



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
GENEVA

Ref. No. 6170.7(30th)/103/2051

NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's Note Verbale, dated 25 September 2015, has the honour to attach herewith the information provided by the Ministry of Health regarding preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern.

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

AA



Geneva, 23 December 2015

To: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

M. Imma Guerras-Delgado,
Advisor on Child Rights

registry@ohchr.org
iguerras-delgado@ohchr.org

Att.: 7 pages

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
GENERAL DIRECTION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH &
HEALTH SERVICES
DIRECTION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

EXTR.URGENT

Athens, 16/12/2015

TO: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D4 Direction for Human Rights
3, Akadimias str.
Athens, 10671

SUBJECT: «Resolution 27/14 of the HRC and related questionnaire – Provision of child mortality for children below five years old, as a matter of human rights»

Please be advised of the following:

In the framework of its authorities, our Service operates with the purpose of protecting and promoting public health, acknowledging the right of the entire population and especially the children in health, as this is designated in the following provisions:

A. Constitution

Part two-Individual and social rights

Article 5: (Free development of the personality, personal freedom) Paragraph 5. All persons have the right to the protection of their health and of their genetic identity. Matters relating to the protection of every person against biomedical interventions shall be specified by law. Article 21: (Protection of the family, marriage, motherhood and childhood, rights of persons with disabilities). Paragraph 3. The State shall care for the health of citizens and shall adopt special measures for the protection of youth, old age, disability and for the relief of the needy.

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ, ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ
ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ
REPUBLIQUE HELLENIQUE, MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES
SERVICE DE TRADUCTION
HELLENIC REPUBLIC, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
TRANSLATION SERVICE

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 2)

B. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Civil Rights (Law 1532/1985, GG A 25). Article 12.

C. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007/C303/01), Article 35 «Protecting Health».

D. International Convention of the Rights of the Child, Law 2101/92 (GG iss.A 192), Article 23.

In this context, our Service recommends and applies provisions of laws, policies and programmes.

In particular:

1. To decrease the infant and child mortality

Taking into consideration the related Decision of the Plenary Session of KESY (Central Health Council), the recognized rights in health and the necessity of further improvement of perinatal care services in the country, our Service recommended the stipulation of a provision of law on the improvement of perinatal care, which was passed by the Parliament (article 2 of Law 4316/2014 «foundation of an observatory of dementia, improvement of perinatal care, regulations of matters of the Ministry of Health authority and other provisions» GG 270 iss.A).

In particular, the provision of law provides for the stipulation of:

- Perinatal Centres
- Plain, Intermediate and Increased Care of Newborns
- The Required monitoring of high risk pregnancy and required conducting of high risk labours in Perinatal Centres
- The development of public Perinatal Centres in all Healthcare Regions and their interconnection with all the health units of the Healthcare Region
- The preparation of a five-years National Action Plan, the formation of a mechanism to monitor the perinatal care and the establishment in the CHC of a durable Committee on Perinatal Care.

All above measures aim at providing effective and qualitative services of perinatal

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 3)

care to all pregnant women, women who recently gave birth and newborns according to their health condition and regardless of the place of residence, the financial condition or other social-economic boundaries.

At the same time, our Service, having regard to the recommendation of the National Committee on Breastfeeding for institutionalizing special breastfeeding places, the benefits of breastfeeding in health and economy, the effect of breastfeeding on the health inequality decrease, as well as the low rates of breastfeeding in our country, recommended the stipulation of a provision of law on the Promotion of Breastfeeding, which was passed by the Parliament (article 3, Law 4316/2014 on the «establishment of an observatory of dementia, improvement of perinatal care, regulations of issues of the Ministry of Health authority and other provisions») (GG 270 iss.A).

This provision institutionalizes:

- Breastfeeding places for the public at Work. Such institutions apply already in foreign countries and aim at increasing the possibilities of babies to be breastfed exclusively in the first six months of their life but also to keep breastfeeding for several months. Their institutionalization in our country will promote breastfeeding with benefits for the health, the economy and the society and will practically support the Greek families by strengthening motherhood and childhood. The institutionalization of Breastfeeding Places at Work is anticipated to facilitate the continuation of breastfeeding after the return of working women to work.
- Baby-friendly Hospitals. The institutionalization of Baby-friendly Hospitals will place our country with a relative delay among the other 152 countries that promote the institution. The low number of Hospitals that are accredited as Baby-friendly was a reference in the conclusive remarks of the UN Committee on the rights of children in relation to the progress of the application of the Convention on the Rights of Children in our country (June 2012). The development of such institution is expected to give the chance to a great number of pregnant women

Φ 09222/8218

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 4)

and women who recently gave birth to be informed about and to choose to breastfeed their children for the longest possible period.

- Milk Banks. The institution of Milk Banks is developed in foreign countries and aims at feeding the babies whose mother encounters difficulties in breastfeeding but wish their children to be fed with breast milk. Its institutionalization in our country is expected to facilitate and to extend the provision of breast milk to those cases of children.
- The «Record of Special Assignment Trainers for the Promotion of Breastfeeding». It provides for the definition of the terms and conditions of a Record establishment, the further training of healthcare professionals, the procedures as well as any other detail in relation to the participation thereof in programmes and actions promoting breastfeeding.

Since the 70s, the Ministry of Health has assigned the formation, development of the National Programme of Preventive Control of Newborns in the Institute of the Child Health (EPPEN) (GG 249 iss.A).

The EPPEN has a universal character of application by all the maternity-newborn units, clinics of the country, the Public and Private sector and is conducted in a unified manner in all the newborns in the Greek Territory.

The Programme is an integrated service that includes the tracing of the Phenylketonuria disease, the Congenital Hypothyroidism, Galactosemia and Lack of Glucose – 6 – Phosphate Dehydrogenase – G6PD as well as the confirmation of tracing, the diagnosis, the therapeutic treatment and assessment of the progress of the suffering child, according to the criteria of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the report of the Experts' Committee on the «Newborn screening in Europe Expert Opinion document, Contract number 2009 62 06 of the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers» of the European Union. It also includes general advice and prevention.

2.To decrease the baby and child mortality but also to prevent serious diseases through vaccinations:

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 5)

In Greece, the vaccinations of children are effected according to the National Vaccination Programme of Children and Adolescents, as this is formulated each time by the National Vaccination Committee according to the current epidemiological and other scientific data.

The vaccines included in the National Vaccination Programme are provided at free to all citizens regardless of their economic, social, professional and insurance condition.

Based on the Law 4238/2014, a Primary Health National Network (PEDY) is established in in the National Health System (NHS) that functions in the Directions for Healthcare of the country, through which all citizens are equally provided with services, including the vaccinations, regardless of their economic, social, professional and insurance condition and their place of residence.

The provided services of Primary Healthcare included among others the implementation of vaccination programmes (art.1, par.5, sect.1b).

In application of the foregoing, our Service issued the circular under ref.no. Y1/C.P. oik.100237/18-11-2014 on the vaccination of the needy and uninsured citizens whereby instructions are given to the involved bodies on the way they will provide and prescribe vaccines to the uninsured and needy citizens based on which the following apply:

- **Insured**

The citizens who are insured in some insurance body and the dependent members thereof are entitled to free vaccines according to the National Vaccination Programme, as this is each time formulated by the National Vaccination Committee.

- **Uninsured holding a book of uninsured**

For the uninsured holding a book of uninsured (needy), the provisions of the Joint Ministerial Decision no. 13491/2006 (GG 1747/iss.B) as this was amended and completed by the Joint Ministerial Decision under ref.no. oik. 48985/2014 (GG 1465 iss.B 5-6-2014) apply according to which the needy are entitled to free vaccines in NHS Hospitals and Primary Healthcare Units of the Directions of Healthcare (PEDY).

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 6)

- **Uninsured**

According to the Law 4270/2014 (art.182 sect.e), a pharmaceutical care to the insured that have lost their insurance entitlement and are not entitled to pharmaceutical care services by any social insurance body is provided, whilst by the Joint Ministerial Decision under ref.no. oik. 56432/28-6-2014, the terms and conditions of access to the pharmaceutical care system are provided.

Roma

By the JMD under ref.no. 15422/oik.31022/2.5.2011, the Roma and Vulnerable Groups Support Centres were established with the purpose of providing among others support and social integration services, such as counselling for the integration of the family and especially children in the Greek society, the support and the promotion of the rights of the child and the development of the institutionalized structures of the society (education, sports, culture, creative activity, etc).

Among other services, personalised information is offered for public health issues, access to public services, safeguarding and promotion of health to develop further actions that are each time deemed necessary and provision of the primary healthcare.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for the adequacy of the centres in medical-pharmaceutical coverage. The each time Direction for Healthcare is responsible for the control and the monitoring in issues of its authority.

3.Promoting children's health

The provisions of the Joint Ministerial Decision no. Y1/C.P. 47815 (GG 1478 issue B/2008) apply for the verification of the compliance with the International Code of Trading of Breast Milk Substitute, which is the harmonization of the National Legislation with the Directive 2006/141EC of the European Commission. The provisions of the said JMD indicates that the National Organisations of Medicines ensures the objective and full information on the babies and infants feeding to be used by the families and anyone is involved in the sector of babies and infants feeding in relation to the design, the provisions, the form and the propagation of information and their control. In addition, the NOM verifies that the information and training material, written or audiovisual, are

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ TRADUCTION OFFICIELLE OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

(page 7)

related to the baby feeding and aim at reaching to the pregnant women and mothers of babies and infants, include clear information on the advantages and superiority of breastfeeding, the possible adversarial effects on breastfeeding caused by the introduced partial provision of the feeding bottle, the difficulty of returning to breastfeeding when it has been discontinued and the indicated use of preparations for babies when it is required. In addition, the notice of preparations of first and second babyhood is effected in such a manner to provide the necessary information on a proper use of products and not to discourage breastfeeding.

The daycare and preschools aim, among others, at eliminating as much as possible the differences that may result from the cultural, economic and education level of their parents, to provide children with a day nutrition and care by complying with the hygiene and safety rules (JMD 16065/2002 (GG 497A) «Standard Regulation of Operation of Municipal and Community Legal Entities of Public Law of Daycare and Preschools»).

The monitoring of children's health is a parallel obligation to the respective family obligation, of the legal entity and is effected by a pediatrician, who visits them once per week. A Health Record is kept for each child and it is updated by the doctor. The parents are updated once per month on child health issues.

The safeguarding of children's health is also an obligation and the other personnel of the daycare, who apply properly all the necessary measures of hygiene and safety and is responsible for any negligence or omission that may have an impact on the children's health.

We are at your disposal for any further explanation and information.

F.KALYVA, HEAD OF DIRECTION

Int.distr.:

- 1.Minister's Office
- 2.Deputy Minister's Office
- 3.Secretary General's Office
- 4.Head of General Direction of Public Health
- 5.Direction for Public Health

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ, ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ
ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ
REPUBLIQUE HELLENIQUE, MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES
SERVICE DE TRADUCTION
HELLENIC REPUBLIC, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
TRANSLATION SERVICE