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Republic of Srpska Government  
Ministry of Health and Social Care  
Attn / Minister, Mr. Ranko Škrbić

Dear Sir,

Subject: Protocol on the Procedure - children at risk

Children at risk are recognized as children with potential behavior that is referred to as socially unacceptable, which, as such, is sanctioned by the law.

The detrimental consequences of various situations in which children find themselves, leaving school or a problem with alcohol for example, reflect not only on each child individually, but also on society as a whole and not only today but long term.

Without proper assistance and support it is not realistic to expect that a child itself will recognize the risks he is faced with or all the consequences that have already occurred and that will leave the trace on its development and growing up.

The problem of beggary in children, behavioral disorders, children in conflict with the law, children under the influence of alcohol, irregular attendance or leaving school and similar very often are the result of inadequate parental care and untimely response to such conditions of children's growing up.

Records of the number of juvenile offenders, the presence of unacceptable behavior in children with increasingly lower age, indicate that such behavior is preceded or followed by neglect of the child or inadequate parental care and absence of needed supervision in growing up of the child.

Untimely and / or inadequate reaction of parents and competent institutions, results in a violation of the rights of the child on several grounds.

Discussions about these, and many other matters of protection of the rights and interests of children, have indicated among other things, to:

- importance of timely recognition of this category of children,
- need to define the activities of different subjects of protection,
- need for joint work of numerous institutions for adequate support for these children,
- necessity of keeping adequate records by unique methodology for children who need special protection.

Whether we look at this problem from the legal, psychological, medical and social point of view, each points to the need above all to recognize this category of children and an adequate reaction especially in the part of prevention, which must be not only in the function of the protection of the child who is already at risk but also in prevention - acting on the causes that lead children in risky situations, but also in the function of education of children and adults about all harmful and long-term consequences to life, development and growing up of the child.

Bearing in mind that

- children at risk grow up in conditions that leave serious health, educational, social and other consequences, and that, while they are still children, are sent to social sector,

it is necessary to

- conjoint action, or coordination of activities of all relevant institutions, services, organizations and individuals in the identification of this category of children, identification of causes that lead them into risky situations, and identification of measures and activities of the relevant for common support to children in overcoming of situations in which they find themselves.

Modeled on the Protocol on the Procedure in cases of peer violence in educational system, it is necessary by multi-sectoral cooperation to do:

- Program of prevention of unacceptable behavior of children and adolescents, and
- Protocol on the Procedure of competent services and institutions for children at risk.

Since it is expected from social welfare centers to act in all cases of growing up of children at risk and at the same time the important role of protection of other subjects is ignored, I expect that you, as the relevant ministry, will take the necessary measures with the aim of cross-sectoral approach in determining the measures and activities of the relevant for the common support to children at risk.

Sincerely,

Ombudsman for Children  
Nada Grahovac