

Press release:

On the focus of Children's Rights Project 2013

In Hungary one of the tasks of the commissioner for fundamental rights that requires priority under the law is the protection of children's rights. As part of a project which has been running since his entering upon duties, Ombudsman Máté Szabó will explore the issue of children's right to a healthy environment in 2013.

During the inquiries of the project, the commissioner will rely not solely on previous related works of the parliamentary commissioner for future generations and the parliamentary commissioner for the national and ethnic minorities rights but on the results of the project 2011 on children's physical-mental health and provisions of the Basic Law and the UN Convention on the rights of the child, as well.

Environment has positive and negative impacts on human rights. It plays a vital role in ensuring human life, producing food and raw materials essential for the industry and development. At the same time, some environmental risk factors like excessive radiation or contaminated drinking water may endanger people's fundamental right to life. Persons exposed to the dangerous effects of contaminated soil, air, food or drinking water on reserves may have their health get worse, may suffer from genetic defects or have reduced quality of life.

It should be emphasized that the meaning of the right to a healthy environment is completely different when speaking about children living in extremely poor conditions, since in their case primary threats are not environmental risk factors of "higher level" (air quality, chemical-free environment, deficiency of bio organic food) but often the lack of minimum environmental conditions – like adequate food, housing and health facilities. Different quality and capacity levels of state-provided public services present a continuous violation of the right to a healthy environment. As a result of institutional and supply system deficiencies, not every child has equal access to adequate quality care and supply services. These children face challenges in accessing quality health care or sports and physical training activities and they have difficulties in access to cultural facilities as well.

In view of this, the project builds upon three major pillars:

1. right to a healthy environment in schools (education, special trainings, environmental consciousness, access to services, meals/special needs, bio organic food, local products);
2. environmental hazards' effects on children (air pollution, noise, waste management);
3. ensuring rights of disadvantaged children or children living in extremely poor or conditions in the context of the right to a healthy environment.

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