

Defence for Children International (DCI) statement before the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 6 – UPR adoption of Greece

March 23rd, 2022

Defence for Children International would like to thank the UPR Working Group and all States that participated in the review.

We welcome the Government of Greece's acceptance of 219 of the recommendations out of the 239 recommendations proffered.

We are particularly pleased that the Government accepted all the recommendations to protect children who are victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and to reduce the institutionalisation of children by significantly increasing the use of family- and community-based alternative care. During the reporting period, Greece has adopted the first national action plan on the rights of the child, aimed at combating child poverty and protecting children on the move.

We also welcome the voluntary pledge to ensure that children are not detained solely because of their status under immigration law and to improve the conditions of unaccompanied minors.

However, the general recommendation to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure was rejected without qualification. We are gravely concerned that current measures to address access to justice for children are grossly inadequate.

Given the various incidents of push backs that have come to the public's attention, we urge the Greek state to establish a transparent and effective mechanism in order to prevent and counter pushbacks against migrants and refugees, and to guarantee the fair access of all actors to an impartial reporting mechanism, without facing any reprisals.

Additionally, we urge the Government to seriously consider all noted recommendations including ending the criminalisation of human rights work, which constitutes a real threat to democracy and the rule of law.

It goes without a doubt that all noted recommendations expose children to vulnerability and impede their access to justice.

Thank you.