

CHILD PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

“ Indicators
for measuring progress
in promoting
the right of children
and young people
under the age of
18 to participate
in matters of concern
to them

Council of Europe
Children’s Rights
Division and
Youth Department



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French edition:

Outil d'évaluation de la participation des enfants

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Preface

In recent years, children's participation in decision making in all matters affecting them has gained ground. Today the importance of listening to children and young people is recognised as fundamental to their human dignity and healthy development.

Allowing and encouraging children to participate in Council of Europe activities, and giving them a voice in the preparation of documents concerning them, has been a very rich and rewarding experience for everyone. One important example has been the preparation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015).

Children were also involved from the very start in the preparation of the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on participation of children and young people under the age of 18, adopted in 2012. We carefully analysed the views expressed by children, because they gave us a deep insight into the reality – or sometimes the frustrations – a child faces when communicating and interacting in an adult-dominated world. The recommendation now provides the framework and guidance for many sectors within the Council of Europe.

Besides thanking the children for their valuable input, we are grateful to the many partners that have been involved in our work in preparing the Assessment Tool: international organisations, civil society, academia, youth and parent associations.

We all look to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a source of inspiration, notably towards its Article 12 regarding respect for the views of the child. The overall objective of the General Comment to Article 12 is to support states parties in its effective implementation. This is where our Assessment Tool comes in: it provides a method, at European level, to facilitate and support the implementation of the child's right to participate.

This Assessment Tool is therefore the next step in a process towards supporting States in putting into place real and active child participation in all settings. The authors have made the tasks of verification, data collection and analysis less onerous for administrative entities. We hope that the Assessment Tool will shed more light on the current state of child participation in the member States of the Council of Europe.

One of the children involved in preparing this Assessment Tool considered that adults "underestimate children's opinion and do not understand the benefits of their participation". Our task is surely to help adults appreciate and understand how rich the contributions of children can be, and to make sure that children's participation is the rule and not the exception.

Snežana Samardžić-Marković
Director General of Democracy

Introduction

This Assessment Tool provides specific and measurable indicators with which States can begin to measure progress in implementing Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18. This Recommendation recognises Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) both as a fundamental right and as a general principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a human rights treaty that has been ratified by all member States. It further recognises that as a general principle, Article 12 needs to guide the implementation of all other rights, and is linked not only to the other three general principles of the UNCRC, Article 2 (the right to non-discrimination), Article 3 (primary consideration of the best interests of the child), and Article 6 (the right to life, survival and development), but also to Article 5 (guidance by parents and evolving capacities of the child), Article 13 (the right to freedom of expression), Article 15 (the right to freedom of association) and Article 17 (the right to information). The Council of Europe Recommendation (2012)2 defines participation as "individuals or groups of children having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity."

Adoption of the Recommendation (2012)2 by the Council of Europe is testimony to the significance attached by member States to the right of children to participate in decision-making. However, despite the centrality of child participation to the values of this Recommendation and the UNCRC, as well as to their effective implementation, it has been challenging for States to identify what measures are needed to achieve that goal. Furthermore, there have been few successful attempts, to date, to develop meaningful indicators against which States can begin to evaluate the extent to which it is implemented. This Assessment Tool provides 10 basic indicators that are cross-cutting, rather than thematic, and reflect the three broad measures addressed in the Recommendation:

- ▶ measures to protect the right to participate;
- ▶ measures to promote the right to participate;
- ▶ measures to create spaces for participation.

Accordingly, each one will have implications for many different government departments, and each department will have responsibilities in respect of many of the indicators. For example, departments for education and schools will need to address issues arising in relation to all three types of measure.

The Tool will enable States to:

- ▶ raise awareness and understanding of children's right to participation;
- ▶ undertake a baseline assessment of current implementation;
- ▶ help identify measures needed to achieve further compliance;
- ▶ highlight and share good practice;
- ▶ measure progress over time.

The aim of the Tool is to support States in meeting the goals of the Recommendation (2012)2, and in so doing, fulfilling their obligations to children. It will also be of particular value in strengthening reporting on progress on implementing Article 12 to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is recognised that the indicators will require the collection of data that may not currently be readily available. They may also require additional analysis of existing data. This is unlikely to be achieved in the short term. It is important, therefore, to understand progress towards meeting the indicators as an incremental process.

It is hoped that States will share the Tool across government ministries, throughout local authority administrations, with the courts and judicial systems, with relevant professionals working with children and young people, with academic and civil society partners, and with organisations of and working for children and young people. The greater the transparency and openness in disseminating the Tool, the greater will be its effectiveness in creating a transformation in the right of children to be heard.

Using the Assessment Tool

The Tool provides a common format for understanding each indicator, and provides short guidance on how to approach the task of measuring progress in its realisation.

THE INDICATORS

Each of the 10 indicators is described and supported by a short paragraph defining how it is intended to be understood and what it covers. All are categorised as structural or process indicators:

- ▶ **Structural indicators** provide an indication of commitment to take action. They refer to the existence of institutions and policies aligned with the UNCRC and Council of Europe standards and the realisation of children's right to participate.
- ▶ **Process indicators** refer to efforts made and actions taken, following on from a commitment. They generally focus on specific activities, resources or initiatives in to ensure children's participation rights.

Structural and process indicators represent the building blocks that member States need to have in place to progress implementation of Recommendation (2012)2. It has been agreed that it is important to start with these indicators before expecting member States to assess progress against the third category of indicator, Outcome indicators which refer to a resultant and measurable change in the realisation of children's participation rights. Accordingly, the Assessment Tool does not include outcome indicators. As more of the data member States require to measure actual implementation and the quality of the participation experience for children becomes available, it is hoped that future versions of the Child Participation Assessment Tool will include a number of outcome indicators.

DATA SOURCES

Under each indicator, some potential sources of data are provided, although the availability of data will obviously vary from country to country. The evidence will also be easier to locate for some of the indicators than others. For example, it should be relatively straightforward to determine whether or not specific legislation or a policy is in place. It is more challenging to assess whether or not training courses of all relevant professionals have adequately incorporated modules on the UNCRC and its application into their work. In addition, for some indicators, it will be necessary to undertake qualitative research in order to gather comprehensive knowledge on whether the indicator is being met. However, through partnerships with key stakeholders, it should be possible over time to gather the relevant information with which to determine the extent to which the indicator is achieved.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Each indicator is accompanied by four graduated criteria for assessment, from 0-3. It is important to emphasise that the value of States using this Assessment Tool is to help measure their progress in meeting obligations to children. It is not a mechanism for comparing or judging States. Preparedness to be open and rigorous about the findings is essential in achieving that goal.

DISAGGREGATION

For each indicator, States are asked to consider the situation of children in vulnerable situations. There are many categories of children who are at risk of being excluded from the exercise of this right: for example, younger children, children with disabilities, Roma children and those from ethnic minority communities, poorer children, children from rural communities, and children in institutions. Disaggregated data is important as it will reveal any potential differences in the extent to which different groups of children are able to express their views and have them taken seriously. Member states are encouraged to analyse the data available to examine whether there are any measures which directly or indirectly exclude certain groups of children, as well as assessing whether all children are able to access their rights to participate on an equal basis.

COUNTRY PROFILES ON CHILD PARTICIPATION

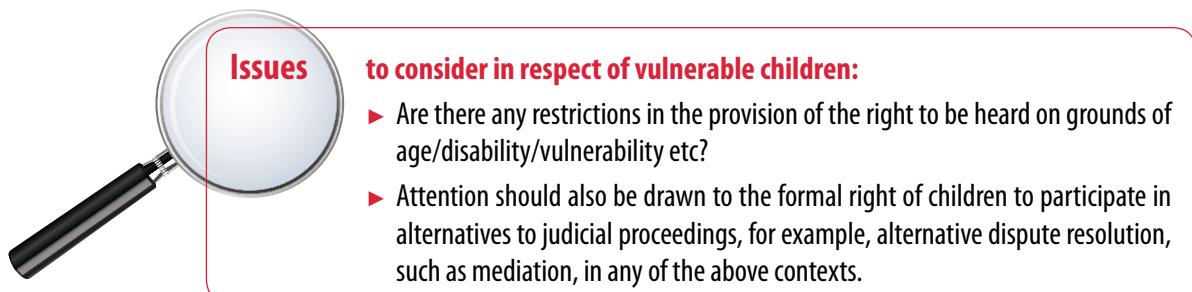
Appendix Two provides a template for a Country Profile that contains a summary of the results of the Assessment for a country that has used the Tool. This template provides a framework for States to record key findings emerging from the Assessment, to highlight any examples they have identified as good practice, and to indicate any measures they plan to undertake in light of the findings. States are strongly encouraged to complete the template for their own use and to send a copy to the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe which is interested to see how the Tool is being used and to be able to share some of the positive practices and methods that are being used in member States to support children's participation in decision making.

OVERVIEW OF THE TOOL

Protecting the right to participate	
1	Legal protection for children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is reflected in the national Constitution and legislation
2	Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision-making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights
3	An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law
4	Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings
5	Child friendly complaints procedures are in place
Promoting awareness of the right to participate	
6	Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children
7	Children are provided with information about their right to participate
Creating spaces for participation	
8	Children are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels
9	Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place
10	Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions

Protecting the right to participate

1 Legal protection for children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is reflected in the national Constitution and legislation	
Definition	<p>An unequivocal commitment to children's right to participate in decisions affecting them should be enshrined in national primary legislation. Reference in the Constitution to the child's right to participate offers a particularly strong indicator of the member State's commitment to the right to be heard. Legal reference to the child's right to be participate should be accompanied by a requirement that children's views will be given due weight in accordance with age and capacity, and in the light of the child's best interests. This commitment should also be included in laws directly affecting children, notably in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ school and education, for example, through mandatory establishment of school councils▶ child protection, care and adoption procedures▶ custody and access in family proceedings▶ family decision-making▶ health care/consent to treatment▶ immigration and asylum proceedings; and▶ criminal justice proceedings
Data sources (indicative only)	National constitutions; Key legal and policy instruments in the field of family law, child protection, education, health care, criminal justice and immigration and asylum.
Assessment criteria	States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria: 0 = No known legal provision for children to express views and for those views to be given due weight 1 = Legal expression of children's right to be heard in at least two of the settings specified 2 = Legal expression of children's right to be heard in at least four of the settings specified 3 = A clear legal obligation to hear and give due weight to children's views is enshrined in the Constitution (if one exists) and in at least six of the settings specified

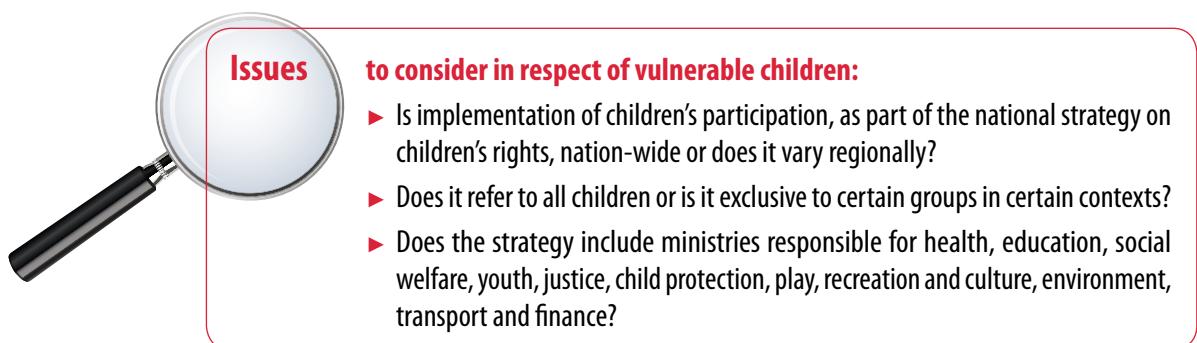


Analysis notes	You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator			
	Setting Legal protection of child's right to be heard is in place (Please tick all that apply)			
	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	
	School and education, for example, through mandatory establishment of school councils			
	Child protection, care and adoption procedures			
	Custody and access in family proceedings			
	Family decision-making			
	Health care/consent to treatment			
	Immigration and asylum proceedings; and			
	Criminal justice proceedings			
Comments	<p>Good practice: Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country</p> <p>Points to address: Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement</p>			
Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator				

2

Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision-making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights

Definition	Children's participation should be explicitly included as part of a broader governmental strategy for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the UNCRC, and Council of Europe instruments and conventions. It should include concrete goals, indicators of progress, and a budget for its implementation.
Data source (indicative only)	National and regional policy and programming instruments.
Assessment criteria	<p>States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:</p> <p>0 = There is no strategy in place on children's rights</p> <p>1 = There is limited reference to children's rights within a broader national human rights strategy</p> <p>2 = There is some reference to child participation as part of a cross sectorial national children's rights strategy</p> <p>3 = A distinct and coherent focus on children and young people's right to participate in decision-making exists in a cross sectorial strategy on children's rights and includes a dedicated set of goals, an established lead responsibility (such as a child or youth ministry) and specific resources allocated to achieve its implementation.</p>

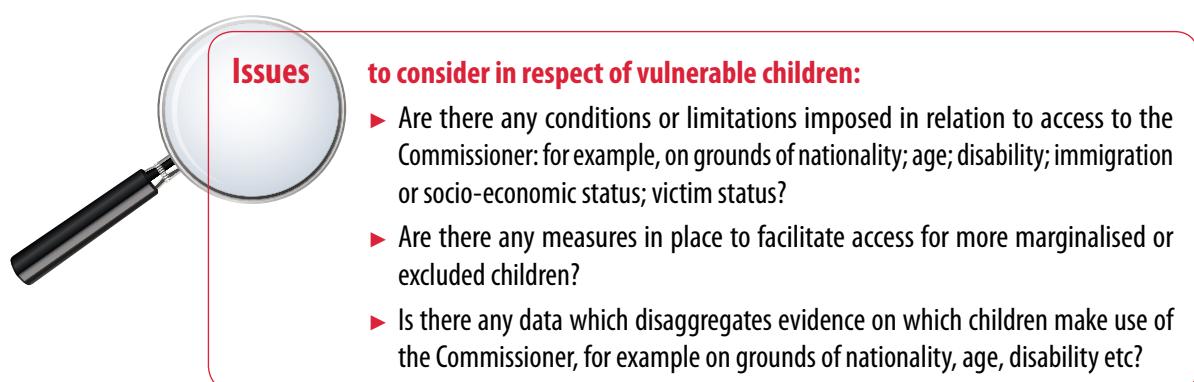


Analysis notes	
Comments	<p>Good practice: Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country</p> <p>Points to address: Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement</p>
Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator	

3

An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law

Definition	An ombudsperson or commissioner for children is established and protected in law with a specific mandate and the necessary resources (office, staff, budget) to pursue campaigns or address concerns on behalf of children. The ombudsperson for children can be a stand-alone institution or part of a broader human rights institution. However, the office should be independent of government and not be constrained or influenced by any specific political agenda but, rather, is able to respond to the key concerns and issues as identified by children.
Data sources (indicative only)	National law Office of National Ombudsman/Commissioner European Network of Ombudspresons for Children (ENOC) Qualitative research
Assessment criteria	States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria: 0 = No ombudsperson or Commissioner for children 1 = Ombudsperson/Commissioner established but not protected by law 2 = Ombudsperson/Commissioner established and protected in law 3 = Ombudsperson/Commissioner established and is fully compliant with Paris Principles ¹



1. The "Paris Principles" are available in the Annex of the UNGA resolution A/RES/48/134, 85th plenary meeting, 20 December 1993: www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r134.htm

Analysis notes	
Comments	<p>Good practice: Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country</p> <p>Points to address: Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement</p>
Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator	

4**Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings****Definition**

The Council of Europe Child Friendly Justice Guidelines provide that children who come into contact with the justice system should:

- ▶ be informed of their rights
- ▶ have free access to a lawyer
- ▶ be heard and taken seriously; and
- ▶ have decisions affecting them explained in a way that they can understand

These provisions should be available to children in the following judicial and administrative proceedings:

- ▶ criminal justice proceedings regardless of whether they are implicated as perpetrators of criminal activity, victims or witnesses of crime,
- ▶ family law proceedings
- ▶ care and protection proceedings,
- ▶ immigration proceedings

**Data sources
(indicative only)**

Key legal and policy instruments in respect of judicial and administrative proceedings

UNCRC monitoring reports and concluding observations of the Committee relating to the implementation of Article 12

European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice monitoring reports on efficiency and quality of justice

Eurobarometer surveys – A specific question/set of questions could be included relating to this issue (for example, under the section "Engaging young in decisions")²

FRA and European Commission data on Child Friendly Justice

Assessment criteria

States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:

- 0** = No direct access to the courts for children
- 1** = Rules and procedures to ensure access to information on rights, to free access to a lawyer, and to be heard in judicial proceedings and to have decisions explained to them in a way they can understand are being applied in one of the judicial or administrative settings listed
- 2** = Rules and procedures to ensure access to information on rights, to free access to a lawyer, and to be heard in judicial proceedings are being applied in at least two of the judicial or administrative settings listed
- 3** = Full implementation of the Council of Europe Child Friendly Justice guidelines has been achieved in all of the specified judicial and administrative settings

**Issues****to consider in respect of vulnerable children:**

- ▶ Are there any conditions or limitations imposed on the availability of this support: for example, on grounds of nationality, age, disability, immigration or socio-economic status, victim status?
- ▶ Are there any measures in place to facilitate access for more marginalised or excluded children?
- ▶ Is there any data which disaggregates evidence of children participating, for example on grounds of nationality, age, disability etc?

2. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_right_child_sum_en.pdf

Analysis notes

You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator

Proceedings	Mechanisms in place (Please tick all that apply)		
	be informed of their rights	have free access to a lawyer	have decisions affecting them explained in a way that they can understand
Criminal justice			
Family law			
Care and protection			
Immigration			

Comments**Good practice:**

Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country

Points to address:

Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement

**Action Points
(follow up)**

Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator

5

Child friendly individual complaints procedures are in place³

Definition

Complaints procedures mandated by law are child-friendly and easily accessible to all children in a range of contexts, notably:

- ▶ schools and education settings
- ▶ care and protection
- ▶ health
- ▶ criminal proceedings
- ▶ family law proceedings
- ▶ immigration proceedings

To be child-friendly, a complaints procedure must include the following elements:

- ▶ It is safe and accessible
- ▶ Children receive information and assistance to enable them to lodge and pursue a complaint
- ▶ Information is made available in age and disability appropriate formats including leaflets, brochures, posters for schools, and dedicated websites and disseminated in locations where children are able to find them
- ▶ Follow up, referral and response mechanisms are well-established and effective and can demonstrate that changes are implemented in response to legitimate complaints
- ▶ Feedback to such complaints is communicated directly to children within a reasonable period in a manner that is adapted to their age and understanding

Data sources (indicative only)

National law

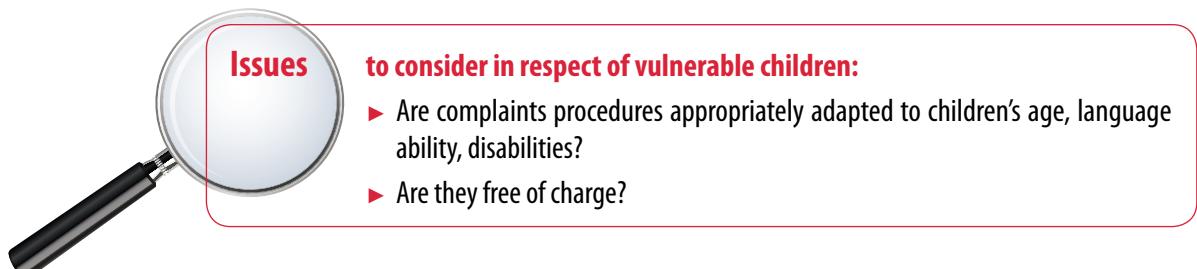
Key legal and policy instruments in the field of family law, education, health care, juvenile justice, social welfare, housing, immigration

Qualitative research in academic/NGO sectors

Assessment criteria

States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:

- 0** = No complaints or feedback mechanisms in place in any of the areas specified
- 1** = Child-friendly complaints procedures are in place in two of the areas specified
- 2** = Child friendly complaints procedures are in place in four of the areas specified
- 3** = Child friendly complaints procedures are mandated by law and easily accessible to all children across all of the areas specified. Children are provided with information about their right to complain and receive help and support to pursue a complaint in accordance with their age and capacity



3. For more information on child friendly and quality participation, see Appendix One, *Basic Requirements for Quality Participation*, for an overview of the measures necessary to achieve a child friendly complaints procedure.

Analysis notes

You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator

Settings	Child friendly individual complaints procedures are in place (Please tick all that apply)		
	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Schools and education settings			
Care and protection			
Health			
Criminal justice			
Family law proceedings			
Immigration proceedings			

Comments**Good practice:**

Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country

Points to address:

Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement

**Action Points
(follow up)**

Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator

Promoting awareness of the right to participation

6

Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children

Definition

Competency-based training on children's right to participation is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working directly with and for children. Competency-based training focuses on an approach to teaching that emphasizes learning and applying skills, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge.

When a person is competent, they can apply what they know to do a specific task or solve a problem and they are able to transfer this ability between different situations

Please select and assess any six professionals groups from the following list:

- ▶ teachers
- ▶ lawyers
- ▶ judiciary
- ▶ police;
- ▶ social workers
- ▶ health care professionals
- ▶ immigration officials
- ▶ carer-givers and residential workers
- ▶ prison officers
- ▶ children and youth leaders/workers
- ▶ civil servants and public officials

Data sources (indicative only)

Nationally accredited professional training programmes for all of the disciplines specified

Qualitative research on attainment of competencies in child participation by professionals working with children

Government departments, universities and other training institutions

Assessment criteria

States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:

- 0 = Very limited or no training available on children's right to participation
- 1 = Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least one group of professionals specified
- 2 = Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least three groups of professionals specified
- 3 = Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least six groups of professionals specified

Issues

to consider in respect of vulnerable children:

- ▶ Does this training and information account for the diversity of children's experiences and needs, for example, is it sensitive to gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, nationality and the linguistic capacity of the child?



Analysis notes	You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator																																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Professional group</th><th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Training on children's right to participation is embedded in pre-service training (Please tick all that apply)</th></tr> <tr> <th></th><th style="text-align: center;">YES</th><th style="text-align: center;">NO</th><th style="text-align: center;">DON'T KNOW</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Profession One</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Profession Two</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Profession Three</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Profession Four</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Profession Five</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Profession Six</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Professional group	Training on children's right to participation is embedded in pre-service training (Please tick all that apply)				YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	Profession One				Profession Two				Profession Three				Profession Four				Profession Five				Profession Six			
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Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator																																	

7

Children are provided with information about their right to participate in decision-making

Definition

Government departments and those delivering key services to children are required to produce information on children and young people's right to participate in decision-making including, for example, information on complaints mechanisms, legal processes, and opportunities to participate in their own organisations, as well as in decision-making or planning processes affecting them. Information made available in child friendly formats, including through social media networks, accessible to children of different ages and abilities, and in appropriate formats for children with different communication needs. It should be made available in arenas that are accessed by children such as specialised websites or helplines.

Education on children's rights, including the right to participate, is a mandatory component of school curricula.

In addition, public information and education programmes (ideally as part of a national strategy) are in place to raise awareness among the general public, children, young people, parents and professionals, on children's right to participate, including the right to form or be part of children or young people's organisations.

Data sources (indicative only)

National children's rights strategies
 National educational curricula
 Government departments including those responsible for children and young people and communications
 Public authorities responsible for local service
 Children's rights NGOs
 Register of children and young people's associations and networks
 Qualitative research with children
 Data collected by the European Commission on children's involvement in judicial proceedings and the FRA's qualitative research on practices and procedures of child participation in justice proceedings

Assessment criteria

States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:

- 0** = No child-friendly information is available about children's right to participate
- 1** = Ad hoc public education/information programmes are in place to raise awareness of children's right to participate and to association
- 2** = Child-friendly information is sometimes made available for children of different ages and in different formats, including Braille, on, for example, children's associations, services, policies, rights, consultations and government guidance
- 3** = Comprehensive and accessible information programmes on children's rights to participation, and a compulsory component in the primary and secondary school curriculum on children's rights is introduced



to consider in respect of vulnerable children:

- Is information provided according to age, language and in formats for children with different disabilities?
- Is information made available to children in, for example, institutions, prisons, hospitals, detention centres for asylum seekers? Is it available to children in more remote regions?
- Is any research data on access to information disaggregated according to age, gender, disability, ethnicity etc?

Analysis notes	You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Governance level</th> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Children are represented in Forums (Please tick all that apply)</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="text-align: center;">NO</th> <th style="text-align: center;">DON'T KNOW</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>National</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regional</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>School</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Governance level	Children are represented in Forums (Please tick all that apply)				YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	National				Regional				Local				School			
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Creating spaces for participation

8

Children are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels

Definition	Children are enabled to participate in forums where they can address relevant authorities, including government, at school, local, regional and national levels (notably through schools councils, child/youth councils, children/youth parliaments or children/youth forums). These forums serve as spaces where children can identify issues of concern to them and bring them to policy makers at the school, local, regional and national levels. Particular efforts should be made to explain the process by which children are elected to such provisions, which children are involved, how children take part in the decision making processes (where appropriate), the regions in which they exist, and the decision-making powers afforded to such bodies.
Data sources (indicative only)	DG EAC Eurobarometer CIVED Public authorities responsible for local services NGO and academic research National Youth Councils
Assessment criteria	States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria: 0 = No forums exist through which children can engage with school, local, regional and national government 1 = A child/youth council or parliament exists through which children can address government at the national level 2 = Child/youth councils exist through which children can address governments at the regional level 3 = Legally mandated child/youth councils or parliaments exist through which children can address governments at the school, local, regional and national level



Analysis notes	You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Governance level</th><th colspan="3">Children are represented in Forums (Please tick all that apply)</th></tr> <tr> <th></th><th>YES</th><th>NO</th><th>DON'T KNOW</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>National</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Regional</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Local</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>School</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Governance level	Children are represented in Forums (Please tick all that apply)				YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	National				Regional				Local				School			
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Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator																									

9**Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local authority services are in place****Definition**

All public authorities responsible for local services, have mechanisms in place to consult with and receive feedback from children, including on the following services:

- ▶ Education and schools
- ▶ Alternative care (e.g. fostering, children's homes)
- ▶ Play, recreation, and sports
- ▶ Cultural services (e.g. museums, arts)
- ▶ Child protection services
- ▶ Support for immigration and asylum seekers
- ▶ Family support and pre-school services

Such mechanisms might include evaluation forms or surveys that are easily accessible to and adapted to children of different ages and backgrounds.

Particular effort should be made to assess the extent to which such services respond to the feedback they receive from children. For example, do they have a mechanism for informing children of the changes that have been made in response to the feedback they have received?

Ideally, efforts should be made to involve children in the design, implementation and evaluation of feedback mechanisms.

**Data sources
(indicative only)**

Legislation
Public authorities responsible for local services
Local public child care providers
Qualitative academic / NGO research including with children

Assessment criteria

States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria:

- 0** = Children do not have opportunities to offer feedback on local public services and such services are not required to offer such opportunities
- 1** = At least two of the local public services specified have systems in place for children to provide feedback on the services provided
- 2** = At least four of the local public services specified have systems in place for children to provide feedback on the services provided
- 3** = All of the local public services listed are required to have feedback arrangements in place and have established effective systems to obtain and respond to feedback from children

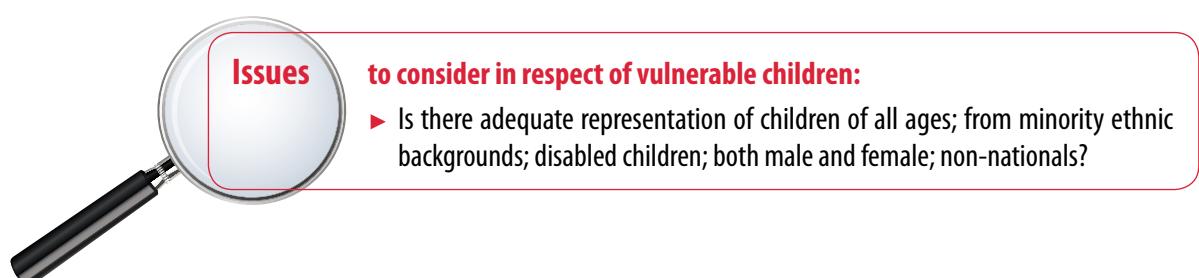
Issues**to consider in respect of vulnerable children:**

- ▶ Are such mechanisms available to all children regardless of age, disability, nationality (language limitations) etc.?



Analysis notes	You can use this matrix to help you assess how well you meet the indicator																																			
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10	Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions (hereinafter called: children's rights instruments)
Definition	Children and their representative organisations are supported with resources to participate in the monitoring of the implementation of children's rights instruments. This should include opportunities for children to participate in shadow-reporting, or to develop their own report
Data sources (indicative only)	Monitoring reports produced by or with children Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Conclusions of relevant Council of Europe monitoring bodies such as the European Committee of Social Rights, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Lanzarote Committee, etc.
Assessment criteria	States can measure progress towards the indicator using the following assessment criteria: 0 = No arrangements are in place to support children's participation in monitoring the implementation of children's rights instruments 1 = Selected children are invited and supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC 2 = The views of a wide range of children from different backgrounds and circumstances are gathered on the implementation of the UNCRC 3 = Children's own organisations receive support to systematically monitor the implementation of the UNCRC and any other children's rights instruments that the member State has ratified ⁴



4. In respect of the Council of Europe instruments, where mechanisms other than shadow reporting are used for monitoring implementation, these can be included in the assessment of the extent to compliance with this indicator.

Analysis notes	
Comments	<p>Good practice: Please use this space to describe any positive examples you have identified of effective quality participation in your country</p> <p>Points to address: Please use this space to describe any areas you have identified that require improvement</p>
Action Points (follow up) Please indicate any action you will take following this Assessment to strengthen progress on this indicator	

Appendix One

OVERVIEW OF THE NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE AND ETHICAL PARTICIPATION AND ASSOCIATED BENCHMARKS

1. Requirement One: Participation is transparent and informative

■ Children must be given information about their right to participate in a child friendly and accessible format. The information should include how they will be able to participate, why they have been given the opportunity to participate, the scope of their participation and the impact that they will be able to have.

■ This means in practice that:

- ▶ Children's participation has a clear purpose
- ▶ Children understand how much impact they are able to have on decision making
- ▶ The roles and responsibilities of those involved are clear and well understood
- ▶ Children agree with the goals and targets associated with their participation

2. Requirement Two: Participation is voluntary

■ Children must be able to choose whether or not they would like to participate and must be informed and able to withdraw from activities at any time. Children must not be coerced into participating or expressing their views.

■ This means in practice that:

- ▶ Children are given time to consider their involvement and are able to provide informed consent
- ▶ Children are aware and are able to withdraw at any time they wish
- ▶ Children's other commitments are respected and accommodated (e.g. work and school)

3. Requirement Three: Participation is respectful

■ Children should be treated with respect and provided with opportunities to express their views freely and to initiate ideas. Staff should also respect and gain an understanding of the family, school and cultural context of children's lives.

■ This means in practice that:

- ▶ Children are able to freely express their views and are treated with respect
- ▶ Where children are selected as representatives, the process will be based on principles of democracy and will avoid discrimination
- ▶ Ways of working build self-esteem and confidence which enables children to feel that they have valid experience and views to contribute
- ▶ Support from staff should be utilised to gain respect for children by other key duty bearers

4. Requirement Four: Participation is relevant

■ Participation should build on children's own knowledge and should be focused on issues which are relevant to their lives and the local context.

■ This means in practice that:

- ▶ Activities that children are involved in are of real relevance to their experiences, knowledge and abilities
- ▶ Participation approaches and methods build on local knowledge and practices
- ▶ Children are involved in setting the criteria for selection and representation for participation
- ▶ Children are involved in ways, at levels and at a pace appropriate to their capacities and interests

5. Requirement Five: Participation is child-friendly

Child friendly approaches should be used to ensure children are well prepared for their participation and are able to contribute meaningfully to activities. Participation approaches and methods should be designed or adapted based on children's ages and abilities.

This means in practice that:

- ▶ Time and resources are made available for quality participation and children are properly supported to prepare for participation
- ▶ Methods of involvement are developed in partnership or in consultation with children
- ▶ Adults have the capacity to support and ensure child-friendly approaches and ways of working
- ▶ Meeting places and activity locations are child-friendly and accessible to children with disabilities and other minority groups
- ▶ Children are given accessible information in child-friendly formats

6. Requirement Six: Participation is inclusive

Children's participation must provide opportunities for vulnerable children to be involved and should challenge existing patterns of discrimination. Staff must be sensitive to the cultures of all children participating.

This means in practice that:

- ▶ Children are not discriminated against because of age, race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- ▶ Children's involvement aims to include children from all backgrounds, which could mean reaching out to children in their local community
- ▶ Participation is flexible enough to respond to the needs, expectations and situations of different groups of children
- ▶ The age range, gender and abilities of children are taken into account
- ▶ Participation challenges and responds to existing patterns of discrimination

7. Requirement Seven: Participation is supported by training for adults

Staff must have the knowledge and capacity to facilitate meaningful child participation. This may involve training and preparation prior to engaging children in activities, as well as ongoing support as required.

This means in practice that:

- ▶ All staff and managers are sensitised to children's participation, understand its importance and understand the need for commitment to child participation
- ▶ Staff are provided with appropriate training, tools and other opportunities in participatory practice.
- ▶ Staff are effectively supported and supervised and participatory practice is evaluated
- ▶ Staff are able to express any views or anxieties about involving children, in the expectation that these will be addressed in a constructive way
- ▶ Specific technical skills or expertise is built up through a combination of recruitment, selection, staff development and practice exchange
- ▶ Relations between individual staff, and between staff and management, model appropriate behaviour, treating each other with respect and honesty

8. Requirement Eight: Safe and sensitive to risk

Adults working with children have a duty of care. Staff must take every precaution to minimise the risks to children of abuse and exploitation and any other negative consequences of participation.

This means in practice that:

- ▶ The protection rights of children are paramount in the way children's participation is planned and organised
- ▶ Children involved in participation work are aware of their right to be safe from abuse and know where to go for help if needed

- ▶ Skilled, knowledgeable staff is delegated to address and coordinate child protection issues during participatory processes.
- ▶ Safeguards are in place to minimise risks and prevent abuse.
- ▶ Staff organising a participatory process have a child protection strategy that is specific to each process. The strategy must be well communicated and understood by staff.
- ▶ Safeguards are in place to minimise and prevent abuse.
- ▶ Staff recognise their legal and ethical responsibilities in line with our Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding policy.
- ▶ Child protection procedures recognise the particular risks faced by some children and extra barriers they face in obtaining help.
- ▶ Consent is obtained for the use of all information provided by children and information identified as confidential is safeguarded at all times.
- ▶ A formal complaints procedure is set up to allow children involved in participatory activities to make complaints in confidence. Information about the procedure is available in relevant languages and formats.
- ▶ No photographs, videos or digital images of a child can be taken or published without that child's explicit consent for a specific use.
- ▶ Responsibilities relating to liability, safety, travel and medical insurance are clearly delegated and effectively planned for.

9. Requirement Nine: Participation is accountable

■ Following their participation, children must be provided with feedback and/or follow up regarding: how their views have been interpreted and used; how they have influenced any outcomes; and where appropriate the opportunity for them to be involved in follow up processes and activities.

■ This means in practice that:

- ▶ Children are involved in our work at the earliest possible stage.
- ▶ Staff and partners are accountable to children for their commitments.
- ▶ Children are supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes.
- ▶ Children are supported to share their experiences of participation with peer groups, their local communities and other organisations.
- ▶ Children are given rapid and clear feedback on their involvement, impact, outcomes and next steps.
- ▶ Feedback reaches all children involved.
- ▶ Children are asked about their satisfaction with participatory processes and their views on how they could be improved.
- ▶ Mistakes identified through evaluations are acknowledged and commitments given about how lessons learnt will be used to improve participatory processes in the future.

Appendix Two

COUNTRY PROFILE: TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING ON THE RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

This template provides a framework for States to record the key findings emerging from the Assessment, to highlight any examples they have identified of good practice, and to indicate any measures they plan to undertake in light of the findings. States are strongly encouraged to complete the template for their own use. Please send a copy to the Children's Rights Division (children@coe.int) of the Council of Europe which is interested to see how the Tool is being used and the outcomes of any Assessment processes.

Indicator	Assessment rating	Comments/observations	Examples of good practice (please provide examples and links that can be shared)	Follow up proposals/plans of action
Protecting the right to participate				
1. Legal protection for children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is reflected in the national Constitution and legislation				
2. Explicit inclusion of children and young peoples right to participate in decision-making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights				
3. An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law				

4. Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings				
5. Child friendly complaints procedures are in place				
Promoting awareness of the right to participate				
6. Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children				
7. Children are provided with information about their right to participate in decision making				
Creating spaces for participation				
8. Children are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels.				
9. Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place				
10. Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions				

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.