Committee: United Nations Children’s Fund

State: Russian Federation

Delegate: Zeren Göğüş

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 There is no evidence of large-scale independent activity by children in the labour market in the USSR, except during the periods of social and economic upheaval associated with the revolution, the civil war and the Second World War.

The Soviet State proclaimed, from the start, its intention to eradicate the exploitation of children. In 1922, employment of children under the age of 16 was prohibited, although children aged between 14 and 16 could still be employed in exceptional cases with the agreement of the Labour Commissariat and the trade unions. Since 1956, legislation has allowed children of 15 years of age to be employed in exceptional cases with the agreement of the enterprise concerned and of local trade union committees. Additional legislation in 1974 stipulated the conditions under which children over the age of 14 could work: no contraindications on the grounds of health, agreement of one of the parents (or guardians) and agreement of the child’s educational institution and the trade union of the enterprise concerned. In 1988, the minimum age for work was established as 14 years.

Since the late 1990s, Russia has reoriented its child protection system to focus more on prevention of child neglect and orphanhood, as well as family placement of children left without parental care. The country has seen significant results. The number of children each year entering specialized institutions for orphans and children left without parental care decreased by 19 percent from 2009 to 2020. In addition, the total number of children in public care declined by 40 percent during the same period.

The social role of children was tightly defined by the boundaries of family socialization and education. In the Soviet social structure, individuals were divided into substantive, ideologically defined categories, and a child’s major role was to be prepared to become a “constructor of communism”. Children were not regarded as independent economic agents, and their role as providers for the household was very limited.

However, the report also notes that a number of serious issues need to be addressed. In particular, the rate of children in public care remains high – 1,673 per 100,000 children – which is higher than in many other upper middle-income/high income countries. Timely identification of families at risk and interventions to prevent child neglect, abuse and separation also remain inadequate. Few regions in Russia have adopted a comprehensive system of social work and care services as a core element of the child protection system.

“To ensure that each child grows in a protective, healthy and loving family, it is necessary to fully implement three key tenets of the child protection policy: prevention of child neglect, abuse and family distress; assistance to families experiencing these issues; and family placement for children who must be separated from their families, with the objective of reuniting the family as soon as possible,” said **[Renaud Seligmann, World Bank Country Director and Resident Representative for the Russian Federation](https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/people/r/renaud-seligmann%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**[.](https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/people/r/renaud-seligmann%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

We should selecting at the federal level a single executive body responsible for all matters concerning the national policy for protection of vulnerable children and their families; further developing preventive services; establishing clear accountability rules and robust monitoring within the child protection system; strengthening the data system of child protection infrastructure; and improving budget reporting on child protection spending.