Practices of cooperation, coordination

Albania

Contents

Practices of cooperation, coordination 1
Albania 1
Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Centre 2
Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination 4
Other practices 5
Advances toward the revision of Law No. 9970/2008 "On gender equality in society" 5
Children rights and protection 5
Rights of Persons with Disability 6
Roma rights 6
The rights to lesbian, gay and queer people 7

Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Centre

The Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center [1], is an institution conceived as a mechanism under the Ministry of Justice, responsible for designing preventive programs and supervise the juvenile for a 6-month period after the end of the sentence. In collaboration with CARITAS Albania, [2]the Center has initiated a promising program known as the "Path of Opportunities," with a primary aim to provide education, employment, and psychosocial support to all minors who have been in conflict with the law and have completed their sentence. This initiative accompanies them through the process of reintegrating into society. Started in 2022, this ongoing initiative involves regular meetings between the working groups of the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes and Caritas Albania to address specific cases of minors currently enrolled in professional courses. Focused on rehabilitating and reintegrating 20 minors who have re-entered society after completing their sentences, the "Path of Opportunities" includes:

- Regular meetings with the minors, offering psychological or medical assistance when necessary.
- Concrete support in employment, education, financing for economic initiatives, etc.
- Foreign language courses as per the minors' needs and desires.
- Continuous consultation with family and community to provide necessary support

In order to formalize this collaboration, the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes and CARITAS Albania signed a cooperation agreement titled "For the provision of services within the framework of the rehabilitation and reintegration of minors and youth in conflict with the law." Under this agreement, several meetings have been arranged with minors, who have completed their sentences at the Kavajë Institute for Minors. Currently, these minors are undergoing professional courses, in computer science and in culinary arts. The "Path of Opportunities" project prioritizes psychosocial support, meticulous case management, education, employment, and equal opportunities for all participants.

[1] Albania, Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center
https://qpkmr.gov.al/
[2]Albania, Caritas Albania
https://caritasalbania.org/historiku-caritas/

Another promising initiative under this institution scope of work is the cooperation Agreement with Interpolice Organization[3], an international organization in the field of security with a focus on preventing and combating crime. The agreement consist in implementing joint programs such as:

- Preparation of specialized rehabilitation plans for minors and youth who have committed criminal acts under the influence of organized crime.
- Treatment of young people aged 18-21 who are nearing the end of their sentence in all Correctional and Educational Vocational Institutions (CEVIs) in the country, the focus of our institution's work.
- Raising awareness among all educational institutions in the country about the importance of reintegrating former convicts and implementing the Juvenile Justice Code.
- Joint training sessions with the state police and prison police as the first point of contact for minors in conflict with the law.
- Training modules for staff of our institution by international experts, members of IPO.

Within the framework of the agreement with IPO, the following workshops have been organized with the following themes:

Prevention of recidivism through successful rehabilitation and reintegration processes, as well as concrete measures undertaken by the institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice and within the framework of inter-institutional cooperation.

"Updates to the Juvenile Justice Code." Participants in this workshop included institutions and organizations working in the field of children's and youth rights in conflict with the law.

The participants in the workshop committed to discussing the difficulties in identifying and protecting minor victims and perpetrators of criminal acts, as well as improving the regulatory framework for employees operating in this joint mission.

[3] International Police Organization

https://www.interpolice.org/

Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination

The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination [4](CPD) is the equality body in Albania, established since 2010, responsible to assure effective protection from discrimination. The CPD is independent in the exercise of duty and is subject only to the Constitution and law.

CPD is a member of Equinet[5], the European Network of Equality Bodies. Through Equinet, members are able to share their expertise at the European level. The Network ensures that information and knowledge flows as efficiently as possible between members in order to learn from the successes achieved and the challenges raised during the implementation of their mandate at national level.

The CPD staff has been actively involved in Equinet working groups, evaluating participation not only in terms of enhancing professional capacities but also in exchanging best practices among equality bodies in various European countries, specifically in:

- The Working Group on Equality Legislation
- The Working Group on Communication, Strategies, and Practices
- The Working Group on Gender Equality
- The Working Group on Policy Development
- The Working Group on Research and Data Collection
- The Project on Equality Body Standards
- The Working Group on Freedom of Movement

This participation underscores a promising initiative of CPD to continuous improvement and collaboration within the European equality network, fostering the exchange of knowledge and expertise to advance equality and non-discrimination across the continent.

[4] Albania, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination https://www.kmd.al/

[5] European Network of Equality Bodies https://equineteurope.org/

Other practices

Advances toward the revision of Law No. 9970/2008 "On gender equality in society"

Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in cooperation with line ministries, has made significant advances toward the revision of Law No. 9970/2008 "On gender equality in society", in accordance with the commitment made in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030".

The working group has been established in accordance with Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection, No. 39, dated 24.01.2024, "On the establishment and operation of the technical inter-institutional working group for the drafting of amendments to Law No. 9870/2008 "On gender equality in society".

Children rights and protection

National Agenda for Children's Rights 2021-2026 (NACR) implements measures for comprehensive and friendly services for children respecting and protecting the highest interest of the child. Childcare is an integral part of family-friendly policies, aiming for no one to be left behind regardless of the socio-economic conditions.

MoHSP led the process to draft an action plan on the committee Recommendations of CRC for Albania, which aim to further improve the rights and well-being of children in our country. A total of 51 recommendations have been identified, of which the most prioritized ones relate to: non-discrimination, violence against children, sexual abuse and exploitation, social security, standard of living and education. The action plan highlights not only the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child but also the interconnection of the proposed measures for fulfilling the recommendations and intersectoral and sectoral/institutional strategies.

Increase the number of Child Protection Workers to 241 employees and Improvement of control of the work Child Protection Workers regarding the quality of interventions during case management procedures to protect children in need.

State Agency for Protection and the Rights of the Child is implementing a new methodology of control adopted by the Minister of Health and Social Protection.

Instruction no. No. 767, dated 28.12.2023, of the Minister of Health and Social Protection, "Methodology of quality control of child protection at local level". This document is a guide that standardizes and unifies procedures regarding legal requirements, for referral and case management, regulates the work quality control activity, child protection structures at local level and directs the professional conduct of the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection during the control process.

Rights of Persons with Disability

Ministry of Health and Social Protection has improved accessibility in infrastructure, in health facilities and social services. The National Action Plan on Persons with Disability, mid-term report has been coordinated with line ministries .

MoHSP with MoES and MECI with ANAD -Association of deaf persons have renewed a five years agreement to improve services of interpretation for deaf person. During the last two years, trainings were held with the leaders of the professional networks of assistant teachers.

Roma rights

Albania has embarked on the implementation of a National Roma Social Inclusion Action Plan (NAP) for the timeframe from 2021 to 2025. NAP is based on the EU Framework of National Roma Inclusion 2021 – 2030. The coordination, implementation, monitoring, and data collection for this initiative are overseen by the National Focal Point at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

In line with the objectives of EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030. Ministry of Health and Social Protection has monitored consistently the situation through Rom-Alb system, comprising a good practice consistently. Over 200 focal points on R/E have been trained in central and local level from January-March 2024 , in order to build capacities for reporting on progress on implementation.

In the framework of the EU integration process, Fifth Albania-EU Policy Dialogue Seminar on the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian national minorities was organized on April 20, 2022, in Tirana. The Policy Dialogue Seminar resulted in operational conclusions and measures and Final Recommendations to be implemented in the timeframe 2022-2024. Moreover, the Poznan Declaration has introduced milestones and indicators in a regional level.

The rights to lesbian, gay and queer people

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics are safeguarded within the framework of the Law on Protection from Discrimination. [6] The Ministry of Health and Social Protection[7] is responsible for ensuring that discrimination based on sexual orientation is eradicated. A promising practice in this regard is the "National Action Plan for LGBTI+ people 2021 - 2027[8]," a strategic document formulated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on behalf of the Albanian Government. This plan is developed through collaboration with various stakeholders including relevant ministries, local government bodies, independent institutions, civil society organizations - particularly those advocating for LGBTI+ rights, and international organizations dedicated to human rights, equality, and non-discrimination in Albania.

The People's Advocate, in focusing on the protection of human rights, also includes the protection and promotion of the rights of the LGBTI+ community. To this end, PA institution collaborates extensively with civil society and its activists in this sphere, institutions and other stakeholders. At any time when violations of rights have been observed, such as cases of violence against LGBTI community members or the usage of hate speech against them, the PA has issued official statements condemning the violence and urging responsible institutions to conduct investigations immediately and hold the perpetrators accountable. It is also part of the yearly awareness campaign IDAHOT. Since 2019, the People's Advocate also participates in the No Hate Alliance with the aim of saying NO to hate crimes and hate speech, and of ensuring the enjoyment of the rights that belong to this community without discrimination.

Coordinated efforts at the central level are overseen by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP), particularly through the Sector of Policies and Strategies for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality within the General Directorate of Health and Social Protection Policies and Development. Each line ministry bears responsibility for addressing specific aspects of LGBTI+ issues based on its mission and scope of activity. Meanwhile, at the local level, Local Self-Government Units collaborate with other local institutions to prioritize the fair and non-discriminatory treatment of LGBTI+ individuals in accordance with established standards and legislation. In the

[6] Albania , Law on Protection from Discrimination https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Law-on-Protection-from-Discrimination-Albania_amended-1.pdf

[7] Albania, Ministry of Health and Social Protection https://shendetesia.gov.al/

[8] Albania, National Action Plan for LGBTI+ people 2021 – 2027 https://rm.coe.int/lgbti-nap-2021-2027-eng/1680a574b0#:~:text=%22NAP%20for%20LGBTI%2B%202021%2D2027%22%20is%20the%20third%20action,against%20LGBTI%2B%20people%20in%20Albania.

development of the National Action Plan, extensive consultations were conducted with key stakeholders at both central and local levels, including input from line ministries, independent institutions, civil society organizations - particularly those focused on LGBTI+ issues - and international organizations.

The "NAP for LGBTI+ people 2021-2027" outlines three overarching Policy Goals:

I. Enhancing the accessibility of public services and specialized support services for LGBTI+ individuals nationwide, ensuring effectiveness, quality, and alignment with national and international standards.

II. Strengthening legal protections and security measures for LGBTI+ individuals by improving the legal framework and its enforcement, as well as facilitating their access to the justice system.

III. Cultivating an inclusive, accepting, and non-discriminatory society towards LGBTI+ individuals throughout Albania.

In April 2024, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection organized the meeting for the presentation of the Transgender Medical Protocol. Members of the working group, representatives of the transgender community, civil society organizations and international partners participated in this meeting.

With the approval of the Transgender Medical Protocol, after consultations with members of the working group and members of the LGBTI+ community, the process in ongoing for drafting of guidelines for the transgender medical protocol. The first meeting of the Working group was held in July 2024.