A Change in a Child is a Change for Bulgaria!
About the National Network for Children

The National Network for Children (NNC) is a network of more than a hundred civil organizations working in the area of children and families.

To ensure children’s and families’ rights in Bulgaria we advocate in partnership with the NGOs, business, institutions, individuals, as well with the support of the children themselves.

Thanks to our expert team we develop positions, proposals and recommendations to change child and family policies.

We actively work to consolidate non-governmental organizations working in the area of children and families and to enhance communication and exchange experience and good practices between them.

We build a well performing and open civil network in issues related to children and families.

Our mission

The mission of the National Network for Children is to strengthen and facilitate partnership between NGOs and all other parties concerned in order to guarantee children’s rights and well-being.

Our goals

- To create and support an active network of NGOs in Bulgaria, with efficient and active links at national level.
- To facilitate cooperation between NGOs working for children and families both in Bulgaria and at European level, including the UN Child Protection Committee.
- To work to endorse an effective social inclusion policy where children and families have a special focus; this policy shall reflect their needs, rights and opportunities for development.
- To support Bulgarian civil organizations that work in the interest of children in order to have a successful influence upon national child and family policy.
- To encourage child and youth participation when making decisions, with a special attention to partnerships with different organizations, engaging with children and young people.
- To promote the development of a proactive unified position and key messages from the civil society in Bulgaria in relation to rights of children and their families.
- To work towards strengthening NGOs’ and other stakeholders’ capacity by providing accessible information, consulting and training for civil organizations working for children and families.
- To provide regular and accessible information flow from and to the NGOs.
Dear Colleagues,

The year 2012 had key significance for the National Network for Children (NNC) both in terms of achievement and the problems we worked to address.

Safeguarding children’s rights in Bulgaria remains a key challenge for us as a society and a country alike. More than half of Bulgarian children live at a risk of poverty and indeed child poverty in the country remains the highest in Europe. At the same time, the money Bulgaria spends on family support is twice less than the European average. In this context, we had to make an even greater effort and step up both our commitment and professionalism in order to be able to achieve our goals.

We, the organisations that make up the National Network for Children, continued to insist that children be regarded as a topmost priority and placed at the heart of national and European policy:

- We continued to cooperate with international and local non-governmental networks, joining our efforts to create a better working environment in the sector for the benefit of children.
- We established a partnership with the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria with a view to acting efficiently at both national and local level, which is where developments take place on the ground.
- We try to listen more actively to the voice of children and young people to whom we dedicate our work and efforts.
- We continue to raise our know-how in the different areas of our work.
- We seek to identify and implement increasingly more successful models for working with children and families.

In our daily work we continually strive to uphold our key principle – putting the child at the centre!

It is important that we remain united and willing to help each other in our challenging work for the benefit of children and families in Bulgaria because we believe that a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Hence, in the new 2013 we will continue our active engagement in different areas of importance for children and families, insist that not only the government but society too takes proper notice, and propose and put into practice workable solutions.

Nevena Madzharova
President of NNC Management Board
1. Influence over child and family policies

1.1. Main child policies

Last year the National Network for Children sent more than 100 letters to government institutions setting out petitions, proposals and opinions on the improvement of child policies to which the institutions concerned responded in approximately one-fifth of all cases. The government put an end to the debate surrounding the adoption of the Draft Child Act thereby abandoning one the most vital reforms capable of ensuring a better life for children in Bulgaria. However, important issues were raised, such as establishing an ombudsman for child rights and continued work to give priority to child and family matters during the new planning period for EU funds. The network has continued to insist on the implementation of a comprehensive family support policy, which currently does not exist. The main highlight of 2012 was the publication of the first Government Notebook.

What did we do?

- In March 2012 we presented the 2011 Notebook: Assessment of the implementation of government commitments to the children of Bulgaria – a report setting out an appraisal of the work conducted by the government on child and family issues. The report was drawn up by network experts in different areas such as “General principles of the Convention on Child Rights”, “Family and alternative care”, “Healthcare”, “Education”, and “Special protection measures”. The annual average score of the government for 2011 was average 3

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<th>Government rating for 2011</th>
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<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>Healthcare</td>
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<td>Special protection measures</td>
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- The network has continued to insist that an ombudsman for child rights be established as an institution that will focus specifically on safeguarding child rights. The NNC wrote an opinion and a letter setting out specific proposals for amendments to the law, which was send to the Minister of Justice, the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science and Children, Young People and Sport at the time when deliberations were in progress on a draft law amending and supplementing the Ombudsman Act.

- The NNC has drawn up an opinion on the government budget for 2013, which through the funds earmarked for maternity benefits clearly demonstrates that children are not a priority in the context of overall government policy. The full text of the opinion is available on the NNC website.

1. All documents, positions and opinions are available at www.nmd.bg
The network continues to actively promote effective civil participation and giving priority to working with children and families during the stage of planning EU Structural Funds for the upcoming financial period (2014-2020). The NNC became one of the organisations that founded and later became a member of the Managing Board of the Civil Participation Forum – an association of civil organisations working in this area.

The network has kept up its efforts to support the development of a Voluntary Work Act. In November, when the draft law was submitted to the National Assembly and an opinion was requested from the NNC, the network continued to insist that a voluntary work record book and special measures for the protection of child volunteers be introduced.

In 2012, the NNC participated in the meetings of the National Child Protection Council. The network was also involved in the drafting of the 2012 National Child Protection Programme and in December 2012 it submitted specific proposals in respect of the content of the programme for 2013.

The NNC became a member of the Public Advisory Board of the Bulgarian Food Bank (BFB) and took part in the development of the criteria and procedures that NGOs wishing to become partners of the BFB should follow in order to do so. The NNC helped ensure that network organisations are able to work jointly with the BFB and distribute food products to those in need.

1.2. Family

The main work of the Network of influence over policies in this area continues to be related to the de-institutionalization process. The quality of alternative social services for children and families is crucial prior to the closure of childcare institutions.

What did we do?

The NNC is actively engaged in safeguarding children’s rights upon the closure of childcare institutions, and works on the prevention of abandonment and ensuring that alternatives to institutional childcare are available. We continue to focus the attention of the government and competent institutions on problem areas in the domain of the policies and practices for deinstitutionalization and development of social services for children and families in Bulgaria and were involved in the process of preparing the Second Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Action Plan to the National Strategy entitled Vision for the Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria, and more specifically the part concerning cooperation with NGOs. We also provided feedback and comments on the full text of the report. Some of our proposals and commentaries are reflected in the final version of the report.

The NNC, along with the Cedar Foundation, published a Deinstitutionalization Manual in the form of a set containing a book and a film. The manual reveals the experience of the foundation and the steps taken in the process of deinstitutionalizing children at the childcare centre for disabled children in Gorna Koznitsa Village, including the opening of day care centres based on the model of a family environment.

On 17 and 18 July the NNC organised an international conference dedicated to deinstitutionalization, which was attended by representatives from 17 countries. At the conference an analysis entitled “FROM LIVING IN COMMUNISM TO COMMUNITY LIVING – WHAT IS COMMON in the deinstitutionalization process for children and adults with mental health problems in the post-Soviet Region”, which looks at the situation in 15 countries, was presented.
As a result of the Network’s insistence on **alignment of foster care and adoption procedures** in support of the initiative launched by the For Our Children Foundation a multi-agency working group on procedures alignment was set up whose members in December 2012 included the NNC and a number of other non-governmental organisations working in the area of foster care and adoption.

Following the receipt of an official request from the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Children, Young People and Sport, the NNC drafted an **opinion on the Draft Law amending and supplementing the Family Benefits for Children Act** by which it supported the changes proposed and made additional proposals.

In the summer the Network announced its position on a **draft Decree of the Council of Ministers amending and supplementing the Regulation on the requirements and procedure for submitting applications, selecting and approving foster families and placing children in such families**. The position of the NNC was drawn up in a timely manner and sent to the e-mails indicated on the public consultations website, which was the only channel for public consultations concerning the proposal. The amendments to the regulation were enacted without further consultation and the specific proposals of the NNC failed to be taken into consideration.

### 1.3. Education

The main activity of the Network in the field of education policies for children was focused on development of new legislation within the system of pre-school and school education.

**What did we do?**

- A number of meetings took place within the Network to consider the opinion and receive comments from NNC members and other professionals working in the area of education. As a result of the meetings a summary was compiled setting out several points advocated by the NNC.

- Opinions were drafted both in respect of the draft law in its entirety and in respect of individual provisions. These were presented at formal meetings organised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the National Parliament. The main position submitted by the NNC to the National Assembly is entitled “Creating new, flexible opportunities for child learning”.

- Owing to the active involvement of the NNC in the work relating to the draft law out of 8 key proposals 6 were fully and 2 were partially endorsed.

- In addition to its work on the draft law, the NNC also commented on a project financed under the “Science and Education for Smart Growth” Operational Programme. Three regional meetings took place at which the programme was discussed and we presented our position. Programme planning will continue in 2013.
1.4. Health

During the last year, the work within child health was focused on healthcare in children settings – schools and kindergartens.

What did we do?

- We continued to work with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to improve legislation in the area of healthy nutrition for children and pupils.

- The Network continued its efforts to improve school toilets. The NNC insists on the approval of a standard for school toilets, which will ensure that they are maintained in a condition, which does not unnerve school children who may need to use them, and consistently have hot water on the tap and are supplied with toilet paper and soap. Work on developing this standard has been carried out in the last two years without any clarity as to when the bylaw will be enacted. We have also highlighted several ways of financing the upgrade and repair of school toilets.

- The National Network for Children has reacted strongly to the trend of saving money from the funds allocated for children at risk. We responded to the intention of the Ministry of Health to redirect the funds allocated for children at risk to blood centres. The savings in the amount of 3.2 million BGN, largely from restructuring and closing childcare institutions for children aged between 0 and 3 years, have not been reinvested to the benefit of children and families at risk but were used to fund other activities of the Ministry.

1.5. Juvenile justice

Last year we continued our work to bring about a reform of child and juvenile justice, which is highly topical at present. The government has launched public consultations concerning the draft action plan for implementation of the Concept for a national policy in the area of child justice, which was adopted last year. The aim of the reform is to ensure that the best interest of children is protected, regardless of whether they are a witness or a victim of crime or are in conflict with the law.

What did we do?

- In the spring the NNC participated in an event dedicated to a discussion of the Concept and the development of an Action Plan for the reform of child justice. At the event initial information was presented about the structure of the plan and the setup of a specialist network of prosecutors from all levels to be tasked with working with children within the system of the Bulgarian Prosecution System. The plan will outline the specific steps to be taken to implement the reform. Respectively, in October the NNC took part in the public discussion, which took place at the time of the formal presentation of the Action Plan.

- Other aspects of child and juvenile crime that NNC focused its attention on include the criminalization of sexual assaults against children via computer systems, the change in the status of schools for children with deviant behaviour (social and instructional boarding and borstal schools) and work with children in the street.

- During the General Assembly of the NNC information about the action plan under development and the specialist network of prosecutors were presented, including Standard for Interviewing Minors and Underage Persons involved in legal proceedings.

- The Network prepared an opinion on the necessity for Bulgaria to sign and ratify the Third Facultative Protocol to the UN Convention on Child Rights, which establishes a procedure for filing complaints in respect of violated children’s rights. During the year the NNC continued its advocacy efforts to ensure ratification of the protocol in the framework of different events and consultative bodies.
2. Campaigns and partnerships

2.1. ‘Golden Apple’ campaign

Awards given by the National Network for Children for contribution to children’s life and well-being

The National Network for Children established the Golden Apple awards in 2011 to encourage organizations and people who contributed to the improvement of Bulgarian children’s life and well-being. There are 8 award categories, including a special award for overall contribution. These are: Fairytale Hero, Journalist, National Politician, Local Politician, Municipality, Hospital, School and Business. In 2011 the special award was presented to Ivan Stancioff and in 2012 to the Peace Corps Volunteer.

The Golden Apple awards have a unique goal – to promote the need for special attention to children and safeguarding their rights by encouraging good practices in all areas related to children and families. The awards are an incentive for institutions to place children in the focus of their work and demonstrate the possibilities available to everyone to contribute to the causes of children.

For a second year the ceremony took place at the State Puppet Theatre, which provided the venue, equipment and the work of its entire staff free of charge. The event was hosted by the actress Silvia Lulcheva. The main sponsor of the event was Mobilitel, which has supported the NNC as a partner in the framework of other projects as well. The cocktail after the ceremony was organised by Party Service with the support of Coca Cola HBC Bulgaria and Villa Lyubimets. The partners of the event included the Bulgarian Donors Forum and UNICEF Bulgaria. Our media partners were BTV and actualno.com. BTV carried a broadcast of the awards free of charge for a month and the website actualno.com provided us with a platform to tell the stories of some of those who received nominations in the Fairytale Hero category.

In the Journalist category the award went to the Darik Radio duo Nina Alexandrova and Prolet Velkova for their tireless efforts to report all problems of children.

The award in the Local Politician category went to Georgi Georgiev, Mayor of Tundzha Municipality, and in the National Politician category – to Milena Damyanova, Deputy Minister of Education.

The awards in the remaining categories went to:

School – Pencho Rachov Slaveykov Primary School, Burgas
Hospital – Child Surgery Clinic of Saint George General Hospital, Plovdiv
Municipality – Svishtov
Business – Piraeus Bank Bulgaria for its support for the Blagodetel Programme of UNICEF

In February 2013 the nominations for the 2013 Golden Apple Awards will be opened.
2.2. „The need for new school toiles – big or small?”

**70% OF PUPILS AVOID SCHOOL TOILETS**

Most Bulgarian pupils spend between 5 and 7 hours at school each day without using the toilets not for any other reason but due to there being no running water, toilet paper, soap, doors that do not close and ... the questionable standard of cleanliness. Yet toilets offer plentiful opportunities to engage in all those things that school rule-books prohibit as teachers are unwilling to set foot in them (they often have separate toilets, which look rather differently to put it mildly).

**THE NEED FOR NEW SCHOOLS TOILETS – BIG OR SMALL?**

Medical research conducted by the World Toilet Organization indicates that the poor condition of school toilets presents very serious for the health of children. The harmful habit of pupils to hold their urge to use the toilet causes dehydration (as children refrain from drinking water in school) and chronic constipation and may later result in a number of disorders of the secretion system, including colon cancer – Bulgaria holds the EU record for number of patients with colon cancer under the age of 35!

**HOW LONG CAN YOU HOLD IT?**

The NNC has three goals which implementation will contribute to the improvement of the condition of school toilets:

- Adoption by the Ministry of Education of a standard for school restrooms, which ensures that toilets are useable.
- Allocation of funds for renovation and maintenance of the toilets so that they have hot water, soap and toilet paper.
- Raise the awareness of pupils that school toilets are to be taken care of.

On 19 November, International Toilet Day, an event was organised in front of the Ministry of Education during which pupils were giving out flyers rolled as toilet paper and invited passers-by to vote on whether school restrooms should have normal or squatting toilets. Many – pupils and their parents – stopped by and said that school restrooms continue to be a nagging problem. The event was broadcast by all national media, including the Bulgarian National Radio, Darik Radio and more than 45 news websites.

More information is available here: [www.facebook.com/toaletni](http://www.facebook.com/toaletni)
Partnerships with businesses

2.3. Mobiltel – „Foster a child. Create a future“

Since the end of 2011 the National Network for Children has worked together with Mobiltel, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), the State Child Protection Agency and the Bulgarian Donor’s Forum on the implementation of the project “Foster a Child. Create a Future”. Its principal objective was to promote and support foster care in Bulgaria.

In the framework of the project a nationwide awareness campaign was implemented, which presents foster care whilst aiming to motivate more families to foster and look after a child in a family environment.

The Goodwill Ambassadors for the Foster a Child. Create a Future project are the little performers from the Bon-Bon band, who dedicated their new song Hymn to Children to the noble initiative.

There are 100 foster families, which receive additional monthly financial support of 100 BGN from Mobiltel under the “Foster a Child. Create a Future” project. They look after children aged between 2 months and 16 years. Seven of the children have disabilities and seven families are looking after siblings.

The National Network for Children is providing consultancy assistance to the partners and liaises with the foster families.

2.4. Samsung Electronics – Trends of Tomorrow

More than 13 000 young people participated in an initiative launched by Samsung Electronics which enabled them to join a programme for career guidance of schoolchildren called Trends of Tomorrow – a part of the Hope for Youth global initiative. The National Network for Children was a part of the campaign whose aim was to encourage the development of young people in Bulgaria, support them in their choice of career and facilitate their first steps in their chosen profession. The mobile team of Samsung and the NNC visited 10 schools in Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna.
2.5. Postbank – a Strong Start

In November 2011 Postbank launched the seventh edition of its Strong Start with Post bank programme. Schoolchildren from all parts of Bulgaria were invited to participate in the debate on the future of Bulgaria and share their views on topical issues by writing an essay dedicated to “My strong start for Bulgaria begins with ….” The initiative ended in March 2012 with the first youth road map setting out specific proposals for the development of our country. The programme was implemented in partnership with the Paydeya Foundation, the National Network for Children, the Bulgarian Donor Forum, the Parents Association and the news website vesti.bg.

2.6. Donor projects

In December 2012 the National Network for Children conducted a survey on the attitude to supporting child-related causes. The main goal of the project was to assess the attitudes and practices in the area of corporate social responsibility as understood by companies in the context of child-related causes. The survey received financial support from the Velux Foundation within the partnership project “Steps to Independence” of the National Network for Children and SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria.

2.7. External communications

In 2012 the National Network for Children continued to act as the main Bulgarian institution actively engaged in giving wide publicity to topics and news related to children.

The website www.nmd.bg

The NNC website received more than 15 300 unique hits each month, which makes it a visible source of information about child and family issues in Bulgaria.

The newsletter

The newsletter published by the National Network for Children reaches more than 5 000 subscribers, including non-governmental organisations, public institutions, business organisations, schools, municipalities etc. Each month it is also published in English and sent to more than 300 international partners of the Network. Everyone can subscribe for the newsletter on the NNC webpage www.nmd.bg.

Social media

At the end of 2012 the NNC Facebook site was being followed by 9 500 social media users of whom more than one-third actively commented on the issues raised by the NNC. The Network is actively developing the content of its Facebook page by posting questions and commentaries on topical events relating to its work and generally child and family issues – www.facebook/nmdbg.
3. Child participation

Why child participation?

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child stipulates: “Every child has the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child shall be given due weight”. It is important to ensure that each child can participate in the process of making decisions on matters that affect them, express their views and have those views taken into consideration. This is the only way to ensure that the decisions we make on child well-being are in line with their own views and perceptions.

The actual process of expressing views and involvement in decision-making is particularly important for the development of children and young people. It allows them to learn to formulate and express their own opinions, take part in the processes that affect them and, most importantly, take responsibility for their own life. Moreover, this process is essentially one that teaches them how important their participation in public and social life and the responsibility of each individual are.

In this sense, child participation is a particularly important part of the work of the National Network for Children as it enables our efforts to ensure the safeguarding of children’s rights and well-being, which lie at the heart of our mission, to remain adequate and in line with current trends and developments.

3.1. Youth Group Megaphon

The NNC has supported the establishment and development of the Megaphon Youth Group, which brings together more than 70 children and young people with whom the members of the Network work. The idea underlying the Megaphon Youth Group is to act as a platform for discussion of the work carried out by the NNC, on one hand, and allow children to raise their own concerns, on the other hand. Megaphone is actively engaged in a number of activities carried out by the NCC.

3.2. Child participation in the Network’s General Assembly

By way of tradition, during the NNC General Assembly a child assembly took place in parallel. It was attended by 25 children and young people, who joined the work of the General Assembly and provoked adult participants with the issue of their right to participation. A final press conference of the children was organised, which enabled adults to pose questions and hear their views.
3.3. Camp for child participation

In September a children’s camp was organised in Topolovgrad, which brought together 20 children and young people from 9 organisations nationwide, in order to help them learn more about the National Network for Children and ask them how, in their opinion, they could become engaged in its work. Those who attended the camp also joined the Megaphon Youth Group.

3.4. Campaigns

Megaphon takes part in and conducts campaigns dedicated to different issues. The members of the youth group were involved in the planning and later took part in a flash mob dedicated to the anniversary of the signature of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Young people went circled Sofia’s Slaveykov Square with adhesive tape fixed onto their mouths symbolically inviting passing adults to allow their voice to be heard. Passers-by were also invited to leave a message on a special banner.
4. Network development

4.1. Training events and the SDOC Project

In 2012, the Strengthening and Development Organizations’ Capacity – SDOC programme was implemented, which presented opportunities to receive training and consultations to Network members. Twenty-four organisations, which are members of the NNC, took part in the programme. Each organisation participating in the programme had a task of developing an action plan in a specific area. For this purpose, it could use consultations from the trainers. The programme helped many participants address internal organisational issues and find support for their initiatives.

4.2. Thematic working groups (TWG)

Thematic Working Groups create possibilities for exchange, sharing and mutual learning in different areas. In 2012, two meetings within each of the four TWG took place, which were attended by approximately 50 organisations participating in the Network. The aim of TWG meetings is the dissemination of good practices and identification of critical problems in the area of work with children and families. The principal areas of work of TWGs are set out below:

- **Family**
  The Family Group is concerned with the policies and practices relating to children placed in the system of childcare – children’s homes, deinstitutionalization, foster care, prevention of abandonment etc. Its members include 53 organisations participating in the Network.

- **Education**
  The Education Group discusses all problems relating to child education – from the earliest stages up until tertiary education. The group deliberates on issues such as nursery and school education, dropping out of school and access to education, inclusive education for children with special educational needs etc. Its members include 58 organisations participating in the Network.

- **Health**
  The members of the health group exchange information and discuss all policies and practices relating to the access to outpatient and hospital care, child and mother health, mental health, health and sexual education etc. It has 28 member organisations.

- **Juvenile justice**
  The members of the Juvenile Justice Group include organisations that work with child witnesses or victims of crimes, children in conflict with the law and is also concerned with issues such as neglect and abuse of children, children in the streets etc. It has 22 member organisations.

Every member organization could participate in one or more TWG based on own assessment.

On a regular basis, the Secretariat provides the TWG with information in the identified areas of work.
4.3. Cooperation between municipalities and NGOs

One of the main priorities in the work of the NNC is work dedicated to the improvement of cooperation between municipalities and the local civil society sector and the development of local capacity for better policies and practices for children at local level. Partnership between municipalities and non-governmental organisations is an essential enabler for the provisions of grass root child and family services of a high standard of quality.

In 2012 the NNC supported several working visits of representatives from four Bulgarian municipalities in the French Departments Nord and Rhona during which practices for the participation of civil organisations in the process of planning of social policies and the provision of social services were presented.

In June 2012 a working meeting and a forum dedicated to good cooperation between municipalities and non-governmental organisations took place. The forum, which took place on 12 June at the Residence of the French Ambassador and brought together more than 20 municipalities and non-governmental organisations, was hosted by the Ambassador of the French Republic.

In October 2012 the NNC was invited to organise a forum within the framework of the Annual Meeting of Local Authorities. During the event several practices for successful cooperation between municipalities and NGOs as well as viewpoints of the recipients of social services were presented.

On 7 December, a three-year cooperation agreement between the NNC and the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria (NAMB) was signed. Cooperation between the two networks aims to improve interaction between municipalities and non-governmental organisations with a view to ensuring better services for children in the areas of education, healthcare and social services.
5. International relations

The National Network for Children participates actively in various international activities by using opportunities for experience and information exchange, by developing its international contacts and by providing its members with the opportunity to participate in different meetings and events.

5.1. Hosting the Annual Eurochild Conference

Since 2009 the National Network for Children has been a member of the European child network (www.eurochild.org). This means that the Network has direct access to information and presentations at European and international level, which it uses as an opportunity to disseminate information about developments that affect children in Bulgaria. Since June 2011 Georgi Bogdanov, the Executive Director of the Network, has been a member of the Management Board of Eurochild. This recognition comes on the heels of the overall efforts of the National Network for Children in recent years to place children’s interests in the focus of public and political attention in Bulgaria.

“...The EU Structural Funds can and must be used to boost deinstitutionalization reform. Here we are not talking only about the closure of homes but rather about the prevention of abuse and neglect of children by reforming the systems of education, healthcare and social services. Deinstitutionalization means alternative services for children that meet a high quality standard.”

Maria Herzog, Eurochild President and Member of the UN Child Rights Committee

In 2012 the Eurochild Annual Conference took place in Bulgaria, an event co-organised and hosted by the National Network for Children. The conference was dedicated to the Promotion of Children’s Rights in Alternative Forms of Care in Europe. The event brought together more than 200 representatives of organisations working with children from all parts of Europe. The conference speakers included Kristalina Georgieva, the EU Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Tsetska Tsatcheva, Chairwoman of the National Parliament and Carsten Rasmussen, an official of DG REGIO at the European Commission and Deputy head of Department I2 for Bulgaria. Rosen Plevnenliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, hosted a reception for the delegates at Lozenets Residence. The conference was of crucial significance for raising awareness of a number of issues relating to the removal of children from institutions and the development of working alternative services for children deprived of parental care.
At the end of 2012, the NNC became the national partner of Eurochild in the preparation of the European-wide campaign for
dehinstitutionalization and advocacy for the use of EU funds in the process.
The NNC participated in the exchange organised by Eurochild dedicated to “Early intervention and prevention in support of families”. The practice of Habitat Bulgaria was selected as one of the four participants in the exchange, along with projects from Northern Ireland, Wales and Poland. It was later included in a publication presenting inspiring practices, which was published on the website of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.

5.2. Partnership with networks for children from Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and France

In 2012 the PROCOPIL (meaning For the Child in Romanian) programme was closed, which the NNC coordinated for Bulgaria during the last 6 years. PROCOPIL brings together networks of non-governmental organisations working with children and families in Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and France. The programme enabled the exchange and transfer of good practices in different areas of the work with children and families – cooperation at local level, professionalization of social work etc. PROCOPIL further helped the development of the international partnerships of the Network, which have remained sustainable after the closure of the programme.

Closing events took place in all countries, which participated in the programme. During the closing event in France, which took place at the Town Hall of Paris, the participants signed an agreement for cooperation in the next three years.

5.3. ChildPact

The National Network for Children was also involved and became a part of the establishment of ChildPact – a network of children from the Black Sea region. The NNC hosted the meeting in September during which the child networks of Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia signed a pact for cooperation.

The main goal of the association is to protect the rights of children in the region, strengthen the role of the non-governmental sector for active participation in child policies and improve cooperation with the authorities at European and local level. ChildPact will work and actively co-operate with the Organisation for Black Sea Economic Co-operation (OBSEC).

The association will be chaired on a rotational basis by each country for a period of six months. The first selected chairperson was Sasha Stefanovic from the Serbian Children Network OpenClub. His deputies will be the chairs of the Albanian and Armenian networks.

"We come together to co-operate with public authorities and politicians from the region, because children need the concerted efforts of adults. Our goal is to raise awareness of and put child-related topics on the top of the agenda every day."

Georgi Bogdanov, NNC
6. The Network

6.1. Network Structure

As at December 2012 the National Network for Children had a membership of 111 non-governmental organisations working with children and families. They constitute the General Assembly of the Network, which is responsible for adopting the main decisions of the organisation.

6.2. Management and Controlling Board

The NNC has a Managing Board of seven member organisations elected by the General Assembly. Each organisation has one representative on the Board. The Managing Board supports, consults and monitors the work of the Secretariat.

Network’s Managing Board members

- Nevena Madzharova, Club of Non-profit Organizations – Targovishte – President of the Management Board
- Gantcho Iliev, World without Boundaries – Stara Zagora – member of the Management Board
- Mariana Nikolova, ‘Karin dom’ Foundation – Varna – member of the Management Board
- David Bisset, Equilibrium Association – Rousse – member of the Management Board
- Dr. Radosveta Stamenkova, Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association – Sofia – member of the Management Board
- Iva Boneva, Center for Inclusive Education – Sofia – member of the Management Board
- Mariana Evtimova, Pulse Foundation – Pernik – member of the Management Board

The NNC has a Supervisory Board whose role is to monitor and supervise the financial transactions of the organisation.
6.3. Secretariat

During the last year, in relation with the growing number of tasks, the Network Secretariat was extended. Currently it has 11 members and every one of them is responsible for particular aspects of the Network activities.

George Bogdanov, Executive Director, Dani Koleva, Programme Director, Vyara Ivanova, Family & Child Justice Policy Coordinator, Mariana Bancheva, Education & Health Policy Coordinator, Ana Kolarova, Fundraising Director, Ivo Bozhkov, External Communications Coordinator, Maria Brestnichka, Network Coordinator, Marusya Tsvetkova, Project Development Expert, Stanislav Dodov, Child and Youth Participation Coordinator, Hristo Hristev, Office Manager, Lidia Ivanova, Financial Director
6.4. Strategic plan

In 2012 the new strategy of the National Network for Children for the next three-year period from 2013 until 2015 was adopted. The Strategy was approved by the General Assembly on 10 June 2012 following in-depth discussions. For the period 2010–2013, the National Network for Children has a three-year strategy. Based on it, on an annual basis the Network’s Secretariat develops Operational plan that is then approved by the Management Board. The plan sets the tasks for the respective year.

The following priorities are set in the strategy of the Network:

1. **Enhancing Network’s capacity**
   - Enrolment of members and supporters
   - Support for Network’s members
   - Coordination of the thematic working groups activities
   - Organizing General Assembly
   - Development of international links
   - Obtaining financial stability
   - Strengthening member organization’s and Network’s team capacity

2. **Advocating and lobbying for effective planning, development and implementation of state child and family policy**
   - Participation in all activities to develop and implement child and family policies
   - Establishment and functioning of a working group “Child policy development”
   - Building efficient cooperation and team-work with other national networks in order to achieve maximum outcomes in child and family policies
   - Enhancing professional capacity of professionals working with children to implement principles to ensure children’s rights and their best interest

3. **Focusing public attention on important issues for children and families**
   - Creating and maintaining regular information bulletins;
   - Updating the webpage of the Network;
   - Developing and maintaining an online communication strategy;
   - Holding the annual Golden Apple award ceremony dedicated to the rights of children and the work of journalists, politicians and institutions in this area.

You could find the whole text of Network’s strategy together with the respective operational plans on our website [www.nmd.bg](http://www.nmd.bg).
7. Funding and report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTIONS, GROUPS, ARTICLES</td>
<td>BGN/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Non-current assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Tangible assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Equipment and other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for group II</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for section B</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Current assets</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Receivables</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Receivables from clients and suppliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for group III</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Cash, including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cash in hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cash with bank</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Bank deposits</td>
<td>233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for group IV</td>
<td>341</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for section C</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Prepaid expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS (B+C+D)</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: 31.01.2013

Simeon Borisov,
Accountant

George Bogdanov,
Executive director

Svetlana Pavlova, CPA
Registered Auditor, Date of the audit report: 31.01.2013
INCOME STATEMENT
NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CHILDREN ASSOCIATION
for the year ended 31 December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Cost</th>
<th>BGN/1000</th>
<th></th>
<th>Name of Revenue</th>
<th>BGN/1000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Previous</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Operating expenses</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td>I. Operating Income</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Expenditure on regulated activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. Revenue from regulated activities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Donations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Revenue from grants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Other expenses</td>
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<td>230</td>
<td>3. Membership fee</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Total A:</td>
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<td>4. Other income</td>
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<td>345</td>
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<td>B. Administrative costs</td>
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<td>Total A:</td>
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<td>355</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for group I</td>
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<td>398</td>
<td>Total for group I</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>355</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Financial expenses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>II. Financial revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Other financial expenses</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5. Interests income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for group II</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Total for group II</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Total cost</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>Total (V):</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>355</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI. Result</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>(44)</td>
<td>Total (V):</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: 31.01.2013

Simeon Borisov, Accountant

George Bogdanov, Executive director

Svetlana Pavlova, CPA
Registered Auditor, Date of the audit report: 31.01.2013
Network Members

Blagoevgrad region
Community Council of Education – Gotse Delchev
Burgas region
The Faithful Steward’ Association – Burgas
‘Demetra’ Association – Burgas
‘Integra’ Association
‘Regional Roma Alliance’ Association – Burgas
‘Smile’ Association – Burgas
Varna region
Association of parents of children with dyslexia – Varna
‘Gavroche’ Association – Varna
‘Eurointegration’ Association
‘Karin dom’ Foundation – Varna
National alliance for social responsibility – Varna
‘Joy for our Children’ Foundation – Varna
‘Sauchasti’ Association - Varna
‘Colourful Future Association’, Varna
Veliko Tarnovo region
Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance
‘Amalipe’ – Veliko Tarnovo
Vratsa region
‘1st of June’ Association – Byala Slatina
‘Science and Technics Centre’ Association – Vratsa
‘Fresh Start’ Association – Hayredin village
School board of trustees of Hristo Botev general school – Tarnava village
Dobrich region
IMKA Association, Dobrich
‘Helping Hand’ Foundation – Dobrich
Kyrdzhali region
‘Initiative for Development – Kyrdzhali Decides’ Association – Kyrdzhali
Kyustendil region
Parental board of trustees of Day Kindergarten
‘Kalina’ – Dupnitsa
Lovetch region
‘Ecomission 21st Century’ Association – Lovetch
Montana region
Community Council on Education – Berkovitsa
Sham Foundation – Montana
Pazardzhik region
‘Future’ Foundation – Rakitovo
Crime Prevention Fund IGA – Pazardzhik
‘Social Practices in the Community’ Foundation – Pazardzhik
‘Development’ Association – Rakitovo
Pernik region
Pulse Foundation – Pernik
Pleven region
‘Community Centers’ Public Fund of Pleven – Pleven
Plovdiv region
‘Big Brother, Big Sister’ Association – Plovdiv
National Alliance for Volunteer Action – Plovdiv
Razgrad region
Janeta’ Association – Razgrad
‘Integro’ Association – Razgrad
Youth Forum 2001 – Razgrad
Ruse region
‘Equilibrium’ Association – Ruse
‘Caritas – Rousse’ Foundation – Ruse
Open Society Club – Ruse
Dynamika Centre, Ruse
Silistra region
‘Ekaterina Karavelova’ Women Association – Silistra
‘Hope for a Good Future’ Association – Silistra
Sliven region
Society for Support for Children and Adults with Mental, Physical and Sensor Disabilities ‘Saint Stilian Child Protector’, Sliven
‘Roma Health’ Foundation – Sliven
Roma Academy for Culture and Education
Sofia City region
‘Agapeadia – Bulgaria’ Foundation
‘Alpha Club – to Survive’ Association
Association of Kindergarten and School Psychological Healthcare Professionals in Bulgaria
‘Roditeli’ Association
Bulgarian Association of Adopted and Adopters
Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association
‘Bulgarian Child’ Foundation
Bulgarian National Committee ‘Together for the Children’
Bulgarian Training Center
‘Child and Space’ Association
‘Children and Adolescents’ Association
‘Evrika’ Foundation
‘Ecip’ Foundation
‘Estestveno’ Association
‘Teach for Bulgaria’ Foundation
‘For our Children’ Foundation
‘Health and Social Development’ Foundation
‘Ethnic Minorities Health Problems’ Foundation
Parents’ Initiative Committee
Social Activities and Practices Institute
‘Lions Club Cyber Vitosha Net’ Association
‘Hope for the little ones’ Foundation
Bulgarian National Scout Organization
National School Eco-Parliament
National Foster Care Association
‘Society for all’ Association
‘Paideia’ Foundation
‘Partners – Bulgaria’ Foundation
‘Human Rights’ Project
‘Applied Research and Communications’ Foundation
‘Friends 2006’ Foundation
‘Reachout’ Association
Progressive and Open Communication Association
‘Cedar’ Foundation
‘Step for Bulgaria’ Foundation
‘Step by step’ Foundation
Theatre and Social Formation ‘Theatre Flower’
‘Freerun Bulgaria’ Association
Association for Pedagogical and Social Assistance
FICE Bulgaria
Worldwide Foundation for Vulnerable Children /
Worldwide Orphans Foundation
‘Centre Nadya’ Foundation
Centre for Inclusive Education
Centre for Psychosocial Support
Amici dei Bambini, Sofia Branch
Habitat for Humanity
Outward Bound Bulgaria
SOS Kinderdorf – Bulgaria
Sofia region
‘Towards a Better Life’ Association – Chelopech
‘Choice for Tomorrow’ Association, Botevgrad
Stara Zagora region
‘Future for the Children with Disabilities’ Association – Kazanlak
‘Reborn Sparkle’ Community Centre – Kazanlak
‘Clovers’ Association – Chirpan
National Association of Resource Teachers – Stara Zagora
‘Friends 2011’ Association - Chirpan
‘Samaritans’ Association – Stara Zagora
World without Boundaries’ Association – Stara Zagora
Targovishte region
‘Naya’ Association, Targovishte
Club of Nonprofit Organizations – Targovishte
Haskovo region
Community Centers’ Association – Dimitrovgrad
‘Children and Families’ Association – Haskovo
‘Give a Smile’ Foundation – Dimitrovgrad
Shumen region
‘SOS Women and Children survived violence’ Association – Novi Pazar
Association of Roma Women ‘Hayatchi’ – Novi Pazar
Yambol region
‘People ill of asthma’ Foundation – Yambol
Bolyarovo Municipal School Trust Fund
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