Rapid Review on Inclusion and Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

unicef

Contents

1 | **Executive Summary**

Across a broad spectrum of child rights in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), specific groups of children are particularly disadvantaged and hard to reach. These groups of children are not only deprived of their rights but face additional barriers such as discrimination, segregation, stigma and prejudice which puts them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their peers in the pursuit and equal enjoyment of their rights. They often do not appear in national statistics and thereby become 'invisible' and risk being forgotten – by decision makers, service providers and the general population.

The aim of this Rapid Review is to provide an overview of the main child rights violations and equity gaps in the realization of rights that currently affect these specific groups of children:[1] children with disabilities, children affected by migration, and children from ethnic and linguistic minorities. Each group of children is important in its own right – all of them complex and heterogeneous and faced with very different challenges. While children from ethnic and linguistic minorities have been prominent in UNICEF's Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA)[2] during the past decade,

children with disabilities have only recently become more visible. Children affected by migration are an emerging focus area that has become more urgent, among other reasons due to the overall dynamic of population movements in the region and worldwide.

Furthermore, the Rapid Review examines, in extended detail, gender-related inequalities affecting girls and boys across the CEE/CIS region.[3] Issues related to gender are prominent in the CEE/CIS region, as elsewhere. The review describes the key barriers and bottlenecks related to gender equality that currently contribute to some of the observed rights violations and equity gaps for these particular groups of children, and identifies their impact on the key strategic result areas of the UNICEF RKLA. The findings for each of the reviewed groups and aspects are presented in three parts: current situation, main child rights violations, and key barriers and bottlenecks. A separate chapter highlights the interconnections between the different areas. Additionally, the annex contains reference material, such as bibliographies and interview lists.

The most common aspects regarding the overall findings of this Rapid Review can be highlighted as follows:

1. The term 'vulnerable children' is currently used by UNICEF and other stakeholders in a wide variety of ways, ranging from an indiscriminate 'the most at-risk vulnerable children' to a breakdown of what is perceived as vulnerable children to include, for instance, children living in poverty, Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities, children deprived of parental care and children in conflict with the law. In the absence of a clear and agreed definition, this generic tag poses a challenge in understanding how much attention is actually paid to specific groups by national policies and programmes and by UNICEF.

2. Children belonging simultaneously to two or more groups reviewed for this study are more vulnerable to rights violations. Ethnic background, disabilities, gender or migration processes may not always necessarily determine rights violations or equity gaps per se. However, the multidimensional nature of vulnerability and the multiplying effects of overlapping risk factors make children belonging to two or more groups more exposed to rights violations – e.g., trafficked Roma children with visible disabilities being forced to beg in the streets. This intersectionality combines to further exacerbate gender inequality, as, for example, in the case of limited voice, mobility, access to resources and power imbalances that make girls and women with disabilities highly vulnerable to sexual violence. This is especially the case if children grow up in poor socio-economic environments. The multiplier effect of vulnerability seems to perpetuate a vicious circle of exclusion and rights violations for some children – e.g., girls who have escaped domestic violence and resorted to migration through smuggling and trafficking might be exposed to further violence and abuse as a result of their 'choice' to migrate.

3. A general *lack of disaggregated data* compounds not only the problem of identifying accurate numbers of children affected by respective rights violations but, above all, the problem of pinpointing obstacles to services, rights violations and their severity for specific groups. It may well be assumed that this non-existence of data is a reflection of the lack of attention given to these groups of children, which remain mostly 'invisible' in statistics and monitoring data.

4. Another important common barrier determining several child rights violations across all groups and RKLAs are clearly *social norms*, which cause either direct or indirect discrimination of children due to their belonging to either one or more groups.

5. The existence and effective implementation of *legislation* is another essential factor that determines equal opportunities for the realization of child rights for all children. In this regard, a large weakness is evident in the fact that many children belonging to the groups reviewed for this study suffer severe difficulties in accessing justice and being protected by justice systems.

6. *Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information* is a further element commonly determining child rights violations for children reviewed in this study, which is reflected in inadequate adaptation of services, procedures or resources that would facilitate access to these services, or the mere lack of adequate services.

7. And, finally, the confluence of discriminatory social norms, ineffective implementation of legislation and policies, and limited access to services, facilities and information results in a *lack of accountability and responsiveness* of duty bearers to ensure that children from the identified groups can fully realize their rights.

The findings for the specific groups of children can be summarized as follows: [4]

Children with disabilities face rampant discrimination that spreads into all spheres of life and is spurred by the prevalence of outdated views on, perceptions of and attitudes about impairments and disabilities. Yet, data around disability remain scarce, which is largely related to the challenge in defining what impairment or disabilities are. The main child rights violations experienced by this group are institutionalization, limited access to early detection, exclusion from education and lack of accessibility and violence (affecting mainly girls with disabilities), which all have a serious impact on their enjoyment of various other child rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

With regard to *children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities*, the report highlights the lack of available data in the region, which would allow for a more accurate identification of children belonging to minorities. Moreover, the term 'minority' is often validated differently across the region, further contributing to the identification problem. Despite the heterogeneity and complexity of minorities in general, the report attempts to identify the main child rights violations for this 'group', which are lack of birth registration, poor socio-economic conditions and lack of adequate housing, institutionalization, unequal access to justice, child labour, early marriage and bride abductions, school drop-out and segregated schools. The main barriers that children from ethnic and linguistic minorities face are discrimination, social exclusion and language barriers.

For *children affected by migration*, the review gives an overview of the different realities faced by children left without parental care due to migration, children in the context of domestic migration, undocumented migrant children, repatriated children and trafficked children. The main child rights violations for this group are child trafficking, forced repatriation, child labour, discrimination, poor socio-economic conditions and lack of adequate housing, as well as the realities faced by undocumented migrant children and children left without parental care.

For the three groups mentioned above, violations have an impact on almost all child rights enshrined by the CRC.

From a child rights perspective, *gender-related inequalities affect girls and boys* at two impact levels: first, through gender inequalities experienced directly by girls and boys, leading to violations of their rights; and second, through gender inequalities experienced by adults that determine the conditions for equal enjoyment of rights by girls and boys. The main child rights violations at the first analytical level are gender differences in education, bias towards sons and devaluation of daughters, the gender dynamics linked to adolescent suicides and gender-based violence. At the second level, unequal labour market opportunities, intimate partner violence and the gendered nature of the HIV epidemic are the gender-related inequalities with the most severe impact on child rights.

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2 | **Methodology**

For the purpose of this research, the UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office provided the group of consultants with a batch of relevant literature to be reviewed. The documentation amounted to a total of 196 documents and formed the basis for a research outline whose purpose was to identify literature gaps as well as interview partners. During the course of further developing the research outline, additional literature consisting of more than 100 documents was consulted and interview partners for each thematic area were identified.

A total of 16 persons – both UNICEF and non-UNICEF staff – were interviewed. Some of the interviews were conducted in groups whereby the interview partners were consulted on more than one of the thematic areas to be considered. The entire research, including several draft revisions that took into consideration feedback from the CEE/CIS Regional Office and UNICEF country offices, was conducted between March and July 2014.

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3 | **Children with disabilities**

3.1 Current situation

DEFINITIONS To gather information regarding the attention given to children with disabilities in this Rapid Review, one has to start with the simple, yet inherently difficult, question: Who are children with disabilities? The documentation across the region reflects the wide variety of meanings and, at the same time, the challenges in 'defining' who children with disabilities are. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child uses the non-definition of impairment and disabilities, respectively used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): "Persons with disabilities include 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."[5] Note that the 'various barriers' are specified as 'attitudinal and environmental' elsewhere[6] in the treaty, underscoring the importance of society's impact on the exclusion of persons with disabilities ('social model').

While the need to enable the rights of children with disabilities has clearly been understood in the region, children with disabilities may or may not be covered under the broader label of 'vulnerable' children.[7] That tag is frequently used in reports[8] and it is the variety of ways in which it is applied that poses a challenge in understanding how much attention is paid to 'children and adolescents with disabilities'. A case in point is the Republic of Moldova, where the Country Annual Report refers to '2,400 vulnerable children', who gained access to early education and care services and who are described but not broken down percentage-wise as: Roma, children with disabilities, children with migrant parents and children in the Transnistrian region (UNICEF Moldova 2013).[9]

The variety of ways in which 'vulnerability' is used in UNICEF reports ranges from an indiscriminate "the most at risk vulnerable children" (UNICEF Kazakhstan 2013) to a breakdown of what is perceived as vulnerable children to include "children living in poverty, Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities, children deprived of parental care and children in conflict with the law" (UNICEF Montenegro 2013).

'Children with disabilities' are varyingly aggregated as either an indefinite group or a group of children that is associated with a specific impairment (e.g., Chernobyl victims, landmine victims). The challenges around psychosocial impairments and their invisibility is underscored in a report that stops short of referring to disability or impairment, respectively (Knaus et al. 2012). Diversity of opinion is further illustrated with the stigma-based conflation of xenophobia and disability that plays out against Roma children.

PERCEPTIONS The perception of children with disabilities reflects the general picture of persons with disabilities. The paradigm shift away from alms and pity towards equal rights holders, replacing the status as – at best – second-rate citizens with having legal capacity and the right to act that capacity, is only slowly taking root. Promising examples of awareness-raising campaigns, particularly around the issue of de-institutionalization (WHO et al. 2011; UNICEF Montenegro 2013), show that a change of perception is possible. But, in the field of education, too many children and adolescents are still missing out on the fulfilment of their rights. This starts with difficulties accessing early childhood development and is further compounded by resistance of both education officials and parents to change perceptions about special education.

There is a clear trend that European Union (EU) enlargement countries, such as in the case of Croatia, have spurred their efforts towards inclusion – not least due to the fact that the CRPD is the first United Nations core human rights treaty that the EU has acceded to. This is, most of all, reflected in the data on the overall prevalence of disability.

DATA AVAILABILITY In general, data around disabilities are scarce[10] – as a result of persons with disabilities and the 'issue', respectively, being hidden as well as the challenges around measuring impairments, particularly on an internationally comparable basis, which is linked to the challenges in 'defining' what impairment or disabilities are.

Even in the UNICEF *State of the World's Children* report (UNICEF 2013), there is no breakdown of percentages for children and adolescents with disabilities, there are no disaggregated data on early childhood intervention and no standardized internationally comparable data on the spectrum of impairments that are covered by the CRPD, including sensory as well as psychosocial impairments. As a consequence, reliable, comparable and disaggregated data about persons with disabilities, as well as obstacles to their inclusion and measures to support their inclusion, are not available.

Importantly, as the *State of the World's Children* report highlights: "A low reported prevalence of disability may be the consequence of low survival rates for young children with disabilities, or it may reflect the failure to count children with disabilities who are confined to institutions, who are hidden away by families fearful of discrimination, or who live and work on the streets" (UNICEF 2013). It is noteworthy that Croatia, as one of the few countries in the region that has introduced the state-of-the-art assessment based on the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability & Health, is closest to the WHO's overall estimate of 15 per cent of every population being disabled at one point in their life (WHO et al. 2011).

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC 2007) notes that: "Extra efforts are often needed to collect data on children with disabilities because they are often hidden by their parents or others caring for the child reinforcing the obligation to collect data, which is most clearly enunciated in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on Statistics and data collection (UNCRPD, Article 31, 2007).

DISCRIMINATION The unequal treatment of children with disabilities in the region takes many forms and covers all aspects of life. The invisibility of children with disabilities, and the general scarceness of data around disabilities, leads to the assumption that discrimination in all areas of life is a given. Also, multiple forms of discrimination are likely to be experienced by children with disabilities, based on social and economic status, but also in conjunction with gender as well as ethnicity, to name but a few.

It is safe to say that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's assessment of discrimination experiences is reflected across the board on all rights enshrined in the Convention: "Discrimination takes place – often de facto – in various aspects of life and development of children with disabilities. As an example, social discrimination and stigmatization leads to their marginalization and exclusion, and may even threaten their survival and development if it goes as far as physical or mental violence against children with disabilities. Discrimination in service provision excludes them from education and denies them access to quality health and social services. The lack of appropriate education and vocational training discriminates against them by denying them job opportunities in the future. Social stigma, fears, overprotection, negative attitudes, misbeliefs and prevailing prejudices against children with disabilities remain strong in many communities and lead to the marginalization and alienation of children with disabilities" (CRC 2007).

The 2013 *State of the World's Children* report, focused on children with disabilities, is very clear: "Discrimination on the grounds of disability is a form of oppression. The establishment of a clear, legal entitlement to protection from discrimination is vital in reducing the vulnerability of children with disabilities" (UNICEF 2013). As children with disabilities continue to face rampant discrimination that spreads into all spheres of life, a prohibition of discrimination based on disability and impairment is therefore vital.

3.2. Main child rights violations

A fixation on wanting to fix people – rather than changing societies' attitudes – is still prevalent in the region. The focus on perceived deficits – including under the academic heading of 'defectology', is pervasive, with impacts on all areas of life.

OVER-REPRESENTATION IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE The placement of children and adolescents with disabilities in institutions, traditionally viewed as 'in the best interests of the child', is one of the most widespread child rights violations in the region. Depriving a child of a supportive and caring family environment, institutionalization blatantly violates the enjoyment of the right to health, the possibility of early learning, as well as the right to an inclusive quality education.

Importantly, institutionalization, as well as the possibility of challenging such a placement and putting an end to it, is also closely connected to a child's right to access to justice, a theme that appears to be emerging more strongly.[11] Significant strides have been made – starting with the closure of the 'most notorious' residential facilities (UNICEF Kyrgyzstan 2013). Reform efforts have increasingly focused on establishing community-based services as a viable alternative to institutions[12] in line with the CRPD.

LACK OF EARLY DETECTION, DIAGNOSTICS AND INTERVENTION The right to health faces a complex set of challenges: early detection is of the essence to ensure early rehabilitation efforts (UNCRPD, Article 26, 2007) not only related to physical and sensory impairments but, importantly, to mental health issues, which are surely prevalent but basically not mentioned. In Belarus (UNICEF Belarus 2013) and Kazakhstan (UNICEF Kazakhstan 2013), the challenges experienced in the area of early detection seem to be very obvious and related to location and area of residence, respectively. Further, the type of impairment also impacts service delivery, which varies greatly.

The persisting paradigm of the medical approach is still prevalent, which is not surprising given that the region is known to have studied impairments in a specialized strand of research known as 'defectology'. The multidisciplinary approach to comprehensive assessment is not yet established, and it is likely to also impact children's right to early learning and the right to inclusive quality education.

Efforts towards improving children's health are under way in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (UNICEF the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2013), where early childhood interventions are focused on children with disabilities, as well as in Turkmenistan (UNICEF Turkmenistan 2013), where reference is made to a more general 'inclusive health' approach.

LACK OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION Inclusive quality education, as well as the right to early learning, are not yet being fulfilled. The mainstream society's resistance against persons with disabilities is reflected in teachers' refusal to educate children with disabilities, as well as in fears by parents of children without disabilities that their children's learning will suffer if a child with disabilities is added to the class (WHO et al. 2011). The awareness-raising campaigns, particularly in Montenegro, show that change is possible: the percentage of persons supporting the placement of children and adolescents with disabilities in mainstream education increased from 36 per cent to 80 per cent (UNICEF Montenegro 2013). Overall, Montenegro is reporting a 10 per cent increase in the access of children with disabilities to mainstream education (Ibid.). Initiatives or strategies have been developed in some countries,[13] but challenges remain that also affect the rights of adolescents with disabilities to a second chance. A case in point is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where different curricula are applied and cultural and linguistic differences compound challenges in accessing education (UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013). Countries such as Croatia, which appear to have been making good progress overall, report challenges that relate to the ongoing efforts of de-institutionalization, linking back to the rights to a supportive and caring family environment and to access justice (UNICEF Croatia 2013).

LACK OF PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION A child's right to be heard (UNCRC, Article 12, 1989) is hardly attainable for children with disabilities under the best of circumstances. In particular, children with high support needs and children who use non-verbal communication, as well as children with sensory impairments, are more often than not excluded from social activities and participatory undertakings (CRC 2009). As a result, exclusion from key areas of society is prevalent.

Ensuring holistic accessibility – that is, social (breakdown of attitudinal barriers), communication (Braille, sign language, alternative means of communication), intellectual (easy-to-understand formats) as well as physical (ramps, accessible bathrooms, adequate furniture) – is key to making participation possible. Importantly, the participation of children with disabilities in all aspects of life is explicitly enshrined in the CRPD (UNCRPD, Article 4, paragraph 3, 2007). The lack of accessibility enabling participation affects the fulfilment of all rights enshrined in the CRC.

3.3. Key barriers and bottlenecks

SOCIAL NORMS The key bottleneck is the *prevalence of outdated views on, perceptions of and attitudes about disabilities*. This is strongly reinforced in the prevailing *social norm* that makes acceptable the exclusion of a child from family and community by placing him/her in an institution, under the assumption that this is in the 'child's best interests'. The impact of social norms on the exclusion of persons with disabilities seems to be largely unknown. In other words, the social model, whereby the emphasis is placed on attitudinal barriers that exclude persons with disabilities, is not yet understood and thus also not applied across the region.

Outdated views also impact policy related to education. While the overall goal is increasingly enshrined, the implementation through pertinent policies is frequently held up by *preconceived ideas about the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in mainstream schools*.

LEGISLATION Importantly, *laws and policies do not yet fully reflect the social model in the area of disability assessment*. The focus on perceived 'deficits' does not comply with the bio-psychosocial model of disability as described in the CRPD, which emphasizes the impact of the 'interaction between a person with impairment and attitudinal barriers'.

Importantly, *legislation and policies around teachers' education* have to meaningfully equip future teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to support all children by providing individualized instruction. This is not yet evident.

AVAILABILITY OF COMMODITIES There appears to be a *gap in the provision of adequate training to medical staff,* but importantly also to those *professionals who should complement the medical assessment* through a multidisciplinary approach, such as psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers.[14]

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The skills of teachers have to be updated in ongoing training and opportunities for further learning. In most instances there will be a need to review the supply of essential commodities given that the requirement to teach 'all' children fundamentally challenges and changes the recruitment of potential teachers. The *attitudes or willingness of teachers* is profoundly informed by prevailing *social and cultural practices and beliefs* and needs to be further addressed.

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE INFORMATION *Social and cultural practices* related to disability may compound this bottleneck in that *families may be reluctant to seek assistance for a child with disabilities due to shame* associated with having an impaired child. The fear of the consequences of having a child with disabilities may override the impetus to seek support and assistance. The lack of parental skills and a lack of adequately trained family support centres and early intervention teams that can inform parents of their rights as well as the rights of their children with disabilities impact the supply to address the challenges that young parents of children with disabilities face.

The supply of curricula as well as adequate educational tools, including teaching materials, is an essential commodity in enabling inclusive education that is frequently impacted by a lack of knowledge about

accessibility requirements and the *availability of alternative teaching tools*.

FINANCIAL ACCESS Family members who act as caretakers of children and adolescents with disabilities that require more assistance face the *challenge of maintaining an income*. A key barrier is therefore the *availability of essential commodities* in terms of both part-time employment that yields sufficient income to allow care-taking and/or the substitution of lost income for those family members or caretakers who provide extensive support to children and adolescents with disabilities and thus cannot hold a paid occupation. In rural areas, where additional support is required due to remoteness, lack of public transportation and lower demand for specialized services, costs for caretakers are even higher.

PHYSICAL ACCESS Procurement policies reflect prevailing social norms in that *'accessibility' is rarely a requirement in pertinent legislation*. Consequently, public transportation and city planning, as well as construction policies, rarely ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. This lack of policy, or lack of policy implementation, impacts the availability of educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Frequently, access to education is cut off due to the *lack of the availability of the essential* commodities such as 'accessible transportation', which is also a *lack of access to adequate facilities*. Alternatively, private transportation can be made available, but this proves to be rather costly, and thus is determined by *financial means*.

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4 | Children from ethnic and linguistic minorities

4.1 Current situation

LEGAL FRAMEWORK Ethnic, linguistic and national minorities (including indigenous communities) are terms with different weight and validity across the CEE/CIS region covered in this Rapid Review. Different clusters of countries and territories could be outlined based on the applicable legal framework regarding minorities. While some countries have ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE 1998), some others do not contemplate minorities in their legal framework (Richardson et al. 2008; UNDP 2010). Nevertheless, in most countries, special provisions for specific minority communities have been made (e.g., for Kurds[15] and Roma[16] in Turkey) regardless of their recognition as a differentiated group.

DATA AVAILABILITY Literature on the situation and challenges faced by minority children other than Roma is not extensive. Especially in the Central Asian countries, there is a lack of robust data disaggregated by ethnicity-age-gender, which is commonly based on ethnic/linguistic self-identification recorded in the census. Furthermore, there is a large heterogeneity of groups in

the region. As an example, in Russia, the approximate number of ethnic groups is about 185,[17] speaking 102 different minority languages,[18] in Kazakhstan it is about 130 (HRC 2010), while in other CIS countries and in Turkey these are counted in tens.

There are no accurate estimates on the overall number of non-majority population in the region. While in 2002 some authors estimated the total minority population in all of Europe (as a geographical term) at about 14 per cent (Pan et al. 2014) over a total approximate population of 770 million, tentative analysis of census data in the CEE/CIS countries would indicate approximately 21.6 per cent of minorities[19] respective of the overall total population of most countries in the region.

However, not all minority groups share similar socio-economic circumstances and are in the same situation of vulnerability. For a thorough overview of the situation of minority children in CEE/CIS, especially in Central Asia, an in-depth analysis would be necessary. In 2013, the *Minority Rights Group* identified in its annual report (Minority Rights Group 2013) a number of minorities, apart from Roma, who are subject to either structural

discrimination or unequal access to education and health; among them were: Kurds and Yezidis in Turkey, Uighurs in Kazakhstan, Talysh in Azerbaijan, Pamiris in Tajikistan, Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, and some indigenous groups in remote areas within the extensive Arctic region in Russia.[20]

An important element to take into account when analysing minorities in the region is the ascription or not to *kin-states* (e.g., Greeks in Georgia) or territories (e.g., Tatars outside the Republic of Tatarstan), which in many cases can be translated into support from *kin-states* to its national minorities (Informant 4; Minority Rights Group 2014; Malakhov et al. n.d.; ECMI 2011). Few ethnic and linguistic minorities are present in more than one state (e.g., Kurds, Yazidis or Uighur). The only transnational minority with presence in all of Europe and parts of Asia with no links to a *kin-states* and considered the most vulnerable and marginalized minority are the Roma (Richardson et al. 2008; Akiner 1997; Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2010). With an overall population of about 7.7 million in the region,[21] Roma under 19 years old represent circa 3.5 million, approximately ≥46 per cent of the total Roma population.

TABLE 1 I Censuses disaggregated by ethnic group[22]

Country	Census Year	Majority group	Majority population	Total population	Non-majority population	% non-majority
Albania	2013	Albanian	2,312,356	2,800,138	487,782	17.4%
Armenia	2013	Armenian	2,961,801	3,018,854	57,053	1.9%
Azerbaijan	2011	Azerbaijani	8,172,809	8,922,447	749,638	8.4%
Belarus	2011	Belarus	7,957,252	9,503,807	1,546,555	16.3%
Bulgaria	2012	Bulgarian	5,664,624	7,364,570	1,699,946	23.1%
Croatia	2005	Croatian	3,977,171	4,437,460	460,289	10.4%
Georgia	2009	Georgian	3,661,173	4,371,535	710,362	16.2%
Kazakhstan	2009	Kazak	7,985,039	14,953,126	6,968,087	46.6%
Kyrgyzstan	2001	Kyrgyz	3,128,147	4,822,938	1,694,791	35.1%
Montenegro	2013	Montenegrin	278,865	620,029	341,164	55.0%
Republic of Moldova	2009	Moldavian	2,564,849	3,383,332	818,483	24.2%
Romania	2003	Romanian	19,399,597	21,680,974	2,281,377	10.5%
Russian Federation	2013	Russian	111,016,896	142,856,536	31,839,640	22.3%
Serbia	2013	Serbian	5,988,150	7,186,862	1,198,712	16.7%
Tajikistan	2012	Tajik	6,373,834	7,564,502	1,190,668	15.7%
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2003	Macedonian	1,297,981	2,022,547	724,566	35.8%
Ukraine	2009	Ukrainian	37,541,693	48,240,902	10,699,209	22.2%
TOTAL			**230,282,237**	**293,750,559**	**63,468,322**	**21.6%**

Source: UNSTATS 2014.

Literature on Roma[23] is extensive; however, there are large information gaps. While there is a comprehensive picture of the situation and equity gaps faced by Roma children in South Eastern European countries, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey, there is no sufficient in-depth literature (or it is completely non-existent) on Roma children in countries like Belarus or Ukraine, and especially in the Southern Caucasus and in Central Asian CIS countries. Some reports point out the high vulnerability of Central Asian Roma ('Lyuli', 'Mugat' and 'Djugi' in the local languages), especially women and children across Central Asian CIS countries, who in many cases lack the necessary identification documents to access basic rights, services and social protection (ADC Memorial 2013; Marushiakova et al. 2010; HRC 2010).

4.2 Main child rights violations

Analysing equity gaps among children belonging to ethnic, linguistic and national minorities is a complex task due to the disparity of different socio-economic environments among minorities across the region.

Thus, this categorization of rights breaches cannot be generalized to all minorities, as it merely represents an abstraction of rights violations among the most vulnerable groups.

While in many cases, growing up in poor socio-economic environments is a determinant (and at the same time a consequence) of inequalities, rights violations and marginalization processes for both majority and minority children, we can observe an over-representation of children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities in these circumstances. Together with added language/cultural barriers and structural discrimination, children from highly vulnerable minorities (e.g., Roma) are at risk of perpetuating their situation within a vicious circle of exclusion.

There are abundant reports portraying Roma children in a situation of vulnerability in the region. Of special concern in the region is the limited access of Roma children to education (school segregation, drop-outs), health care, housing, unequal access (and treatment) to justice (Ghai and Cottrell 2010), over-representation

TABLE 2 I Estimates of Roma population in CEE/CIS countries and territories[24]

Country	Total population (World Bank 2010)	Census data (self-declared)	Census year	Minimum estimate	Maximum estimate	Average estimate (CoE used figure)	Roma children under 19 years old*
Albania	3,204,284	1,261	2001	80,000	150,000	115,000	
Armenia	3,092,072	50	2004	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Azerbaijan	9,047,932	No data	No data	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Belarus	9,490,500	9,927	1999	25,000	70,000	47,500	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,760,149	8,864	1991	40,000	76,000	58,000	
Bulgaria	7,543,325	325,343	2011	700,000	800,000	750,000	
Croatia	4,424,161	9,463	2001	30,000	40,000	35,000	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2,060,563	53,879	2002	134,000	260,000	197,000	
Georgia	4,452,800	1,200	1989	1,500	2,500	2,000	
Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)	1,815,000	45,745	1991	25,000	50,000	37,500	
Montenegro	631,490	8,305	2011	15,000	25,000	20,000	
Republic of Moldova	3,562,062	12,271	2004	14,200	200,000	107,100	
Romania	21,442,012	619,007	2011	1,200,000	2,500,000	1,850,000	
Russian Federation	141,750,000	205,007	2010	450,000	1,200,000	825,000	
Serbia (excluding Kosovo UNSCR 1244)	7,292,574	108,193	2002	400,000	800,000	600,000	
Turkey	72,752,325	4,656	1945	500,000	5,000,000	2,750,000	
Ukraine	45,870,700	47,917	2001	120,000	400,000	260,000	
TOTAL			**3,738,700**	**11,577,500**	**≥7,658,100**	**≥3,446,145**	Average estimate in CEE/CIS countries: 46%

Source: Council of Europe estimates on Roma population (<http://coe.int>).

* Reports estimate the percentage of Roma under the age of 19 years old to range between 41 per cent and 55 per cent over the total population in some countries.[25] While many reports use 50 per cent, in this table an overall estimate of 46 per cent has been applied and extrapolated, for the average of Roma population under 19 of the countries where relevant statistical information is available.

in institutional care (ERRC et al. 2011) and overall, a structural limitation to the right of Roma children and their comprehensive well-being.

The limitation of children belonging to Roma and other vulnerable minorities to access basic rights and protection increases their exposure to abuse and exploitation, making them more vulnerable to trafficking (UNICEF 2009; KMOP et al. 2014; ADC Memorial 2013; Richardson et al. 2008), which in some cases is organized within the same ethnic or family group,[26] especially those children without birth certificates or identity documents, as pointed out by some reports (HRC 2010; ADC Memorial 2013; UNICEF et al. 2008).

Furthermore, there are certain deeply rooted traditions and trends having an impact on rights violations of minority children, such as *early marriage* (e.g., Roma, Yezidi and many other groups) and *bride abduction* (UNICEF 2009; Marushiakova et al. 2010; CRC 2014; Topcuoğlu 2012; CRC 2012e; UNICEF 2011) of young girls[27] (e.g., Uighur, Kyrgyz and different ethnic groups in North and South Caucasus, among others). Although some steps have been taken by different state authorities to regulate or fight these practices, there still remain many challenges to ensure their implementation.

The most frequently reported and documented rights violations related to minority children include:

Lack of birth registration and/or identity documents remains a significant rights violation among minority children. This practice happens where – intentionally or unintentionally – parents who, in some cases, might lack identity documents and/or are at risk of statelessness, do not record births. Children without identity documents face additional obstacles to access basic rights, services and social protection, are particularly exposed to abuse and exploitation, and are more vulnerable to trafficking networks. This has a potential impact (direct/indirectly) on all child rights enshrined in the CRC.

Poor socio-economic conditions and lack of adequate housing affect many vulnerable groups. However, some ethnic minorities in the CEE/CIS region are disproportionately affected by poverty and sub-standard living conditions, sometimes reinforcing stereotypes of the majority population. This has a direct impact on the rights of young children to minimum living standards, to comprehensive well-being and to protection from the risks of disasters, as well as an indirect impact on many other child rights.

Over-representation in institutional care of Roma children has been pointed out by reports in some CEE/

CIS countries. This situation is often related to factors such as poor socio-economic circumstances (structural unemployment, indebtedness and inadequate housing), single parenthood (especially single motherhood), unwanted pregnancies and migration. Furthermore, lack of professional capacity in assessing disabilities often leads to discriminatory practices. It is not uncommon for children from a minority linguistic group to be, erroneously, considered as having an intellectual impairment.[28] In this instance, by virtue of speaking a minority language, children are registered as having a disability and placed in institutions and special schools. There are indications that the current system in many countries creates a cycle from which it is hard to escape, as children in institutional care are forced to leave the institutions when they reach 18 and, in most cases, have limited support – or none at all – in the outside world (ERRC et al. 2011), or are simply moved from institutions that house children to institutions that house adults with disabilities. All of the above represent violations of the right to a supportive and caring family environment.

Unequal access to justice and discriminatory treatment and even harassment of minority children by law enforcement authorities has been reported for Roma, but also for other ethnic minorities in the region. Some reports confirm that children of minority and lower-income groups are over-represented in juvenile justice systems, and even more so in detention. Their contact with the justice system often pushes them deeper into poverty and exclusion instead of extending a supportive hand (ADC Memorial 2013; UNICEF 2013).

Child labour potentially affects minority and majority children in different contexts (including domestic and international migration). Among some minority groups (e.g., Roma), child begging is widespread within specific social strata.

Early marriage and bride abduction are practices more common among minority girls. Although such practices are not limited to ethnic minorities, they are well rooted in some ethnic groups across the region. These practices are often associated with and lead to violations of the rights to education, health and young child well-being, protection from violence and respect for the views of the child.

School drop-out and segregated schools are identified trends affecting Roma children (but not exclusively). Poor socio-economic conditions, child labour, discrimination and harassment from majority students and teachers, among other causes, leads to low school attendance and drop-outs. This has a direct impact on the rights to early learning and education.

4.3 Key barriers and bottlenecks

SOCIAL NORMS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES/ BEHAVIOURS *Discrimination and stigma* are not limited to minority groups, although discrimination on an ethnic basis is prevalent in CEE/CIS countries and territories and contributes to continuing the vicious circle of exclusion, especially where governments have not yet adopted anti-discrimination laws. While in many cases minority children grow up in similar poor socio-economic conditions and face similar difficulties in accessing rights (e.g., child labour, low school attendance) as children from the majority population in some low-wage countries, *discrimination on an ethnic basis* is well rooted in many CEE/CIS states. Sometimes, it is linked to recent or past inter-ethnic conflicts (e.g., ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek minorities in Osh, Kyrgyzstan). Cases of *structural discrimination* at institutions, *harassment,* different kinds of *segregation* (e.g., segregated education, Roma in special schools) and, in the most extreme cases, forced displacement of minorities (CRC 2006c) continue to be present in the region, with a clear impact on children's access to basic rights and to their comprehensive well-being.

Some ethnic minorities such as the Roma are disproportionately victims of *prejudice* and stigma; stereotyped views about Roma children are widespread among the general population across Europe, and among policymakers and service providers. A 2011 pilot research[29] followed a group of Czech and Slovak Roma pupils attending special or *de facto* segregated (Roma-only) schools in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, who moved with their families to the United Kingdom, where they attended primary or secondary mainstream education. While in their home countries most of the children had been diagnosed with mental and learning disabilities, the attainment of the same pupils in the United Kingdom schools was just below average; only a small percentage of the cohort (2–4 per cent) was deemed to require special attention, which is provided to them within the mainstream school; 89 per cent of the pupils spoke fluent English. As the example shows, societal norms and expectations, as well as specific behaviours towards minority children, can fuel structural discrimination and have very negative impacts (direct/ indirectly) on the equal realization of the rights enshrined in the CRC.

The *political sensitivity of minority issues* in some CEE/CIS countries and territories, together with inter-ethnic frictions, lack of dialogue and building of national identities may also affect, together with structural discrimination, the level of access of minority children to rights and services.

LACK OF DATA As seen in previous sections, the *disparity in the definition of 'ethnic', 'linguistic' and 'national' minorities across the different legal frameworks* in the CEE/CIS region implies different approaches and level of access to rights and services by minority children. In addition, the overall *lack of accurate ethnic-gender-age sensitive statistical data* limits the knowledge of the reality and hampers the profiling of the needs of children from minority communities in the region.

LANGUAGE BARRIER In addition, *language* plays an important role in determining ethnic and linguistic minorities in the region; however, in many cases it also poses a *barrier* to accessing services on an equal basis. While most of the public services are accessible in the CIS countries in both the state language and Russian (the common *lingua franca*), in many cases, minority children and women have little or no knowledge of either language (Karimova 2013; UNDP 2010; UNDP 2013; ADC Memorial 2013). Language barriers, as a structural cause, may have an impact especially on the education output and access to health care of minority women and children;[30] in addition, language shapes the way in which mainstream populations may perceive and construct children from minorities as 'other' and 'different' than themselves, and vice versa, with far-reaching consequences in terms of social inclusion and participation.

LEGISLATION AND POLICIES Regarding the determinant *legislation/policies*, apart from the development of *specific policies* and their inclusion in the national agendas,[31] further efforts are needed to strengthen their *implementation on the ground* in some CEE/CIS countries and territories. Many challenges remain to address complex topics such as school segregation (e.g., Roma in schools for disabled children), school drop-out, early marriage and bride abduction (*cultural practices and beliefs*), civil registration and housing, among others.

5 | **Children affected by migration**

5.1 Current situation

Domestic and international movements and displacements of populations have historically characterized the CEE/CIS region. Recent trends have given further prominence, and in some cases urgency, to questions about the impact of migration on children in the region. First, conflicts in the vicinity (the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq) have increased forced migration flows to or passing through CEE/CIS countries. Second, new and re-emerging conflicts within CEE/CIS, with larger geopolitical implications such as Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Ukraine, have led/might lead to increasing numbers of internally displaced persons/refugees. Third, increasingly restrictive and punitive immigration/asylum policies in the EU and Russia, including border patrols and detention facilities, are affecting migrants from, or in, transit through CEE/CIS countries. Fourth, increasingly negative public attitudes in Europe vis-à-vis migrants from neighbouring regions (e.g., Western Balkans) and from within the EU (e.g., Bulgaria and Romania) have resulted in expulsions and repatriations to CEE/CIS countries (a similar phenomenon is observed in Russia with migrants from Central Asia). Children are affected by migration when they are left behind by one or both migrating parents, when they move with parents domestically or internationally (voluntarily or forced), or when they move alone (voluntarily or forced). In the CEE/CIS region, migration concerns children from CEE/CIS countries and territories moving domestically or beyond borders within the region and beyond the region, and also children moving to the CEE/CIS region from other countries of the world. The impact of migration on children and adolescents must be seen in the broader context of poverty and conflict, and within the perspectives of vulnerability and resilience, gender relations and children's rights.

The categories in the table below attempt to map different situations that exist in the CEE/CIS region.

CHILDREN FROM COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE CEE/CIS REGION HAVE TRADITIONALLY MIGRATED WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR PARENTS, DOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED, TO COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE CEE/CIS REGION – MOSTLY COUNTRIES IN THE EU Their situation, presenting both very positive opportunities but also persisting challenges, has been and is the object of

regular data collection and study in receiving countries and by the EU. It is also an important policy issue for EU Member States, EU institutions and EU civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks. Reports and rulings from EU institutions have determined that migrant children face limited access to justice and health and education services, and are subjected to apprehension, administrative detention and deportation, collective expulsions, push-backs and border control practices that endanger their lives when trying to enter the EU territory, due to their or their parents' migratory status. The movement has included the significant number of refugees and asylum seekers from the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia – a flux which continues today, for instance from Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict. Data on the numbers and situation of children from CEE/CIS migrating to countries other than the EU are limited.

THE MOVEMENT OF POPULATIONS AND CHILDREN, BOTH VOLUNTARY AND FORCED, WITHIN THE CEE/CIS REGION HAS HISTORICALLY CHARACTERIZED THIS PART OF THE WORLD, at the time of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, during and after their dissolution, and until today. Countries like Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are preferred destinations for significant numbers of migrant families and children from the CEE/CIS region in search of better opportunities. On a smaller scale, CEE/CIS populations move from and to virtually all

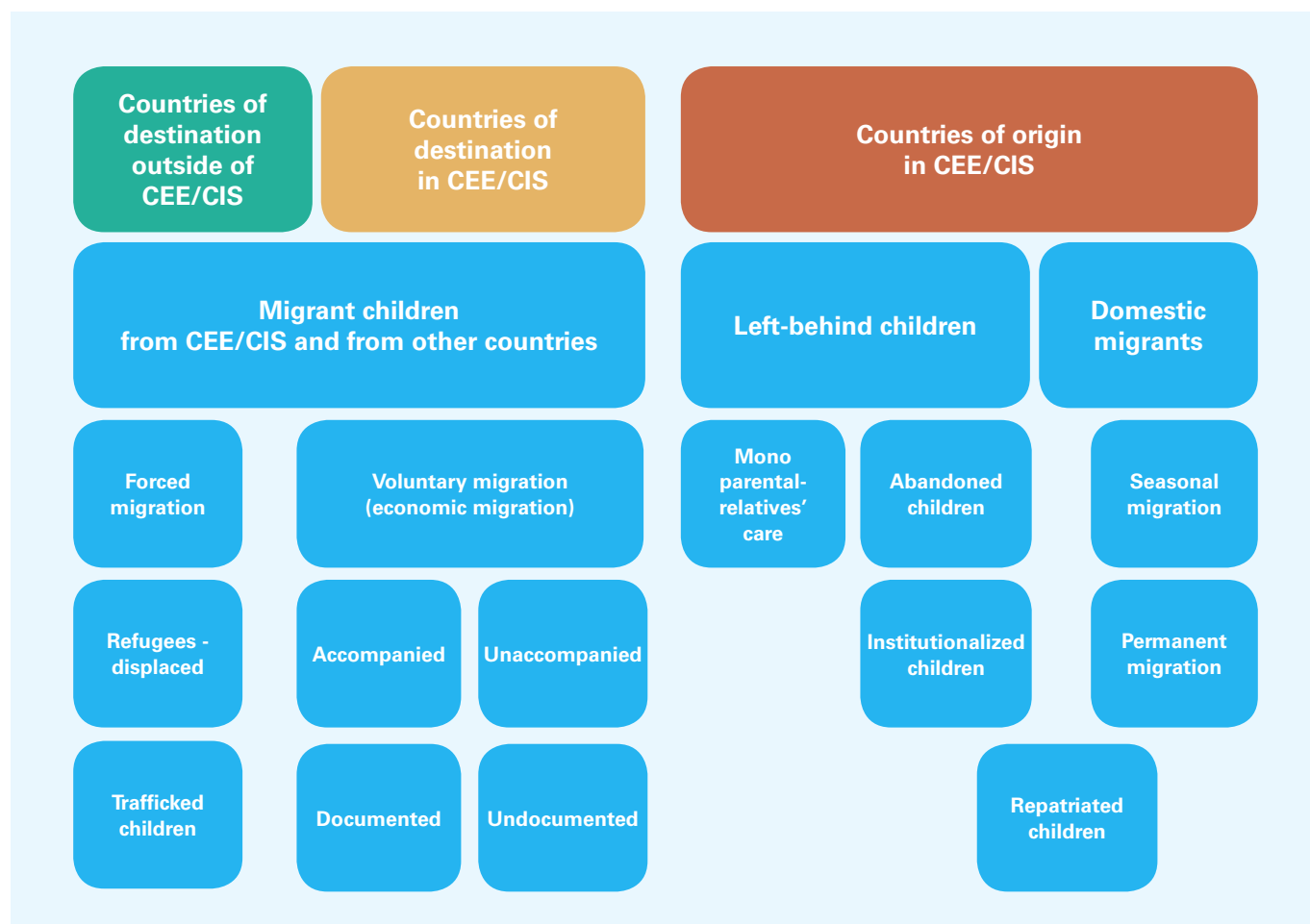**FIGURE 1** I Different groups of children affected by migration[32]

TABLE 3 I Immigrants under 19 years old in the main CEE/CIS in-migration countries[33]

Country	Total foreigners (non-citizens)	Under 19 years old	Per cent under 19 years old
Kazakhstan*	30,375	4,287	14.1%
Russia**	5,000,309	856,189	17.1%
Turkey***	272,943	not available	not available
Percentage migrants under 19 years old			**230.282.237**

Source: Foreign population (non-citizens) by country of citizenship, age and sex (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>). Disaggregated data by age group are not available for Turkey.

countries in the region. Only limited information exists on the situation of children who live in a country of the region that is different than the country in which they were born or of which they are nationals. A study on the situation of migrant children in Moscow noted the worrisome prevalence of psycho-emotional disorders, caused by hostile environments at schools and with peers. These problems are especially grave when young migrants come to Russia from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. While rights for children of permanent or temporary legal migrants are widely recognized in the national legislation in Russia, illegally migrating children are only entitled to education and emergency medical services. The study noted that schooling and social integration can become especially challenging for migrant children with little Russian language ability, and for adolescents who are between 14 and 18 years old. On the other hand, children are able to learn the language of the host country more quickly than their parents: in Moscow and St. Petersburg, complementary Russian-language learning programmes for children were developed.

TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN FROM CEE/CIS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES HAPPENS WITHIN THE REGION AND BEYOND Left-behind, undocumented and unaccompanied street children and children in institutional care in CEE/CIS countries are at risk of falling into organized trafficking networks. Trafficked children face violations of many of their rights, and are deprived of access to basic services and comprehensive well-being. Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are among the countries that are a source of human smuggling and trafficking. Age and gender play a role in the typology of exploitation within child trafficking: forced labour, begging, petty crime or sexual exploitation (Europol 2011; Shelley 2014).[34] Due to the complex, clandestine and transnational nature of child trafficking, absence of reliable data is a fact. A study by UNICEF Kazakhstan in 2012[35] found that among the 103 trafficking victims interviewed, 35.0 per cent were cross-border trafficking victims (31.1 per cent were cross-border trafficked into Kazakhstan, and 3.9 per cent were cross-border trafficked from Kazakhstan). Acknowledging the

TABLE 4 I Refugees, returnees, displaced and stateless persons (non-disaggregated)

Country/territory of asylum	Total refugees and people in refugee-like situations	Returned refugees	Returned internally displaced persons	Stateless persons
Albania	82	-	-	-
Armenia	2,918	-	-	11
Azerbaijan	1,730	-	-	1,741
Belarus	595	-	-	7,391
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,933	449	365	4,500
Bulgaria	5,688	-	-	-
Croatia	824	439	67	1,720
Georgia	462	-	-	1,569
Kazakhstan	616	-	-	7,337
Kyrgyzstan	6,095	-	8,100	32,300
Montenegro	12,874	-	-	4,312
Republic of Moldova	146	-	-	2,073
Romania	1,005	-	-	275
Russian Federation	3,914	41	166	178,000
Serbia (and UNICEF in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244))	70,707	392	845	8,500
Tajikistan	3,323	1	-	2,300
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1,130	-	-	1,154
Turkey	14,465	-	-	780
Turkmenistan	59	-	-	11,000
Ukraine	3,176	-	-	39,817
Uzbekistan	214	-	-	-
TOTAL	**136,956**	**1,322**	**9,543**	**304,780**

Source: UNHCR (2011).

progress made by some countries on launching national plans and strategies to fight trafficking,[36] reports from civil society organizations and concluding observations and recommendations from the Committee of the Rights of the Child agree on the need to take firmer steps and enhance regional coordination and cooperation to eradicate child trafficking in the region.

There are little to no data about **UNDOCUMENTED AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN CROSSING INTERNATIONAL BORDERS IRREGULARLY WITHIN THE CEE/CIS REGION** While children belonging to these groups often are 'invisible' in national statistics, they are paradoxically very 'visible' in the streets and in migrants' settlements. As basic care is provided primarily within the family unit or guardianship in charge, thus minimizing contact with institutions, identification is extremely difficult (Informant 5; PICUM 2013; PICUM 2011). The *Agreement of the States Parties of the CIS on the Return of Minors to their State of Permanent Residence*[37] (2002) was an attempt to enhance regional coordination and exchange of information among states, but significant challenges remain. Undocumented and unaccompanied children face serious obstacles to access basic social services and social protection. Fear of being discovered by immigration authorities, thus being subject to deportation, is a deterrent to approach institutions providing services (health, education) or protection. In some cases, there are reports of exploitation (child labour, trafficking, etc.) and abuse occurring within the same family or group, which represents an added difficulty in identifying rights violations by national authorities.

A phenomenon that is little studied is **THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN MIGRATING (FOR ECONOMIC REASONS) TO CEE/CIS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES NOT PART OF THE REGION** For instance, a migration profile for Armenia produced by UNICEF in 2013 indicated that, in Armenia, there were 221,147 people from Azerbaijan, 16,335 people from the Democratic Republic of Korea and 8,929 people from the Islamic Republic of Iran. There is little to no information regarding the access of children from these populations to education, health and other services, or regarding the degree of their integration into society, culture and language.

A more recent and visible trend in CEE/CIS countries and territories has been **THE INFLUX OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM NON-CEE/CIS COUNTRIES** This phenomenon has been driven by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and has significantly affected Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and, to a lesser extent, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine. More recently, the crisis in Ukraine has generated internal displacement within the country, and movements of populations towards Russia.

CHILDREN LEFT WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE DUE TO MIGRATION (LEFT-BEHIND CHILDREN) IN CEE/CIS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES HAVE BECOME A VISIBLE PHENOMENON Children may remain: a) under mono-parental care (most often women) when only one of the parents emigrates (most often men); b) under the attention of relatives; or c) under institutional care (abandoned children). The latter is the scenario that has the highest impact on left-behind children, who might face major obstacles in accessing rights (especially 'street children', either domestic or foreign) and comprehensive well-being, and thus be exposed to a higher risk of exploitation, abuse and trafficking. Children left behind have been reported to be impacted in terms of psycho-emotional development, education performance and social integration, and by drug abuse and suicide, among other issues. While in some countries (e.g., Armenia) there is a lack of data on left-behind children due to migration, in others (e.g., Albania, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan) comprehensive studies have been conducted about the 'left-behind generation'. Taking into consideration different cultural elements, family structure patterns and regular receipt of remittances, some of the findings have identified positive impacts on nutritional status, health-seeking behaviours, and education performance of children left behind. The withdrawal of remittances, on the contrary, is found to generate the most negative impact on abandoned children.

The category of **REPATRIATED CHILDREN** encompasses a number of situations in which children, accompanied or unaccompanied, are repatriated to their countries and territories of origin. In recent years, mainstream media has highlighted cases of forcible repatriation of Roma from Western European countries to CEE/CIS countries and territories in south-east Europe. Very often, repatriated children face a number of obstacles in terms of reintegration into society, culture and language, and of accessing social services, particularly if they were born abroad and do not speak the local language. The situation is aggravated in minority groups, such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children repatriated to Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), who were reported to face negative consequences to their well-being, including psychosocial and emotional effects.[38]

DOMESTIC MIGRATION OCCURS IN ALL CEE/CIS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, on either a permanent or temporary basis. Family migration from

rural to urban areas to look for better opportunities or seasonal agricultural jobs (temporary migration) are the main patterns. There are reports in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan of obstacles faced by children of domestic migrants in accessing services (education and health), often due to difficulties obtaining residence registration (*propiska* in Russian) within the national territory (CRC 2014; CRC 2013c; UNICEF 2011). Seasonal child labour has been a practice in some regions based on an agricultural economy, where it is directly linked to seasonal (harvesting) migration and to families relying on the workforce of all members. In many cases, children of seasonal migrants stay in the temporary accommodation (usually below standards) taking care of younger siblings. As a result, they often face obstacles to follow education during harvesting (Richardson et al. 2008).[39] Some countries have put in place compensatory policies; e.g., Turkey has launched a programme providing free meals and bus transportation from the agricultural fields to the local schools for seasonal migrant children.

5.2. Main child rights violations

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) protects every child, regardless of nationality or immigration status. States have obligations to respect the provisions of the Convention in their policies and actions towards each and every child within their jurisdiction. These provisions include the right to citizenship, physical integrity, health and education, as well as the right to be free from discrimination, exploitation and abuse. Policies should protect children's rights by enhancing access to the potential benefits created by migration, while also providing protection for those who are vulnerable to its negatives consequences. Effective migration policies need to be accompanied by additional investments in health, education and social protection to address the risks faced by children and adolescents who are migrating or left behind.

The potential positive and negative impacts of migration on children are of a different nature and intensity, depending on the typology of migration and category. Children most likely to face rights violations are undocumented, unaccompanied and trafficked children, repatriated children, refugees and asylum seekers from beyond the region, and children left behind who do not receive remittances. They are among the most vulnerable children in the region.

There are, however, some common aspects. While many adolescent children of both sexes migrate to escape sexual abuse, social stigma or pressure to marry, women and girls often have more limited access to information about the steps for safe and regular migration, and about work opportunities and labour-market conditions in destination countries, increasing their vulnerability at all stages of the migration process. Domestic and international migrant children, as well as those who are repatriated, are all likely to experience poor socio-economic conditions and lack of adequate housing in their country of destination or of forced return. Lastly, discrimination, harassment and assaults to (foreign) migrant workers and children have been reported in receiving countries in the CEE/CIS and beyond, especially in states which have not yet adopted anti-discrimination laws and, more so, with regard to children from ethnic minorities and children with disabilities.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND PARTICIPATE are violations especially experienced by trafficked children and undocumented migrant children. Trafficked children – minority children (especially Roma) – see their fundamental rights violated and are deprived of access to basic services and comprehensive well-being. Undocumented migrant children face serious obstacles to access basic rights and social protection. Sometimes the fear to be discovered by immigration authorities, thus being subject to deportation, is a common deterrent element to approach institutions providing services (health, education) or protection. Runaway children (foreign street children), orphan refugees and child victims of human trafficking (abducted and sold into labour or sexual slavery) are encompassed within this category (UNICEF DPS 2012). In some cases, there are reports of exploitation (child labour, trafficking, etc.) and abuse occurring within the same family or group (OSCE/ODIHR 2006; Shelley 2014), which represents an added difficulty to identify rights violations by national authorities.[40] Unaccompanied and undocumented children are more exposed to abuse and exploitation, and thus are more vulnerable to trafficking networks.

Children repatriated to their country of origin are usually faced with serious reintegration difficulties, particularly if they were born abroad and do not even speak the language of the country of origin, adding obstacles to accessing basic rights and services. As an example, in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), many reports stress the severe implications of repatriation of Roma children on their comprehensive well-being and integration in a society unknown to them. Years after the first repatriations of Roma, Kosovo institutions still face many challenges to ensure equal enjoyment of rights by Roma children.

The **PSYCHOSOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT** of children left without parental care (left behind), their overall well-being, is often **NEGATIVELY IMPACTED**

due to migration. While in some countries (e.g., Armenia and Tajikistan) there is lack of data on the left-behind children due to migration, in others (e.g., Albania, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Romania) comprehensive studies have been conducted about the 'left-behind generation'. Taking into consideration the different cultural elements and family structure patterns across the countries, some of the findings have identified an impact on psycho-emotional development, education performance, social integration, drug abuse and suicide, among others.[41]

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT is often impacted by child labour and school drop-out that affect both domestic and international migrations that are economically motivated. Especially in domestic migration movements, child labour consists predominantly of seasonal agricultural work. Involvement of children in economic activities is to the detriment of their school attendance, which is accepted in many rural areas in the region.

POOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND LACK OF ADEQUATE HOUSING affects not only migrant children, but also all children in similar socio-economic conditions. However, both domestic and international migrants with low professional qualifications have to face frequently adverse living conditions in their country of destination.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND ASSAULTS to (foreign) migrant workers and children have been reported mostly in in-migration CIS countries. Especially in states that have not yet adopted anti-discrimination laws, this may have a potential impact (direct/indirect) on the realization of most of the rights enshrined in the CRC.

5.3. Key barriers and bottlenecks

Children affected by migration create a complex and multidimensional area under exploration, as it encompasses multiple situations motivated by different reasons and only sharing, in most cases, a common denominator: moving away from the place of residence. Therefore, as mentioned in previous sections, the situations of vulnerability vary according to the migration context. Regarding the main bottlenecks determining equity gaps and access to rights, and despite the heterogeneous nature of the group, some common barriers have been identified. The barriers include:

LACK OF DATA Similar to other areas of vulnerability, a common bottleneck regarding children affected by migration is the overall *lack of age-sensitive data on migrant populations* by national and international data collection systems, which hampers the accurate profiling and drafting of needs assessments and policies targeting this specific group due to the shortage of statistical visibility in the region. Lack of data remains a major issue particularly for: a) children who migrate across borders within CEE/CIS (documented, undocumented and trafficked children); b) children repatriated to the region; and c) children not from CEE/CIS who migrate or are displaced to the region.

INSTITUTIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE PATTERNS Moreover, structural *discrimination*, unequal treatment and the *criminalization* of undocumented migrant children, compounded with the lack of coordination, cooperation and information exchange on migration issues among ministries and institutions at both domestic and international levels, have an impact on the level of protection and access to rights by vulnerable children affected by migration.

INADEQUATE OR/AND INEFFICIENT LEGISLATION
Regarding *legislation/policy*, one of the main bottlenecks consists of migration laws (highly restrictive migration policies in many cases) that in most CEE/CIS countries and territories do not include *migrant children* as a separate category with a right to special protection. Furthermore, although some countries may include in their national legal frameworks access to basic rights, services and protection for all children in general, it is not clear to what extent migrant children (including undocumented migrants) can freely enjoy these rights in practice. Where policies and institutions exist, unclear accountabilities and lack of coordination among service providers may hamper effective access.

ABSENCE OF DOCUMENTATION In most in-migration CEE/CIS countries and territories, fear of undocumented migrants (accompanied or unaccompanied) *to be discovered* by immigration authorities, thus being subject to deportation, is a common deterrent element to approach institutions providing access to basic rights and services (health, education) or protection. Therefore, the *treating-children-as-children* approach can be hampered in practice by two main obstacles: a) absence of provisions or ambiguity in the domestic legal framework (and implementation) related to children affected by migration; and b) fear of undocumented migrant children to approach institutions to avoid deportation.

Given the multiple barriers faced by undocumented migrant children due to discrimination, language and administrative reasons, extra steps still need to be taken by in-migration countries to ensure their access to basic rights and comprehensive well-being.[42] Migration to another country may offer children from the region good opportunities to advance their well-being and realize their rights when it is done in a documented, regulated way, as part of a family movement, and when the receiving country has appropriate legal and policy frameworks in place. The economic benefits of migration, mainly in the form of remittances, have recognized positive effects on children left behind in the region, but might not always counterbalance the negative effects of the partial or total absence of parental care. Remittances represent significant but volatile income sources for households as well as states, thus requiring flexible social protection systems able to respond to changes and provide a wider range of non-material support. The potential of remittances to support the funding of services for children left behind, and of ideas and networks from diaspora to influence policies and behaviours in the country of origin, are not yet capitalized on in the region.

6 | Gender-related inequalities that affect boys and girls

6.1 Current situation

Due to their political past, most CEE/CIS countries and territories have a long history of striving for gender equality. Although it is well known that women's rights and gender equality were integral parts of the official state rhetoric in these countries, it is less commonly recognized that these goals had never been fully achieved in reality (Steinhilber 2011).

A recent *re-traditionalization of gender roles* in the region is a phenomenon that was confirmed by the majority of sources consulted for this research. The causes of this trend are manifold and relate to a variety of circumstances in the respective countries so that the identification of a specific trigger cannot be generalized. Most interviews confirmed the importance of the role of media, especially commercials, in disseminating re-traditionalized gender roles and gender-discriminatory attitudes (Ibid.; Informant 13; Informant 14; Informant 15). In some cases, recent economic disputes between the Russian Federation and the EU were mentioned to have provoked 'anti-gender' media campaigns, particularly in some CIS countries[43] of conflicting economic or geopolitical interests between Russia and the EU.[44]

Gender-related inequalities[45] have a considerable impact on the realization of child rights and affect equity gaps in several ways. In order to analyse the effects of gender inequalities in society on all children, this research distinguishes between two impact levels that have serious consequences for the realization of child rights:

1) Gender-related inequalities directly experienced by girls and boys. Inequalities at this level are more 'visible' as their results are often, but not always, measurable by relevant indicators (if available to a gender-disaggregated extent); in some contexts they affect more girls while in others boys.

2) The impact that gender-related inequalities in the family and a society as a whole (especially among adults) have on children of both sexes – though in some cases on either girls or boys to a disproportionate extent – thereby affecting the realization of their rights.

Level 1: Gender-related inequalities experienced by girls and boys

DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION Gender differences are most apparent at school or in the educational field: while enrolment rates show (almost) no gender differences at primary and lower-secondary levels, they start to diverge at upper-secondary and tertiary levels with, in some cases, extreme divergences between countries (TransMonEE 2014). This means that differences in enrolment by gender vary greatly throughout the region, with boys more likely to be out of school in some countries and girls in others. However, the largest gender differences are in countries and territories where girls are more likely to be out of school (UNICEF 2013a), as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Despite these almost equal enrolment rates in the first educational levels, gender inequalities play an important role in educational achievement (often higher among girls[46]), attendance and school drop-out (often higher among boys), though with significant differences in some clusters (converse trends in rural areas in Central Asia, among Roma in South-Eastern Europe, among internally displaced persons/refugee groups – e.g., in Albania and Serbia) (Steinhilber 2011; RECI 2012). In addition to the above-mentioned TransMonEE data, a recent study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) further demonstrates that in the lower-income countries of Central Asia, the secondary gross enrolment rate among girls is significantly higher than in other low-income developing countries (OECD

2012). This is not the case with Roma girls, who have a very low transition rate into upper-secondary education (RECI 2012). A higher share of female enrolment in tertiary education is a continuous trend in the majority of countries for which data are available; nevertheless, available figures and observations[47] demonstrate that the opposite is the case in some countries of Central Asian or the Caucasus.[48]

SON BIAS The latest OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) revealed a concerning increase in gender inequalities in the CEE/CIS region compared with its 2009 edition (OECD 2012). A reason for concern is the growing problem of son bias measured by social institutions that foster intra-household bias towards sons and devaluation of daughters (Ibid.). It highlights the incidence of missing women due to sex-selective abortions, female infanticide or neglect of girls, as well as gender bias in the fertility preferences of families. Based on the evaluation of sex-ratio data, the analysis demonstrates that the phenomenon of 'missing women' has already become a problem in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Albania and Armenia[49] (Ibid.).

ADOLESCENT SUICIDES Some CEE/CIS countries rank among those with the world's highest suicide rates[50] (Värnik 2012), which are generally higher for men than for women (Ibid.). The same gender difference applies to adolescent suicides (Steinhilber 2011), with particularly high death rates among 15–19-year-old males in Russia (23.9), Kazakhstan (20.7), Belarus (17.9) and Kyrgyzstan (17.4) (TransMonEE 2014), further contributing to a much

FIGURE 2 I Share of females in education (Per cent of all students enrolled in the respective level of education), from primary (ISCED 1) to tertiary (ISCED 5) education[51]
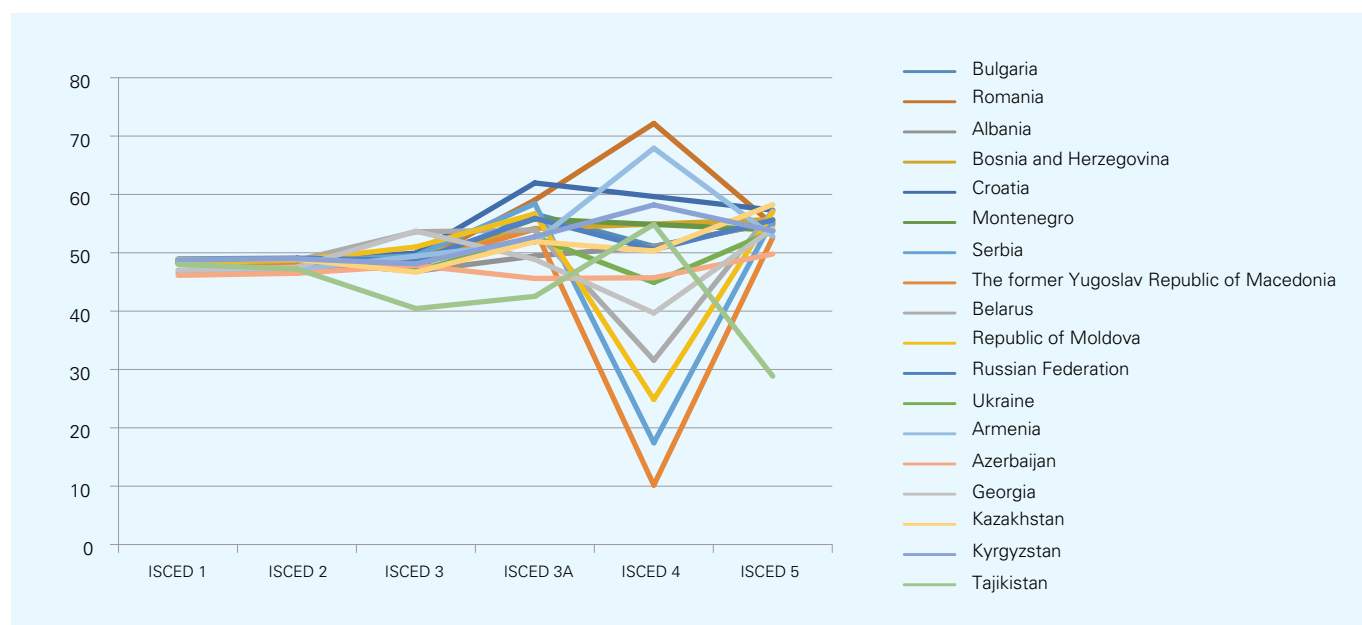
Source: TransMonEE 2014.

lower life expectancy at birth for boys than girls, which in some cases reaches differences of up to 10 years or more (WHO 2014a).[52]

Increasing numbers of female adolescent suicides also warrant attention. While suicide rates remain consistently higher among adolescent men, a worrying trend in female suicide rates has been observed, especially in Central Asia[53] and Turkey.[54]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) is an area of particular concern that violates children's rights in several ways – either committed directly against children or by children witnessing GBV (*see Level 2)*. This distinction in impact levels highlights GBV as one of the most severe forms of gender-related inequalities that violates child rights.

Statistical data on child victims of GBV – not only in the CEE/CIS region – is scarce, likely due to weaknesses in data collection. The term GBV describes "harmful acts perpetrated against a person based on socially ascribed differences between males and females […], which highlights the vulnerabilities of women and girls

FIGURE 3 I Son bias in the CEE/CIS region[55]

High Discrimination   Low Discrimination   Not Ranked
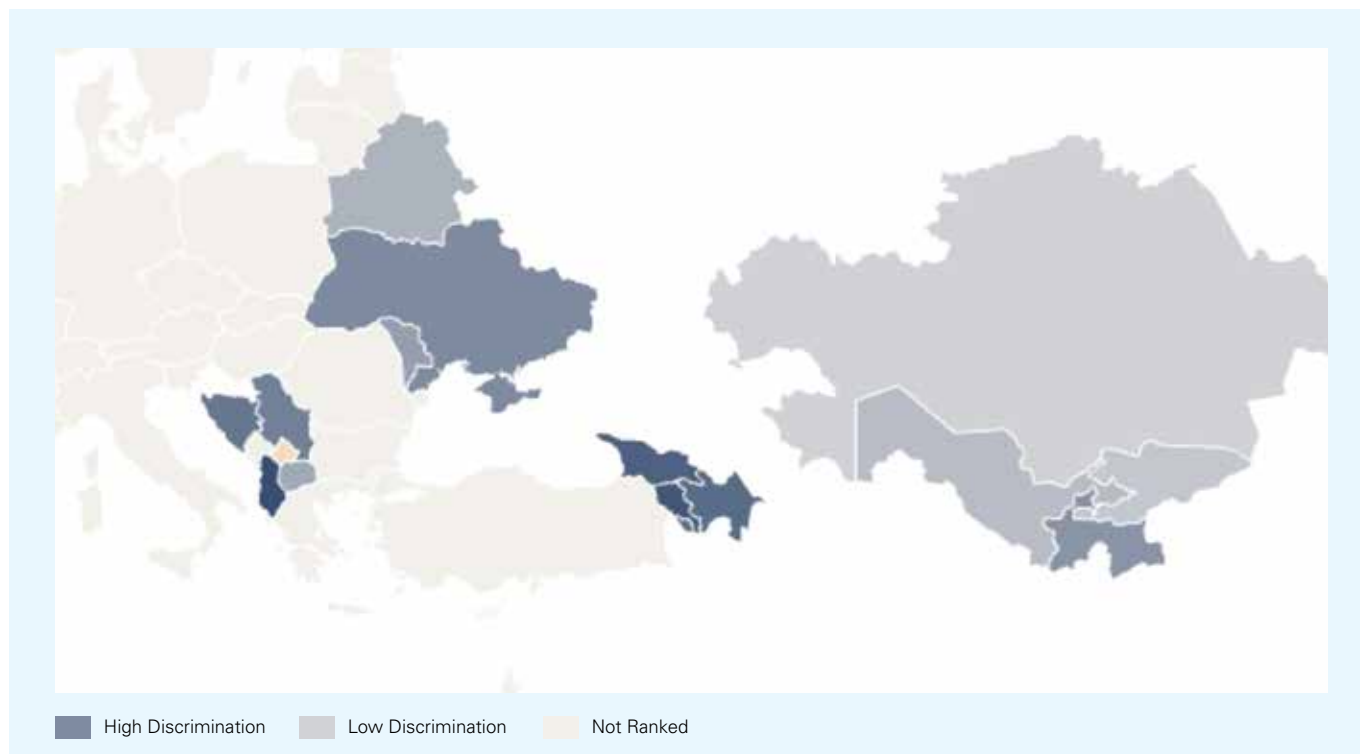
Source: OECD 2012; see also <http://genderindex.org/>.

FIGURE 4 I Suicide rates among 15–19-year-olds (deaths per 100,000 average relevant population), sorted by gender difference, year 2011[56]
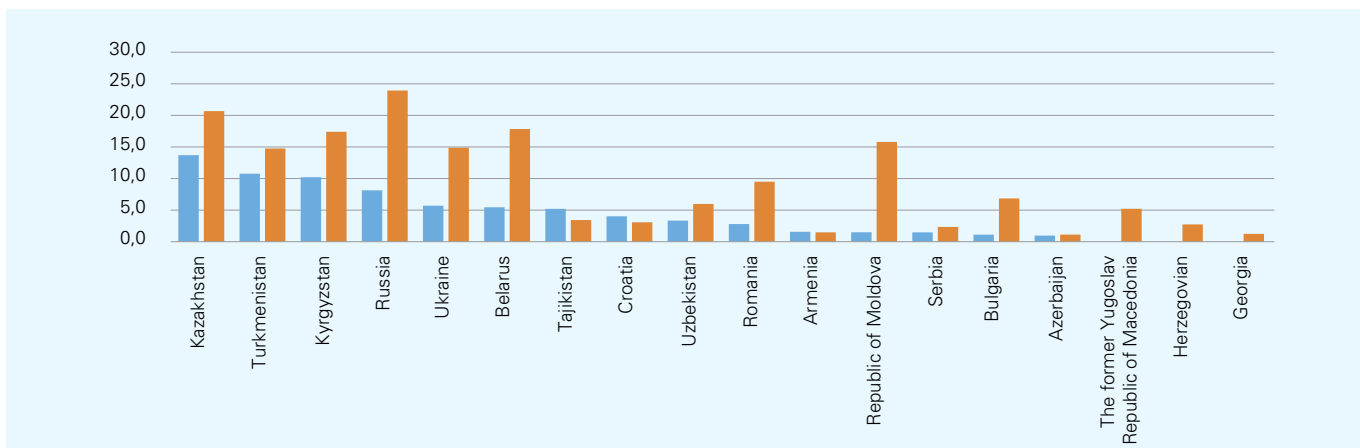
Source: TransMonEE (2014).

to various forms of violence in settings where they are discriminated against because they are female" (UNICEF 2014a). As a result, the majority of statistical data on GBV refers to female victims, which tends to subsume women and girls without necessarily distinguishing between age groups (i.e., women or girls).[57] While the majority of GBV victims are indeed female, the distinction between the forms and settings of GBV highlights the complexity of the problem and the need for further analysis of the impact of GBV on child rights.

Despite the lack of regional statistical data, existing evidence suggests that global trends related to GBV against children also apply to the CEE/CIS region. As the latest related United Nations study on violence against children has highlighted, "boys are at greater risk of physical violence than girls, while girls face greater risk of *sexual violence*, neglect and forced prostitution" (UNGA 2006). Regarding sexual violence, the study found girls to be abused at 1.5 to three times the rate for boys, whereby most of the abuse occurred within *the family circle* (Ibid.). In this context, cultural practices observed in some CEE/CIS countries and territories[58] (especially in some communities), such as early marriage, forced marriage and bride abductions, put girls at a highest risk of experiencing GBV in the family – a scenario in which the domestic violence often translates into an *intimate partner violence*.[59]

Violence against children occurs in a variety of settings for which evidence of GBV could also be identified in the CEE/CIS region. For example, *schools* are a common setting where acts of GBV are committed. In this context, it is worth highlighting that some UNICEF CEE/CIS country reports have called into question the main findings of the aforementioned United Nations study, which stated that generally more girls became victims of sexual abuse and GBV at school (UNGA 2006). A recent UNICEF study conducted in Serbia (UNICEF 2014b) stressed that exposure to sexual abuse and GBV varies between boys and girls, depending on the type of violence; however, the research clearly indicates that boys are more frequent perpetrators of sexual abuse and GBV against girls, as well as against other boys. Similar observations have been reported by UNICEF Kazakhstan (UNICEF 2013c) with regard to bullying behaviour, which may constitute a form of GBV. The study found that most bullying occurs within sex groups (boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl), but when bullying occurs across sex groups it is mostly boys that bully girls. With regard to adult perpetrators of GBV against children in school settings, no accurate data that would allow the verification of any trend[60] across the region could be identified.

Furthermore, children in *institutions* are reported to be particularly exposed to GBV. While some reports suggest that girls are more likely to become victims of sexual and physical violence in either care or detention facilities (e.g., UNGA 2006; UNICEF 2011f), there are not enough data to confirm this trend for the entire region. Nevertheless, in view of the over-representation of children with disabilities and Roma children in institutional care, the risk of experiencing GBV in these settings appears to be particularly high for these groups.

Another context in which GBV against children occurs frequently is *migration*. As the latest related report from the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) on human rights of migrants emphasized, girls are not only more likely to be trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour and other forms of exploitation and abuses, they are also often forced into irregular migration channels. This exposes more migrant girls to the risk of GBV during all stages of the migration process, including physical violence or the request of sexual favours in exchange for protection or promises to cross borders (HRC 2009).

Level 2: Gender-related inequalities experienced by adults

UNEQUAL LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES Persistent labour-market segregation, a significant gender wage gap in the region (Sattar 2012) and continued discrimination of women entering the labour market hamper women's equal access to and equal opportunities in the labour market.

Limited access to childcare services remains a key barrier to women's labour-market participation and an obstacle to reconciling paid work with family responsibilities. Gender role divisions continue to be strong, with unpaid care work almost exclusively done by women[61] (Steinhilber 2011; Informant 7; Informant 8; Informant 12). Low enrolment rates, especially in early childhood care, and in some countries also in pre-primary education, demonstrate this phenomenon across the region.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE can be identified as the cruellest expression of gender inequality experienced by adults, with the most severe effects on children. Differentiating this form of GBV from the trends described under GBV against children (*see Level 1*) highlights the aggravating effects of the offence on children, who see their rights violated as both victims and witnesses.

As the reviewed literature and interviews confirmed, intimate partner violence remains a persistent problem across the entire region. Reports[62] from Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine highlight it as an issue of particular concern. According to available statistical data, some CEE/CIS countries and territories rank among the highest in terms of prevalence of intimate partner violence in a worldwide comparison. For example, 58.3 per cent of women in Tajikistan reported that they experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their partner, 41.9 per cent in Turkey and more than 20 per cent in three other CEE/CIS countries for which comparable data exists (UN Women 2012).

FIGURE 5 I Gender pay gap as difference (per cent) in monthly earnings

FIGURE 6 I Women in the labour force (Per cent of corresponding total for both sexes)
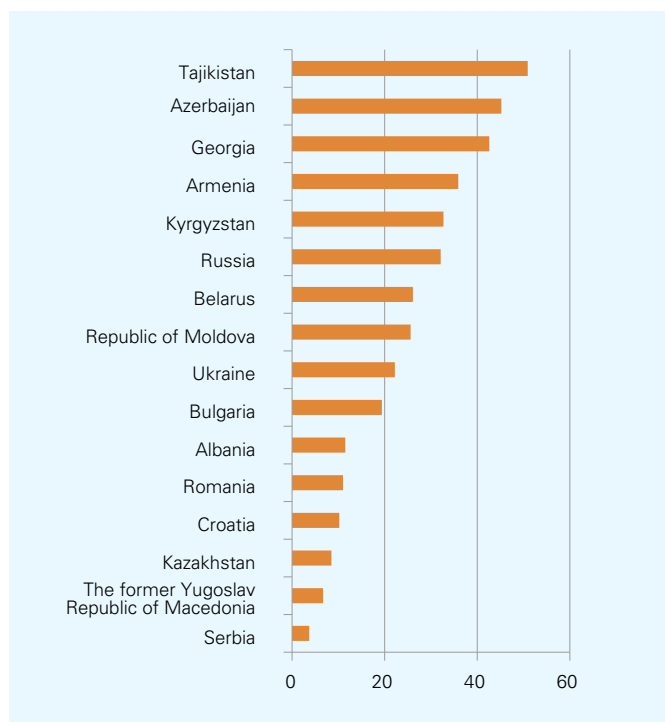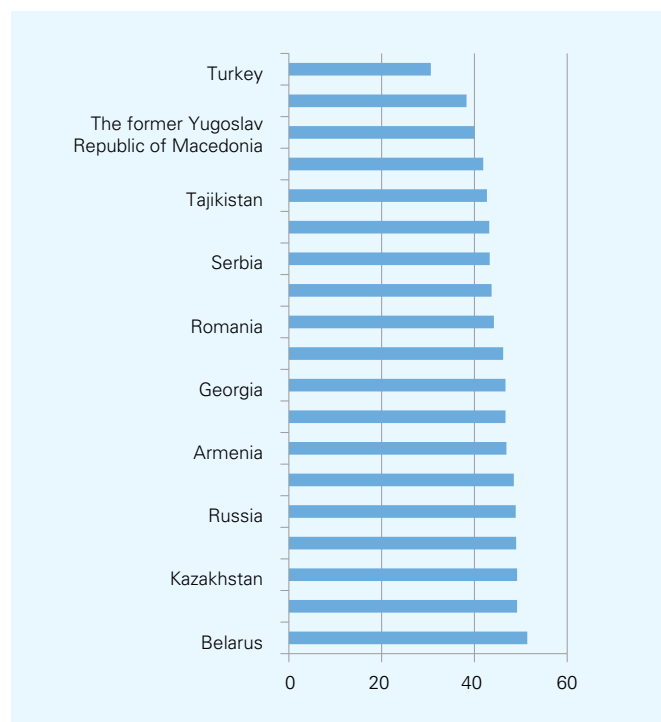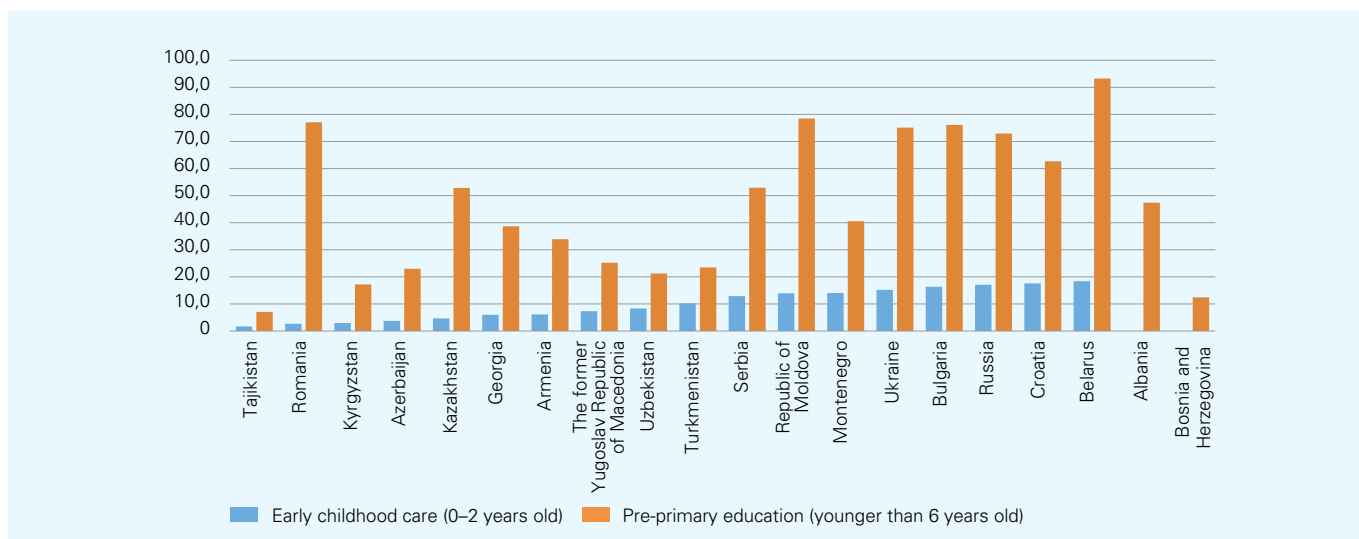

Source: UNECE 2014.[63]

FIGURE 7 I Enrolment in early childhood care (gross enrolment ratio, per cent of children aged 0–2) and pre-primary education (net enrolment ratio, per cent of population aged 3–6), year 2010/2011[64]

Source: TransMonEE (2014).

THE HIV EPIDEMIC Available data for the region suggest (WHO 2014c) that the share of men living with HIV is higher than that of women – in some cases significantly higher.

Gender-related inequalities are a key driver of the HIV epidemic in several ways (WHO 2014b): firstly, because "gender norms related to masculinity can encourage men to have more sexual partners and older men to have sexual relations with much younger women" (Ibid.) and secondly, because "norms related to femininity can prevent women – especially young women – from accessing HIV information and services" (Ibid.).

6.2. Main child rights violations

This section explores the effects of gender-related inequalities on the realization of child rights that affect girls and boys on two distinct levels. The first relates to gender disparities, such as different health and education outcomes for boys and girls. The second relates to women's lack of resources, decision-making and mobility, coupled with their caregiving responsibilities. These continue to be major factors in the multiple deprivations faced by their children – both boys and girls – often perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of poverty and inequality.

VIOLATIONS RELATED TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT Gender-related differences in education clearly demonstrate that "gender defines educational opportunities" (Steinhilber 2011), posing a particular threat to the right of the child to education

through progressive achievement and on the basis of equal opportunity. One of the potential consequences of early school drop-out of girls is early marriage and early childbirth, which clearly threaten the right of the child – both adolescent mother and her child – to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. Early childbirth also poses an important threat to the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Another important aspect is the *multiplier effect of gender-related inequalities* in education on later life patterns and hence the violation of a variety of child rights. Examples are vocational training choices which reflect strong gender stereotypes and limit women to lower-income and lower-prestige sectors of the economy (Steinhilber 2011; Informant 13) and choices of field of study,[65] which have an effect on occupational segregation and the gender wage gap in the region (Sattar 2012).

Direct discrimination of women is most apparent when it comes to entering the labour market, as reports of discriminatory recruitment practices[66] in the region confirm. Labour-market segmentation and the prevailing gender wage gap are the most evident signs for indirect discrimination. This has a direct effect on women's access to social benefits, such as pensions, social security, or unemployment compensation (Dokmanovic, cited in Ünal et al. 2010), which in turn poses a particular threat to the right of the child to benefit from social security, including social insurance. Furthermore, the awareness of gender discrimination in the labour market is often a

FIGURE 8 I Share of men and women living with HIV (Per cent of total number of adults aged 15 and over living with HIV), 2012
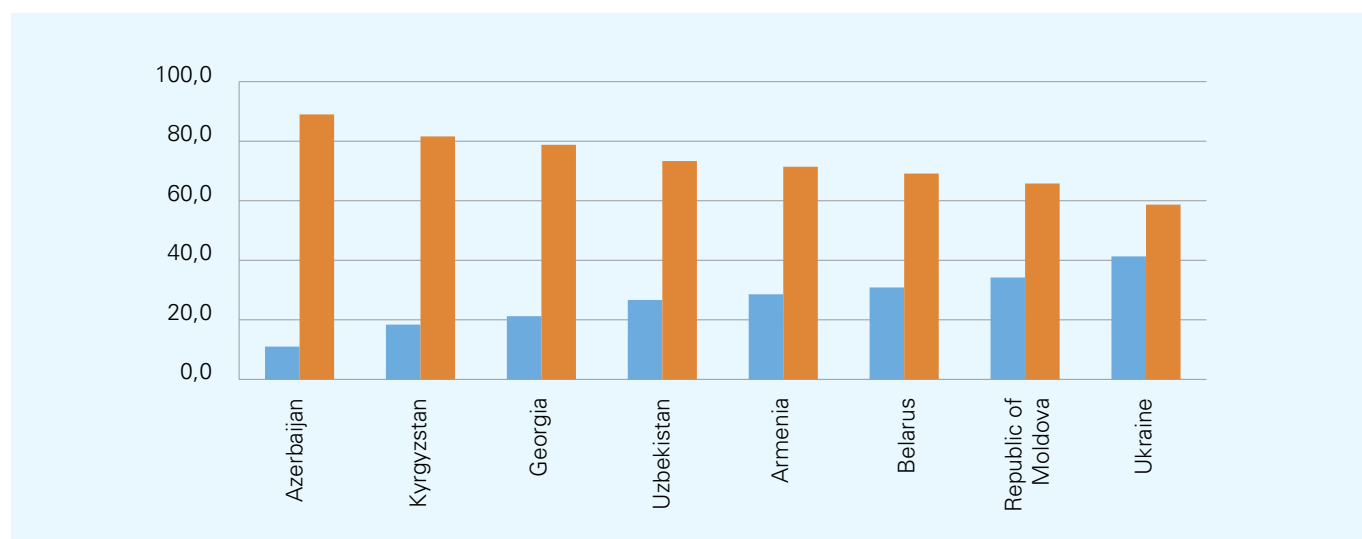
Source: WHO 2014c.

reason why young women may choose not to continue their education,[67] posing a clear threat to the right of the child to education through progressive achievement and on the basis of equal opportunity.

All consulted material for this review revealed extreme difficulties in *accessing childcare services*, which, on the one hand, hampers women's efforts to access the labour market, thereby further contributing to unequal labour market opportunities, and, on the other, highlights the dilemma and/or possible violation of the right of children of *working parents* to benefit from childcare services and facilities for which they are eligible.

VIOLENCE-RELATED VIOLATIONS can be found in three main categories: adolescent suicide, GBV and intimate partner violence. These violations can impact the realization of many other child rights enshrined in the CRC.

First, some of the identified male-specific behavioural patterns put a higher health risk on boys, while the mentioned social or psychological pressure puts boys and young men at a much higher risk of *suicide* (Steinhilber 2011). Adolescent suicides are strongly influenced by gender dynamics, consequently posing not only a high risk on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, but also clearly indicating a violation of the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The increasing numbers of female adolescent suicides in some Central Asia countries and Turkey gives reason for concern. Anecdotal evidence suggests that an increase in GBV and economic problems in combination with a strong dependency on women's partners are among the main reasons for this trend.[68] Furthermore, the lack of places of shelter for victims of GBV appears to be a potential cause for female suicides (Ibid.). Early marriage (Ibid.), forced marriage, as well as a history of family violence, loss of a loved one, loss of a job or livelihood or restrictive attitude towards women[69] are often the reasons why young women decide to commit suicide.

Second, *GBV* against children directly violates the right of the child to protection from all forms of violence, whereas its consequences violate the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as well as the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. If GBV is committed against a child by a family member, this violates the child's right to grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

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Third, *intimate partner violence* remains a persistent problem in the entire region, also violating the child's right to grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. The psychological consequences of witnessing violence within the family directly violates the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. As the preliminary results of a currently ongoing UNICEF study in the CEE/CIS region[70] suggest, "cultural acceptance of violence within the family" is one of the main obstacles for children to accessing justice (IDLO-UNICEF 2014), which violates the right of the child to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child and the right to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child. Moreover, it endangers the child's civil and political right to seek remedy when his or her rights have been violated.

SON BIAS in the region not only has demographic consequences but also emphasizes the observed social and psychological pressure on boys (Steinhilber 2011), who are treated differently by society than girls. This is observed in many families who measure their sons' qualities by their labour-market success (Ibid.; Informant 7), by juvenile courts and justice systems, which reflect the social norm that "it is good to teach boys a lesson and help them become real men"[71,72] and by institutional facilities.[73] These unequal expectations on boys and girls violate the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Additionally, the above-mentioned pressure on boys and unequal expectations are often cited as structural causes for why "young men are much more prone than young women to migrate for

work, to come into conflict with the law, or to engage in high-risk behaviour such as substance misuse, risky sexual practices, or activities that imply a risk of accidents" (Steinhilber 2011), consequently threatening the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

Moreover, girls, who are much less numerous than boys in the justice system (particularly in detention), lack services adapted to their particular needs and are more often than boys detained together with adults. There is a lack of female police officers that are able to understand the particular needs of girls and can communicate with them in a way that may decrease their anxiety.[74] These consequences of gender-related inequalities particularly threaten the girl child's right to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting them.

THE HIV EPIDEMIC Data on people living with HIV in the region suggest that gendered behaviour patterns may have an effect on male infection rates. Additionally, the observed unequal power relations that often limit women's positions to negotiate on equal terms with their partners about the use or method of protection (Steinhilber 2011) further highlight the role of gender dynamics contributing to the spread of the epidemic, which violates the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, but also the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

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6.3. Key barriers and bottlenecks

SOCIAL NORMS and **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS** are the main drivers of the child rights violations and equity gaps in the realization of child rights resulting from the re-traditionalization of gender roles. Section 6.2 explains how gender inequality creates bottlenecks and barriers that prevent the achievement of desired outcomes for all children. Son bias and its effects, the social pressure on boys to become breadwinners and to start working at an early age, and gendered behaviour patterns that make boys and men more prone to risky behaviour are some examples. Traditional gender roles are also directly promoted by gender discrimination in the labour market having considerable effects on women's and girls' service access and provision. Limited access to services (such as day-care services) and resources, as well as limited participation in decision-making and limits to mobility, do not only hamper women's access to and opportunities in the labour market, but is also a main barrier that fuels several child rights violations. This links with a lack of essential commodities and political will to provide better access to childcare services due to social norms that promote traditional gender roles (i.e., it is the mother's 'job' to take care of the child).[75] Finally, acceptance of domestic violence and GBV, either within a family or in society as a whole, have been identified as key barriers that determine several rights violations which, due to their high prevalence, can be considered social norms and behaviours.

LEGISLATION/POLICY, MANAGEMENT/COORDINATION, AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES AND LACK OF ACCESS TO ADEQUATELY STAFFED SERVICES are some of the driving forces for traditional gender roles represented in school environments. Strong gender stereotypes in school textbooks in the entire region[76] and the feminization of the teaching profession in primary and secondary education (Steinhilber 2011; Informant 13)[77] are some of the key barriers to eliminating gender inequality. UNICEF is aware of the prevalence of gender stereotypes in school material;[78] however, policy change is often limited by political will or opposing opinions of respective policymakers.[79] Gender discrimination in the labour market is a result of lack or weak implementation of gender equality legislation. Moreover, the lack, or weak implementation, of legislation that classifies domestic violence as a criminal offence needs to be highlighted as a bottleneck in relation to this key barrier. The lack of shelter places for victims of GBV and/or domestic violence is another bottleneck that relates to the **AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES** as well as **BUDGET/EXPENDITURE**.

7 | Effects of multiple and overlapping dimensions of equity and social exclusion on the realization of child rights

1. Children belonging simultaneously to two or more groups reviewed for this study are more vulnerable to rights violations.

- Ethnic background, disabilities, gender or migration processes do not necessarily determine rights violation or equity gaps per se. However, the multidimensional nature of vulnerability and the multiplying effects of overlapping risk factors makes children belonging to two or more groups more exposed to rights violations. This is especially the case if they grow up in poor socio-economic environments.[80] Furthermore, social norms, practices and behaviours that support structural factors contributing to gender inequality further exacerbate risks and vulnerabilities. This report highlights the most important interconnections between multiple dimensions of equity and social exclusion which many indicate the likelihood of serious rights violations on multiple grounds – e.g., trafficked Roma children with visible disabilities being forced to beg in the streets, or the perception of persons with disabilities as having limited voice and power that make girls and women with disabilities highly vulnerable to sexual violence. In addition, the multiplier effect of vulnerability seems to perpetuate a vicious circle of exclusion and rights violations for some children – e.g., girls, having escaped domestic violence and resorted to migration through smuggling and trafficking, being exposed to further violence and abuse as a result of their 'choice' to migrate.

2. The socio-economic situation of children and adolescents is likely to be a contributing factor that adds to other causes for marginalization and possibly discrimination.

- Lack of data available on persons with disabilities suggests that frequent denial of their existence often leads to neglect, and that prospects for education,[81] let alone gainful employment, are limited. Therefore, persons with disabilities are said to have at least twice as high a representation among persons living in poverty than other societal groups.[82]

3. Violence (sexual violence and exploitation) especially affects girls with disabilities, girls belonging to minorities and migrant girls.

- The perception of persons with disabilities as having limited power or voice makes girls and women with disabilities highly vulnerable to violence, particularly sexual violence.[83]

- Many adolescent children of both sexes migrate to escape sexual abuse, social stigma, or pressure to marry – often women and girls who have limited access to information regarding work opportunities and labour-market conditions in destination countries (CRC 2012). Additionally, limited access to information on necessary steps for safe and regular migration contributes to a greater vulnerability of female migrants at all stages of the migration process (Ibid.).

4. Human trafficking especially affects minorities and migrants with disabilities, and in particular girls.

- Minority children are often affected by migration, either as migrants, left-behind children or, in the worst-case scenario, as victims of human trafficking or due to forced repatriation. Upon arrival, repatriated children from ethnic minorities often have to face double impediments, with a potential impact on inequalities and rights violations: difficulties derived from the repatriation and reintegration, and potential exclusion and discrimination due to their ethnic background.

- Similarly, a trafficked Roma child with a visible disability who is forced to beg in the streets of a third country (ethnic background, disability and forced migration) experiences a series of deprivations, including fundamental rights, which can lead to several child rights violations.

- One of the most vulnerable categories of children identified in terms of overlapping deprivations are trafficked Roma children with disabilities, in particular girls. Research conducted by ERRC and People in Need (2011) revealed that Roma are highly vulnerable to trafficking due to structural forms of ethnic and gender discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, which result in low educational achievement, high levels of unemployment, growing up in state care, domestic violence affecting predominantly women and children, and substance abuse. Furthermore, many of the vulnerability factors, such as domestic violence, high school drop-out rates, homelessness or being in state care, affect children and youth exclusively or disproportionately.

5. The equal realization of the rights of each child is affected by her or his parents' experience of discrimination.

- There is an intimate relationship between the situation and status of mothers and fathers and their experience of discrimination and rights violations, and the development of their young children. This was highlighted particularly with regard to female parents from ethnic minorities.

- Intimate partner violence and violence against other family members, especially children (i.e., domestic violence) has been identified as an important factor that can motivate migration, especially of women and children,[84] adding to the vulnerability of its victims, which is often greater for female migrants at all stages of the migration process (CRC 2012). Moreover, migration policies that are discriminatory often have the effect of limiting regular migration channels for women and girls, resulting in their marginalization to the most vulnerable labour sectors or as dependents of male migrants. These circumstances contribute to the compulsion to resort to migration through smuggling and trafficking, exposing women and girls to violence and abuse during their migration journey, as well as in countries of destination (Ibid). It can therefore be concluded that gender-related inequalities, causing a vicious cycle of violence, migration, further violence and gender discrimination, have a multiplier effect on child rights violations experienced by children affected by their consequences.

6. Providing access to inclusive and quality early learning and education for all children is the first step to fighting exclusion and eliminating inequalities.

- The education prospects of girls with disabilities are significantly below those of boys with disabilities.[85] However, there is ample evidence that all four groups of children face, to varying degrees, difficulties in accessing and/or participating in education.

- There is evidence that gender differences in school enrolment are much higher among Roma when compared with the general population: Roma girls are much more likely to be out of school than Roma boys. This shows that gender dynamics in Roma communities have an important role to play in Roma children's educational opportunities (UNICEF 2013a).

8 | **Conclusions**

This Rapid Review has identified the main child rights violations related to *children with disabilities, children affected by migration, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities and children affected by gender inequalities* in countries and territories of the CEE/CIS region, as well as the main bottlenecks that determine these rights violations which would need to be addressed in order to reduce the vulnerability of the above-mentioned children. Based on the findings presented in this Rapid Review, the following general observations can be made:

1. **Social norms, cultural differences and deeply rooted traditions** drive multiple discriminations associated with disability, ethnic and linguistic identity, and migratory status in the region. Gender inequality adds a dimension of intersectionality that often exacerbates risks and vulnerabilities, contributing to rights violations. They can be considered as one of the major causes of child rights violations that specific groups and individual children face. In order to prevent child rights violations, substantial societal change will be needed.

2. Across the CEE/CIS countries and territories, **disability, ethnic and linguistic identity, and migratory status are factors that can increase the vulnerability of specific groups and individual children** to the violations of their rights; these violations are also influenced by the environment in which they live, gender inequality and their socio-economic situation.

3. The **absence of rigorously gathered data, definitions and statistical methodologies** for data gathering are significant bottlenecks that continue to impede a more in-depth understanding of (and response to) how identified factors affect the violations of child rights for specific groups and individual children. All four groups share the overall lack of disaggregated data that would allow for: a) a rigorous accounting of children, and b) the precise identification of children affected by each rights violation. Lack of data not only prevents the rigorous accounting of children necessary for informed decision-making but also represents an important challenge related to the

access to rights, especially as regards documentation and registration. An intensive investments and work on these aspects is required.

4. **Effective implementation of legislation, including access to justice**, as well as **access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information** would be required to guarantee equal opportunities for the realization of child rights for all children. The key responsibility for implementing legislation falls to the various duty bearers – teachers, headmasters, social workers, police officers, judges, health professionals, etc. – who need to actively ensure that the rights of the most vulnerable groups of children are realized.

5. Children of all four groups face severe problems in accessing quality inclusive education, unlike the majority of children from the CEE/CIS, making this an area of particular concern to UNICEF.

Based on the findings of this Rapid Review, the following conclusions can be drawn for the specific groups:

Children with disabilities:
- The socially accepted placement of children and adolescents with disabilities in institutions, traditionally viewed as 'in the best interests of the child', is one of the most widespread child rights violations in the region.

- The lack of data on people, and therefore also children with disabilities, is not only a reflection of their invisibility by the population at large but likely due to the challenges in applying a common definition of 'impairment' and of 'disability'. Lack of data on children with disabilities not only hampers efforts to establish the collection of internationally comparable data, but at the same time reflects the differences in attitudes towards creating and implementing adequate measures that would enable the inclusion of children with disabilities in all aspects of life.

- Despite the lack of quantitative data, this Rapid Review revealed that children with disabilities experience most rights violations affecting their right to health, to education and to early learning. Furthermore, it is important to take into consideration the further compounding element that can be attributed to girls with disabilities.

- Guaranteeing participation in all aspects of life, most notably by ensuring holistic accessibility (i.e., information, social, communication, intellectual, physical), is the key to achieving the inclusion of children with disabilities and therefore the realization of their rights.

Children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities:
- Minority children without birth registration is the group affected by most rights violations, having an impact on the realization of almost all child rights.

- Growing up in poor socio-economic environments is a determinant (and at the same time consequence) of inequalities, rights violations and marginalization processes faced by most children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities. Together with the added language/cultural barriers and structural discrimination, children from highly vulnerable minorities (e.g., Roma) are at risk of perpetuating their situation within a vicious circle of exclusion.

- The limitation of children belonging to Roma and other vulnerable minorities to access basic rights and protection increases their exposure to abuse and exploitation, making them more vulnerable to trafficking and violence-related violations.

- For many children of ethnic and linguistic minority groups, there are certain deeply rooted traditions that directly violate child rights, such as early marriage and abduction of young girls as brides.

Gender-related inequalities affecting girls and boys:
- Gender disparities can be identified between girls and boys, and gender inequality experienced by women both have a considerable impact on child rights violations, which severely affect all child rights.

- GBV has been highlighted as an area of particular concern in the CEE/CIS region, as it directly breeches basic human rights (along with several child rights) of child victims and, as in the case of intimate partner violence addressed against a child's parent, further aggravates the impact of rights violations or may even cause a vicious circle of further violence and rights violations.

- The recent *re-traditionalization* of gender roles in the region is a worrying trend that has severe consequences for children and the realization of their rights, and therefore requires concrete counteraction. The results presented in this study (namely, that gender inequalities directly violate child rights) could serve as a meaningful argument for implementing the UNICEF Gender Action Plan in the CEE/CIS. A country or cluster-specific analysis of the particular triggers of this trend would be needed to identify specific measures UNICEF could apply to counteract them. The socialization of gender roles in childhood could be a potential entry point for future UNICEF activities.

Children affected by migration:

- The most vulnerable subgroups of children affected by migration are: a) children left without parental care due to migration; b) children in the context of domestic migration; c) undocumented migrant children; d) repatriated children; and, e) trafficked children.

- Trafficked children, unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children are the group affected by most rights violations. Discrimination and harassment and assaults cause most rights violations for these children.

- Migration laws in most CEE/CIS countries and territories do not treat migrant children as a separate category to be taken into account for specific protection measures. Although some national legal frameworks include access to basic rights, services and protection for all children in general, it is not clear to what extent migrant children (including trafficked, unaccompanied and undocumented) can freely enjoy these rights in practice.

Lastly, the negative effects of multiple and overlapping dimensions of equity and social exclusion experienced by children belonging to more than one of the above-described groups on the realization of their rights need to be highlighted. These children represent the most vulnerable group that faces the most serious problems related to the access of their rights in the region. The special vulnerability of these children severely hampers the realization of their rights.

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See interviews, Children from ethnic and linguistic minorities.

1. It is to be noted that this review covers specific social dimensions of vulnerability, while there are also children living in economic vulnerability (poverty) who are not socially vulnerable according to the dimensions presented in this study. The rights violations experienced by children living under conditions of poverty are covered under another UNICEF regional report, 'Social Monitor 2015: Social protection for child rights and well-being in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia', forthcoming in 2016.

2. The 8 Regional Knowledge and Leadership Areas or RKLAs are: 1. A child's right to a supportive and caring family environment; 2. Justice for Children: Enabling justice systems to respect and protect child rights; 3. A child's right to inclusive quality early learning and education; 4. A child's right to be born free of HIV; 5. A young child's right to health and well-being; 6. A child's right to social protection; 7. A child's right to protection from the risks of disasters: Reducing vulnerability; and 8. An adolescent's right to a second chance. At the time of writing, some of these RKLAs have been merged.

3. CEE/CIS countries and territories, referred to as region in this report, include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (UNSRC 1244), Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

4. Due to the diversity of situations in the different countries and territories, the findings of this review cannot be generalized for all children belonging to these groups throughout the region.

5. CRC 2007, para. 7, as well as Article 1, second part, UNCRPD.

6. Preamble (e) UNCRPD.

7. For an in-depth discussion of the concept of 'vulnerability', see "Mental Health and Development: Targeting people with mental health conditions as a vulnerable group" (World Health Organization 2010).

8. See, e.g., UNICEF 2013 Annual Reports from Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

9. Due note is taken that this information has been disaggregated, per information from the country office.

10. The most recent documents highlighting the lack of data on persons with disability include: Outcome Document of the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development (UNGA 2013).

11. Informant 1.

12. Compare UNICEF Croatia 2013, UNICEF Montenegro 2013 and UNICEF Serbia 2013.

13. For example, in Belarus, 'Education Strategy Paper' (UNICEF Belarus 2013), and in Ukraine, 'National Strategy on Education Development by 2021' (UNICEF Ukraine 2013).

14. Compare also Articles 1, 4 and 25 of the UNCRPD 2007.

15. Kurds (Informant 4; Minority Rights Group 2014; ECMI 2014).

16. Roma (Deniz et al. 2011; Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2010; Richardson et al. 2008; Malakhov et al. n.d.; Stepanov 2005).

17. <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_etn_10.php> (17 July 2014).

18. <http://ethnologue.com/country/RU> (17 July 2014).

19. Estimates on minorities extracted from census data are not accurate, as they are based on voluntary self-identification of citizens, who in many cases are afraid to declare belonging to ethnic/linguistic minority groups (e.g., Roma in most CEE/CIS countries) due to fear. In many cases, a large percentage of minorities either ascribe in censuses to the predominant ethnic group, or refuse to answer the question.

20. Minority Rights Group 2013.

21. Based on CoE estimates, see table. No available data for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan.

22. Disaggregated data are not available for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

23. The term 'Rom' (pl. 'Roma') coexists in the CEE/CIS space with other ethnic denominations such as 'Sinti', 'Egyptian', 'Ashkaeli', 'Cikan', 'Dom', 'Lom', 'Abdal', 'Lyuli', 'Djugi' and 'Mugat', among others. In many cases, these are differentiated groups sharing similar social, linguistic and cultural elements.

24. Data are not available for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan.

25. UNICEF 2007, <http://romachildren.com> 17 July 2014.

26. Informant 6.

27. This practice is documented in a number of CEE/CIS countries, and is practiced by some minority communities; however, it is also is culturally rooted and accepted in some majority societies, especially in rural areas.

28. Informant 3.

29. Equality and the Roma Education Fund, 'From Segregation to Inclusion: Roma pupils in the United Kingdom – A pilot research', 2011.

30. In the past few years, multilingual and/or minority education policies have been implemented in a number of CEE/CIS countries and territories, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova, among many others, or launched initiatives to train minority teachers (e.g., Turkmenistan), with differing results. In some other cases, multilingual education policies have evolved towards ethnic-based segregation at schools (e.g., the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Bosnia and Herzegovina), with a potential impact on the social dimension of children (Barbieri et al. 2013; Informant 4; Informant 6; Informant 7; Informant 8; Informant 10).

31. During the past 10 years, many steps have been taken to reduce equity gaps of Roma children in Europe (especially within the EU and candidate/potential candidate countries) and to address child rights violations. Policies, action plans and programmes, among others, have been drafted and implemented to improve the overall situation of Roma and to increase equal access to basic rights. Fostered by national and international institutions and different organizations (e.g., the Roma Education Fund, under the auspices of the Decade for Roma Integration 2005–2015), most of the efforts have focused on addressing birth registration, education, employment, health

and housing of Roma families and their children in south-eastern European states with a high density of Roma communities.

32. Different groups of children affected by migration analysed for this Rapid Review. Most vulnerable groups are highlighted in red.

33. * Source year 2009; ** Source year 2013; *** Source year 2009.

34. Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are among the countries that are a source of human smuggling and trafficking.

35. <www.unicef.kz/files/00001021.pdf>.

36. All CEE/CIS states covered in this Rapid Review have ratified the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*.

37. State parties to the agreement: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

38. See UNICEF in Kosovo UNSCR 1244 2013 and UNICEF in Kosovo UNSCR 1244 2010.

39. As an example of compensatory policies for this trend in the region, Turkey has launched a programme providing free meals and bus transportation for seasonal migrant children from the agricultural fields to the local schools (Informant 7).

40. Informant 6.

41. See CRC 2009, CRC 2011, CRC 2013, UNICEF 2011, Giannelli et al. 2010, UNICEF Moldova 2008, UNICEF and CIDDC 2006, Barbone et al. 2013.

42. See United States Embassy in Kazakhstan 2009; CRC 2007; IOM 2013; UNICEF 2012; OHCHR/UNICEF 2013.

43. Particularly in CIS countries that form part of the EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the customs union with Russia (Eurasian Economic Community), as, for example, observed in Armenia (Informant 9; Eurasianet 2013).

44. Informant 9.

45. For the purpose of this study 'gender-related inequalities' refer to the unequal treatment or perception of children and adults based on their gender. Unfortunately, any aspects related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children and adults could not be included in the findings due to the lack of available data for the region and time constraints to conduct this research.

46. Son bias is a SIGI sub-index capturing social institutions that foster intra-household bias towards sons and the devaluation of daughters.

47. All data refer to the academic year 2010/2011 with the following exceptions: all Albania figures refer to 2009/2010; Georgia figures for ISCED 4 refer to 2008/2009, figures for ISCED 3 refer to 2004/2005; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro figures for ISCED 4 are missing and are assumed as mean average of ISCED 3A and ISCED 5; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia figures for ISCED 5 refer to 2009/2010. N.B.: Turkey is not included in the TransMonEE database.

48. A recent comparative analysis of the 2009 PISA results in CEE/CIS (UNICEF 2013b) demonstrates significant gender differences in performance, with large variations between subjects. For example, girls perform significantly better than boys in reading (larger gender gap in CEE/CIS countries than in OECD). Gender differences in mathematics are much smaller and vary between countries: in some there is an advantage for boys (seven countries) and in others, for girls (three countries). In science, there is a slight tendency for girls to perform better than boys (14 CEE/CIS countries).

49. Informant 8 and Informant 11.

50. In only two countries for which TransMonEE data are available, the percentage of females in tertiary education is below 50 per cent (Azerbaijan 49.8 per cent, Tajikistan 28.8 per cent).

51. For example, in Kazakhstan, the suicide rate of 15–17-year-old females rose from 9.4 in 2005 to 14.8 in 2011, and in Kyrgyzstan from 6.8 to 13 in the same time period (TransMonee 2014).

52. Pre-natal sex selection has also been confirmed as common practice and a worrying trend in Azerbaijan and Georgia (Sattar 2012), Armenia (Ibid.; Informant 9) and Albania (Barendt 2009).

53. For example, Rank 4: Russia 30.1 per 100,000 inhabitants; Rank 5: Belarus 27.4 per 100,000 inhabitants; Rank 7: Kazakhstan 25.6 per 100,000 inhabitants; Rank 12: Ukraine 21.2 per 100,000 inhabitants.

54. See: <https://ww1.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2003/june/ozguven.pdf>.

55. For example, Russian Federation: m 63, f 75; Belarus: m 67, f 78; Ukraine: m 66, f 76 (Ibid.).

56. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan figures refer to 2006; Ukraine figures refer to 2010. N.B.: Turkey is not included in the TransMonEE database.

57. The majority of reports on GBV consist of survey data retrieved from interviews and questionnaires in which adult women were asked whether they had been victims of GBV as a child (e.g., FRA 2014; WHO 2013; UNGA 2006).

58. See chapter 5 on children from linguistic minorities.

59. See also Level 2 'intimate partner violence'.

60. The aforementioned United Nations study (UNGA 2006) highlights that more girls become victims of sexual abuse and GBV committed by male teachers and classmates.

61. While the involvement of fathers in early childcare continues to be very low in the region, it appears that a growing number of men are interested in becoming more involved (Steinhilber 2011).

62. Data from Georgia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan refer to 2006/2007. N.B.: Turkey is not included in the TransMonee database.

63. See UNICEF 2006, UNICEF 2007a, UNICEF 2007b, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009b, UNICEF 2010, UNICEF 2011a, UNICEF 2011b, UNICEF 2011c, UNICEF 2011d and UNICEF 2011e; N.B.: Documents provided by UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office for Albania (Inclusive Social Policy Social support for the most vulnerable; protection and access to public service; 'Every Person Counts') and Azerbaijan

(Child marriage in Azerbaijan) do not include sufficient information on their publication, which would allow them to be included in the reference list. Note also that many of these documents refer to intimate partner violence as 'domestic violence'.

64. Gender pay gap: Most figures refer to 2010, with the exceptions of Albania (2009), Belarus (2008), Kyrgyzstan (2008), the Republic of Moldova (2011), Russia (2009), Serbia (2007) and Tajikistan (2011). Women in the labour force: 2013 data correspond to Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey; 2012 data correspond to Albania, Belarus and Kazakhstan; 2010 data correspond to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine; and 2009 data correspond to Tajikistan.

65. Women tend to choose education, the humanities and health care as their field of study, while men opt for sciences, mathematics, agriculture and veterinary medicine (Sattar 2012).

66. For example, pregnancy tests, having to sign an undated letter of resignation to be used in case of pregnancy (Steinhilber 2011) or simply not hiring (young) women because they are expected to go on maternity leave (Informant 13).

67. Informant 13.

68. Informant 11.

69. Informant 8.

70. Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Montenegro.

71. Another possible explanation for the higher numbers of boys charged with criminal offences than girls (e.g., available TransMonee data for 2010 indicate that between 89 per cent and 99 per cent of all juvenile charges were made against boys).

72. Informant 1.

73. Informant 13.

74. Informant 1.

75. Informant 7.

76. Informant 12.

77. In the majority of countries, the teaching profession has low prestige as well as wages. Furthermore, it allows (women) combining paid work with their family responsibility due to the working hours (Steinhilber 2011). Male professions in primary and secondary educations tend to include headmasters, gymnastic teachers and IT specialists (Informant 13).

78. Informant 14 and Informant 15.

79. Informant 8.

80. It is to be noted that this review covers specific social dimensions of vulnerability while there are also children living in economic vulnerability (poverty) who are not socially vulnerable. The rights violations experienced by children living under conditions of poverty are covered under another UNICEF regional report 'Social Monitor: Social protection for child rights and well-being in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia'.

81. UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2013*, Children with Disabilities, 2.

82. See, e.g., United Nations Secretary-General Report to the General Assembly, Keeping the Promise: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities towards 2015 and beyond, A/65/173, with reference to a background paper; see also: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2013*, Children with Disabilities, 29.

83. World Health Organization/World Bank, *World Report on Disabilities*, 59.

84. See, e.g., O'Connel, cited in Abramovich et al. 2011, HRC 2009.

85. UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2013*, Children with disabilities, 29.

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Daniel sits with his foster family, Luna, Stella, and their mother Banova Brdo, at their home in Belgrade, Serbia. Daniel was born with a disability, and maternity ward officials encouraged his 15-year-old mother to place him in an institution. At the time, he was unable to express emotions, and showed signs of autism. Ms. Brdo began to foster him four years after he entered the institution and since then and there has been great improvement in his condition. Serbia is one of only two countries in the region to approve laws that prohibit the institutionalization of infants (the other is Romania). Institutional care for children under age 3 is known to be damaging to their mental and emotional development, inhibiting cognitive and speech development, impairing intelligence, and contributing to emotional detachment.

Page 4: © UNICEF/UN04769/Georgiev

A boy sits beside a railroad track, on a rainy day in September 2015 near the town of Gevgelija, on the border with Greece. Next to him, a woman and a young child sit with their luggage beneath an umbrella, while behind them, others who have fled their homes amid the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis walk beside the railroad track. He is among millions escaping conflict and insecurity in their home countries of Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic. There are children of all ages traveling with their families. They are arriving in the country from Greece, transiting to Serbia and further to Hungary, from where they generally aim to reach other countries in the European Union.

Page 5: © UNICEF/UNI184131/Ibrahimova

Aslan from Azerbaijan first joined a disability centre six years ago in a wheelchair. His mother was very pessimistic and thought he would never be able to walk, but now he can walk with some help. Children with disabilities in Azerbaijan are often left out of mainstream activities, face discrimination and lack opportunities to live up to their full potential. UNICEF is working closely with the Government and civil society to create an effective legal and social framework for better care and protection of children with disabilities based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the top priorities include providing alternatives to the system of state childcare institutions and helping to include children with disabilities into the mainstream policies and structures.

Page 7: © UNICEF/UNI181501/Zmey

A girl is living with her mother in a train car on the Sloviansk central station; direct hit missiles destroyed her parents' home in Uglehorsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine. In mid-May 2015 in Ukraine, more than 1.2 million people, including some 161,000 children, have been internally displaced by the current conflict.

Page 8: © UNICEF/UN05555/Georgiev

Rida, from the Syrian Arab Republic, rests after receiving a warm coat in the UNICEF child-friendly space at the Vinojug refugee and migrant transit centre near Gevgelija in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which borders Greece. Injured on the boat trip from Turkey to Greece, Rida continued his journey with his parents and two sisters after receiving treatment at a Greek hospital. He is one of many children escaping conflict and insecurity in their home countries of the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq. UNICEF scaled up facilities and services in Gevgelija, including building a larger, warmer child-friendly space in the winter of 2015, to assist and protect children and their caregivers.

Page 11: © UNICEF/UNI172529/Khizanishvili

Nika, assisted by his caregiver, makes a texture cube during an activity at a day-care centre run by First Step Georgia (FSG) for children with disabilities, in Tbilisi, the capital. When used, the cubes help develop hand-eye coordination as well as aural and visual skills. FSG, a UNICEF partner, is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for children with disabilities by providing direct care, public advocacy, family support services and training.

Page 13: © UNICEF/UNI154429/Pirozz

Virginia, 2 years old, lives with her mother, Nicolinka, and her 17-year-old sister, Graziela, in a Roma community in the town of Shumen, northern Bulgaria. The mother is jobless and pregnant with her third child, and Graziela does not attend school in order to look after Virginia. The father abandoned the family. They receive support from social and health workers at a UNICEF-assisted family centre.

Page 14: © UNICEF/UNI184129/Ibrahimova

Arzu comes to Mushvig, a day-care centre for children and young people with disabilities in Garadagh, a town about one hour's drive from the Azerbaijan capital of Baku. Arzu likes to draw. Children with disabilities in Azerbaijan are often left out of mainstream activities, face discrimination and lack opportunities to live up to their full potential. UNICEF is working closely with the Government of Azerbaijan and civil society to create an effective legal and social framework for better care and protection of such children based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the top priorities include providing alternatives to the system of state childcare institutions and helping to include children with disabilities into the mainstream policies and structures.

Page 18: © UNICEF/UNI180492/Yurtsever

Abir, an 11-year-old from Aleppo, says "I did not have any chance to play with my toys for four years. I miss them a lot. Especially my kitchen set." She has been living in Akcakale Camp in Sanliurfa province in Turkey. UNICEF's Child-Friendly Spaces project is funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority in Turkey known by its local acronym AFAD and in cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent Society in all camps in Turkey to ensure that vulnerable Syrian and other refugee and migrant children and youth have access to safe, participatory and inclusive education spaces and recreation activities.

Page 23: © UNICEF/UNI200695/Filippov

Children write 'father' and 'mother' on the blackboard at a school in the village of Staromykhailovka, in Donetsk region, which is on the front line between the cities of Donetsk and Mariyanovka. Cold threatens the lives of some 700,000 children in eastern Ukraine if repairs to the water network are not urgently made to prevent potential failure of central heating systems during the freezing winter months. In mid-May 2015 in Ukraine, more than 1.2 million people, including some 161,000 children, have been internally displaced by the current conflict.

Page 25: © UNICEF/UN010700/Georgiev

A young child holds a toy as she seeks shelter with other Afghan refugees from very cold, wet weather conditions at the Tabanovce reception centre for refugees in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after being refused entry into Serbia. Hundreds of Afghan refugees, including children and women, are stuck in freezing conditions in Tabanovce in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian as border changes in the Balkan region create confusion and chaos. UNICEF routinely distributes school bags in Tabanovce to women with small children who need to carry children's items.

Page 31: © UNICEF/UNI185983/Filippov

Children play on a playground fixture at the only operating kindergarten in the city of Debaltseve, Donetsk region. The school was damaged during hostilities, causing it to close temporarily. Windows have been blown out, shrapnel has hit interior walls, and paint is peeling in the hallways from the impact of explosions. A UNICEF-supported mobile team of volunteer psychologists has been assisting children at the kindergarten. In mid-May 2015 in Ukraine, more than 1.2 million people, including some 161,000 children, have been internally displaced by the current conflict.

Page 32: © UNICEF/UNI184125/Andrei

Georgiana (right) sits with her mother and brothers outside their home in Georgia. She is excited to join second grade, where things will be definitely different now that she is officially registered. Georgiana is now entitled to her state benefit, to healthcare, to be counted in the official statistics.

Page 33: © UNICEF/UNI154515/Pirozzi

A boy plays in a class in Lefnosi School in the southern town of Prizren, Bulgaria. The town has primary and secondary schools and dormitories with children with various disabilities. UNICEF is working closely with the Government and civil society to create an effective legal and social framework for better care and protection of children with disabilities based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the top priorities include providing alternatives to the system of state childcare institutions and helping to include children with disabilities into the mainstream policies and structures.

Page 35: © UNICEF/UNI178078/Volpi

[NAMES CHANGED] Anna, holding a doll, stands in a corridor in the basement of a hospital in the city of Donetsk in Donetsk Oblast. A row of beds is visible behind her. Anna, her brother, Sasha, her mother and her grandmother have been sheltering in the hospital basement for the past five months following a recent upsurge in shelling. The family shares a sleeping space with 20 other people. Despite limited humanitarian access, UNICEF continues to provide aid in conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, especially for vulnerable children and families in bomb shelters, basements and cellars, and for those who urgently need food, water and basic hygiene supplies. By the end of January 2015, more than 1,000 children had sought refuge in underground bomb shelters in Donetsk City due to the ongoing violence.

Page 37: © UNICEF/UNI154002/Pirozzi

Sandra, 8 years old, who has Down Syndrome, plays with a ball, at a UNICEF-supported centre that provides community-based services for children with disabilities and their families, in the town of Ivanjica, Serbia. Despite growth in the availability of such services, access remains limited. A social policy, introduced in 2011, provides a comprehensive framework for the provision of community-based services and introduced significant changes in the way they are licensed, provided, monitored and financed. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, UNICEF provides technical support to partners in the least developed regions to help provide community-based services for families of children with disabilities.

Page 38: © UNICEF/UNI154015/Pirozzi

A woman kisses her infant daughter at the Zvecanksa Street institution, in Belgrade, Serbia. The centre has a shelter where young mothers can live, helping prevent abandonment of their babies, and also provides services for children with disabilities.