

Detention of unaccompanied children in police station cells in Greece

Human Rights Watch reports that in Greece, as of late December, 54 unaccompanied children were detained in police station cells or in immigrant detention centres. Their research found that these children lived in “unsanitary conditions, often with unrelated adults” and could be “subject to abuse and ill-treatment by police”.

Detention of children is contrary to international human rights law, as stated also by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Article 6 of Regulation 604/2013 states that Member States shall closely cooperate with each other, shall take due account of family reunification possibilities and, in the case of unaccompanied minors, shall “as soon as possible take appropriate action to identify the family members, siblings or relatives of the unaccompanied minor on the territory of Member States.”

Is the Commission aware of the situation and, if so, which steps will it take to support other EU states to speed up family reunification from Greece with relatives and offer to safely relocate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children even if they lack family ties?

Annex:

According to HRW and several studies, among which a report drawn up at the Commission's request, detention has a serious long-term impact on children, including “harm to their development, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and memory loss”:

<http://odysseus-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/FINAL-REPORT-Alternatives-to-detention-in-the-EU.pdf>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/23/asylum-seeking-kids-locked-greece>

<http://www.unhcr.org/58a458eb4>

Sources :

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/child-migrant-detention>

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:180:0031:0059:EN:PDF>