNevesinje–Acting in accordance to the Protocol in cases of violence, neglect and abuse of children, No:791-84-PŽ-17/17 from 13 July 2017
- 18.Public health institutionHospital Istočno Sarajevo - Acting in accordance to the Protocol in cases of violence, neglect and abuse of children, No :851-94-PŽ-18/17 from 13 July 2017
- 19.PS „VukStefanovićKaradžić“ Doboj – Protection against peer violence, No: 108-69-1-PŽ/17 from 21 August 2017
20. Ministry of health and social protection –Best interest of the child in implementation of the right to personal relations and direct contacts with other parent, No:968-110-PŽ-20/17, from 21 August 2017
- 21.cnetral election commission BiH –Violations ofthe rights of children in political campaigns, No:1063-16-PŽS-16/17, od 24.08.2017.godine.
- 22.Ministry of education and culture –Fulfillment of conditions for the work of pre-school, No:1158-21-PŽS-22/17 from 20 September 2017
23. Public institution for children’s protection –Assistance for a newborn, No:1427-169-PŽ-23/17 from 22 November 2017
24. PS „VukStefanovićKaradžić“Ugljevik–Protection of the rights and interests of the minor,No :1048-122-PŽ-21/17 from 29 November 2017
25. PS „PetarKočić“Šiprage–Right of the child to protection against violence, No:1136-140-PŽ-24/17 from 19 December 2017

Opinions

Law on Ombudsman for children¹⁶ regulates the mandate of the Ombudsman for children to give opinions on proposal of laws and other legislative acts when they relate to the issues important to protection of the right of the child.

Acting in line with the Article 7 of the Law on ombudsman for children is of significant importance; however, due to the short deadlines for giving opinions it is often limited content wise as the relevant ministries fail to submit the texts of proposal to the institutions. In the reporting period, the exception from this was the Ministry of justice which acted within the legal framework and timey submitted the texts of the proposal of eth law to Ombudsman for children with request to give an opinion on it.

In line with the legal authority, the Ombudsman for children submitted:

- 1.Opinion on draft criminal code, number :487-3-UP/17 from 04 April 2017, submitted to Ministry of Justice,
- 2.Opinion on Draft law on secondary education, No:1374-4-UP/17 from 25 October 2017,Submitted to the Ministry of education and culture

¹⁶Law on Ombudsman for children , Aticle 7.

3. Opinion on Draft law on special register for convicted perpetrators of criminal acts of sexual exploitations and abuse of children, number: 1409-5-UP/17 from 01 November 2017 submitted to the Ministry of Justice.

XII ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2018

In 2018, the Ombudsperson for Children will undertake all activities in accordance with its statutory powers, and in particular:

1. Continue activities on:

- Monitoring and demonstrating the compliance of laws and other regulations in the Republic of Srpska related to the protection of the rights of the child with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international documents related to the protection of the rights and interests of the child.
- Give opinions to proposals of laws and other regulations, if they are regulated by issues of importance for the protection of children's rights.
- Monitoring the implementation of all regulations relating to the protection of the rights and interests of the child and providing appropriate recommendations to the competent entities.
- Monitoring and pointing out violations of the rights and interests of children as in the previous period.
- Proposing to take measures to protect and promote the rights of the child, as well as to prevent harmful acts that jeopardize the rights and interests of the child.
- Adoption of the necessary amendments to the Family Law to which this report indicates, Initiative number: 110/10 of 16 February 2010.
- Adoption of a long-term strategic document for the improvement of social care for children, Recommendation No. 1538/10 of 29.10.2010.
- The adoption of the new Law on Sports, Recommendation number: 312-2-UP-5/17.
- To include topics related to the promotion of health, healthy lifestyles and the adoption of healthy lifestyles in children and education on sexual reproductive health for children and young people in the School Curriculum in schools Recommendation no: 471-UP / 12 of 05.04 .2012.
- Undertaking activities related to the promotion of the need for vaccination of children.
- Adopting appropriate preventive programs about the harmful effects of gambling on the children and their growing, but also other forms of addiction, as indicated by the Annual Report for 2016.
- Adoption and publication of the Annual Report on Violence, Abuse and Neglect of Children, as proposed by the Recommendation No. 126-3-PŽS-3/17 of 01.03.2017. and the special report of the Ombudsperson, as indicated in this report.

2. Start the initiative:

- To compile a compulsory Protocol on Cooperation that sets out the obligation and way of continuous coordination and cooperation, including the exchange of information between all institutions responsible for providing support to children with disabilities (both at the local and at the entity level), and especially between the first instance the expert commission for the needs assessment and guidance of children and youth with disabilities (center / social work as a coordinator of these commissions) and expert observation teams in schools;

- Launch activities on the development of textbooks for established special programs for students of a particular type and degree of disturbance;
- To establish mandatory early identification and treatment measures for children with disabilities with a view to their inclusion in pre-school institutions;
- To expand the prescribed circle of occupations that can be attended by children with special educational needs
- Initiate the undertaking of the necessary activities to eliminate architectural barriers in all educational institutions as soon as possible.
- Initiate the creation of a special protocol on the treatment of children in begging that would:
 - Ensure more efficient cooperation and coordination of the competent authorities, institutions and / or services, especially in the prevention,
 - Provide institutional data collection by establishing appropriate records for the purpose of planning and implementing preventive programs and identifying the necessary activities for improving the position of this category of children,
- Start an initiative on the drafting and adoption of the Rulebook on the criteria and procedure for identifying, monitoring and determining talented children, as well as all other regulations and other by-laws referred to in this report.

To establish mandatory early identification Start an initiative on the drafting and adoption of the Rulebook on the criteria and procedure for identifying, monitoring and determining talented children, as well as all other regulations and other by-laws referred to in this report treatment measures for children with disabilities with a view to their inclusion in pre-school institutions

1. As in the previous period:

- Within the Children's Socialization Project, the Ombudsman for Children will take additional measures in order to ensure that our presence in this camp is accomplished in more shifts, with the aim of educating children about their rights, as well as gathering information on how much of their rights are exercised in their environment.
- The Ombudsman for Children will devote the necessary attention to marking: Children Sunday, Children's Rights Day, Safe Internet Days, International Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, International Day of the Children of the Victims of Violence, as well as all other important dates with the aim of promoting children's rights and more active role of all subjects of protection and individuals in the protection of children and their rights and interests.
- In order to regularly inform the public about the state of children's rights in the Republic of Srpska, as well as its activities, the Ombudsperson for Children will continue to cooperate with the media in the forthcoming period, but also encourage all protection subjects to make their work with children more transparent, including their internal general acts.
- Cooperation with the non-governmental sector is very important and will continue on all common issues related to the promotion and protection of children's rights.
- As a full member of the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children - ENOC, and a member of the Ombudsman for Children of South Eastern Europe - CRONSEE, the Ombudsman for Children will continue to cooperate with other members and actively contribute to the improvement of the work of these network

- The Ombudsperson for Children will also undertake all other necessary activities within the limits of his / her authority with the aim of protecting and promoting the rights of the children.