



OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

Strengthening families. Ending institutional care.

Opening Doors for Europe's Children
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Hope & Homes for Children

eurochild



MDRI-S



ODS
MRETA ORGANIZACIJA ZA DECU I ODRASLE



COMMISSIONER
FOR PROTECTION
OF EQUALITY

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Across Europe, hundreds of thousands of children are growing up in institutional care. The consequences are devastating for children, for their families and ultimately, for society as a whole. Most children growing up in institutions have low educational achievement and suffer severe delays in their physical, cognitive and emotional development. Many of these children will fall victim to trafficking, exploitation, unemployment, homelessness and depression on leaving the care system. Majority of children with disabilities placed in residential institutions will spend their whole life there.

The goal of our advocacy campaign **Opening Doors for Europe's Children** is to improve the quality of life of children and young people in, at risk of entering, or leaving alternative care across Europe by promoting **deinstitutionalization** reforms. We believe that comprehensive transformations of children's services need to take place in order to guarantee every child a better life.

In our definition, deinstitutionalization primarily aims at:

- Decreasing reliance on institutional and residential care with a complementary increase in family- and community-based care and services;
- Preventing separation of children from their parents by providing adequate support to children, families and communities;
- Preparing the process of leaving care, ensuring social inclusion for care leavers and a smooth transition towards independent living.

Opening Doors for Europe's Children, which is coordinated by *Eurochild* and *Hope and Homes for Children*, is taking place in 13 European countries and includes organizations and networks of organizations for children from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

In **Serbia**, we aim to:

- contribute to continual process of deinstitutionalization of children, especially children from the most vulnerable groups, through promoting equality, establishing sustainable system of local support services, implementation of inclusive education and strengthening families;
- ensure that the funds from the EU Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA) are used for development of local support services in order to prevent further institutionalization and ensure community living for children.

With these goals in mind, we invite:

- decision-makers and international donors to **end further investments in institutions**, their renovations or building of new institutions, because it sustains the circle of poverty and social exclusion of children and young people in Serbia.
- decision-makers to work on gradual **introduction of admission ban** in institutions and work on development of family-based or family-like services for children.
- decision-makers, international organizations, national civil society organizations, families of children with disabilities **to support the process of deinstitutionalization** and work together on creating conditions for family-based support.

In Serbia, advocacy campaign **Opening Doors for Europe's Children** is coordinated by **Mental Disability Rights Initiative MDRI-S**. National partner is Network of CSOs for Children of Serbia (MODS) coordinates in Serbia.

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