

**- REVIEW -**  
**CONGRES OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

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***”Humanity has to do its best for the child.”***

(Declaration of Geneva)

**Abstract:** In the first decade of October, a congress of specialists involved in the protection of children's rights took place at the location of Düzce University, Turkey.

This meeting, that aimed to improve recognition and respect of children's rights, brought together specialists in the field of work with children. During the three-day congress, a hundred papers on regional analysis of children's rights protection were presented, along with debates and brainstorming sessions, intended to highlight children's rights.

In conclusion, the congress responded with solutions and recommendations regarding the following categories of problems: Education for all children (healthy, gifted or with special needs); Exploitation and violence against children; Child labor; Refugee children; Addictions; Harmful habits of children; Cyberbullying etc.

There have been analyzed and concluded several solutions and recommendations, several methods and ways, aimed to raise awareness of children's rights.

**Keywords:** children's rights, specialists, congress, solutions and recommendations.

## **General framework of issues**

According to the *Declaration of Geneva*, 26 September 1924, children are human beings with rights and dignity ([Declaration\\_of\\_Geneva\\_1924.PDF](#)). Adults are responsible for ensuring that children's rights are respected. *The Declaration of the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 ([www.humanium.org](http://www.humanium.org)).

After more than half a century, children's rights have started being taken into consideration, through new additions that are mentioned in the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This convention is the first international legally bound text, recognizing all the fundamental rights of the child, in 20 November 1989, United Nations ([www.humanium.org](http://www.humanium.org)). In accordance with the present Convention, the respect for the child is an act of expression of freedom and peace in the world. Respect for the rights of the child in a nation represents a measure of the country's social and economic progress.

The first Turkey Congress on Children's Rights took place four years ago, when *The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund* (UNICEF) declared that year as *Innovation for Equity in Children's Rights*. The social and economic progress that is taking place worldwide induces the necessity of developing new solutions for children's well-being."Throughout 2014, UNICEF will convene a series of «Activate Talks» which [...] bring together change makers from all walks of life to rethink and rework how we can deliver results for the most vulnerable and marginalized children" ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)).

After UNICEF desiderates in child's well-being, in Turkey begun a series of conferences, meetings, and discussions, aimed to better children's lives.

This autumn, the *Second Congress on the Children's Rights* was organized by Turkish scientists.

## **Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress on International Children's Rights, CRC-2017**

On 5-7 October 2017, in the Congress Hall of Düzce University in Turkey, took place the *Congress of International Children's Rights*.

Turkey is a country located in western Asia and southeastern Europe, in the Anatolian Peninsula, with the capital of Ankara. The official language is Turkish.

Düzce University is a young university that was founded in 2006, and now, in 2017, has 26 000 students.

Düzce is a province of hazelnut cultivation, and is located near a Turkish part of Black Sea, and about 200 km of the megalopolis Istanbul

(population:18,8 milion/year 2016), ([www.stiripesurse.ro](http://www.stiripesurse.ro)).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Congress of International Children's Rights* (CRC-2017) was organized by the Düzce University in cooperation with The Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Ministry of National Education, Düzce Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policies, and Düzce Provincial Directorate of National Education. An important step forward in the field of children's rights in Turkey was constituted by the involvement of the national administration in supporting this congress. The fees of this congress' participants were supported by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Another important scientific result of the specialists' meeting, is the opportunity for the abstracts of presentations to be published online in an abstracts' e-book. The full texts of papers will be optionally published in the congress' proceedings book (<http://childrenrightscongress>).

This meeting that aimed to improve the recognition and respect for children's rights brought together specialists: professors, psycho-pedagogues, teachers, educators, psychologists, journalists, computer system engineers, researchers, doctors, and artists, responsible for work with children.

"Being loved and taken care, eating regularly and healthy, having rest and fun, benefitting from health services, playing games independently, sheltering and protecting are among the essential rights of children all over the world. Going to school, getting a modern education, protection from violence, exploitation, neglect and all kinds of danger are their main primary rights. At the same time, living in peace and freedom, not working before the age of 18 and living in an immaculate environment has an important place in children's rights. All these rights should be applied to all children without any exception" - fragment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Congress of International Children's Rights' presentation (<http://childrenrightscongress>).

For all these reasons, the aim of the congress is to raise awareness of children's rights, and share scientific studies, implementations and experiences on children's rights; and by putting forward the problems in the implementation of children's rights

The Congress was organized by the academical team of the Faculty of Education of Düzce University. This Faculty has seven departments: Pre-School Education, Elementary Education, Mathematics Education for Elementary Schooling, Pedagogical Education, Science Education, Special Education, Turkish Language Education, English Language Education, Psychological Counseling and Guidance. It provides new approaches on teaching and learning in: Quality and Accreditation of Teaching, Analysis of Education Programs, Educational Statistics, Human Rights and Democracy, Globalization and Education. The Faculty of Education uses language teaching materials: Measurement and Evaluation, Literature and Language Teaching,

Adaptation and Development, Research Methods.

Romania was represented by three papers. Two of them were from the Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad: 'Education for Children with Special Needs' written by Mihaela Gavrilă-Ardelean, Düzce University invited member of Scientific Committee of Congress, and 'The Human Rights – No Child Left Behind, Gifted or Not' written by Gabriela Kelemen (Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2016; 2017, Gavrilă-Ardelean & Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2017; Kelemen, Gavrilă-Ardelean et al., 2016; Mitrofan, Buzducea et al., 2001). The authors are professors at the Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Work, Department of Pedagogy, Psychology and Social Work.

During the three-day congress, a hundred papers on regional analysis of children's rights protection were presented, along with debates and brainstorming sessions, intended to highlight children's rights.

The presentations were focused on varied domains of children's rights:

- Children's education;
- Exploitation and violence against children;
- Child labor;
- Refugee children;
- Access of children to health services;
- Addictions;
- Harmful habits of children;
- Cyberbullying, etc.

At the opening of the congress, that took place at *Atatürk Cultural Center Cumhuriyet* Conference Salon of Düzce University, the following political and administrative personalities participated: Deputy Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey, the Rector of the University, figures belonging to the Turkish scientific world, and national artists with educational attributions in the field of children's rights.

During the three-day congress, a hundred papers on regional analysis of children's rights protection were presented, along with debates and brainstorming sessions, intended to highlight children's rights.

The needs, rights and responsibilities of children, from their parents' perspective; knowledge of the Department of Special Education about child protection against sexual abuse; special education in consonance with children's rights; students' attitude towards children's rights, are some topics that have been debated within the conference. A 'Guide to School Violence' and various studies on violence and suicide prevention have been presented, along with solutions. An assessment of child sexual abuse cases, that took place over the past five years, has been presented, together with proposals of preventive solutions. The topic of violence, reflected in children's books and stories, children's cartoons, paintings and children's games has been approached. The

analysis of children's knowledge of their own rights through story-composition technique, which was carried out on children aged 5 to 6 years, has had an interesting result.

Other presentations have approached children's intellectual disability, through informations regarding legal rights of parents and abuse of mentally handicapped people. 'Media and Children's Rights' is a work that has explored Newscasts and media sources for children, online abuse and the role of the internet in children's lives. The effectiveness of 'Addiction Control Programme', applied to secondary education in Turkey, has been evaluated. The development of social skills in children, and the addiction protection programme have been discussed.

The area focused on children's right to education and learning included presentations on:

- The evaluation of children's attitude towards teachers and towards school;
- Six different learning environments;
- Summer school type classes are opportunities to learn children's rights;
- The right to education of children with special needs, Education for children with special needs Mihaela Gavrilă-Ardelean (INS, 1999; L.487/2002/2013; Bucur, Goian et al., 2012);
- Children's right to quality education;
- Gifted children's right to education.

The right of children to health services has been highlighted through the following presentations:

- The right of children to health services in all specialties;
- Children's rights regarding the perception of the concept of nurses;
- Are health professionals aware of neglect and / or abuse in the medical act?

Children's work, and social abuse of children are topics that have been presented in a special section of the congress, through papers that have described the following issues:

- Mental image of adults regarding child labor;
- Two violations of children's rights from the point of view of labor during agricultural season;
- Solutions against child labor;
- Musical workshop for children: Have you ever asked me?;
- Aspects of child marriage, is the marriage of child girls with adult men, in the culture of Islam, through the eyes of children's rights, which is an example of children rights' violation in Islamic

- states, where the law allows marriage at young ages (minors);
- Sexual abuse, long-term effects: a case report;
  - Prevention of child sexual abuse and intervention of social services;
  - The right to participate and Local Governments: developing the conscience of children's rights through the practical application of Child-Friendly Town;
  - Visual Arts: child's perceptions of his/her rights and a basic education of teachers with regard to children awareness of their own rights;
  - Raising public awareness regarding the rights of preschoolers and adolescents;
  - Determining mothers' opinions on children's rights;
  - Investigating parents' attitudes towards children's rights.

### **Conclusions:**

In conclusion, it can be stated that the work of the 'Second Congress of International Children's Rights' has highlighted the visibility of children's rights in Turkey. During the three days of meetings, public debates, that have been carried out by scientists and by different categories of public actors involved in the field of children's rights, have generated innovative solutions to specific problems.

Researchers from Turkey and other countries participating in the conference have established the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding children's rights, and the particularities of each country.

These findings constitute the foundation of the future *Congress on International Children's Rights*, that will take place in five years. They also constitute a new university collaboration opportunity for Erasmus students' mobilities.

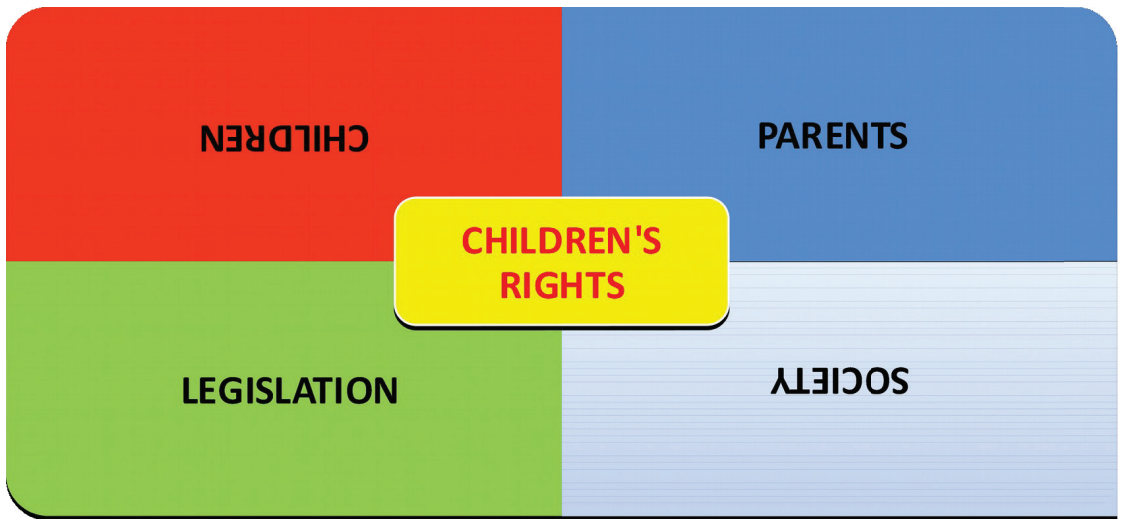


Figure 1. Scheme of work in the next meeting of the steering committee of the project

The following pictures show the congressional activities.



Figure 2. Congressional activities



Figure 3. University Campus of Düzce University





Figure 4. Mr. Vice-Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey in opening



Figure 5. Mrs. Rector and congress team from Düzce University Congress



Figure 6. Building a university collaboration with Mr. Vice-Rector of Düzce University,



Figure 7. Certificate of participation in conference on education of the Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad

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