

General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science

RESOLUTION

Adopted 11 June 2016, Sofia

Reaffirming the principles established in the Charter of good neighborly relations, stability, security and cooperation, signed in Bucharest in 200, as the founding document of SEECP;

Guided by the Rules of Procedures of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly adopted on May 2014 which establish the functioning of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly;

In accordance with the SEECP PA Work Programme 2015/2016 adopted on May, 2015;

Emphasizing that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols are legal binding instruments for all our countries;

Taking note of the General Comment No 6 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin;

Following the Recommendations given by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the Day of General Discussion: ‘The rights of all children in the context of international migration’, in 2012;

Deeply concerned by the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe, their access to rights and services;

The General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science, which was convened in Tirana, on April 9, 2016:

1. **Urges** SEECP Participants to recognize minors on the move as children, first and foremost. Border control and immigration policies should never be enforced at the expenses of the rights of the child;
2. **Calls upon** SEECP Participants to guarantee that every child has access to an effective procedure to claim international protection. Any claim for international protection by a child should be considered in its own merit, in a timely fashion and respecting all procedural guarantees and the best interests of the child;
3. **Recommends** to SEECP Participants to undertake immediate measures aiming at reforming the asylum system and make sure they become child and gender sensitive;

4. **Calls upon** SEECF Participants to step up measures for eradicating child poverty, improving the education system, increasing the effectiveness of the care, child protection and justice for children systems, in order to reduce the push-factors for migration of children and adolescents from our Region;
5. **Urges** SEECF Participants to cease the detention of children, with or without their parents, on the basis of their immigration status. Instead, to the greatest extent possible, and always using the least restrictive means necessary, they should adopt alternatives to detention that fulfil the best interests of the child, along with their rights to liberty and family life through legislation, policy and practices that allow children to remain with family members and/or guardians and be accommodated as a family in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved;
6. **Calls upon** SEECF Participants to continue investing in reception conditions both by enhancing their capacities and the conditions. Reception centres should meet children's needs in design, functioning and equipment. Sufficient gender and age segregated safe spaces should be available;
7. **Urges** all SEECF Participants to ensure access to basic services for children on the move and their families, including first medical aid, adequate food and non-food supply, mother and child safe spaces, child-friendly spaces and recreational activities for children, counselling, education etc., as well as referral to specialized services when needed (i.e. hospitalization, specialized mental health care, etc.);
8. **Encourages** Parliaments of SEECF Participants to hold an annual parliamentary debate that assesses the situation of children, including children on the move and the measures undertaken by the Government. More data and information is needed about the situation of children on the move, their needs, and the risks they face. The development of specialized services and social policies should be guided by such data. Children and youth should participate to such a parliamentary debate including children on the move themselves;
9. **Calls upon** SEECF Participants to prioritize the enhancement of child protection systems to also address the particular needs of children on the move and ensure their effective collaboration with the law-enforcement and justice system, with a view to hold accountable all those perpetrating violations of children's human rights. The Parliaments should monitor and ensure accountability so that budgetary decisions are driven by children's issues at all levels and contribute to systems strengthening. Budgetary decisions need to enhance alternatives to migration for national children and promote the reintegration of those who are returned; and

10. **Supports** SEECF Participants in undertaking all required measures to bring to an end the discrimination of foreign children and ensure that they access child protection systems on equal basis with national children. Further investments in such systems need to ensure that these systems provide the services needed also by refugee and migrant children arriving in the country and that sufficient and well-qualified guardianships, social workers, psychologists, teachers, doctors, police officers, magistrates and lawyers are available to assist the children.