

**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

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R E S O L U T I O N № 373

July 5, 2017

**FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MECHANISM FOR JOINT WORK OF THE INSTITUTIONS
CONCERNING THE TRACKING AND RETAINING OF CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

On the authority of art. 8, par. 3 of the Structural Regulations of the Council of Ministers and its administration

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS RESOLVED:

1. The establishment of a mechanism for joint work of the institutions concerning the tracking¹ and retaining of children of compulsory preschool and school age in the education system.

2. The mechanism of art. 1 comprises of actions pertaining to:

(a) Formation and operation of teams, called "tracking teams", for joint work of the institutions with the purpose to track and retain children of compulsory preschool and school age in the education system.

(b) Creation of rules for the exchange of information between the institutions concerning preschool and school age children who are not enrolled in the education system, who are at risk of dropping out of school, who have left school prematurely, or who cannot be found at their permanent or current address.

(c) Improving the effectiveness of the procedure for the distribution of family benefits and other material allowances according to the individual needs of the preschool and school age children, as well as improving the coordination of the sanctions-imposing mechanism against parents when they fail to fulfill their obligations under the Child Protection Act and Preschool and School Education Act.

¹ The Bulgarian term "обхват" и „обхващам“ is not easy to translate into English. For the proper conveying of the meaning of this term two different words have been used "track" and "enroll," depending on the context. "Enrollment" being an option for translation of the term „обхващам“ is a rather positive or neutral term which does not represent the constricting nature of the intent of the authors of Resolution 373. The verb "обхващам" means "track and enroll at the threat of punishment" especially in the context of the current document.

(d) Establishing of procedures for the provision of information by institutions and joint actions for the imposition of the respective sanctions on those parents whose children of compulsory preschool and school age do not attend school, according to the terms of the Child Protection Act and the Preschool and School Education Act.

3. Tracking teams are formed in every city, town, or village with a school. In cities, towns, or villages with more than one school, more than one team may be formed, according to the determination of the Head of the Regional Office of Education. It is mandatory for the teams to include representatives of the Regional Office of Education, of the institutions in the preschool and school education system, of the respective municipality, of the respective Social Assistance Directorate, and of the respective Regional Directorate/District Department of the Ministry of Interior. Taking into consideration the specifics of the teams' actions, the teams must include also officials of the Regional Employment Bureau, of the Juvenile Delinquency Commission, representatives of the local Committees Against Anti-Social Behavior of Juveniles and Minors, of the regional health inspectorate and other institutions. Upon determination of the institutions involved, other persons, who work with the aforementioned institutions on the tracking, retaining, and integration of preschool and school age children into the education system, may also participate in the teams.

4. The terms and deadlines of formation of the tracking teams are as follows:

(a) By July 31, 2017, the municipal mayors specify the areas of jurisdiction of each team within the territory of their municipality and inform the heads of the Regional Office of Education thereof.

(b) By August 5, 2017, the heads of the Regional Offices of Education submit requests to the municipal mayors on the territory of the respective region, to the Heads of the Regional Directorates of Social Assistance at the Social Assistance Agency, to the Heads of the Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Interior, and to the principals of institutions in the preschool and school education system, in order to appoint participants to the teams. By August 15, 2017, the nominations for team members should be sent to the heads of the Regional Offices of Education; the heads of the Regional Offices of Education nominate their employees as members of the tracking teams. Where necessary, the heads of the institutions, whose representatives are included in the teams, commission members of their own administration to form tracking teams in other communities, where there are no respective government officials for the teams.

(c) By August 18, 2017, and taking into account the nominations of the respective heads of institutions, the heads of the Regional Offices of Education officially appoint the members and the leaders of the tracking teams.

5. The tracking teams carry out the following actions:

(a) Identify children of compulsory preschool and school age, which are not tracked by the education system, and take measures for their tracking.

(b) Identify preschool and school age children who have dropped out of school, and carry out actions for their reintegration into the education system.

(c) Identify preschool and school age children who are at risk of dropping out of school, and carry out measures for their retainment in the education system.

(d) Make a list with measures concerning each child who is identified as unenrolled, dropout, or at risk for dropping out of the education system, and interact with the competent institutions in order to implement a complex approach of various interventions.

(e) Interact with the parents, in order to track, enroll, and retain the preschool and school age children in the education system.

(f) Engage mediators and work with them.

(g) Take measures for general and supplementary support of the children under section (d) in accordance with the government education standard for inclusive education.

(h) Inform the municipal mayors about established failures of parents to fulfill their obligations, with the purpose to impose penalties under art. 347 of Preschool and School Education Act.

6. The identification of the children of compulsory preschool and school age, who are not enrolled in the education system, and the measures for their tracking are to be carried out by means of the following mechanism:

(a) By August 10, 2017, the General Directorate “Civil Registration and Administrative Service” of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (CRAS) must report to the municipalities and the heads of the Regional Offices of Education about the children of compulsory preschool and school age who are subject to be tracked by the education system.

(b) By August 18, 2017, the heads of the Regional Offices of Education provide the tracking teams with the information received from CRAS about the school age children whose permanent or current address are within their area of jurisdiction.

(c) By August 31, 2017, and on the basis of the information from CRAS, the municipal mayors are to make a list of the children of compulsory preschool and school age, who were not enrolled in preschool or school on the territory of the respective municipality during the previous year, and submit the information to the tracking teams, according to their area of jurisdiction and the permanent or current address of the preschool and school age children.

(d) The tracking teams take measures about the tracking of the children, who were not registered during the previous year, by visiting their homes and holding conversations with their parents in order to enroll the children in school or kindergarten, by working with mediators and the local communities, by recommending to the competent institutions that they take additional joint measures, including the imposition of penalties by the competent bodies for the failure of the parents to keep their obligations under the Child Protection Act and the Preschool and School Education Act, as well as the suspension of welfare payments and distribution of products under the Family Allowances for Children Act.

(e) By September 30, 2017, and by December 20, 2017, the principals of the schools and kindergartens enter in the preschool and school education database system information about the children who are enrolled in their respective institutions.

(f) By October 20, 2017, the heads of the Regional Offices of Education must make inquiries in the information system and prepare lists of the preschool and school age children, who attended school or kindergarten during the previous year, but have not been enrolled during the current school year (with the exception of the students who graduated from 12th grade), and submit the lists to the municipal mayors.

(g) By October 25, 2017, and by February 23, 2018, the municipal mayors submit the information to the tracking team, taking into account their respective areas of jurisdiction and the permanent or current address of the preschool and school age children.

(h) The teams take measures for tracking the children who are not registered in school or kindergarten during the current school year, by visiting their homes and holding conversations with their parents in order to enroll the children in school or kindergarten, including through the involvement of mediators; the teams recommend additional measures to the competent institutions in order to offer a complex approach, including the imposition of sanctions by the competent bodies on those parents who have failed to fulfill their obligations under the Child Protection Act and the Preschool and School Education Act.

(i) The teams prepare a list of the children, who are not found at their permanent or current address within a period of 10 days, and submit it to the heads of the Regional Office of Education.

(j) In those cases, where the permanent and current address of the child differ, the heads of the Regional Office of Education submit the information about the unfound children to the respective municipality, according to the permanent address, in order to locate the child and his/her parents and to implement measures for the tracking of the child in the education system.

(k) In those cases, where the children are not found at their permanent address within a period of 10 days, the municipal mayors report back to the respective heads of the Regional Office of Education, according to the permanent address of the child.

(l) The heads of the Regional Offices of Education send the data about the children who are unenrolled and unfound at their address to CRAS for actualization, then forward the data to the respective Regional Directorate/District Department of the Ministry of Interior, according to the last known address of the child, in order to receive assistance in ascertaining the location of the child and his/her parents.

7. The Minister of Education and Science:

(a) Organizes the implementation of the mechanism of art. 1;

(b) Ensures the participation of the Regional Offices of Education and of the institutions in the preschool and school education system in the mechanism of art. 1.

8. The Minister of Labor and Social Policy, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, the Chairman of the Central Committee against the Anti-Social Behavior of Juveniles and Minors, mayors of municipalities and regional governors ensure the participation of their respective institutions in the mechanism of art. 1 and oversee the implementation of the mechanism within the framework of their institutional responsibility.

9. The mayors of municipalities:

(a) Specify the area of jurisdiction of each team within the territory of their municipality and inform the head of the respective Regional Office of Education.

(b) Appoint municipal officials as members of the tracking teams.

(c) Coordinate the tracking teams at the municipal level.

(d) Provide the necessary information for the operation of the mechanism of art. 1.

(e) Between the 20th and 30th day of the months of March, June, September, and December, the mayors report to the Coordination Unit of art. 16 of this Resolution regarding the imposed penalties under art. 347 of the Preschool and School Education Act, for each respective period.

10. The heads of the Regional Offices of Education:

(a) Form the tracking teams according to the terms of art. 4.

(b) Specify the functions and the area of jurisdiction of each team in accordance with the districts of art. 9, section (a), and the concentration of preschool and school age children from vulnerable social groups;

(c) Coordinate and manage the tracking teams at the regional level together with the regional governor.

(d) By November 30, 2017, and by April 30, 2018, they report to the Coordination Unit of art. 16 about the implementation of the mechanism of art. 1.

11. The regional governors exercise control over the implementation of the mechanism of art. 1 at the regional level, and provide assistance through the coordination of the institutions, on request by the head of the Regional Office of Education.

12. The principals of schools and kindergartens:

(a) Appoint educators and other staff in the tracking teams and ensure the participation of the appointed persons.

(b) Provide technical, administrative, and organizational support to the tracking team, whose area of jurisdiction includes their respective kindergarten or school.

(c) In case of established need, refer the case to the respective Directorates of Social Assistance in order to distribute products to the preschool or school age child, and recommend the type of allowance according to the identified needs of the child.

(d) By the 15th day of each month, the principals submit information to the municipal mayor about students who missed more than 5 classes during the previous month and about preschool children who missed more than 3 school days during the previous month, for no valid reasons, with the purpose to impose penalties on the parents under the terms of art. 347 of the Preschool and School Education Act.

(e) Organize the implementation of the mechanism of art. 1 at the school level or kindergarten level.

(f) Provide the head of the Regional Office of Education with the necessary information for the proper functioning of the mechanism of art. 1.

13. General Directorate “Civil registration and administrative service” of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works provides the necessary information for the functioning of the mechanism of art. 1.

14. The heads of Directorates of Social Assistance:

(a) Provide school principals with lists of at-risk children, in order to implement the actions of the mechanism in art. 1 at the school level.

(b) Provide school principals with lists of the children who receive social assistance, in order to follow up the effectiveness of welfare benefits in relation to the tracking and retaining of the children in the education system.

(c) In case of established need, they recommend that the school principals grant scholarships in order to ensure access to education and prevent dropout under the terms of Ordinance No. 33 of the Council of Ministers regarding the terms for granting of scholarships to students who have completed their primary education.

15. On request by the kindergarten or school principal, the regional health inspectorates submit information about the authenticity of medical notes or other medical documents that excuse the absence of the preschool or school age child.

16. A Coordination Unit shall be established, operating under the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister, having coordinating functions in relation to the work of the Ministry of Education and Science, tasked to carry out inter-institutional coordination and control at the national level for the implementation of the mechanism of art. 1.

17. The members of the Coordination Unit of art. 16 are the Minister of Education and Science, the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, the Minister of Finance, the Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection, the Executive Director of the Agency for Social Assistance, the Chairman of the Central Committee against Anti-Social Behavior of Juveniles and Minors, and three mayors, nominated by the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

FOR THE PRIME MINISTER: /signature/ Tomislav Donchev

FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS: /signature/ Veselin Dakov