

Macedonia

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i>	
Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working:	Unavailable
Minimum age of work:	15 ²⁵³⁶
Age to which education is compulsory:	Eighth grade or age 16 ²⁵³⁷
Free public education:	Yes ^{2538*}
Gross primary enrollment rate:	Unavailable
Net primary enrollment rate:	Unavailable
Percent of children 5-14 attending school:	Unavailable
Percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	Unavailable
Ratified Convention 138:	11/17/1991 ²⁵³⁹
Ratified Convention 182:	5/30/2002 ²⁵⁴⁰
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No ²⁵⁴¹
*Must pay for books and other related supplies.	

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Children work on the streets in Macedonia, begging for money, food and clothing; performing minor services, such as washing car windows; and selling cigarettes and other small items.²⁵⁴² Children also work in the informal sector on family farms (though usually not during school hours).²⁵⁴³ Children sometimes sell small items in bars or restaurants at night.²⁵⁴⁴ Street children are predominantly of the minority Roma ethnic group, but also include ethnic Albanians, Turks and Macedonians.²⁵⁴⁵ Romani children are forced by Romani adults to beg for money as a part of an organized group at busy intersections, street corners, and in restaurants.²⁵⁴⁶

During the reporting period, there was an apparent downward trend in trafficking activities in Macedonia. The Ministry of Interior registered seven cases and the Ministry of Labor reported 23 internally trafficked "potential victims," 16 of whom were minors. However, it is unknown what percentage of overall trafficking victims are registered by the Ministry of Interior and the

²⁵³⁶ Government of Macedonia, *Constitution of Macedonia, 1991*, (November 17, 1991), Article 42; available from http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/mk00000_.html.

²⁵³⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Macedonia," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006>.

²⁵³⁸ Government of Macedonia, *Constitution of Macedonia, 1991*, Article 44. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 5.

²⁵³⁹ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, accessed June 28, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

²⁵⁴⁰ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, [database online] [cited June 28, 2006]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

²⁵⁴¹ ILO, *IPEC Action Against Child Labour: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, February 2007; available from <http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/public/english/standards/ipec/doc-view.cfm?id=3159>.

²⁵⁴² Divna Lakinska, *Assessment of Policies, Situation and Programmes for Children on the Streets in Macedonia*, prepared by UNICEF, June 2005, 4, 38, 103. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 6d.

²⁵⁴³ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, *reporting*, August 26, 2005.

²⁵⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 6d.

²⁵⁴⁵ Lakinska, *Assessment of Policies, Situation and Programmes for Children on the Streets in Macedonia*, 44, 45, 107. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 5.

²⁵⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 5.

Ministry of Labor. Although Macedonia is not considered to have a significant incidence of sex tourism involving children, a local NGO reported 39 instances when children were used as juvenile prostitutes. Girls and young women from families with social and economic problems, as well as Roma women and children, were among the groups in Macedonia considered to be at the highest risk of becoming victims of trafficking.²⁵⁴⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 15.²⁵⁵² The employment of minors in work that is “detrimental to their health or morality” is prohibited.²⁵⁵³ Minors are further prohibited from working overtime, working at night between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., or performing work that involves “strenuous physical labor, underground or underwater work or other jobs, which may be harmful or threatening to their health and life.”²⁵⁵⁴ However, the law allows children to work in film or advertisements with parental consent and after a Ministry inspection of the workplace or children under 14 years to work as an apprentice or in vocational education programs if the work is part of an official education program.²⁵⁵⁵ Employers who illegally employ minors face a potential fine.²⁵⁵⁶

The procurement or trade of minors for exploitation is punishable by a mandatory, minimum sentence of 8 years of imprisonment.²⁵⁵⁷ Penalties for traffickers engaging in sexual exploitation and/or labor exploitation range from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. Penalties for mediators/organizers of prostitution range from a minimum of a monetary fine to a maximum of 10 years imprisonment. The law provides also for a minimum prison sentence of 8 years for persons who engage in the trafficking of minors or who knowingly engage in sexual relations with a trafficked child.²⁵⁶¹ In cases when trafficking cannot be proven due to a lack of evidence, Macedonian law provides for prosecution of perpetrators for mediation in prostitution, an offense that is easier to prove than trafficking.²⁵⁶²

Forced labor is prohibited by the Constitution.²⁵⁶³ Individuals under 18 are prohibited from serving in the armed forces.²⁵⁶⁴

²⁵⁴⁷ U.S. Embassy – Skopje, *reporting, February 15, 2007 and April 25, 2007.*

²⁵⁵² Government of Macedonia, *Constitution of Macedonia, 1991.*

²⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵⁴ Government of Macedonia, *Labor Relations Act: Macedonia*, (December 27, 1993), Sections 7, 63, 66, and 67; available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/47727/65084/E93MKD02.htm>.

²⁵⁵⁵ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, *reporting, August 26, 2005.*

²⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 6d.

²⁵⁶¹ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, E-mail communication to USDOL official, August 03, 2007.

²⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶³ Government of Macedonia, *Constitution of Macedonia, 1991*, Article 11. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 6c.

²⁵⁶⁴ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Macedonia," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/regions/country.html?id=126>.

Enforcement of laws regulating the employment of children is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.²⁵⁶⁵ According to the U.S. Department of State, although a legal framework is in place, there has been little practical implementation of child labor laws and policies.²⁵⁶⁶ The State Labor Inspectorate has not discovered cases of minors working in factories or other businesses in Macedonia.²⁵⁶⁷ The Government's Ombudsman's Office investigates violations of citizens' legal rights and has a special unit to investigate violations of children's rights,²⁵⁶⁸ but had not received a child labor related case as of February 2007.²⁵⁷⁰

The Government of Macedonia increased the number of trafficking cases prosecuted in 2006, the most recent year for which this information is available, to 48 cases from 35 cases in 2005. Over 50 traffickers, i.e. half of all suspects, were convicted in 2006, with sentences between 8 months and 13 years' imprisonment, including victim restitution and confiscation of property. Two police officers were found guilty of trafficking-related crimes and received sentences of 18 months and two years, respectively. A Special Prosecutor's Office in the Office of Organized Crime in the Ministry of Justice was created in 2005 to improve trafficking enforcement.²⁵⁷¹

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

A National Plan of Action and Strategy to combat trafficking was adopted in March 2006.²⁵⁷² In cooperation with the government, UNICEF is conducting public awareness raising campaigns on street children and child trafficking.²⁵⁷³ ILO-IPEC is implementing a USD 2.2 million, regional project, funded by the German government, to combat the worst forms of child labor in the stability pact countries, which includes Macedonia.²⁵⁷⁴ IOM and local NGOs are implementing various counter-trafficking projects in cooperation with the government, including the anti-TIP information project "Open Your Eyes" and support for the toll free trafficking SOS number. Border Police officers participated actively in USAID sponsored training, especially as part of the Transnational Referral Mechanism project administered by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.²⁵⁷⁶

²⁵⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 6d.

²⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁶⁷ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, E-mail communication, August 03, 2007.

²⁵⁶⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 5. See also United Nations, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Twenty-third session, Geneva, 2000; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.15.Add.118.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.15.Add.118.En?Opendocument).

²⁵⁷⁰ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, E-mail communication, August 03, 2007.

²⁵⁷¹ Ibid. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Macedonia."

²⁵⁷² U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Macedonia." See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Macedonia," Section 5.

²⁵⁷³ UNICEF, *Child Protection*, [online] July 5, 2006 [cited November 2, 2006]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/tfyr Macedonia/protection.html>.

²⁵⁷⁴ ILO-IPEC Geneva official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, March 1, 2007.

²⁵⁷⁶ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, E-mail communication, August 03, 2007.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare operates one center for street children in Skopje. The center is government funded, and also receives international financial support. According to the Ministry of Labor, on average 275 children a month, who were predominantly Roma, had been served by the center in the past 3 years.²⁵⁷⁸

²⁵⁷⁸ U.S. Embassy- Skopje, E-mail communication, August 03, 2007.