



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024.

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Belgrade, 2025.

MODS is a children's association with 111 members from all over Serbia. We arose from the need for organizations working with children to unite around common goals and perform together.

Today, MODS is an independent platform that works to improve the cooperation of associations, harmonize common positions and increase their participation and the participation of children in creating public policies that will contribute to:

- reducing poverty, social exclusion and inequality;
- that every child lives in a safe family environment;
- that every child has an accessible and quality education;
- that every child has accessible and quality health care and environment;
- that every child be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

MODS organizes consultations with member organizations that conduct activities with children and for children and their parents on policy changes that can improve the quality of life for every child. We understand the children's opinions and respect their views. We support the participation of our members in working groups that form state institutions to change public policies for children.

We have established four thematic groups in which the MODS members are involved and which serve us to agree on joint actions, exchange information, and learn: 1. Social and Health Protection (Housing); 2. Education, Culture, and Media (Media Literacy, Early Childhood Development); 3. Protection of Children from Violence, Gender-Based Violence, and Gender Equality; 4. Sustainability (Environmental Protection, Innovation, Digitalization).

MODS has a representative in the Council for the Rights of the Child of the Government of the Republic of Serbia; signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Deputy Protector of Citizens for the Rights of the Child, signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Council for Monitoring the Recommendations of the UN Human Rights Mechanisms of the Government of the Republic of Serbia; is a member of the Platform of Organizations for Monitoring the Recommendations of UN Human Rights Bodies; we are a member of international networks and alliances - Eurochild, ChildPact, the global network for ending sexual exploitation - ECPAT and regional networks in the Danube region - Danube Civil Society forum.



Jednaka prava  
za svu decu.



## ADVANCING CHILD RIGHTS AND CSO

In 2024, with support from the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia through the Framework Partnership Agreement, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) successfully implemented its Annual Work Program focused on strengthening child rights, supporting civil society, and contributing to Serbia's EU integration process.

Key accomplishments included:

- **Capacity Building of CSOs:** MODS trained 59 representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) on public policy analysis, child rights, monitoring reforms, and child participation. These efforts aimed to increase CSO involvement in structural reforms linked to EU accession.
- **Joint Advocacy – Guarantee for Every Child:** MODS developed a national advocacy initiative focused on ensuring every child has access to housing, education, protection from violence, healthcare, and family support. A draft advocacy plan was created with the participation of 36% of member organizations and consultations with 24 youth representatives.
- **Policy Monitoring and Influence:** MODS published a National Monitoring Report on child rights and contributed to Serbia's EU Progress Report. The network also completed a legal analysis on the socio-economic rights of children, highlighting necessary reforms.
- **Strengthening CSO Cooperation:** Through thematic groups and collaborative forums, MODS connected over 100 member organizations to work together on policy priorities. These structures fostered dialogue, joint planning, and collective advocacy.
- **Promotion and Communication:** MODS issued 52 newsletters, redesigned its website, and launched a communication plan to raise awareness of children's rights and the role of CSOs in Serbia.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Efforts were made to meaningfully include children and young people in advocacy processes, particularly through collaboration with the Ombudsman's Youth Panel.

These actions supported public policy improvements and advanced the social inclusion of children, especially those at risk of poverty or discrimination. MODS' work in 2024 laid the foundation for sustainable advocacy and long-term impact in line with EU values and child rights standards

## SAFE TRAVEL: YOUTH SHAPE THE RECOMMENDATIONS



The recommendations were developed through consultations with the Youth Panel of the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia, focusing on the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of children during travel as part of the project "SAFE TRAVEL – Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse."

The tourism and travel industry is particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) due to its highly mobile and transitional nature. Children are often at risk of being exploited and abused not only by tourists and travelers but also by members of the local population.

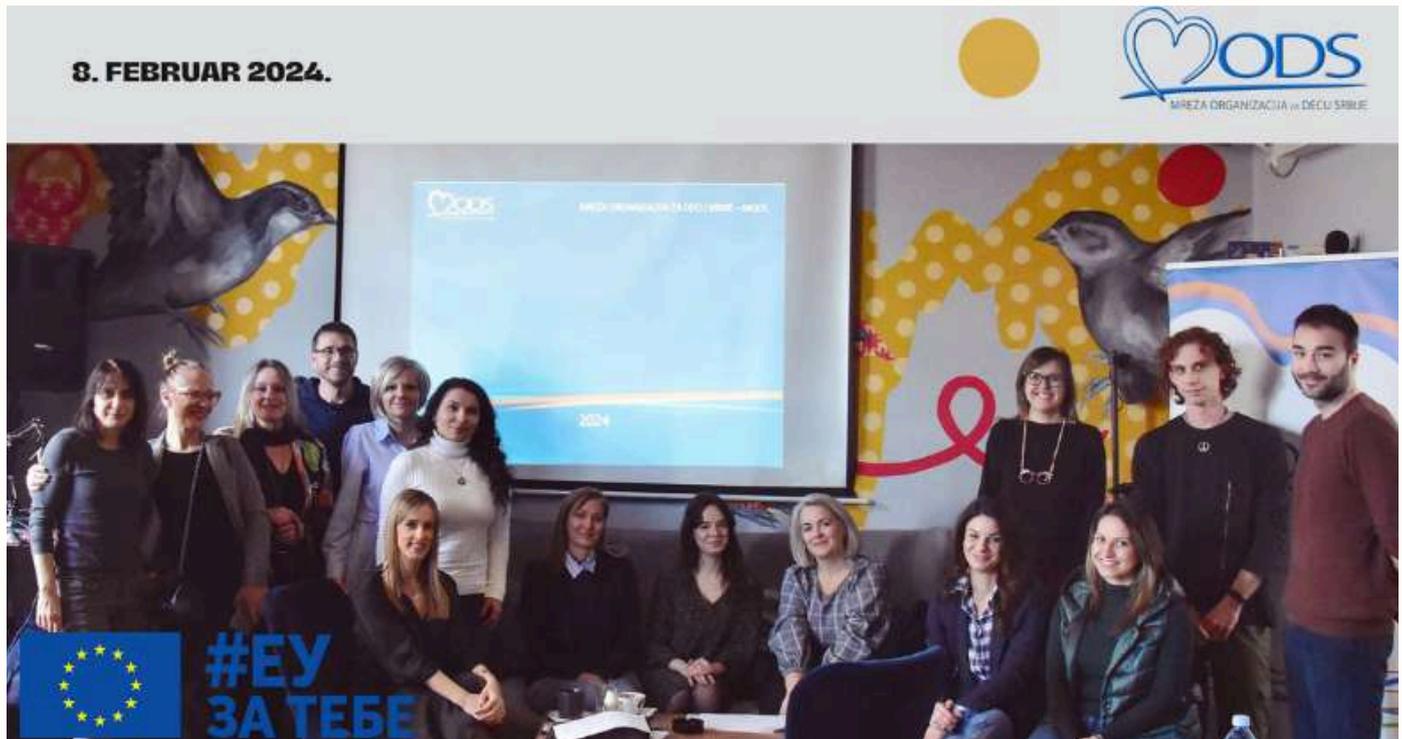
The activities are implemented in cooperation with the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia.



More information is available [here](#).

FEBRUARY 2024 |

# CONSULTATIONS WITH MODS MEMBERS ON CHILD POVERTY



On February 8, 2024, consultations were held with members of MODS dedicated to one of the most pressing issues in our society – child poverty in Serbia. The meeting was facilitated by Maja Milačić from GRiG, coordinator of the thematic group "Social and Health Protection (Housing)."

The focus of the consultations was on identifying current challenges and exploring concrete solutions to the problems children in Serbia face. Participating organizations had the opportunity to present their work, ideas, and initiatives implemented at both local and national levels, contributing to a broader understanding of the issue and the exchange of valuable experiences.

As part of the gathering, a workshop on "Public Policy Analysis" was held, followed by a presentation of the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for the period 2024–2026.

Afterwards, Jelena Žunić Cicvarić from the Užice Child Rights Centre (UCPD) presented the project "Children's Rights Are Human Rights," offering insights into various opportunities for organizations working with and for children.

More at the link [here](#).

# SIGNED DECLARATION ON COMMITMENT TO THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL



Today, February 22, 2024, at the initiative of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – MODS, the Declaration on commitment to the prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation in the context of tourism and travel was signed.

This declaration represents a significant step forward towards ensuring the safety and well-being of children in the tourism industry and was signed by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, YUTA (National Association of Travel Agencies), HORES (Business Association of the Hotel and Catering Industry of Serbia), and MODS.

The signatories committed to implementing measures and regulations that will ensure zero tolerance towards sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF Serbia provided significant support for this initiative.

For more information about this event, please visit the following [link](#).

# NATIONAL CHILD RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT 2024



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## Nacionalni monitoring izveštaj MODS-a za 2024. godinu

The Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) published its National Child Rights Monitoring Report for 2024, offering a comprehensive overview of the situation of children's rights in Serbia. The report identifies key challenges and achievements in legislation, social protection, education, and child participation.

Special emphasis is placed on including children and young people in decision-making processes, highlighting participation as a key pillar of an inclusive and just society. The report also provides recommendations for improving policies and programs aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for every child.

Through monitoring and advocacy, MODS ensures that children's voices are heard and their needs are reflected in policy recommendations. MODS also plays an important role in raising public awareness and supporting children and families—actively contributing to a safer and fairer environment for all children in Serbia.

*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia - MODS and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Union.*

The full report is available at the following [link](#).

# A DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM ABUSE IN TOURISM WAS SIGNED AT THE TOURISM FAIR.



Representatives of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce (PKS), the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS), the Business Association of the Hotel and Hospitality Industry (HORES), and the National Association of Travel Agencies (YUTA), under the auspices of UNICEF, signed today at the Tourism Fair in Belgrade a joint Declaration on commitment to the prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse in the context of tourism and travel.

Saša Stefanović from the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia assessed that today's signing is a significant step for this organization and the children themselves. 'It is good that the private sector in tourism has shown commitment and willingness to do everything in their power to protect children from exploitation in tourism,' said Stefanović.

The signing of the Declaration represents a significant step in strengthening prevention and responding to the protection of children from any form of violence. It indicates that the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, along with its members in this sector, recognizes the need for such a unified document. This serves as testimony that when it comes to children, we are all on the same path and will undertake all necessary activities, each within our own domain, to ensure their protection.

For more information, please visit the following [link](#).

# MODS ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMME (ERP) 2024–2026



The Government of the Republic of Serbia has completed the tenth cycle of preparing the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for 2024–2026. The Programme was adopted on December 28, 2023, and submitted to the European Commission (EC).

In line with the European Commission's Guidelines for the preparation of this year's ERP, the focus of the Economic Reform Programme for the upcoming three-year period is directed toward a narrower set of structural reforms compared to previous cycles.

In the introductory section of the Joint Conclusions of the Economic and Financial Dialogue between the EU and the Western Balkans and Turkey (ECOFIN), held in Brussels on May 16, 2023, the part referring to Serbia emphasized that the policy guidance defined in the Conclusions of the Economic and Financial Dialogue of May 24, 2022, has only been partially implemented.

In the Economic Reform Programme – ERP 2024–2026, which is intended to respond to the received recommendations, the Republic of Serbia still does not foresee adequate measures that would directly improve the situation of the country's poorest and most vulnerable groups. Although the ECOFIN recommendation refers to a significant increase in the adequacy of benefits for individuals and families with children, Serbia's response focuses on introducing the Social Card registry and legal regulations prescribing regular adjustments and negligible increases in financial and social assistance.

More at the link [here](#).

# DANUBE REGION SOCIAL INNOVATION SUMMIT



On April 23, 2024, the Danube Region Social Innovation Summit marked the official launch of the international initiative “Caring Communities”, a collaborative project aimed at transforming care systems across the Danube Region.

The Summit provided a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and innovative thinking on the future of care. It brought together stakeholders from public institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, laying the foundation for long-term collaboration in improving care services and social well-being.

More information is available [here](#).

## **About the “Caring Communities” Initiative**

The Caring Communities project is a transnational initiative launched under the leadership of Diakonie Baden and co-funded by the EU Interreg Danube Region Programme. Implemented by 25 partners from 9 countries, the project runs from January 2024 to June 2026.

The initiative responds to the common desire of many people: to live at home for as long as possible with the necessary care and support. While care stakeholders across Europe face similar challenges, solutions are often fragmented and developed only at national levels.

Caring Communities aims to improve the quality of life for people in need of care—both in rural and urban areas—by building innovation capacity and strengthening interregional cooperation between public and private actors, with strong scientific support.

# CARING COMMUNITIES – TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



The introductory conference “Caring Communities – Towards Sustainable Financing of Social Care Services” was held in Belgrade on April 25, 2024. This event was organized by the Republic Institute for Social Protection and the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia.

The “Caring Communities” initiative aims to improve the quality of life for people in need of care in the Danube region. Through capacity building for innovation and interregional cooperation structures, involving various private and public actors and with the support of the academic community, this initiative strives to address the problems faced by people across Europe.

The introductory event was an opportunity to exchange ideas within the “Caring Communities” initiative and to consider the possibilities of active involvement of all relevant partners.

At the event opening, experts highlighted the importance of improving social care in Serbia and the role of international cooperation through the “Caring Communities” project. Key speakers shared insights on the social protection system and long-term care.

More information is available [here](#).

*The project “Caring Communities – Transnational Approaches for Multiple Transformative Changes in Home Care and Community Development in the Danube Region” is supported under the transnational cooperation program for the Danube region and includes 25 partners from 9 Danube region countries from January 2024 to June 2026.*

## MODS AT THE EVENT ON CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN BIH AND SERBIA



On May 30, 2024, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) took part in a regional event held at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies "Prof. Dr. Zdravko Grebo" at the University of Sarajevo. The event marked the presentation of the research study "Mapping Child Participation in Decision-Making in BiH", developed in partnership with the Global Campus for Human Rights and supported by the Right Livelihood Foundation.

Following the launch of the research, a panel discussion brought together key stakeholders from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to reflect on challenges, achievements, and best practices in promoting child participation.

MODS was represented by Zorica Sokolov and Mirjana Džuverović, who highlighted positive examples from member organizations, including the Užice Center for Children's Rights, Friends of the Children of Serbia, and UG Roditelj. They emphasized the need for meaningful, continuous involvement of children in decisions that impact their lives and pointed to the importance of creating supportive environments for this process. The panel included members of the Children's Parliament of Novi Grad Sarajevo, representatives of local institutions, and organizations such as Save the Children and UNICEF, all contributing perspectives on improving systems for child participation in the region.

More information is available [here](#).

# MODS THEMATIC GROUP ON EDUCATION



On June 13, the MODS Thematic Group on Education was held at the Dositej Obradović Foundation in Belgrade. The meeting brought together member organizations and education experts to discuss key challenges in the education system, with a focus on peer violence, inequality, and inclusive education.

Aleksandra Milutinović, coordinator of the group, opened the meeting by emphasizing the importance of joint action and policy monitoring. A workshop followed, focusing on Serbia's progress in EU accession and current government strategies

Participants highlighted the need for preventive approaches led by professionals, clear guidelines for grading students with individual education plans (IOPs), and stronger support for teachers. The group also reviewed MODS' contribution to the EU Progress Report and emphasized the importance of increased investment in education and partnerships between schools and civil society.

Key messages:

- Safe society = Safe schools
- Education reform must follow real social needs
- Civil society is a key partner to schools
- Every child deserves quality education

More information is available on the following [link](#).

## “CHILDHOOD IS...”



To celebrate International Children’s Day, more than 300 children from 30 municipalities across Serbia — from Kosovska to Sremska Mitrovica — participated in the national creative contest “Childhood Is...”, united under the joyful slogan: “No worries, more play!”

Children of preschool and school age, up to 18 years old, sent in their works—drawings, poems, and short stories—reflecting their vision of a carefree childhood. The inspiration came from the lyrics of the MODS anthem “For Every Child”, composed by MODS ambassador Ana Stanić, encouraging children to explore what childhood means to them.

The contest became a celebration of children’s voices, imagination, and creativity. It gave space for self-expression and highlighted how children view the world when they are free to dream, play, and be heard.

Every child who took part was a winner. Their works remind us how important it is to protect and nurture the right to childhood—a time of freedom, curiosity, and joy. Through their art and words, children showed how powerful their creativity can be when given the opportunity.

More information is available on the following [link](#).

# MODS FEATURED IN IGNITE PHILANTHROPY NEWSLETTER FOR CONTRIBUTION TO PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CSA



The Ignite Philanthropy quarterly newsletter, Ignite Sparks, highlighted the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) in the section 'Spotlight on Impact'.

MODS implemented the project "SAFE TRAVEL – Protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse" in cooperation with the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia and the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, which resulted in the signing of the Declaration on commitment to the prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation in the context of tourism and travel.

The signing of this Declaration represents a significant step forward towards ensuring the safety and well-being of children in the tourism industry, and it was signed by the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, YUTA (National Association of Travel Agencies), HORES (Business Association of the Hotel and Catering Industry of Serbia) and MODS. The signatories committed to implementing measures and regulations that will ensure zero tolerance towards sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

More information is available [here](#).

## REGIONAL MEET-UP SUCCESSFULLY HELD IN SERBIA: MODS HOSTS ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE REGION



From September 17 to 19, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) hosted a regional meet-up in Serbia with representatives from Different & Equal (Albania) and the Astra Foundation (Armenia). The main theme of the meet-up was the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse. This event was part of Ignite Philanthropy's initiative to connect partners and strengthen collaboration among organizations working to address this global issue and improve children's and youth's lives.

In Belgrade, participants visited local organizations making a strong community impact: Bibija – Roma Women's Center, NGO Atina with Centar GRiG, and PIN – Psychosocial Innovation Network, with a lunch stop at Bagel Bejrl, a social enterprise by NGO Atina.

On the second day of the meet-up, we visited the Center for Missing and Abused Children (CNZD) in Novi Sad with guests from Albania and Armenia. Alongside learning about CNZD's work, we heard from other impactful organizations—Know How Center, Play Center Novi Sad, the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, and the Youth Shelter—who shared valuable insights into their efforts to combat child sexual abuse and support the local community.

Further information can be found [here](#).

## MODS THEMATIC GROUP MEETING ON CHILD PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE



On September 25, 2024, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) held a thematic group meeting focused on protecting children from violence, bringing together member organizations active at both local and national levels.

The event was hosted by SOS Children's Villages Serbia, whose director, Vesna Mraković, welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of discussing child protection in such a dedicated setting.

The meeting was opened by dr Jovana Škorić from the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, who coordinates the thematic group. She highlighted the urgency of strengthening child protection systems and encouraged members to share ideas and proposals for change.

During the workshop, dr Jelena Tanasijević presented key aspects of child-focused social policies, stressing the importance of a rights-based approach. Maja Simić from SOS Children's Villages shared their prevention and safety programs aimed at protecting children through education and support services.

MODS members also presented their initiatives and proposals for improving child protection, including suggestions for legal and policy reforms. The meeting concluded with a collaborative discussion on strengthening joint advocacy efforts and cooperation within the network.

More on the following [link](#).

## MODS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



On September 17, 2024, the second meeting of the Steering Committee of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) was held in a hybrid format (via Zoom and at Café Bar 16).

The meeting was opened by Saša Stefanović, MODS Director, and Jasmina Miković, Steering Committee President, and featured a guest appearance by Stefan Barth from Agapedia Deutschland, who briefly presented his organization's work.

The Steering Committee discussed key internal matters and strengthened member engagement.

The meeting included updates on the exclusion of inactive members, support for new membership applications, and proposals to improve communication, visibility, and engagement within the network—including visits to member organizations, needs-based training

## MODS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS TOOK PART IN SEMINAR ON CIVIC EDUCATION



Three MODS member organizations – Dečiji centar (Zaječar), Kokoro (Bor), and the Developmental Cultural Educational Center NatAna – participated in a three-day seminar focused on analyzing and improving the subject of Civic Education in schools. The seminar was held in late September at Hotel Jezero on Borsko Lake, as part of the project “Democracy Needs Democrats” led by Zaječarska inicijativa.

The event explored current challenges in teaching Civic Education, particularly among youth aged 12 to 19. Research presented during the seminar pointed to a decline in young people’s trust in institutions and emphasized the need to reform the curriculum.

MODS representatives – Selena Ristić Vitomirović (Dečiji centar), Milojka Milivojević (Kokoro), and Natalija Bukvić (NatAna) – actively contributed to discussions, highlighting the importance of making Civic Education mandatory and ensuring it is taught by trained professionals.

Participants agreed that the quality of teaching largely depends on teacher motivation, as well as the support of school leadership and students. A key takeaway: without concrete action, Civic Education may face an uncertain future in Serbia’s education system.

Find out more at this [link](#).

# 11TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MODS IN KRAGUJEVAC



The 11th Annual General Assembly of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) was held on October 17–18, 2024, in Kragujevac, bringing together member organizations and new candidates to review past achievements, share future plans, and make key strategic decisions for the network.

## Reports for 2023 Adopted

The Assembly began with opening remarks from Iva Eraković, followed by a presentation of MODS' 2023 activities by Saša Stefanović and the financial report by Ana Jovanović. Both reports were unanimously adopted.

At the 2023 MODS General Assembly, new members of the Steering Committee and the Supervisory Board were elected.

In addition, several new organizations joined MODS: Moj način – Inclusive Development Circle for Children and Youth, NatAna – Developmental Cultural Educational Center, U bojama dece, Sidro, Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia, Živimo zajedno, and Autizam Valjevo.

The Assembly concluded with a discussion on plans for 2024, focusing on the expansion of the “Guarantee for Every Child” campaign and strengthening child protection efforts.

More at the link [here](#).

OCTOBER 2024 |

# MODS COLLABORATIVE FORUM



As part of the Annual Assembly, the MODS Collaborative Forum took place on October 17, 2024, bringing together member organizations to strengthen joint efforts in protecting children's rights in Serbia.

A central focus of the Forum was the "Guarantee for Every Child" campaign, which aims to ensure access to housing, education, healthcare, and protection from violence for all children. Participants discussed strategies to expand the campaign's reach and visibility.

More information is available [here](#).



## *Exchange of Good Practices and Strengthening Cooperation*

Members shared successful local initiatives in social protection, education, and violence prevention, highlighting the importance of joint advocacy to improve conditions for children at risk of poverty. A dedicated session focused on enhancing cooperation with the MODS Secretariat, addressing communication, coordination, and member expectations.

Key conclusions from the Forum were presented during the final Assembly session. Members agreed to intensify collaboration and advocacy efforts to broaden the impact of the campaign and strengthen the network's influence on public policies affecting children.

# SPECIAL PROTOCOL ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL PROTECTION ADOPTED



The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs has adopted a Special Protocol on the Protection of Children from Violence in the field of social protection.

The basis for adopting this Special Protocol was established through the General Protocol for Protection of Children from Violence in Serbia, adopted by the Government on February 10, 2022.

The Protocol was developed by a working group formed by the Ministry, with the support of UNICEF and an expert consultant. **Marija Nijemčević Popovski** (SOS Children's Villages Serbia) represented MODS in the working group.

This Special Protocol defines procedures, responsibilities, and preventive measures for protecting children who access social protection rights and services—whether through centers for social work, other social protection institutions, foster families, or alternative service providers. It outlines the roles of the Ministry, the Institute for Social Protection, and the Chamber of Social Protection.

More information is available [here](#).

## PARTNERS MEET-UP IN ZAGREB



As part of the Caring Communities project, the Faculty of Law at the University of Zagreb hosted a two-day event from October 22nd to 23rd at the Association of University Teachers and Other Scientists in Zagreb. The meeting brought together over 30 participants from the Danube Region, all partners in the project, to enhance the capacity of partner organizations to measure social impact.

The program, led by experts Danijel Baturina, Nikola Buković, and Maja Gergorić from the Department of Social Policy, alongside Georg Mildemberger from University of Heidelberg, Martin J. Ivanov and Petya Klimentova from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and Danijela Paska from the ACT Group in Croatia, addressed key topics such as:

- Frameworks for assessing social innovation impact,
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) evaluation criteria,
- Data collection methods and strategies for managing impact within organizations.

The project "Caring Communities – Transnational Approaches for Multiple Transformative Changes in Home Care and Community Development in the Danube Region" is supported under the transnational cooperation program for the Danube region and includes 25 partners from 9 Danube region countries from January 2024 to June 2026.

## MODS RECOMMENDATIONS FEATURED IN THE 2024 EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPORT ON SERBIA



The 2024 European Commission Progress Report on Serbia highlighted the contribution of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS), emphasizing the urgent need to improve the legal and strategic framework for child rights in the country.

The report noted a lack of progress in key areas, including the absence of a current national strategy for children (the last plan expired in 2015), and the failure to ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which would allow children to file complaints directly to the UN Committee.

It also pointed out the expiration of the national strategy for preventing violence against children, the inactivity of the Child Rights Council, and delays in legislative reforms such as banning corporal punishment and child marriage in the Family Law.

The Commission echoed MODS' call for stronger social protection, child-friendly justice, and better data on vulnerable groups, particularly Roma children and children with disabilities. It also raised concerns about high dropout rates among Roma girls, conditions in residential institutions, and limited CSO involvement in policymaking.

In its April 2024 contribution, MODS emphasized the need to speed up reforms and adopt key laws, including the Law on the Rights of the Child, amendments to the Family Law, the Law on Social Protection, and measures to prevent unnecessary institutionalization of children with mental disabilities.

More information is available [here](#).

## MODS THEMATIC GROUP “SUSTAINABILITY” HELD ON WORLD CHILDREN’S DAY



On November 20, MODS held a thematic group meeting on “Sustainability – Environment, Innovation, and Digitalization”, led by Dubravka Kahrmanović from Friends of Children of Serbia. The meeting brought together child-focused organizations to share experiences and propose initiatives for a healthier, more sustainable environment for children.

Key topics included alarming data from UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2024 report, which shows that half of the world’s children are at risk due to climate change. Dubravka also shared findings on eco-anxiety among children in Serbia.

Mirjana Džuverović presented Serbia’s Climate Adaptation Program 2023–2030 and a child-friendly summary created by MODS to help children and youth understand and engage with climate issues.

### ***Workshop: Child Participation Model***

The session also featured a workshop on child participation, led by Jelena Žunić Cicvarić from the Užice Center for Children’s Rights. Participants explored how to ensure children are meaningfully included in decision-making processes.

The workshop focused on three key levels of participation: informing and giving feedback to children, consulting them, and involving them directly in decisions. Emphasis was placed on the importance of truly listening to children and creating space for their voices to impact real outcomes.

Further information can be found [here](#).

## FIRST WORKSHOP OF THE SYSTEM INNOVATION LABS HELD IN BELGRADE



The first workshop of the System Innovation Labs within the “Caring Communities” project was held in Belgrade on November 19, 2024. The workshop was organized by the Republic Institute for Social Protection and the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS), and it gathered a large number of representatives from institutions and organizations involved in improving social protection services in the community.

The workshop’s goal was to engage participants in defining a model for the sustainable financing of social protection services. Participants explored challenges and potential in financing these services through interactive methods, such as systemic modelling.

The workshop provided an opportunity for a deep understanding of the system’s dynamics and the identification of key intervention points. During the workshop, participants collaboratively developed an initial model for stable and continuous financing of social protection services, representing a crucial step towards achieving the project’s goals.

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Further information can be found [here](#).

# MODS CONTRIBUTED TO THE EUROCHILD 2024 REPORT ON CHILDREN IN NEED ACROSS EUROPE



On World Children’s Day, Eurochild released the report “Children’s Realities in Europe: Progress & Gaps”, featuring insights from 57 members across 31 countries—including the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS).

The report highlights setbacks across Europe, especially for children in vulnerable situations. Despite existing policies, many countries lack concrete action and sufficient funding. In 2023, 24.8% of children in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with figures rising in over half of the countries surveyed.

MODS contributed findings from Serbia, underlining the persistent challenges in child poverty, access to services, and the lack of systemic support for children at risk. The report provides recommendations for national and EU decision-makers to better address these gaps and ensure children's rights are upheld in practice.

In Serbia, the 2024 Eurochild report highlights significant challenges in child welfare, including a 27.1% child poverty rate, with Roma children and those with disabilities facing heightened risks of poverty and exclusion. Child marriages remain prevalent, particularly among Roma girls, and access to early childhood education is notably low in marginalized communities. Children with developmental disabilities are disproportionately placed in institutions due to inadequate family support services.

More information is available [here](#).

[Read the full report here](#)

# CHILDREN ARE NOT PROPERTY - MODS RESPONDS TO HARMFUL STATEMENT



Following a statement by a member of parliament referring to children under 18 as “state property,” the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) expresses deep concern and reminds the public that children are not the property of any individual, institution, or state. They are rights-holders, entitled to dignity, participation, and protection—guaranteed by Serbian law and international standards.

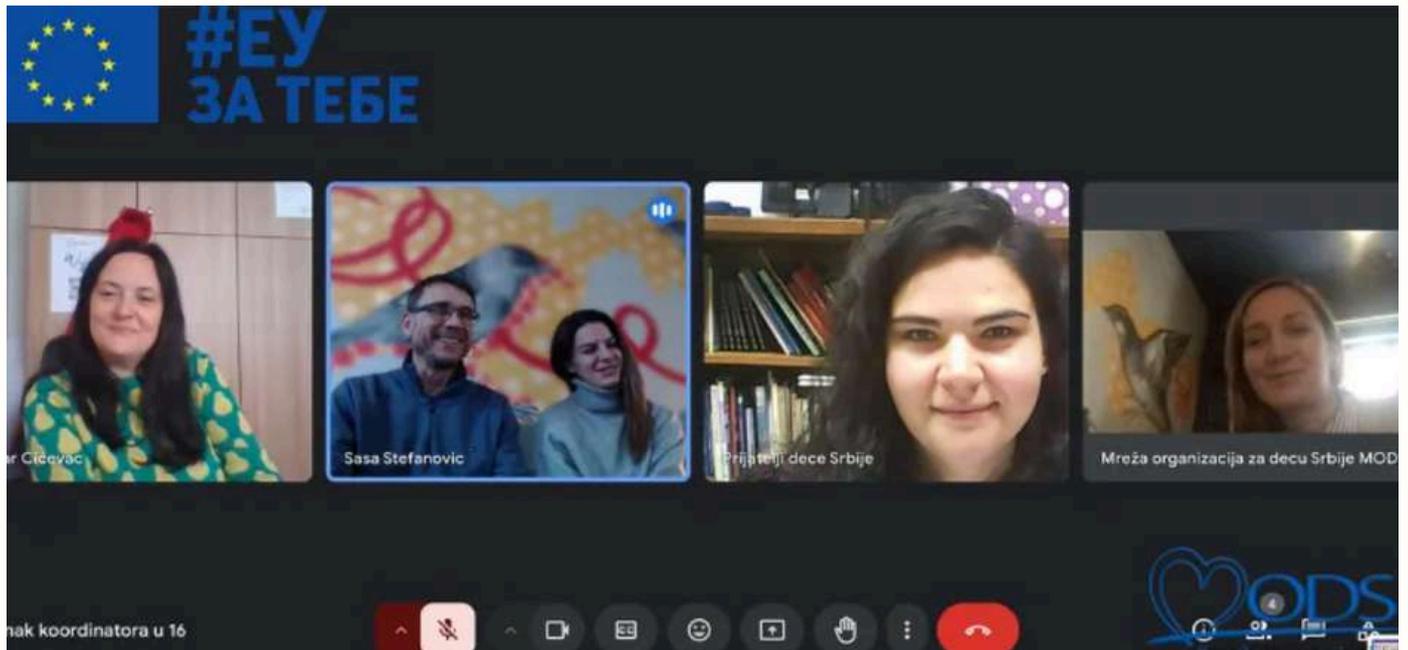
Children are not the property of any individual, institution, or state. They are independent rights-holders, entitled to freedom of expression, participation in decisions affecting them, and protection of their dignity and integrity.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Serbia, clearly defines these rights. Framing children as property undermines democratic values and the foundations of a rights-based society. The state’s role is to provide children with a safe, supportive environment where they can grow, express their views, and make decisions—not to silence or stigmatize them.

We expect public officials to demonstrate a high level of responsibility toward children and to avoid statements that may weaken trust in institutions or violate children’s rights. Children have the capacity to understand and speak up about issues that shape their future, and society has a duty to ensure that all actions and public discourse respect and promote their rights.

More information is available [here](#).

## MEETING OF MODS THEMATIC GROUP COORDINATORS HELD



On December 24, 2024, MODS held a hybrid meeting of its thematic group coordinators to review progress and plan future joint activities.

The meeting gathered Maja Milačić (GRiG) – Social and Health Protection (Housing), Aleksandra Milutinović (Okular) – Education, Culture & Media (Media Literacy, Early Childhood Development), and Dubravka Kahrmanović (Friends of Children of Serbia) – Sustainability (Environment, Innovation, Digitalization). Jovana Škorić (CNZD) – coordinator for the group on Protection from Violence and Gender Equality, was excused.

Coordinators reflected on the achievements of 2024 and discussed priorities for the upcoming year, with a focus on joint advocacy efforts, improving inter-member collaboration, and creating stronger synergies between thematic areas to increase the impact on public policies related to children's rights.

MODS thematic groups are based on the network's Strategic Plan 2023–2028 and serve as platforms for:

- Information exchange among members working on similar topics
- Joint planning of initiatives and projects
- Advocacy and policy monitoring, especially in the context of Serbia's EU integration

Coordinators play a key role in leading meetings, preparing materials, facilitating communication, and representing MODS in dialogue with state institutions and international partners.

More information is available [here](#).

## SECOND WORKSHOP OF THE SYSTEM INNOVATION LABS HELD



The second workshop of the System Innovation Labs, within the “Caring Communities” project, was successfully held on December 17, 2024, at the Republic Institute for Social Protection in Belgrade. The Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) and the Republic Institute for Social Protection organised the workshop as part of the “Caring Communities” program.

The goal of this workshop was to engage participants in the process of defining a model for sustainable financing of social protection services. Attendees analyzed the social protection system in Serbia, identified key points of impact, and discussed potential sources of sustainable financing. The workshop was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the system’s dynamics and key intervention points through interactive group work and plenary discussions.

The “Caring Communities” project aims to improve the quality of life for people in need of care in the Danube region by building capacity for innovation and fostering interregional cooperation between private and public stakeholders.

*The project “Caring Communities – Transnational Approaches for Multiple Transformative Changes in Home Care and Community Development in the Danube Region” is supported under the transnational cooperation program for the Danube region and includes 25 partners from 9 Danube region countries from January 2024 to June 2026.*

More information is available [here](#).

## FOCUS GROUP WITH THE YOUTH PANEL OF THE PROTECTOR OF CITIZENS



On December 10, marking International Human Rights Day, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) organized a focus group with the Youth Panel of the Protector of Citizens. The event supported the development of the “Guarantee for Every Child” program, aimed at improving services and support for children and youth in Serbia.

Through open dialogue, young participants shared experiences from their communities, highlighted challenges in accessing education, healthcare, and protection, and proposed practical solutions. A special focus was placed on the needs of vulnerable groups, including Roma children, children without parental care, and those with disabilities.

Their insights will shape future recommendations for creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all children.

### ***About the “Guarantee for Every Child”***

Inspired by the EU’s Child Guarantee, the program recognizes that child poverty is a complex, multidimensional issue affecting children’s rights to health, education, safety, and participation. The initiative is built around five pillars:

- Adequate housing
- Quality education
- Protection from violence and exploitation
- A safe and healthy environment
- Supportive family life

The program aims to ensure that every child, regardless of background, has access to quality services and equal opportunities to thrive.

More information is available [here](#).

## MODS NOMINATES CANDIDATES FOR THE REM COUNCIL



The Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS) has nominated Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Krstić and Doc. Dr. Dušan Aleksić as candidates for the Council of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM). The nomination was submitted to the National Assembly's Committee for Culture and Information, in accordance with the public call.

Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Krstić, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, is a respected expert in media studies and journalism, with extensive experience in media education and research. She specializes in television and digital journalism and multimedia production, and is known for her advocacy for media democratization and professional standards..

Doc. Dr. Dušan Aleksić, a communication expert and media researcher from the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, focuses on media literacy and digital communication, especially among youth. He is widely recognized for his work in training future journalists and promoting ethical standards in reporting.

Both candidates are committed to strengthening media freedom, transparency, and the public interest and would bring valuable expertise to the work of REM.

Find more information on the following [link](#).



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