



ΛΕΟΝΤΕΙΟΣ ΣΧΟΛΗ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



ΛΕΟΝΤΕΙΟΣ ΣΧΟΛΗ
ΝΕΑΣ ΣΜΥΡΝΗΣ

**Human Rights Council
Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Greece
53rd Session (November 2026)**

Joint Stakeholders' Submission on:

Human Rights in Greece

Submitted by:

Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)

(NGO in Consultative Status with ECOSOC)

and

Marist Brothers – Province of L'Hermitage

and

The Leonteion Schools of Greece

Geneva, April 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This stakeholders' report is a joint submission from the aforementioned organizations. The report highlights key concerns related to **children's rights** in Greece regarding **educational load and time pressure; stress and emotional burden on students; security issues in everyday life; economic insecurity and impacts on family life and social inequalities and discrimination**. Each section offers recommendations to the government of Greece.
2. The data and information obtained for this submission came from various sources and include information from children, youth, teachers, educators and other civil society actors living and working in Greece. All information concerned the period from November 2021 to April 2025.
3. **Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)**¹ is an international organization promoted by the Marist Brothers, present in 80 countries. FMSI has 18 years of experience working in the field of international solidarity, advocating for children's rights especially in the field of education. It works at the international level, participating in the UN human rights mechanisms in collaboration with other organizations with similar interests. It has been accredited by ECOSOC since 2011.
4. **The Marist Brothers – Province of L'Hermitage**: The Marist Brothers is a religious congregation of consecrated men in the Catholic Church. They are involved in the education of children and young people in schools and other educational settings. The Province of L'Hermitage is an Administrative Unit within the Marist Institute, composed of several locations and personnel living and working in Greece, Algeria, Spain, France, Hungary and Switzerland.² The Marist Brothers have been present in Greece for almost 120 years providing quality education to children and young people.
5. **The Leonteion Schools of Greece**:³ The Leonteion Schools are nonprofit educational institutions with a tradition of more than 200 years. They operate according to the Greek Ministry of Education's official timetable. They are among the oldest educational institutions in Greece and are part of the Catholic religious congregation of the Marist Brothers. In line with the vision of the Marist Brothers' founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat, the Leonteion Schools aim to educate and evangelize young people so they can become "good Christians and virtuous citizens."

II. GENERAL REMARKS AND COOPERATION WITH THE UPR MECHANISM

6. Greece was last reviewed in November 2021 at the 39th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, receiving 239 recommendations. The submitting stakeholders welcome the constructive participation of Greece in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). As the outcome of its UPR at Human Rights Council 49 (March 2022), Greece adopted 216 of these recommendations (24.9% increase compared to the previous cycle) and noted 23.⁴

¹ FMSI: <https://fmsi.ngo/en/child-rights/>

² Marist presence in the world: <https://champagnat.org/en/marist-institute/our-presence/>

³ The Leonteion Schools of Greece: <https://leonteios.edu.gr/>

⁴ Cf. "Matrix Recommendations Greece" available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/UPR39_Greece_Thematic_List_of_Recommendations.doc

7. We also welcome the adoption of many recommendations that are connected to the Sustainable Development Goals:⁵ **4** – Quality education (6%), **5** - Gender equality (13%), **8** - Decent work and economic growth (9%), **10** - Reduced inequalities (44%), **16** - Peace, justice and strong institutions (20%).
8. By adopting these recommendations, Greece has signaled a firm commitment to protecting fundamental freedoms. While we applaud this initiative, the submitting stakeholders emphasize the need for consistent funding and practical enforcement to turn these promises into reality. This progress is a prerequisite for a more equitable society, especially for those in vulnerable positions. We therefore urge the government to prioritize a transparent monitoring phase that actively involves civil society stakeholders.
9. The submitting stakeholders appreciate the government of Greece’s cooperation in allowing us to submit this document, reflecting its respect for UN protocols on civil society participation. This report tracks the progress of recommendations accepted in the previous cycle and emphasizes our shared goal: to reinforce past achievements while effectively managing new human rights developments in the next review.

III. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

Methodology:

10. The data for this report was collected through workshops with 247 children and adolescents, 115 males (46,56%) and 132 females (53,44%) between the ages of 12 and 18 who are students at the two Marist schools in Athens. The report covers the primary concerns that emerged from the fieldwork, which focused on issues affecting the participants' educational and personal well-being.
11. This report features **direct quotes from children and young people** who shared their perspectives on their human rights situation. These voices, presented "*in quotation marks*" and *italics*, were gathered through written responses offered by children, adolescents and young people during the data collection process. Their **voices** inspire and validate the theoretical work of the organizations behind this report.

Overview:

12. **Educational load and time pressure:** Students report being overwhelmed by extended school hours, a heavy curriculum, and constant assignments, which deprive them of time for rest, creativity, and personal development. They believe that the educational model prioritizes memorizing theoretical knowledge over developing critical thinking or life skills. Consequently, the lack of free time is a leading cause of intense dissatisfaction among adolescents, who feel that the school system currently exhausts them rather than supports them.
13. **Stress and emotional burden on students:** Mental health is a major concern as students experience overwhelming stress from academic obligations and intense competition. High expectations from both family and school contribute to mental exhaustion, low self-esteem, and anxiety regarding the future. This burden is exacerbated by a lack of time for socializing and the rise of social media abuse. Students also report a significant lack of understanding

⁵ "Infographic" available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Infographic-3rd-cycle-greece.pdf>

from their environment, highlighting a need for better psychological support and a balance between school and personal well-being.

14. **Security issues in everyday life:** Security challenges create a multi-layered feeling of insecurity across school, family, and social environments. In schools, bullying and cyberbullying undermine trust and discourage students from expressing their opinions. Some students also face domestic violence at home, which severely impacts their emotional development. Furthermore, high crime rates and poor infrastructure—such as dangerous sidewalks and inadequate public lighting—make adolescents feel unsafe during daily commutes, limiting their freedom to move and participate in social activities.
15. **Economic insecurity and impacts on family life:** Economic hardship, including poverty and unemployment, significantly disrupts family dynamics. Parents are often forced to work excessive hours to meet basic needs, which severely limits quality family time and emotional connection. This financial pressure leads to poor communication and increased stress within the household. Additionally, economic inequality creates a gap in access to essential extracurricular activities and tutoring, leaving children from struggling families at a disadvantage compared to their peers.
16. **Social inequalities and discrimination:** Adolescents recognize systemic discrimination based on socioeconomic status, race, religion, and gender. They feel marginalized and devalued by a society that fails to provide equal opportunities, particularly noting the disparity between public and private education. A lack of accessible public infrastructure, such as hospitals and sports areas, further isolates those in underprivileged areas. These inequalities prevent many young people from feeling accepted, making them feel that their voices are ignored and their potential is limited by the state.
17. The government of Greece has enacted legislation and instituted public policies aimed at ensuring the protection of human rights. It is acknowledged that some of the challenges confronting the government are complex and require dedicated effort to address, both in the present and in the future. We deeply appreciate its commitment to maintaining these efforts.

IV. EDUCATIONAL LOAD AND TIME PRESSURE

18. Greece received several recommendations in the last UPR addressing the right to education for all, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 - Quality Education). The submitting stakeholders acknowledge that Greece supported and has taken action on many of these recommendations⁶ and is working on their implementation despite the current challenges.
19. The Greek educational landscape between 2020 and 2025 is defined by a "triple load" on adolescents: the official state curriculum, the *frontistiria* (private tutoring) system, and the demands of digital life. This environment has created a systemic crisis of time pressure and diminishing academic returns.

⁶ For example: **130.182** – State of Palestine: “Continue its efforts in combating child poverty, protect their rights to health and education and ensure that all children, including children from families with low socioeconomic status and children of migrants, receive support and enjoy all child rights”; **130.155** – Indonesia; **130.154** – Mauritius; **130.153** – India; **130.147** – Bahamas; **130.144** Republic of Korea; **130.141** – Norway; **130.134** – Ecuador; **130.130** - Malawi

20. The Greek Ministry of Education instituted the National Baccalaureate to transition from a single-exam-centric model to a cumulative grading system across three years of secondary school.⁷ A central pillar of this reform is the Bank of Topics of Graded Difficulty, from which 50% of the Final Exam topics is selected at random.⁸ While intended to ensure transparency, students and teachers argue it has created a "relentless high-stakes environment" where "every day counts", effectively extending examination pressure across the entire three-year cycle. Students point out that the traditional model emphasizes the accumulation of theoretical knowledge at the expense of life skills and critical thinking and call for a less examination-oriented system, a reduction and rationalization of the curriculum, a restructuring of the school schedule and the introduction of alternative forms of assessment, such as group work and long-term projects.
21. Private tutoring remains a structural necessity for university admission. For an average middle-income family, these costs consume "12–22% of disposable income".⁹ This "tutoring gap" drives educational inequality, as 91% of the top income quintile resorts to private tutoring compared to only 28% of the bottom quintile.¹⁰ Consequently, university admission remains heavily correlated with a family's ability to pay,¹¹ leading to a psychological environment where state school is viewed as secondary to "real" learning in private institutes.
22. Data from UN agencies and the OECD highlight a regression in both performance and health. The OECD PISA 2022 results indicate that the Greek system may need a thorough revamping, especially as concerns the three skills tested: mathematics, reading and science. At the same time, it mentions the detrimental effects of school closures and online lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic, which have affected students immensely, mainly due to a lack of support for homework.¹² Furthermore, UNICEF identifies a causal link between academic pressure and poor health, noting that Greece has some of the "highest rates of childhood obesity and overweightness in the world", affecting 37.5% of children.¹³ This obesogenic environment is driven by sedentary behaviors and a "decline in participation in physical and other activities" due to excessive workloads.

⁷ AACRAO-EDGE, "Greece Government's proposal for the National Baccalaureate", available at: <https://www.aacrao.org/edge/emergent-news/greece-government's-proposal-for-the-national-baccalaureate>

Greek Reporter, "Greece Unveils Major Education Shift to Reshape High Schools", available at: <https://greekreporter.com/2026/02/03/greece-education-shift-reshape-high-schools/>

⁸ Eurydice, "Assessment in general upper secondary education", available at: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/greece/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education>

⁹ Kalofonos, H (2024) "Education in Greece: Opportunities, Disparities & Microeconomics of Social Mobility", available at: <https://hkalofonos.medium.com/education-in-greece-0b93eeb68f1f>

¹⁰ Ibidem

¹¹ UNICEF Greece Country Programme 2022-2026, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/media/1386/file/UNICEF's%20National%20Programme%20for%20Greece%202022-2026.pdf>

¹² OECD, PISA 2022 Results (Volume I and II) - Country Notes: Greece, available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i-and-ii-country-notes_ed6fbcc5-en/greece_a24e696b-en.html

¹³ UNICEF Greece Country Programme 2022-2026, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/media/1386/file/UNICEF's%20National%20Programme%20for%20Greece%202022-2026.pdf>

23. NGOs like Eurochild emphasize that 30.5% of Greek children are at risk of “poverty or social exclusion”, making supplemental education a barrier to basic rights.¹⁴ Additionally, a 2025 survey revealed that 39% of secondary students spend over three hours online on weekdays, often as a “compulsive escape” from academic pressure, which further exposes them to cyberbullying and stress.¹⁵
24. The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and UNICEF both highlight an "unfinished agenda" regarding the fulfillment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Specifically, they note that the structural demands of the educational model compromise “the right to rest, leisure, play, and recreational activities” (Article 31).¹⁶ In summary, while the government seeks modernization, the lived experience for adolescents is one of systemic exhaustion, where a "high load" continues to deliver "low returns" in both proficiency and wellbeing.
25. The adolescents who participated in the data collection for this report are aware of these challenges. The following needs were expressed by them:
- *“As teenagers, we have many obligations and many teaching hours every day.”*
 - *“What greatly prevents us from enjoying one of our most basic rights, such as leisure, is the excessive amount of time taken by the lessons assigned by teachers.”*
 - *“By giving us so many lessons and back-to-back tests, they leave us with minimal free time to enjoy our childhood.”*
 - *“Enormous academic demands that cause stress and pressure on children from a very young age.”*
 - *“School pressure and excessive studying stress us and prevent us from being calm”*
 - *“We believe that school hours should be reduced and the grading method should not create competition among children”*
 - *“The truth is that many times we stay up until late at night to study the assignments for the next day.”*
 - *“Furthermore, we would like fewer exams because they often stress and pressure us.”*
 - *“Many children lack the financial means to attend school and access their full rights.”*
 - *“Screens and electronic devices... often isolate us and prevent us from trying new things.”*
26. **To bridge the gap between academic consistency and student well-being, aligning national policies with Sustainable Development Goal 4, the submitting stakeholders propose recommendations to foster a learning environment that prioritizes mental**

¹⁴ Eurochild, “Country Reports: Bulgaria - Germany - Greece - Ireland - Italy – Spain”, available at: https://www.dkhw.de/filestorage/1_Informieren/1.1_Unsere_Themen/Kinderarmut/Europaeische_Kindergarantie/Dateien/Eurochild_Child_Guarantee_Report_compiled.pdf

¹⁵ Better Internet for Kids, “Children's online habits in Greece: 2025 nationwide survey explores challenges in implementing the Digital Services Act (DSA)”, available at: <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/news/childrens-online-habits-greece-2025-nationwide-survey-explores-challenges-implementing-digital>

¹⁶ UNICEF “A situation analysis of children and youth”, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/media/2041/file/Full%20Report:%20The%20Analysis%20of%20the%20Situation%20of%20Children%20and%20Youth%20in%20Greece%202021.pdf>

And, NCHR “Written Responses to the List of issues in relation to the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child”, available at: https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/ektheseis_diethwn_eurwpaikwn_forewn/GNCHR_Lols_CRC_Report.pdf

health, equity, and modern pedagogical standards. These recommendations aim to rebalance students' daily lives while ensuring they remain competitive in a globalized world:

- a. Amend the secondary education legislative framework to reduce daily instructional hours and increase mandatory break durations. This measure must be accompanied by a systematic streamlining of the national curriculum prioritizing core competencies.**
- b. Transform the functional paradigm of the Bank of Topics (Trapeza Thematon) from a high-stakes summative examination tool into a low-stakes formative pedagogical aid, utilizing the repository for diagnostic purposes and continuous classroom feedback that allow educators to focus on personalized learning progress rather than standardized test performance.**
- c. We strongly urge for more training for teachers and support for lifelong learning and training for all school staff through the allocation of funds and special courses, so that lessons become more interesting and more rewarding for students and teachers. This is directly linked to the points made above.**

V. STRESS AND EMOTIONAL BURDEN

27. Between 2020 and 2025, the psychosocial landscape for Greek adolescents has been defined by a transition toward modernized mental health frameworks countered by a "milestone of anxiety" rooted in systemic educational and economic pressures.
28. The Greek government initiated a structural reorganization of all Mental Health providers in the country through the "National Action Plan for Mental Health 2021–2030" in February 2021, which aims to align domestic practices with WHO frameworks through cooperation with WHO.¹⁷ Central to this plan is Axis 3, which mandates "completing the network of mental health services for children and adolescents". Furthermore, Act 4779/2021 established safeguards against "harmful online content" to mitigate the psychological impact of cyberbullying.¹⁸ However, recent centralization under Law 5129/2024 has drawn criticism for potentially distancing services from the local communities they are intended to serve.¹⁹
29. UN agencies provide a critical view of the social determinants affecting youth. UNICEF reports that "28.1% of children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion," a primary driver of internalized student stress.²⁰ The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has expressed "deep concern" regarding "long waiting lists for children seeking mental health

¹⁷ Cf. <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/18a4e643-1429-4e6b-a317-d7c6a29adabf/12248967.pdf> and, European Union, "National Policies Platform - 7.5 Mental health", available at: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/greece/75-mental-health>

¹⁸ Better Internet for Kids, "Greece - Policy monitor country profile," available at: <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/knowledge-hub/greece-policy-monitor-country-profile>

¹⁹ Psychiatriki, "On the sectorization of psychiatric services" (Volume 36, Issue 1), available at: https://psychiatriki-journal.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1988:for-the-sectorization-of-psychiatric-services&catid=14&lang=en&Itemid=838

²⁰ UNICEF Greece - Annual Report 2024, available at: <https://open.unicef.org/download-pdf?country-name=Greece&year=2024>

services" and a severe "shortage of specialist doctors," particularly in rural regions.²¹ While Greece maintains one of the lowest suicide rates in the EU, the CRC notes this may hide high rates of ideation and self-harm.²²

30. The NGO "The Smile of the Child" reported supporting "two children every three days on 'suicidal issues'" in 2024, managing an average of 513 daily calls. Their data suggests that "bullying and peer violence" are pervasive, with 22.1% of students reporting being bullied. This NGO's research confirms that children who spend excessive hours on screens often have lower levels of general wellbeing and are more likely to be victims of bullying. This creates a double-bind for adolescents: they are too busy with school and *frontistiria* for physical socializing, but their digital "relief" exposes them to further psychological stress.²³ For refugee students, Save the Children documents "systemic gaps" in camps that often involve "inhumane living conditions" and isolation.²⁴
31. A significant disconnect exists between the government's policies and the students' lived experience of "structural causes" of stress. The "Panelladikes" (National University Entry Exams) remain the primary source of chronic anxiety. Research indicates that "older age" and "female sex" among other factors "were positively associated with the amount of stress, anxiety and dysphoria-related symptoms reported" by students in one study.²⁵ Additionally, the high rate of "Neither in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)" (15.9%)²⁶ seems to reflect a sense of academic hopelessness. Technical schools and vocational training have both suffered an unprecedented decline during the recent economic crisis, some of it due to governmental policies and legislation, therefore turning regular Higher Secondary Schools into the "only" option, which do not cover the educational and employability needs of Greek youth at risk. Specifically Technical Higher Secondary Schools (EPAL) have recently seen various seriously violent events, which have been reported in national newspapers²⁷. This is because of the common notion that the young people who end up in them cannot achieve the standards required in a regular Higher Secondary School, thus creating feelings of inequality, marginalization and frustration, which can easily result in violent behavior towards infrastructure, teaching equipment, staff and/or other students.

²¹ Eurochild – Greece, available at: <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2024/03/Greece-Childrens-Rights-Political-will-or-wont.pdf>

²² UNICEF Greece, "Adolescent physical, mental and reproductive health", available at: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/state-childrens-rights/health-and-nutrition/adolescent-physical-mental-and-reproductive-health>

²³ The Smile of the Child, "Understanding and Measuring Child Well-Being in Greece: Empirical Findings for 2022-2023", August 2023, available at <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2023/04/%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%95%CE%A5%CE%9D%CE%91.pptx.pdf>

²⁴ Save the Children, "«It does not feel like real life»: children's everyday life in Greek refugee camp"s, available at: <https://gcr.gr/wp-content/uploads/Children-in-Greek-refugee-camp-report-online-1.pdf>

²⁵ PubMed, "Educational Stress among Greek Adolescents: Associations between Individual, Study and School-Related Factors", available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36981604/>

²⁶ UNICEF Greece - Annual Report 2024, available at: <https://open.unicef.org/download-pdf?country-name=Greece&year=2024>

²⁷ For examples in English see: <https://en.protothema.gr/2025/05/05/unveiling-of-the-national-plan-against-juvenile-violence-community-service-technical-junior-high-schools-and-reintegration-program/> OR <https://www.tovima.com/society/school-violence-in-greece-two-teens-stabbed-in-latest-violent-incident-outside-greek-high-school/> OR <https://greekcitytimes.com/2025/11/24/alarming-trend-of-under-age-girls-engaging-in-violent-fights/> among others

32. Adolescents participating in the preparation of this report addressed this significant issue on multiple occasions. Below, we share some of their direct expressions:
- *“Enormous academic demands that cause stress and pressure on children from a very young age”*
 - *“Bullying both on social networks and in real life that turns children's daily lives into a nightmare”*
 - *“School pressure and excessive studying stress us and prevent us from being calm”*
 - *“School bullying is a frequent and particularly unpleasant phenomenon, often leading to self-harm”*
 - *“We would like fewer exams because they often stress and pressure us”*
 - *“Sometimes at night we need to study until late... The hours we have school and the hours we have to wake up in the morning are very early. Most of the time we want to speak out, but we cannot”*
 - *“Expectations placed upon us, such as being able to function and concentrate very early in the morning despite very few hours of sleep due to heavy workloads”*
 - *“Children and teenagers are hindered by excessive schoolwork and pressure from both parents and teachers”*
 - *“We would request that professional psychologists visit schools monthly to monitor children’s psychological well-being”*
 - *“The grading method should not create competition between children, so we do not feel inadequate for not being 'good students'”*
 - *“Teachers need to show greater... understanding and empathy. If a student is having a bad day, instead of pressuring them, teachers should help them feel better”*
33. **To effectively address mental health issues among children and young people and to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4, the submitting stakeholders recommend the following to the Government of Greece:**
- a. **Procure the funds to strengthen psychosocial school support structures for children and youth by employing more professional psychologists to assist and empower all schools, no matter how remote, to monitor student well-being. The ratio of psychologist per school, especially in urban areas, should reach 1:1.**
 - b. **Integrate the HEALTH-IQ quality indicators²⁸ across the newly established Regional Mental Health Services Networks and track and report waiting times for child and adolescent mental health services, ensuring that mental health services are *“effective, compassionate and equitable”*.**
 - c. **Re-evaluate the sufficiency of scientific personnel in structures that are responsible for certifying children with Special Educational or Other Needs (KEDASY) so that all children can receive the help they need when they need it most in order to become accepted in the school environment.**

²⁸ WHO, *“Rapid assessment of the quality of mental health care in Greece”*, available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12137-51909-79578>

- d. **Foster policies that enhance the balance between school life and personal well-being, by rationalizing academic workloads, promoting emotional security, and providing psychological support.**
- e. **Provide more and proper technical school education and programs of certified manual professional apprenticeships. Such schools would offer the chance of a vocation and of employability in the future to thousands of young people who cannot continue their education in a university.**

VI. SECURITY ISSUES

- 34. Security issues permeate all areas of adolescents' everyday life, creating a multi-layered feeling of insecurity that significantly affects their quality of life. Analysis of data from 2021 to the present suggests that security issues are no longer isolated incidents but have become structural features of adolescent daily life, creating an environment characterized by chronic anxiety and a documented decline in the quality of life.
- 35. School: Bullying and cyberbullying dominate students' concerns, constituting a serious and widespread phenomenon that undermines the feeling of security, trust and acceptance in the school environment. Children feel unsafe to express their opinions and do not always feel accepted.
- 36. Studies conducted during this period show a significant escalation in both traditional and cyberbullying, alongside a growing involvement in juvenile delinquency. Adolescents involved in bullying, whether as victims or perpetrators, present heightened emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and peer difficulties. Analyses identified that boys, urban residents, and individuals from non-traditional family structures are at higher risk of bullying involvement.²⁹
- 37. Family: For many adolescents, the home environment has become a site of "unseen" violence—physical, psychological, and sexual—that remains largely unreported due to cultural taboos, lingering patriarchal norms and the lack of robust community-level social services.³⁰ This lack of a safe and supportive family environment causes anxiety and affects their daily lives.
- 38. Society: Adolescents express strong fear of high crime rates and the lack of adequate policing in certain areas. They feel insecure during their daily commutes, especially in the afternoon and evening hours, which limits their freedom of movement and their participation in social and cultural activities.
- 39. The sense of security for adolescents is also deeply tied to their immediate community and neighborhood environment. Sociological analysis shows that the erosion of trust within

²⁹ PubMed, "Changes in Bullying Experiences and Mental Health Problems Among Adolescents Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic in Greece", available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40283727/>

³⁰ Ntoutsoulis, G.A. (2024), "Adolescent Behaviour in Modern Greek Society: Risk Management on Socioeconomic Factors and Resilience Strategies for Stakeholders and Policymakers", available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392392712_Adolescent_Behaviour_in_Modern_Greek_Society_Risk_Management_on_Socioeconomic_Factors_and_Resilience_Strategies_for_Stakeholders_and_Policymakers

UNICEF Greece Country Programme 2022-2026, available at:

<https://www.unicef.org/greece/media/1386/file/UNICEF's%20National%20Programme%20for%20Greece%202022-2026.pdf>

communities undermines social cohesion, leaving teenagers more vulnerable to social isolation and delinquency.³¹

40. In addition, adolescents point out that infrastructure problems in schools, inadequate public transportation, worn and dangerous sidewalks, poor public lighting and abandoned public buildings contribute to an increase of a feeling of insecurity.
41. The Greek government's approach to everyday security since 2020 has been characterized by a dual focus on digital modernization and the hardening of criminal legislation. These updates responded to prominent criminality cases and social demands for stricter punishment for criminals, yet they frequently encounter criticism for prioritizing punitive control over systemic prevention.³² A January 2025 poll showing that over 80% of Greeks lack faith in the justice system's ability to uncover the truth correlates with the general institutional decline tracked by civil society.³³ This systemic distrust creates a vacuum in everyday security, as citizens—including youth—feel that the state is either incapable of protecting them or is actively complicit in their insecurity.
42. Young people shared their own opinions about children's rights and safety concerns:
 - *“Crime, Survival problems, Acceptance problems”*
 - *“Domestic violence / abuse, Neglect”*
 - *“Safe environment for children”*
 - *“Violence against minors”*
 - *“Bullying both on social networks and in real life that turns children's daily lives into a nightmare”*
 - *“Many children fall victim to school bullying because they are different”*
 - *“We want more safety and for the police to act on our issues too, and not only those of adults”*
 - *“School bullying is a frequent and particularly unpleasant phenomenon, often leading to self-harm”*
 - *“[we need] a safe schoolyard”*
 - *“Keeping our cities clean”*
 - *“It is the abuse of children by their parents (or rape), the neglect of children when [parents are at] work”*
43. **In line with Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the submitting stakeholders present the following recommendations to strengthen awareness of and protection for the rights of children, adolescents, and youth in Greece.**
 - a. **Strengthen prevention and protection mechanisms for school and online bullying, build upon the existing "Safe Youth" digital tools and the 2022-2026 UNICEF**

³¹ Ntoutsoulis, G.A. (2024), "Adolescent Behaviour in Modern Greek Society: Risk Management on Socioeconomic Factors and Resilience Strategies for Stakeholders and Policymakers", available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392392712_Adolescent_Behaviour_in_Modern_Greek_Society_Risk_Management_on_Socioeconomic_Factors_and_Resilience_Strategies_for_Stakeholders_and_Policymakers

³² Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2026: Greece", available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/greece>

³³ Hellenic League for Human Rights, "STRUGGLE FOR ACCOUNTABILIT: The State of the Rule of Law in Greece", available at: <https://www.hlhr.gr/en/report-rule-law-greece-2025/>

National Programme, by mandating child-friendly justice training for all educational and law enforcement professionals, integrated with the existing centralized digital reporting system for cyber-victimization.

- b. Develop a decentralized network of Municipal Child and Family Support Centers wherever these do not exist to provide "Support and Love" through specialized psychological and social services for families facing poverty, domestic violence, or neglect.**

VII. ECONOMIC INSECURITY AND IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE

44. During the previous UPR cycle, Greece supported implemented several recommendations³⁴ aimed at mitigating the impact of the economic crisis and reducing poverty among vulnerable children and their families.
45. However, economic insecurity decisively continues affecting the family life of adolescents. Children report poverty, lack of basic survival needs (shelter, food, water, medicines), economic crisis, unemployment and price increases. Greek children remain highly vulnerable, with child poverty (ages 0–17) reported at 15.9% in 2025.³⁵ Material deprivation is widespread; approximately 42.9% of all Greek children live in overcrowded housing, a figure that surges to 56.3% for those in the lowest income brackets.³⁶ Food insecurity is also prevalent, with studies linking the shortage of basic goods and "cold homes" (lack of heating) directly to increased adolescent aggression.³⁷ Furthermore, 43.9% of the population reports an inability to cope with unexpected financial expenses, a figure that rises to 53.3% for households with three or more children.³⁸
46. Economic insecurity forces parents into excessive work schedules that severely limit family interactions. Greeks work an average of 2,109 hours per year, "much higher than the OECD average of 1,749 hours".³⁹ Crucially, 74% of the employees are forced to work more hours than [previously] due to the crisis".⁴⁰ These "non-standard working schedules" (e.g., working

³⁴ **130.130** - Malawi; **130.134** - Ecuador; **130.128** – Poland; **130.133** – Dominican Republic; and **130.190** - Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

³⁵ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) – “Severe Material and Social Deprivation and Living Conditions 2025 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) (Income reference period: 2024)”, see Table 1, available at: <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SFA10/2025>

³⁶ Ibidem, see Table 2.

³⁷ Yannopoulos, C. & Leriou, E. (2023) “School bullying and poverty in Greece: Findings from the implementation of a new model during the school year 2022–2023” available at: <https://www.kepe.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/%CE%921-1.pdf>

³⁸ Eurostat – “Quality of life indicators - economic security and physical safety”, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Quality_of_life_indicators_-_economic_security_and_physical_safety

³⁹ Passport to Trade 2.0, “Greece - Work-life balance”, available at: <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-greece/work-life-balance-in-greece>

⁴⁰ Ibidem

late at night or during the weekends) are found to "negatively influence family connectedness as both the time and the quality of time spent with adolescents may be reduced"⁴¹.

47. Poor parent-child relationships, lack of emotional support and excessive pressure from the family cause stress and negatively affect the psycho-emotional development of young people. Families under the strain of "consecutive crises" report that relationships are modified, often leading to a "lack of tenderness from parents, and signs of neglect and abuse".⁴² A report by WHO/Europe states that the proportion of adolescents reporting high levels of family support has dropped from 73% in 2018 to 67% by 2022.⁴³ These dysfunctional relationships and the lack of emotional support are consistently linked to psychiatric outcomes; for example, "financial hardship within households correlates strongly with increased anxiety and depressive symptoms in adolescents".⁴⁴
48. Some concerns have been expressed by adolescents regarding this issue:
 - “[Children lack] *Shelter, Money, Food, Water, Medicine, Support and Love from the social environment*”
 - “[The State should provide] *Funding for destitute families*”
 - “*Family environments of children who, due to economic difficulties, are often unable to provide them with the essentials*”
 - “*To monitor/audit how the benefits intended for children are being used*”
 - “*The fact that many children lack the financial means to attend school and access their full rights*”
 - “*For parents not to work so many hours, to receive higher wages, and to spend appropriate time with their children*”
 - “*The neglect of children when [parents] work; the state forces parents to work the majority of the day, resulting in them being exhausted when they return home and failing to engage with us*”
 - “*Fewer working hours for our parents and a higher salary*”
49. **In line with Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 11, the submitting stakeholders present the following recommendations, inviting the government of Greece to take specific action to improve the general well-being of the nation, especially for children and youth:**
 - a. **Fully implement and adequately fund the National Strategy for Social Integration and Poverty Reduction to address the root causes of family economic instability by ensuring that families living below the poverty line have access to affordable public services and social protection benefits.**

⁴¹ Aronsson, A. et al (2025), available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/393469872_Parental_precarious_employment_and_the_mental_health_of_their_adolescent_children_a_Swedish_registry_study

⁴² Ibidem

⁴³ WHO – Europe, <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/13-11-2024-rising-school-pressure-and-declining-family-support-especially-among-girls--finds-new-who-europe-report>

⁴⁴ Zotou Evaggelia (2025), “*Depression Among Greek Teenage Students: A Silent Crisis*”, available at: <https://isrgpublishers.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/ISRGJAHSS9972025.pdf>

- b. Allocate specific funds more efficiently within the National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child to provide low-income families with free school meals, housing assistance and healthcare services wherever those are not in place.**
- c. Implement and monitor the "flexible working arrangements" established under Laws 4808/2021 and 5239/2025, specifically incentivizing the permanent adoption of the "four-day workweek" for parents of children under 12, so that parents will have more time for their children and provide the warmth and psychological support they need.**
- d. Remunerate and psychosocially support mother-housewives who have to provide home care not only for children and youth, but also for old parents; this will help sustain families on the brink of poverty.**

VIII. SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND DISCRIMINATION

50. Adolescents recognize the existence of serious social inequalities that affect their educational and social path. They report discrimination and stereotypes related to socioeconomic background, place of residence, gender, racial or religious identity and racism. Beyond financial problems, Greek society faces persistent challenges regarding discrimination and the exclusion of vulnerable groups, which further complicates the security landscape for adolescents. Several recommendations from the previous UPR cycle claim for the acknowledgment and alteration of this situation.⁴⁵
51. A 2024 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) revealed that 54% of LGBTQ+ respondents in Greece had "experienced harassment in the past year." Within educational settings, the findings are even more severe: 70% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported that "during their time in school they suffered bullying, ridicule, teasing, insults or threats because they are LGBTIQ."⁴⁶
52. Joint statements from the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and UNHCR in August 2025 expressed "serious concern about the escalation of negative rhetoric and the increasingly hostile climate developing against refugees, migrants and the civil society organizations that support them."⁴⁷ In its 2023 annual report, the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) recorded 158 incidents of racist violence, with 89 cases specifically targeting migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ **130.5** – Botswana; **130.25**, **130.189** and **130.190** - Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; **130.231** – Canada; **130.10** Mexico; **130.12** – Namibia; **130.15** – Pakistan; **130.21** – Rwanda; **130.23** - United States of America; **130.24** – Uruguay; **130.28** – Angola; **130.30** and **130.48** – Australia; **130.31** – Azerbaijan; **130.37** – Chile; **130.45** – Iceland; **130.46** – Israel; **130.13** – Nigeria; **130.18** – Peru; **130.19** - Republic of Moldova; **130.22** – Tunisia; **130.127** – Algeria; **130.33** – Bahamas; **130.39** – Egypt; among others

⁴⁶ FRA - EU LGBTIQ survey III "*LGBTIQ Equality at a Crossroads: Progress and Challenges*", available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/lgbtiq_survey-2024-country_sheet-greece.pdf

⁴⁷ GNCHR (26/01/2026) "*Statement on the provisions of the draft law targeting civil society organisations*", available at: <https://www.nchr.gr/en/news/2181-statement-on-the-provisions-of-the-draft-law-targeting-civil-society-organisations.html>

⁴⁸ RVRN Annual Report 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/racist-violence-recording-network/>

53. The Roma community remains one of the most rights-deprived groups, with "80% of Roma children still at risk of poverty compared with an EU average of 17%."⁴⁹ Sociological reports in 2025 noted that negative public discourse is "normalizing xenophobia and risks escalating racist violence," while also highlighting failures to address police violence and discrimination against Roma living in segregated settlements.⁵⁰
54. Equal opportunities are not guaranteed, as children from less privileged backgrounds are deprived of access to quality education (inequality between private and public schools), healthcare and social benefits. Adolescents noted a lack of hospitals, play and sports areas, and poor organization of the state that does not provide opportunities for young people.
55. Adolescents in Greece are aware of the social inequalities and different forms of discrimination present in their society. Below are some of their comments:
- *“Not all children are accepted in society”*
 - *“Improvement of public health”*
 - *“To improve the provision of medical care to children without any financial burden on the family”*
 - *“Many children of immigrants face difficulties with their lessons because their parents do not know the language and cannot help them”*
 - *“Many children fall victim to school bullying because they are different”*
 - *“The fact that many children lack the financial means to attend school and access their full rights”*
 - *“Efforts to reduce inequality, more respect for teachers, keeping our cities clean, and respect for appearance, race/color, and religion.”*
56. **To address inequalities, based on children and adolescent opinions, the submitting stakeholders propose the following recommendations towards comprehensive social welfare policies.**
- a. Strengthen the public education system in underprivileged regions by implementing an Inclusive Educational System Strategy that allocates specific funds for individualized support of children at risk.**
 - b. Introduce a national curriculum that systematically cultivates a culture of respect, tolerance, and acceptance of diversity in all schools, aiming to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination through human rights education and awareness campaigns. The program should focus specifically on integrating Roma and migrant children.**
 - c. Create a permanent National Youth Participation Mechanism within the National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child. This mechanism should provide children with a formal platform for participating in decision-making processes, with a particular focus on hearing the voices of those in vulnerable situations.**

⁴⁹ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, “Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in Greece”, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-the-human-rights-of-roma-in-greece-by-michael-o-flaherty/1680b60ac0>

⁵⁰ RVRN (14/07/2025), “Concern Over the Worsening Climate Against Refugees and Migrants in Political and Public Discourse”, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/concern-worsening-climate-refugees-migrants-in-political-public/>

- d. Take firm action to stop illegal trafficking and illegal immigration of vulnerable people, while, simultaneously, providing educational and psychological support for all migrant children and youth already within the country's borders.**

IX. CONCLUSION

57. We appreciate Greece's acceptance of a significant portion of the last cycle's recommendations. We also acknowledge that Greece, being a country severely hit by consecutive crises and a border country to boot in an area of multiple recent conflicts, has done a lot to implement measures in line with previous recommendations despite often lacking financial means. Continued progress in legislative and practical implementation is essential for the sustained benefit of the Greek people, as well as all human beings living in the country regardless of their country of origin, ethnic background or culture.
58. We also want to thank the government for considering the concerns raised by civil society, especially those from children and young people. They represent both the present and future of humanity and their active involvement and responsible leadership are crucial for transforming the present to secure their future. The recommendations outlined by children and youth, recorded and processed in this report, are indicative of their broader aspirations for sustainable development and self-determination. These recommendations offer valuable insights that could inform policy development.
59. Solving complex problems like poverty, inequality and discrimination requires a diverse set of actions. We believe that a true guarantee of human rights can only be achieved through the collaboration of the government, civil society and the public. As stakeholders, we are committed to doing our part to turn this shared vision into a reality.
60. We appreciate the opportunity the United Nations provided through the UPR mechanism, as it enabled us to amplify the direct voices of Greek adolescents. Their valuable contributions have been crucial in addressing the concerns and demands outlined in this report.