



Research Article

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Child Protection Measures as a Legal Instrument for Child Protection at Tirana Municipality

Anisa Subashi

*General Directory of Social Services,
Tirana Municipality, Skanderbeg Square,
Tirana 1001, Albania*

Edit Bregu

*Vice Dean/Lecturer, Law Faculty,
Wisdom University College, Medar Shtylla St.,
Tirana 1019, Albania*

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Abstract

For Albanian institutions and society, application of the protection measures comes not only as an innovation in the field of child rights and protection but especially as a legal instrument that for the first time attains to put the highest interest of the child and to guarantee his/her protection in time and according to the simplified legal procedure. This paper presents types of protection measures, child characteristics for which these measures have been in place, analysis of the process starting with the identification and evaluation of the risk till in confirming of the protection measure from the Court as well as all the progress of implementation of the Individual Protection Plan. The paper offers an analysis of the demographic and analytic factors on the motives and cases where protection measures are applied. 74 measures analyzed are 74 children's' life's where the protection system has intervened to stave off from the risk and offer the services in a safe place. In 36 of them is being realized specialized supervision in family environment where through the Individual Protection Plan, despite family services, specialized support from child protection unit is being more intensive in family. In absence of foster families, the protection measure for child placement in alternative care is applied in residential care institutions or at their relatives. For emergent protection cases, all 23 children are placed in residential care institutions for children; 8 cases taken under immediate protection and other 13 cases taken under protection and placed in alternative care actually are not leaving in street condition but placed in a safe place meanwhile that child protection structure continue with empowering plans for families aiming at returning of child close to biological families.

Key words: *child, protection measure, case management, child abuse, highest interest of the child*

1. Introduction

“Every child has the right of protection from the violence, abuse, maltreatment and exploitation for work especially under the age to work, that can damage the health, moral and risk the life or his/her normal development” (Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Article 54, point 3, 2012).

"4 – 16% of children are physically abused and one in ten are neglected or psychologically abused. During childhood, between 5% and 10% of girls and up to 5% of boys are exposed to penetrative sexual abuse, ... however official rates [those children referred to child protection services] indicate less than a tenth of this" (Spratt, T.; Hietamaki, J.; Nett, J.; Bromfield, L; Kindler, H; Ponnert, L. 2014).

Child protection is an issue for every child in every country of the world:

At any given time, more than 300,000 child soldiers, some as young as eight, are exploited in armed conflicts in over 30 countries. More than 2 million children are estimated to have died as a direct result of armed conflict since 1990.

More than 1 million children worldwide are living in detention as a result of being in conflict with the law. In Central and Eastern Europe alone, almost 1.5 million children live in public care. Over 13 million children are estimated to be orphaned as a result of AIDS alone.

Approximately 250 million children are involved in child labour, with more than 180 million working in hazardous situations or conditions.

An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked every year.

A 1995 estimate of the number of children in the commercial sex trade indicated that 1 million children (mainly girls but also a significant number of boys) entered the multibillion-dollar industry every year. The figures may now be higher.

Forty million children below the age of 15 suffer from abuse and neglect, and require health and social care.

An estimated 100-130 million women and girls living in Africa today have undergone some form of genital mutilation. (UNICEF, 2004 "Child protection. A handbook for Parliamentary Union).

States are responsible to promote establishing and implementing of the child protection system in accordance with their international obligations according to which the children have all the rights. Ensuring children rights and their access to the fundamental rights predicted in international and national legislation is the main challenge of each organization / institution what have in focus children protection (The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2012).

Children protection framework in principle should know and accept what is recognized, respected and protected as a rights holder, every child is "rights holders", highlighting that children have capacity to participate in their own protection, and should be focused in prevention and responding towards cases of abusing and neglecting and emphasizing the need for a stronger partnership in this direction (UNHCR, 2012). Every approach to prevention, diagnosis and treatment requires accepting that every child in the world is equally important, wherever and whatever the circumstances of their conception, birth and life. (Southall, D.; MacDonald, R.; 2013)

Children protection national systems should know and respect 10 main principles that are:

1. every child is recognized, respected and protected as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection;
2. no child is discriminated;
3. child protection systems include prevention measures;
4. families are supported in their role as primary caregivers;
5. society is aware and supportive of the child's right to freedom from all forms of violence;
6. child protection systems ensure adequate care, including:
 - standards, indicators and systems of monitoring and evaluation;
 - child safeguarding policies and reporting mechanisms for organizations working with children;
 - certification and training for all professionals working for and with children.
7. child protection systems have transnational and cross-border mechanisms in place;
8. no child should be without the support and protection of a legal guardian or other responsible adult or competent public body at any time;
9. training on identification of risks is given to teachers, health sector professionals, and social workers;

10. safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms are in place. (European Commission, n.d.).

2. Literature Review

Child protection is a public service aimed at protecting children against detrimental care, that is different types of maltreatment (Flach-Eriksen, A.; BackleHansen, E.; 2018). Main aim for the child protection mechanism is “to empower the child protection from abuse, neglect and other forms of violence” (World Vision, 2014). Predicting and taking formal measures for children protection is very important and should be part of vision and social policy of each country. Protection act of 1983 foresees formal measures for children protection defining children protection measure as “legal provisions and state-sanctioned interventions, designed to take action in situations where children are at immediate risk of being subject of violence, neglect”

Whatever the level of resources available in any country, it is essential that governments priorities adequate funding of child and adolescent protection and support (Southall, D.; MacDonald, R.; 2013). From 2017 the field of child protection and rights has undergone into a radical change charging with duties and responsibilities children protection measures in local and national level. Identification, referring, protection and all the process of managing which is done based on a well-defined procedure, requires time, willingness, institutional responsibility, and especially close collaboration with the parents / child legal caretaker. Although the government has established structure enabling implementation of the policies, still the mechanisms for a response and clear interventions, effective and coordinated one with clear roles and responsibilities are not in place or are missing. (Council of Europe, 2016) Based on the analyses made in the frame of treating the implementation of the protection measures, it resulted that this mechanism made possible to connect government institutions and non-governmental institutions in realization of the highest interest of children offering services in time and interventions based on identified needs.

“Child protection is realized through applying of the protection measures and interventions for children rights protection and offering of the services according to their needs aiming at child development and well-being in his/her familiar environment or placing him / her in alternative care, when children are deprived temporary or permanently from parents care and protection or when for his / her highest interest he/she can't be left in the care of parents” (Law 18/2017 “For child rights and protection”, Article 53).

Talking about child protection it is important to define child abuse. The World Health Organization defines abuse as following: ‘Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Southall, D.; MacDonald, R.; 2013). Addressing and treating child abuse includes and presents challenges for societies in the domains of public health, human rights, criminal justice, social justice, community welfare and economics, it is a multi-dimensional approach and dimension.

Law 18/2017 “For child rights and protection” that foresees child protection measures includes also some of the circumstances in which children can be found: including conditions where the situation of the child does not change even after offering of all the services and the interventions, when the child is in higher and immediate risk, when in the moment of identification, he / she does not have self-protection skills without any interventions or health care etc.

There are several ways to create an environment that is protective for every child and can include addressing the impact of economic and social poverty, advocacy in national and international at all levels government, communities, families and children themselves, seeking societal behavioral change, attitudes and traditions, strengthening of the capacity to assess and analyse protection issues, putting mechanisms in plane and providing resources, developing and reviewing of national monitoring systems to ensure they cover child protection issues. (UNICEF, 2004 “Child protection. A

handbook for Parliamentary Union)

In every case the aim of the child protection structures is to empower the biological family and case management cumulatively together with the family. The separation of the child from the family and his/her placement in alternative care institutions is seen as the last possibility and last intervention done after all other possibilities to empower the biological family are considered and exhausted.

Tirana Municipality after the new administrative reform constituting 24 Administrative Units and 3 neighborhoods. (Decision of the Tirana Municipal Council, No. 33, date 29.03.2018), in order to fulfill its legal obligation for the assignment of at least one child protection employee in administrative units having more than 3000 children, has functional 27 child protection employees in 24 administrative units and 3 neighborhoods. The employee for child protection performs the function of a case manager for children that are in need for protection starting from the identification or referring, drafting and implementing of the protection measures and protection individual plan till the moment these measures aren't in force any more. (Law 18/2017 "For child rights and protection", Article 53).

Protection measures are:

- a) emergency protection measure, that is a temporary protection measure for removal of the child from the family and his/her placement in alternative care system;
- b) protection measure for child placement in alternative care system;
- c) protection measures for specialized supervision in the family environment;

The policy for child protection services workforce should recruit professionals who are qualified to work with vulnerable children, young people and their families. (Australian Association of Social Workers, AASW, 2020). The child protection employees are a focal point and very important in the quality of the services offered and the management of the cases. Their qualification should be periodically promoted and supported also from the government. The government should support advanced-level practitioners to gain postgraduate qualifications in child protection practice from recognized tertiary education institutions (AASW, 2020). In the Law 18/2017 "For child rights and protection" in Article 49 it is mentioned that employees in child protection office including the director of the office should be social worker. 'Social workers, in a variety of practice contexts, need to be able to promote child wellbeing and to assess and respond to the needs of children and families. (AASW, 2020).

Meanwhile other clarifications about the criteria for the employment of the employees working for the children are specified the Decision of the Council of Ministers. (Decision of Council of Ministers, no. 186, dated 04.04.2019). Specifically, in the scope of this decision are included:

- employees of child protection structures;
- employees working with child;
- those professional having the right to work as "Social Worker" and "Psychologist".

Criteria for the employment of these employees include:

- a) Not being convicted by a decision of Albanian and / or foreign courts for criminal offenses against the person, committed intentionally;
- b) No decision has been taken against them, by Albanian and / or foreign courts, related to protection measures against domestic violence;
- c) To have training and certification in the field of protection of children's rights.
- d) Having a university degree as a social worker;
- e) To have postgraduate education or work experience in the relevant profession, not less than two years.

In this law are mentioned two important things discussed previously in paper: training and certifications and educational background of the person.

The world current situation has been affected in almost every direction from the world pandemic Covid - 19. In quarantine situation and conditions offering of the services was a challenge in itself. Meanwhile some services are offered online still there is a need for in-person engagement. The

problem for the situation in Albania was connected with the limitation to access to the internet and smartphones. In Albania, online support and supervision was provided by State Social Services to children in residential care centers as well as by the staff during the lock-down (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF, 2020). This situation showed that there is a need for future intervention in terms of moving from paper-based case management to online systems. In the survey conducted in June 2020, the Child Protection section of UNICEF's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) showed that they have all developed new ways of working with digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). Albania is classified as a country that still rely on paper-based case management systems but important steps towards digital tools are being taking. In Albania, ministerial instructions specified case management interventions according to the perceived level of risk, authorizing case management by 'telephone' only for cases with low or medium risk or for cases of COVID-19. During this period of time there were delivered training virtually in specific topic such as: mental health and psycho-social support and case management.

3. Methodology

Tirana Municipality has applied protection measures in the highest interest of the identified cases, implementing the procedure according to the legislation but also setting up good practices in the application for the first time of the legal instrument that has been the main innovation in the legal framework for children rights and protection.

This paper takes into consideration types of protection measures, child characteristics for which these measures have been in place, analysis of the process starting with the identification and evaluation of the risk till in confirming of the protection measure from the Court as well as all the progress of implementation of the Individual Protection Plan.

Research questions of this paper include:

What happened when the child situation does not change even after the services and evaluated interventions offered and he / she continue being in a risk situation?

What happened when the child is in higher and immediate risk and in the moment of identification, he / she does not have self-protection skills and if his/her is left in his / her actual condition without applying any protective intervention, he / she can be sexually abused, trafficked or subject of other abuses considered as penal referring to Penal Code?

Which should be the decision of the child protection structure when within the family there are elements of abuse and neglect but one of the parents is supportive for the child?

The methodological approach used in this paper include a combination between quantitative approach including the review of data received from Child Protection Employees in Tirana Municipality and qualitative approach including the development of semi structured interviews with the Child Protection Employees. The data are gathered protecting the confidentiality of the cases and their families.

This data corresponds to the time period between 2018-2020 for the cases of the children for whom is applied one of the protection measures foreseen in the Law no. 18/2017 "For child rights and protection". The main reason for the selection of this period of time is because it corresponds with the period in which the legislation for the rights and protection of the child did entry into force.

Subject of this paper are 74 protective measures applied in Tirana Municipality for the period 2018-2020. Every measure is taken into consideration examining children data aiming at identifying which is the most risked gender, age of the children taking under protection, how much does the education affect the implementation of a protection measure, the process and the importance of registering in the civil state and the rapport of the protection measures applied from each administrative unit.

4. Analysis and Results

The role of the institutions is very important and inclusive in the application of the protection measures – starting from the Child Protection Employee, Director of responsible structure for social

services in Municipality, State Social Services, Alternative Care Institutions and in some specific cases where there are noticed elements of penal act the police has played an important role.

The aim for building an integrated child protection system in local level guaranteeing the functioning of all the links in undertaking of the concrete measures guaranteeing children well-being, aiming at their education, access in justice, health and security, is reflected in the application of the protection measures evaluating at the same time needs for improvements of the local government.

74 protection measures applied in Tirana municipality and taken into consideration in the frame of this paper are divided as following:

- a) 23 immediate / emergency protection measures;
- b) 15 protection measures for placing the child in alternative care;
- c) 36 protection measures for specialized supervision of the child in family environment.

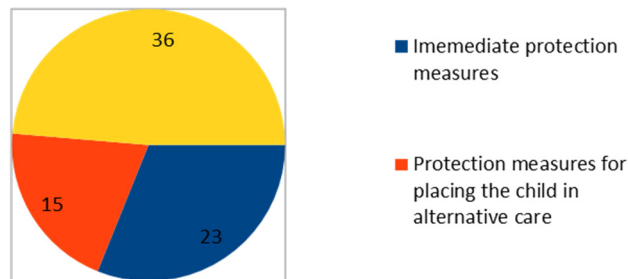


Figure 1 :

From the demographic data of the children to whom protection measures are taken, in this paper will be detailed and analyzed such data as: gender, age and administrative units where these children are placed.

4.1 Gender

From the analyze of the gender balance (female / male) to whom the protection measures are applied, resulted that in total there are 46% (34) female and 54% (40) male. This is connected with the reason why these protection measures are applied and the majority of male cases identified in street situation or in conflict with the law.

In the year 2015, a risk analysis on children in conflict with the law realized from the General Directory of Prisons showed that referring to the statistics of the last 5 years there is a tendency of increasing of the child criminality. Although the situation is improving, in 2017 the number of suspected children of age 14-17 was 1.740, still the situation is to be monitored and evaluated. Between the years 2015 – 2017 the number of suspected child decreased with 11.4 % (Terre des hommes Foundation, 2019).

The cases of female children are mainly refereed to sexual abuse, trafficking or facing social – economic difficulties. In total from 74 protection measures taken into consideration the specification of the gender is as follow:

- **In 23 emergency protection measures:**
9 are female; 14 are male.
- **In 15 protection measures for placing the child in alternative care:**
8 are female; 7 are male.
- **36 protection measures for specialized supervision of the child in family environment:**
17 are female; 19 are male.

4.2 Age

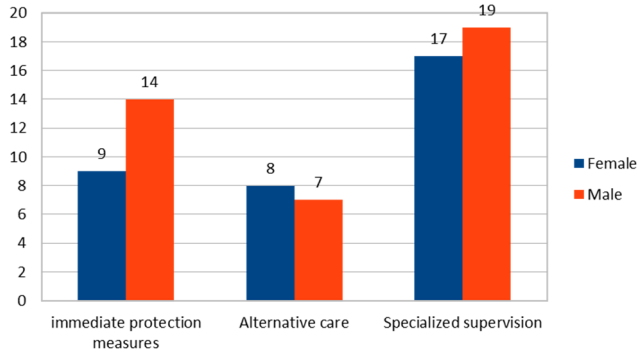
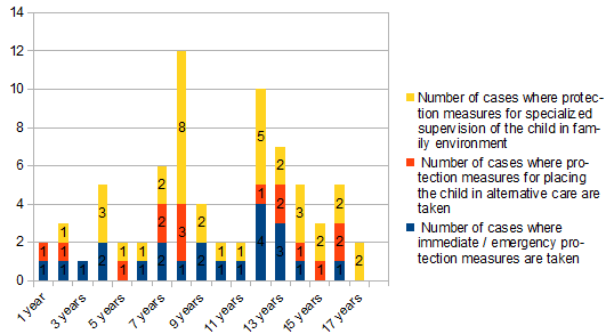


Figure 2 :

Cases taken into protection correspond to the age 1 – 17 years old because the problematic connected directly with the violation of the fundamental rights of the children affect them at any age.

Table 1: Cases of children divided according to their age

Age	Number of cases where immediate / emergency protection measures are taken	Number of cases where protection measures for placing the child in alternative care are taken	Number of cases where protection measures for specialized supervision of the child in family environment
1 year	1	1	
2 years	1	1	1
3 years	1		
4 years	2		3
5 years		1	1
6 years	1		1
7 years	2	2	2
8 years	1	3	8
9 years	2		2
10 years	1		1
11 years	1		1
12 years	4	1	5
13 years	3	2	2
14 years	1	1	3
15 years		1	2
16 years	1	2	2
17 years			2
Total	23 cases	15 cases	36 cases



Due to the typology of intervention through a specialized supervision in the family environment, for children over 10 years old, there is a higher number of protection measures for specialized supervision in the family environment. This is also related with the perception of the level of risk and the facility of family intervention in these cases.

For cases under 10 years old, it is noticed the application of the protection measures for placement of the child in alternative care and emergency protection measure – because the intervention for family empower in this situation has been impossible and the placement of the child in alternative care is done implementing the highest interest of the child.

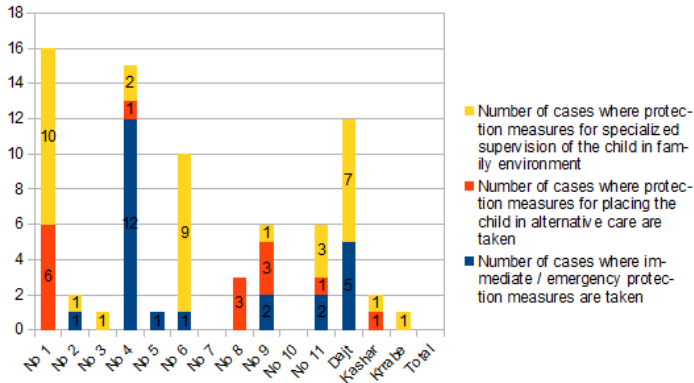
Another important element is receiving child opinion for the application and implementation of the protection measure in cases where the child is over 14 years old. From the analysis conducted resulted that there are applied 2 immediate protection measure for children over 14 years old, 4 protection measure for child placement in alternative care and 9 protection measure for specialized supervision in family environment. Receiving and taking into consideration of the child opinion is one of the most fragile and important things in applying of the protection measure. Child opinion is received from the Child Protection Employees or psychologist and is being reported in intersectorial technical group meetings.

4.3 Administrative units in which the protection measures are applied

In the analysis of the child protection measures divided according to Administrative Units, the data are as below:

Table 2. Protective measures according to administrative units

Administrative units	Number of cases where immediate / emergency protection measures are taken	Number of cases where protection measures for placing the child in alternative care are taken	Number of cases where protection measures for specialized supervision of the child in family environment
No 1		6	10
No 2	1		1
No 3			1
No 4	12	1	2
No 5	1		
No 6	1		9
No 7			
No 8		3	
No 9	2	3	1
No 10			
No 11	2	1	3
Dajt	5		7
Kashar		1	1
Krrabe			1
Total	23 cases	15 cases	36 cases



It is noticed that from the municipality units that applied protection measures are Kashar and Krraba and from those that do not have protection measures applied are administrative units no. 7 and 10. Administrative units that have applied more protection measures are administrative units no. 1 and 4. This is connected with the composition of communities which is mixed and includes in significant proportion members of Roma and Egyptian communities whom face different economic difficulties leading to increased number of cases of the children that are abused and obliged to force work.

In composition of administrative unit 1 is also Lanabregas and Shkozë areas meanwhile the administrative units 4 has in composition area of Bregu i Lumit. In order to address the needs of these areas and to offer more services aiming at minimizing of the problems and difficulties, the Municipality has taken specific measures. Actually, in the administrative unit no. 1 is established and functional Community center in Shkozë and in administrative unit no. 4 is Community center “Gonxhe Bojaxhi”.

4.4 Education

From the cases taken into consideration resulted that 80 % of the children, to whom are taken immediate and protective measures for their placement in alternative care, in the moment of applying the measure they do not regularly attend the school or they drop out from basic education. These are mainly cases of the children identified in higher risk of street situation or immediate for their placement in alternative care. In the institutions where they are placed after applying of the protection measure, part of the individual plan implemented from the institution is their regular attending of the school. (for children 06-18 years old). The main focus for the cases under specialized supervision is monitoring school attendance, which is realized by the child protection employee in close collaboration with social workers of community centers. Regarding registration and attending of the kindergarten for the cases of children under specialized supervision are offered some facilities according to the payments, wearings and their vaccination.

5. Discussions and Reasons for Applying of the Protection Measures

Child protection links closely to all aspects of children’s well-being. Often, the same child is prone to malnutrition and illness, deprived of early stimulation, out of school and more likely to be abused and exploited. (UNICEF, 2004 “Child protection. A handbook for Parliamentary Union). Cases, when towards the children are applied protection measures, are defined in Article no. 55 of the law 18/2017 “For child rights and protection”. In the analysis of the cases taken into protection it is noticed that there is no specific division for determination of the circumstances for applying of protection measures. Based on the evaluation it is noticed that in the cases when in the highest interest of the

child is not to be left in parental care, because his / her physical, moral, psychological and emotional integrity is in risk and there are also elements of violence, exploitation or neglect.

In 74 cases to whom are applied protection measures, based on the evaluations, 100 % of them came from families in economic and social difficulties. These difficulties are connected with the refusal of the parents to work, mental health problems, lack of collaboration with the child protection structure aiming at empowering of the biological family.

In 3 of the cases taken under protection there are elements of trafficking making deeper and harder the process of case management including also institutions or dedicated organization in offering of the services towards children victims / possible victims of trafficking.

The connection of the mental health problems with the violation of the fundamental rights of children and the consequences in violence, abuses and neglect is one of the problematics identified during the case analysis. In 23 immediate protection measures, 10 cases parents are diagnosed with mental health problems. Their health condition, lack of sustainable services and the difficulty to collaborate with state structures have led as a consequence to removal of the child from the family environment and his / her placement in alternative care.

From the data, of a great interest during the research of information on the cases of the children taken into protection, is the realization of criminal denunciation for child abuse.

There are 6 criminal denunciations made towards the legal caretaker for abuse toward minor according to the regulations on article no 124/b of the Penal Code. Among them one is in prison, 2 others are in probation service and for 3 remained cases there is no information on the progress of the judicial process.

Every protection measure is applied based on the procedure foreseen in regulations for children rights and protection. In the reviewed documentation, in implementation of the deadline and legal procedures, for immediate protection measures and protection measure for placement of the child in alternative care, within the deadline of 5 days after the decision has been given from the responsible structure for social in Tirana Municipality, Child Protection Employee present to Tirana Judicial District Court claim for confirmation of the validity of the protection measure and placement of the child in custody.

Parents are informed about the decision, State Social Service or any other party included in the process in a written form. After the decision is made, and is known for the parties one of the parties within the deadline of 5 days can proceed with the appeal.

There has been only one case of complain of the protection measure, the case is treated in Court of Appeal where the protection measure is applied and re-confirmed.

For specialized supervision in family environment, the law recognizes the confirmation from the director and there is no need to be confirmed in the Court.

According to the requests from the Children Protection Employee towards the General Directory of Social Services in Tirana Municipality, are approved from the director of responsible structure the protection measures as according to the circumstances listed below:

- Parents that have passed away or are declared dead from the court, are unknown, their parental responsibility has been removed and they are in need for protection;
There are no protection measures applied in these circumstances.
- Parent or legal caretaker whom has been stopped, arrested or sentenced to imprisonment and the child is in need for immediate protection;

Applied in two cases – male – immediate protection measure – in the first case the mother has been arrested and the child has remained without parental care even after the father has abandoned the family.

The child is placed in emergency service within 72 hours and for the mother was avoided the punishment so the child has been back to the mother.

In the second case, the child has been placed in immediate protection because the father has been arrested and the mother earlier has abandoned the family and the child remained without parental care. The child is placed in institution of alternative care.

In the highest interest of the child, it can't be left without parental care; because his/her / his physical, moral, psychological and emotional integrity is in risk and the child is abused, neglected and exploited.

In the frame of this analysis is united the conditions defined in the point c) and ç) of the article 55 of the Law 18/2017 "For child rights and protection" because in the deep analyze of the historic of the cases it can't be divided the highest interest of the child with the cases when she / he is abused, neglected and mistreated.

In the cases where immediate protection measure is taken, 3 cases are abandoned from the parents, in 10 cases the parents have mental health problems and are not able to take care of the children, 2 cases are identified as victims of trafficking and 8 of them are mistreated and forced for begging or street work.

In cases taken into consideration and placed in alternative care, 1 case is victim of trafficking, in another case the parent has mental health problems and in 13 cases children are maltreated and neglected.

Specialized supervision measure in the family environment is applied as protective measure for the children whom has the possibility to be treated and protected within the family, being monitored and supervised with a detailed plan from the child protection structures. This measure is applied also in cases when the child can stay with one of the parents that have the ability and the possibility to take care and to protect him / her from the actions of other parent that is suspected or proven to have abused, raped, exploited or neglected child and who does not reside or who, due to an immediate protection order or a protection order is not allowed to attend the same house or family environment as the child in need of protection. (Article 58)

Among the cases that are supervised in family environment:

2 cases are victims of sexual abuse;

9 cases one of the parents has used physical violence but the other parent can take care of and provide security for the child,

2 cases are children in conflict with the law,

23 cases there are elements of mistreated and forced for street work.

The definition of the highest interest of the child is realized having in focus forecasting of the article 6 of the law 18/2017 which in particular pushes the structures to have in focus:

1. children's needs for physical, psychological development, education and health, security and sustainability as well as growth / belonging to a family;
2. child opinion, depending on child age and ability to understand;
3. child history, having into consideration specific cases of abuses, neglecting and other forms of child violence as well as possible risk what similar situations can happen in the future;
4. the ability of the parents or other persons taking care for children well-being and to respond to children needs;

The ongoing of the personal relationship between the child and the persons to whom he / she has gender, friendly and spiritual connection.

Child has committed penal act and because of the age does not have penal responsibility;

In the category of the child in conflict with the law, there are applied two protection measures for specialized supervision in the family environment,

The child is suspected or accused or has been convicted for a penal act, is in free conditions and needs protection.

There has not been applied protection measures in such circumstances.

6. Conclusions

Changes and improving of the legislation on children's rights and protection in Albania foresees protection measures as a legal instrument to remove the child from the risk situation and guaranteeing of his / her highest interest.

For the period of time 2018 – 2020 in Tirana municipality are applied in total 74 protection measures according to the Law 18/2017 “For child rights and protection”;

Cases of the children taken into protection are part of the categories of the child that by the Law 18/2017 are foreseen as in need for protection and based on the evaluation they are victims of abuse, neglect, discrimination or of any another criminal act, as well as person below the age of criminal responsibility that is accused of committing of a penal act;

Protection measures are applied in implementation of the procedures foreseen in legislation that regulate the rights and protection of children and confirmed by the Tirana District Court.

Even though the separation of the child from the biological family is seen as the last choice, in Tirana municipality there are 23 cases of children to whom is taken immediate protection measure and 15 cases are placed in alternative care in the residential care institutions;

There are 36 cases of children placed in specialized supervision and they are monitored based on Individual Protection Plans.

All the cases taken into consideration came from a difficult social and economic background and situation;

In 43 % of the cases taken into immediate protection parents have mental health problem disabling them to their parental ability;

In every case over of child 14 years old to whom is applied protection measure, it is taken into consideration the child opinion fulfilling one of the most important legal criteria – taking into consideration of child opinion;

For cases of child abuse and their obligation to force work there are some penal denunciations, but there is a lack of detailed information on the ongoing of the progress of the investigation and the judicial process for each criminal report.

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