



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 2537th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 September 2021, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Otani

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Czechia (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Czechia (continued) (CRC/C/CZE/5-6; CRC/C/CZE/Q/5-6, CRC/C/CZE/RQ/5-6 and CRC/C/CZE/RQ/5-6/Corr.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Czechia joined the meeting via video link.*
2. **Ms. Jůzová Kotalová** (Czechia) said that her Government would give due consideration to the Committee's recommendation to withdraw the reservation made to article 7 (1) of the Convention.
3. **Ms. Zahradníková** (Czechia) said that all offences under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography were covered by the Criminal Code. Even though trafficking in children for the purpose of forced labour, forced marriage or involvement in armed conflict was not a problem in the Czech Republic and no cases of such trafficking had been reported, the Government was engaged with a range of actors in the prevention of that crime. For example, the International La Strada Association, which specialized in anti-trafficking initiatives, organized seminars in schools and children's homes to help raise awareness about trafficking among young persons about to enter the labour market. Police officers received training on trafficking in children. Representatives of the National Centre for Combating Organized Crime, regional police directorates and alien police offices and liaison officers who worked with minority communities exchanged information about trafficking in human beings and shared best practices. The Judicial Academy regularly provided training on trafficking for judges and public prosecutors. Trafficking in children was also an integral part of the training provided to consular officers.
4. **Mr. Machačka** (Czechia) said the fact that his Government had distanced itself from the Durban process did not mean that racism and racial discrimination were not addressed in Czechia. Action plans on racism and hate crime, on Roma integration and on migrant integration had been adopted. The plans were focused on the prosecution and prevention of hate crime, awareness-raising, Roma integration and participation, the fight against discrimination and social exclusion and the integration of migrants in Czech society.
5. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography did not directly concern trafficking, which was an issue covered by the Convention. Not all instances of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography involved trafficking. She would like to hear more specific information on the follow-up given to the Committee's recommendation in its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/OPSC/CZE/CO/1, paras. 24–25) to amend the Criminal Code, in particular to bring it into line with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol.
6. **Ms. Válková** (Czechia) said that she wished to assure Committee members that the new Criminal Code was now fully compatible with the Optional Protocol. However, as the delegation had not been able to make its position clear on the subject, it would be glad to provide further details on the amendments made to the relevant criminal legislation in writing.
7. **Ms. Kosová** (Czechia) said that the national cybersecurity strategy included a pillar on the prevention of cybercrime and education in the field of cybersecurity, focused on the protection of particularly vulnerable persons in cyberspace, including children and adolescents. The Ministry of the Interior was preparing a crime prevention strategy for the period 2021–2026, which would include the aims of strengthening the prevention of cybercrime and risky behaviour in cyberspace and providing assistance and support to victims in cyberspace. The Czech Republic was actively contributing to the European strategy on children's rights in the area of the digital and information society through participation in a working group of the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity.
8. The Safer Internet Centre, which had an advisory board consisting of experts and representatives of children, had a prominent position in the country. The Government endeavoured to implement the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children and other

regional European strategies. Several research studies had been carried out dealing with risky behaviour on the Internet, including the “e-safety” project of Palacký University Olomouc. The results were used to create tailor-made prevention projects focused on soft skills and cybercrime prevention, with the involvement of the non-profit sector and academia.

9. **Ms. Hlaváčová** (Czechia) said that an interministerial online working group had been established to monitor fake news and disinformation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Disinformation was countered with proactive communication through official government web pages and national campaigns. Official web pages provided medical and practical information about COVID-19 and included a special section dedicated to fake news and disinformation. The web pages had been launched in cooperation with civil society organizations and the National Agency for Communication and Information Technologies. A national information campaign on vaccination against COVID-19 had been launched in 2021.

10. **Ms. Šmídová** (Czechia) said that the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting was responsible for the protection of children from the potentially negative effects of the media. It monitored broadcast and streaming media services to ensure that no content that could endanger the physical, mental or moral development of children was shown between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The Council was empowered to impose fines for violations and could investigate following complaints from the public or on its own initiative. Since 2009, when statistics on violations had first been published online, the Council had issued 421 findings on violations and imposed 23 sanctions for the endangerment of children. The Council prioritized the protection of children and operated a website aimed at helping parents to protect their children against the negative impact of media, which included child-friendly information.

11. **Ms. Jůzová Kotalová** (Czechia) said that an amendment of the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children would be debated in the upper house of Parliament in the coming days. If adopted, a minimum age of 3 years for children to be placed in institutions would be introduced. The amendment did not provide for the closing of the institutions, but it was hoped that the age restriction would help reduce the number of children placed in them and lead to a reconsideration of their use. An amendment of the Health Services Act as it concerned regulations on homes for children under the age of 3 was also under discussion.

12. Over the previous decade, deinstitutionalization had been pursued through efforts towards major legislative reform with a view to adopting a comprehensive law on children, which would address the current fragmentation of the system of care for vulnerable children. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had submitted several proposals on an integrated system, but none had been accepted by the Government. Previous legislative changes had led to an increased number of foster carers, which in turn had facilitated a 50 per cent reduction in the number of the youngest children in institutions and a decrease in the number of new placements in institutions. Even with no new legislative changes, at the current rate of decrease, there would be no children under the age of 3 years in institutions by 2025.

13. Deinstitutionalization was also promoted through financial support for transformation in the regions. Future deinstitutionalization efforts would need to focus on older children, children with special needs and behavioural issues, minority children and children with many siblings, for whom it was difficult to find foster care. Another avenue for improvement was family support and prevention of institutionalization. To that end, the Government was working to establish a network of family services, involving increased support for formal social services and the inclusion of community and informal services such as volunteer assistance.

14. In the previous 10 years, following the adoption of the Social Services Act, the number of children with disabilities had decreased by about 90 per cent. Children with disabilities were often placed in institutions not by a court but through an agreement with the child’s parents. Current efforts were focused on ensuring that the social and legal protection authorities were aware of all such placements so that the families could be advised of the availability of other types of services, such as home care.

15. Children were never placed in institutions as a first resort. Decisions to remove children from their families could only be made by a court after an assessment to determine

the best interests of the child. The economic situation of the parents was not grounds for institutionalization. Courts were legally required to prioritize placement with members of the extended family, followed by placement with foster carers. If that was not possible, children would be placed in emergency assistance facilities, which were smaller and provided care for limited periods. Children could only be placed in institutions if it was proved to the court that all the other options had been exhausted. Such placements were subject to regular re-evaluation by the court.

16. Children of all ages placed in all types of institutions received visits from the social and legal protection authorities every three months. The Ombudsman performed regular monitoring of institutions. Public prosecutors ensured regular supervision of the care provided to children placed in institutions by court order. The providers of facilities were subject to regular monitoring of compliance with the applicable quality standards and health and safety rules. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was currently carrying out a project with European Union funding to visit some 250 institutions of various types to ensure that the services provided were adapted to the needs of the children placed there. All providers of care facilities were required to have a complaints procedure and to inform children about it. Compliance with that requirement was verified as part of regular monitoring.

17. All types of institutions had a maximum capacity set out in the applicable law. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs took every opportunity to lower the capacity through legislative amendments. For example, the amendment of the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children currently being considered provided for a reduction in the capacity of emergency assistance facilities, a requirement for the regions to specify the maximum capacity of each specific facility and a ban on the incorporation of such facilities into a larger institution.

18. At the start of 2021, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had conducted research on the numbers of Roma children in institutions for children under 3 years of age and estimated that the proportion was 53 per cent, which was much higher than their representation in the general population. The Government intended to address the issue, including by fulfilling the recommendations made by the European Committee of Social Rights following a complaint registered against the Czech Republic in 2020 and by exploring the reasons why Roma children were disproportionately institutionalized and determining whether targeted social services for their families were required.

19. Baby boxes still existed at private facilities and no current legal instrument could be used to prohibit them. The number of boxes had slightly increased while the numbers of children left in them had remained stable. The police and the social and legal protection authorities searched for the parents of any children so abandoned. In recent years, there had been several cases in which the abandoned child's parents had been found or had come forward and were offered help from social services to care for the child. If the parents could not be found, the child would be placed in alternative family care. To prevent the use of baby boxes, it was necessary to raise public awareness about the other available options.

20. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate it if the delegation could address the questions he had raised about children with disabilities and the institutionalization of children. In addition, he would like to hear the State party's comments on reports that young intersex children were subjected to sex reassignment surgery or therapy without their consent, as they lacked the maturity required to give or withhold such consent.

21. **Ms. Jůzová Kotalová** (Czechia) said that the number of specialized day care and home care social services for children with disabilities was increasing. Children with disabilities had access to all the same services as adults with disabilities in a form adapted for children. A recent study had shown that children used many such services, including the provision of personal assistants. Respite services were also available.

22. There were currently 399 children placed in homes for children with disabilities, which was 3.6 per cent of the total capacity of facilities for persons with disabilities. A reassessment of the situation of children in institutions was under way, to ascertain for example whether financial support or alternatives to institutionalization could be provided to parents who had reached agreements with institutions on the placement of their children, to

help the parents care for them or whether such children could be placed in foster care. Approximately 600 children with disabilities had been placed with foster families.

23. Under the National Strategy on the Development of Social Services 2016–2025, efforts were being made to ensure access to services in all regions of the country. Local authorities, hospitals, doctors and other social services had been instructed to inform parents and children about the availability of services. Fees payable for social services were strictly limited by law and subject to various exemptions. Social benefits paid to families could be used to cover the costs of such services, which were not very high in comparison to average household income.

24. The number of children with disabilities in institutions had decreased rapidly owing to the provision of the Social Services Act allowing for the payment of a care allowance to be used on services of the client's choice. Children or their parents or guardians could decide whether they preferred home care, day services or institutional care. Pursuant to the amendment of the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children currently under discussion, the approval of the social and legal protection authorities would be required for any child to be placed in an institution, even in the event that an agreement was reached on such placement between the parents and institutions. The authorities would be immediately informed of any such arrangements and be in a position to offer the family other services with a view to preventing institutionalization.

25. One of the objectives of the National Strategy on the Protection of Children's Rights was to ensure equal opportunities for children with disabilities through a legislative framework based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that ensured children's rights to live in a family environment and have access to education and adequate standards of living and social protection. A further objective was the development and delivery of training programmes to promote more effective communication with children with disabilities and their families, which was vital for the assessment of children's situations and the planning of their care.

26. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate clarification as to whether or not the new legislation being adopted would lead to a ban on the placement of children under the age of 3 in institutions.

27. **Ms. Todorova** said that she would like to know whether she was correct in her understanding that a market in social services existed, in which institutional care was one of the services available for purchase by parents, using their own funds or the care allowance. She would also like to understand the role of the public prosecutor in the monitoring of childcare.

28. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that she wished to know whether the complaints procedures in institutions were properly disseminated and made accessible to all children. She wondered whether government agencies and civil society organizations engaged in advocacy and awareness-raising work to combat child abandonment and prevent the use of baby boxes.

29. **Ms. Marshall-Harris** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that she wished to clarify her question concerning debt faced by children. She took it that most such debt entailed unpaid health-care expenses. As health care was a right that children must have, any debt incurred for medical costs was a violation of that right. She therefore failed to understand why children were burdened with that kind of debt. She would like to know whether there was a clear budget line for the implementation of children's rights. It would also be useful to learn about any regulations in place to ensure that the business sector, particularly the tourism industry, complied with international children's rights standards. Further information on the avenues available to children for seeking justice in cases of discrimination would also be appreciated. It would be helpful to know whether the State party planned to follow up on the Committee's previous recommendations to establish a comprehensive system of data collection and analysis and to increase official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national income (CRC/C/CZE/CO/3-4). Updates on the status of the draft legislation on the development of youth participation and on compensation for child victims of forced sterilization would be welcome. She wondered whether any cases of sexual abuse by Catholic priests and other clergy members had been reported, whether child and forced marriage were explicitly criminalized and whether the Government planned to strengthen protections

against sexual exploitation for children over 15 years of age. She wished to hear about any steps taken by the State party to promote equal parenting, support children leaving care and ensure the visitation rights of children of incarcerated parents. She would welcome information on the support provided to children with autism and developmental disorders and the measures taken to prevent child suicides. It would be useful to know whether parents could stay with children who were hospitalized or undergoing medical procedures. She wished to know how the impact of air pollution on children's health was assessed and whether there were any programmes to raise children's awareness of environmental health and climate change. Lastly, she asked how cases of sexual exploitation and marriage abroad and forced begging were addressed when they involved children.

30. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** said that he would like to hear about the steps that the State party had taken to increase its cooperation with civil society organizations in line with the Committee's previous recommendations (CRC/C/CZE/CO/3-4). He wished to know how the State party was following up on the findings of the European Committee of Social Rights, in its decision in *International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) v. Czech Republic* (complaint No. 148/2017), regarding the similarities in the way children under and over the age of criminal responsibility were treated. Furthermore, given the similarities between the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, it was not clear how the juvenile justice system was consistent with articles 37 and 40 of the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2019).

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

31. **Ms. Jůzová Kotalová** (Czechia) said that efforts would continue to introduce a ban on the institutionalization of small children. Pursuant to the law, public prosecutors engaged in the monitoring of children placed in institutions by court order because those children were considered to be deprived of their liberty. Follow-up measures for children leaving care had been included in a proposed amendment to the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children. A new financial benefit was available to young people leaving institutional or foster care who wanted to continue their studies or prepare to enter the job market. Fathers were now entitled to not just one, but two weeks of parental leave and new legislation had provided for a larger and more flexible parental allowance. The Government was raising the awareness of parents about child-friendly alternatives to the use of baby boxes.

32. **Ms. Šmídová** (Czechia) said that the 2021–2025 National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities served as the framework for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. That plan included measures focused on family life that aimed to reduce the number of children in institutional care, increase interest in alternative family care, provide support to parents and others responsible for the care of children with disabilities and promote the professionalization of foster care. Other measures under the plan aimed to promote inclusive and equal education by, for example, improving training and support for teachers of children with disabilities. Individualized support measures for students with special needs had become increasingly available over the preceding five years. There had been an increase in the percentage of children with hearing impairments or autism spectrum disorders attending ordinary schools. The Czech Republic had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2021.

33. **Ms. Válková** (Czechia) said that the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been the fruit of years of effort.

34. **Ms. Hlaváčová** (Czechia) said that a government resolution adopted in August 2021 required the Ministry of Health to develop a strategy by June 2023 on the implementation of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative, ensure sustainable financing, monitor the care provided and build the capacity of the national coordination body on breastfeeding. In the future, all maternity hospitals would uniformly apply the national standards. The resolution placed emphasis on hospitals' compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

35. In 2020, the Ministry of Health had issued guidance to increase the involvement of midwives in the work of maternity hospitals and create a friendlier environment. Beginning in 2021, the costs of breastfeeding classes held within four weeks of a baby's birth were covered under the public health insurance scheme. The National Commission for

Breastfeeding created in 2019 at the Ministry of Health and a working group on labour and maternal health at the Office of the Government were involved in the coordination of tasks relating to maternal health. The Institute of Health Information and Statistics maintained a national reproductive health register that collected data on assisted reproduction, newborns, abortions, pregnancies and congenital and hereditary diseases.

36. Since submitting its report, the State party had launched a screening programme to assess the risk for premature birth and a pilot project for postnatal screening for spinal muscular atrophy. Care for children with rare diseases was provided by the specialized centres participating in the European Reference Networks for rare diseases. Under a proposed amendment to the Public Health Insurance Act, the cost of medicines used to treat rare diseases would be reimbursed in a more predictable manner.

37. The Ministry of Health was engaged in a reform of the mental health-care system, which sought to deinstitutionalize the care of children and increase the quality of care they received in psychiatric hospitals. It was hoped that, by 2030, there would be at least two multidisciplinary mental health teams in each region of the Czech Republic. Outpatient psychiatric care and psychological support services for children were being increased. The Ministry of Health was working with the Ministry of Education to prevent institutionalization. During the COVID-19 pandemic, various information and crisis hotlines had been set up for children and the “Care for Yourself” project, which had come out of a working group on the mental health impact of COVID-19, provided prevention and support tools for children with mental health problems.

38. The sterilization of children under 18 years of age was prohibited. Parents of hospitalized children were, by law, authorized to be with them, and the cost of the stay of parents of children 6 years of age and under were reimbursed under the health insurance scheme. Although access to hospitals had been restricted at the beginning of the pandemic, the Ministry of Health had responded with timely guidance that stressed children’s right to have a parent or legal guardian present. Because health care for children was fully covered by the State under the health insurance scheme, children should generally not incur any debts in connection with health-care costs. Reimbursement for the costly care associated with rare diseases would become more systematic under the proposed new legislation. Under an amendment to the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals, children under 5 of parents who were long-term residents must be covered by the public health insurance scheme. All other children were subject to the private insurance scheme.

39. **Ms. Mohylová** (Czechia) said that a bill on social housing had been rejected by Parliament. The Government had established a system for financing the construction of social housing, using State investment promotion funds, European Union funds and direct investment subsidies of the Ministry of Regional Development, and over 9,000 units had been built over the previous 10 years. Housing had become less affordable over the previous five years, as housing prices had risen more quickly than household incomes. The Government’s focus had therefore expanded from social housing to affordable housing, and Parliament was now considering a bill on affordable housing that would serve as a national framework for such housing. Social housing was one of the priorities of the housing strategy adopted by the Government in April 2021. The strategy sought to make housing more affordable by increasing the supply of rental housing and improving its quality.

40. **Mr. Černý** (Czechia) said that one of the aims of the Strategy of Educational Policy of the Czech Republic until 2030, which the Government had adopted in 2020, was to ensure equal access to quality education by limiting student tracking, combating disparities and segregation and ensuring good case management and interdepartmental cooperation. He was unaware of any studies performed by the Ministry of Education to ascertain why some parents and teachers were reluctant to accept the Inclusive Education Action Plan. In his opinion, the fact that the reforms had been introduced from above had undermined acceptance of the plan and had initially generated distrust. If the reform had exclusively addressed children who were disadvantaged for health or social reasons, it would have garnered more support, but among the beneficiaries were children with behavioural problems, who were grouped together with other disadvantaged children. At the outset teachers often lacked the resources to effectively help such children, which had led to frustration. That notwithstanding, the

Ministry of Education was addressing those difficulties and acceptance of the Action Plan had already improved.

41. The number of children of foreign nationals enrolled in school ranged from about 3.3 per cent of the total in kindergarten to about 2.2 per cent at the secondary level. The most common countries of origin were Ukraine, Viet Nam, Slovakia, the Russian Federation, Mongolia, Bulgaria and Romania. Since 2013, the numbers of children of foreign nationals had increased by nearly 100 per cent in kindergartens, by about 80 per cent at the elementary level and only slightly among secondary students. Because members of the Roma community often maintained that their nationality was Czech, it was difficult to compile precise statistics on the number of Roma children enrolled in school, but estimates ranged from about 2 to 3.5 per cent.

42. **Mr. Pepřík** (Czechia) said that the age of full criminal liability was 18 and that juveniles over 15 were not criminally liable for their acts if at the time the acts were committed the young persons had not reached sufficient intellectual and ethical maturity to recognize the illegality of their actions or to control them. Under the Juvenile Justice Act, unlawful conduct by children under 15 was not subject to criminal proceedings, but to civil proceedings, which must include participation by the child, the child's legal guardian and the social and legal protection authority.

43. The Ministry of Justice was preparing implementation of a decision by the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe in a case brought against Czechia by the International Commission of Jurists. It was drawing up an amendment that would for instance take into account mandatory legal representation of children during pretrial proceedings. Similar provisions would be introduced for the defence of juveniles, for example specifying the need for attorneys to represent the children throughout proceedings. The Ministry was also considering alternatives to formal proceedings, including the possibility of waiving legal action against the child if the circumstances permitted, or the capacity of youth courts to refrain from the imposition of criminal measures without a requirement for a court hearing.

44. Convicted persons were allowed visits of up to three hours per month, with a maximum of four visitors at a time, including children, unless internal prison rules stated otherwise. Additional visits could be authorized for personal reasons by the prison director, even outside visiting hours.

45. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** said that the European Committee of Social Rights had specified that the fact that cases of children under the age of 15 were heard in civil courts did automatically mean that their rights were respected. Hopefully, the amendment would be adopted and it would be fully in line with the principles of juvenile justice. He would appreciate further information on access to case files and the right to appeal, on the specialization of lawyers who were called upon to represent juveniles and on the guarantees provided to children under 15 who were placed in closed institutions.

46. **Ms. Válková** (Czechia) said that proceedings involving children placed in closed institutions were handled in accordance with European standards and that only the most serious cases, involving extremely violent crimes or mental health problems, resulted in detention in closed or semi-closed institutions, which were run by the Ministry of Education. There had only been about 20 such cases in about 10 years.

47. **Mr. Machačka** (Czechia) said that an analysis of the situation of intersex children had been carried out by academics in cooperation with the Public Defender of Rights and would be studied by the Government with a view to taking appropriate steps in accordance with their recommendations. Combating discrimination, including discrimination affecting children, was one of the tasks of the Public Defender of Rights. Sterilization had been a human rights issue, especially in relation to women of the Roma community. A law had recently been adopted to provide compensation to victims of such practices, and the handling of claims had been scheduled to begin in 2022. There had never been any cases of sterilization of children. A special committee had been established with the participation of representatives of churches, institutions and non-governmental organizations to discuss issues related to sexual abuse in churches and to consider possible compensation for victims.

48. **Ms. Votočková** (Czechia) said that the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals and the Asylum Act were the two main instruments whose provisions addressed the prohibition of detention of children. The Asylum Act prohibited the detention of asylum-seeking minors regardless of whether they were accompanied, but the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals had a provision allowing the detention of persons whose presence in the country was irregular, on the basis of an individual assessment, and only if no alternatives to detention were available and if there were serious doubts about the person's age. In such cases an age assessment was performed during detention. So far, age assessments had been carried out using medical methods, as a last resort, but the Government was aware that it was preferable to use non-medical methods and was trying to find a new, practical model for such procedures, applying the recommendations of the European Asylum Support Office. It would hopefully have a new procedure in place in the coming months.

49. **Ms. Marshall-Harris** said that the Committee appreciated the efforts that the State party had made to find solutions to the issues faced by children in Czechia and hoped that the solutions would be long lasting. It would be grateful if the Government would pay still more attention to the problems of discrimination against Roma children, the situation of children with disabilities, children who were sexually exploited or abused and children deprived of a family environment, as well as migrant children. The Committee would address such questions in its recommendations and concluding observations and trusted that the Government would duly take account of them.

50. **Ms. Válková** (Czechia) said that in 10 years the State party had achieved a great deal to ensure a better situation of children by improving the legislation and practices and strategies. The authorities were aware that there were still points requiring more effort and would address them to ensure the best interests of the country's children, so that all children could benefit from the improvement in the standard of living. The Government looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations.

51. **The Chair** noted that the delegation had the opportunity to submit further information and answers to any questions raised during the interactive dialogue to the Committee within 48 hours.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.