

Annex 2

Children's rights: History and dates

The history of children's rights confirms that they have become a fact (as a social phenomenon and recognition) thanks to the efforts of many people, organizations and movements. In the 20th century, a new culture for the rights of children presents /treats them as equal human beings with not only their duties but also rights and responsibilities.

What are children's rights?

Children's rights consist of fundamental guarantees and basic human rights.

Children's rights are fundamental human rights which recognize and guarantee children the right to life, non-discrimination, and dignity, ensured through the protection of physical and mental integrity (protection against slavery, torture, etc.)

Children have the same rights as adults: civil and political (right to identity, nationality, etc.); economic, social and cultural (such as the right to education, a satisfactory standard of living, health, etc.).

Children have both individual (to live with their parents, to education, to protection, etc.) and collective rights (as a part of specific groups of children - refugees, children with disabilities, children from minorities, incl. indigenous children in some countries).

A brief history of the international movement for the rights of the child over the years

- In the 16th century, the theologian Martin Luther and the educator Jan Amos Comenius (his follower) defended the idea that "school should be the right of every child."
- From the end of 18th century, there was a growing awareness of the need to look at children's rights differently.
- Disadvantaged children (without parents, without a home, etc.) began to attract public attention. In 1741, the first institution for orphans was opened in London, and a few decades later (in 1796) the English radical politician Thomas Spence wrote the book *The Rights of Young Children*. This is the first modern protection of children's natural rights in England.

In France, legislation from 1841 paid special attention to the protection of children in their workplace, and in 1881 a legal regulation of the right of children to education came into force.

- In the early 19th century, Lord Shaftesbury began a vigorous campaign in England against child labor.
- The early 19th century was the beginning of the Children's Rights Movement in the United States, which had two priorities: separate justice for children from that of adults and protection of children in the workplace. In accordance with the first priority, in 1899 the Juvenile justice court began to function, which is proof of "the distinction between the rights of children and those of adults."

- 1900 The book by Ellen Key *The Century of the Child* is published in Sweden. It defends the right of the child to be a child, to grow up “in a world which is absolutely wonderful“, to non-violent upbringing, to self-development, while the role of the adults is to help him/her understand “his/her place in the great process of life, and his/her responsibility to all the events around.
- 1914-1918 г. - World War I
- 1917 - Declaration of Children’s Rights produced by Proletkult following the Russian Revolution. Proletcult united about 100 local organizations with approximately 80,000 members by 1920. It adopted its Declaration of the Rights of the Child which "ensures that children can choose their form of education, their religion" and that they could even leave their parents (if they chose to)".
- 1919 - Polish paediatrician and educationalist Janusz Korczak wrote about children’s rights in his book *How to Love a Child*. The book was later renamed *The Right of the Child to Respect* (1929). Korczak's ideas became widely known and became the basis of the Geneva Declaration. We are also rediscovering them in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1924 г. - Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Declaration of Geneva) was adopted by The League of Nations in 1924 (focused on care and protection)
- 1939-1945 г. - World War II
- 1945 - 50 nations form the United nations
- 1948 –UDHR / amended form of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child’ adopted by UN.
- 1959 -1959 - The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted unanimously by the participants in the General Assembly of the United Nations (representatives of 78 countries). The declaration was extended to 10 principles or groups of rights to include special treatment, education and care for children with disabilities, as well as the rights to play and recreation. The focus was not only on the child's needs for material security but also his natural need for love and understanding. Children were no longer an object of rights that "must ... receive ..." (according to the Geneva Declaration of 1924), but a subject of rights.
- 1978 г. - Polish delegation to the 34th session of the UN Commission tabled a motion that the UN should adopt a convention on the rights of the child (previous attempt was in 1959).
- 1979 –UN proclaimed the International Year of the Child.
- 1989 г. - UNCRC ratified. On 20 November 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the final text of the document by an absolute majority. This is the most complete document in the field of children's rights with the force of international law. With the adoption of the Convention, the rights of the child become law.
- 1990 - UNCRC brought into force. The UNCRC contains 54 Articles; 1-42 are about the rights and freedoms of children and young people. The UNCRC is applicable from birth to 18 (in Scotland this is extended to 21 for children or young people who have been looked after).