

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Principles of commitment:

The aim of this policy is to acknowledge risks and implement measures to address them in relation to child protection. In order to achieve this aim, this policy is based on several principles of commitment.

- FORUM as a Central-European human rights organisation fully adheres rights of all children as provided especially in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in relation to children with disabilities in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- FORUM commits itself to ensure that all rights of children are respected and protected within its own practices to safeguard the well-being and the best interest of all children, including those with severe disabilities.
- All children are especially assured about their right to express their views freely, in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- FORUM assumes particular responsibility towards all children who come into contact with the organisation staff, consultants and other representatives. No child must come to harm, at any time, as a result of engagement with FORUM in any capacity.

2. The scope and definitions:

This policy relates to all FORUM activities in which children are directly or indirectly affected. If unclear, it is presumed that the activity can affect children.

Child: according to Article 1 of the UN CRC, child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Disability: according to Article 1 of the UN CRPD, persons with disabilities are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. It may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or

coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

Neglect and negligent treatment: allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Child protection: responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that the FORUM undertakes to protect children ensuring that no child, including those with severe disabilities is subject to any form of abuse/neglect as a result of their association with the organisation, their contact with the FORUM staff, consultants, representatives in any organisation activity.

3. Identification and management of risks:

This policy is applicable to:

- FORUM members who carry their duties within the framework of the organisation statutes
- FORUM employees who carry their duties within the framework of labour contracts concluded with the organisation
- Consultants who carry their duties within the framework of contracts concluded between consultants and FORUM
- Volunteers and trainees who carry their duties within the framework of contracts concluded between the organisation and volunteers

Every person, including employees should immediately notify the chair of any abusive behaviour. This notification will be recorded, anonymously if requested and the chair will initiate investigation, in consultations with board member and possibly external advisors.

As a matter of principle, all staff, consultants, volunteers and others engaged with FORUM have duties toward children and any violation, when established, is considered as a violation of duties under the Czech Labour Code, resulting upon consideration by the chair and the board to dismissal in accordance with the Labour Code and the Civil Code.

This policy is subject to annual review by the board, and if requested or needed, at any time.

4. Implementation and responsibilities:

This policy was adopted by the board and the Chair has a duty of its implementation. This policy is communicated to all staff, including consultants. All new employees are informed about the policy. The policy is available to all electronically in the organisations folder and the Chair makes sure it is available online within three months since the adoption.

In relation to the recruitment process, all candidates are vetted, and background information are collected by the Chair, who bears the responsibility also within the framework of this policy as a person who ensures that staff know the standards and who can act as a go-to person for any concerns on child safeguarding. The Chair is under a duty to consider any information from background checks which might be relevant from the perspective of this policy. If the Chair is of the opinion that there are obvious risks, despite the competency of the candidate it must be given due weight.

The child protection policy was adopted at the board meeting on 2 May 2019 and it will be reviewed within a year.

Annex: Reporting template

Who: Please indicate who might have been involved in any incident raising an issue within the framework of the child protection policy.

What: Please indicate and describe any incident or information which can be relevant from the perspective of the child protection policy:

When and where: Please indicate when and where the incident happened, including contact details if possible:

Contact details: please provide, if wishing, your contact details and submit the information directly to the Chair, or via email: forumhr@forum.eu