



Report Card 2015 marks minor progress in childcare – 3.20

National Network for Children proposes 10 recommendations to 10 unresolved problems

Sofia, April 15th, 2015 – For fourth consecutive year [National Network for Children](#) presented “Report Card 2015: What is the average score of State’s care for children?” The purpose of the document is to make a review of the progress of the implementation of State’s commitments to the children.

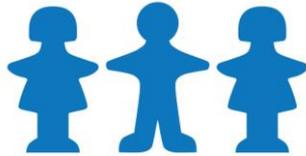
The highest score in the document is Good 4.29 for sub-subject “Early childhood care and education”. The progress in this field is sensible compared to last year when the score was Poor 2.86. The increase is a result of the actions taken to adopt standards for early childhood development and development of programs for pre-school education and schooling. The lowest score is Poor 2.11 for sub-subject “Adoption”. In 2014 the score was 2.43. Report Card 2015 notes that the process of adoption is still not a priority for the state, goes through complications, is too confusing and is scattered between many institutions.

218 children and young people had the opportunity to share their point of view for some of the obligations and recommendations in the document. They took part in four focus-groups and filled in online survey. Through them their opinion and scores became part of the whole text of the authors of Report Card 2015, which for second consecutive year gives their voices a platform to be heard.

The scores in Report Card 2015 are:

General principles under the UN Convention on the rights of the child	3.06
Family and alternative care	2.61
Healthcare	3.31
Education	3.62
Child justice	3.30
Annual score	3.20

“The purpose of the Report Card is to give outer point of view to the politics and experts in the state institutions and organizations for the way that we all walk in the development of politics for childcare. This year for the first time the score is 3.20. We always say that the scores themselves are not so important but is more important to follow the development of the obligations and for all of them we strive to give solutions and suggestions and to share existing good practices” **said Georgi Bogdanov, Executive Director of the National Network for Children.**



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“The “Report Card 2015: What is the average score State’s care for children?” is published for fourth consecutive year which gives us the opportunity to follow up the trends in the development of policies for children and families in Bulgaria. Our analysis shows that there are still many areas in which reforms are too slow and the will for change is not enough.

We often talk about deinstitutionalization or replacing old homes for children with new modern services, we develop foster care and we are given as a good example to other states from Central and Eastern Europe. The fact is that there is decrease of the number of children in foster homes and increase of children who are sent to centers of family type or foster care. In the same time the whole number of children in formal state care haven’t changed at all. By the end of 2014 children who are under state care still is over 6 000. For consecutive year we have proposal to put the priority on the prevention of children abandon and families separations, early intervention and support for the parents. We have a lot of work to do in this direction and we hope that state institutions will continue their partnership and cooperation with the non-government organizations so that we are able to create many other services for support according to the needs of every child” – **said Dani Koleva, Program Director of the National Network for Children.**

In addition to the analysis of the obligations of the state Report Card 2015 puts the light on 10 questions which are still not included in the state strategic plans but are extremely important for bettering of the child and family welfare in Bulgaria. “10 possible solutions to 10 unresolved problems” which the experts of the Network are proposing are:

1. To create Children’s Ombudsman;
2. To actualize the adopted in 2004 National residential strategy and to adopt package of programs and legislation changes for its implementation;
3. To develop and adopt holistic family policy;
4. To improve the capacity of child protection system;
5. To remove the two-shift model of education;
6. To guarantee free access to pre-school education for all children no matter where they live and what their social status is;
7. To guarantee mother-and baby-friendly healthcare system;
8. To develop purposeful state policy for investing and keeping in Bulgaria pediatricians and children healthcare specialists;
9. To adopt a policy and to encourage the culture of zero tolerance in the society towards violence against children;
10. To develop and implement unitary standards for friendly hearing of children.

4 short movies asked the guests of the event: “Is the state supporting enough the parents in Bulgaria?”, “Could you live normally only from social benefits?”, “How can we live together if we are not studying together?”, “Who are the children in conflict with the law?” With them National Network for Children shows that if families in risk receive adequate help in the right moment many children wouldn’t be abandoned or separated from their families; the faith of 6 000 children who go through the Children



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Pedagogical Rooms every year depends on the work with their families and the attitude of the adults who they meet on their life trajectory; the inclusive education is for all children, not only for children with special needs and to contest the myth that you could live normally on social benefits.

Answers of the questions asked in the videos and other topics concerning the life and welfare of children in Bulgaria were given by the guests in the 4 discussion groups: “Family”, “Healthcare”, “Education” and “Justice”.