

In 2015, Macedonia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government amended its laws to classify the forced begging of children as a human trafficking offense and codify that children cannot provide legally valid consent to engage in prostitution. The Ministry of the Interior collaborated with UNHCR and smaller NGOs to draft standard operating procedures for addressing the needs of unaccompanied and separated migrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking children transiting through the country, which the Government adopted in December. Mobile teams of social workers and plainclothes police officers from the Ministry of the Interior removed 78 children from street work and took them to daycare centers. However, children in Macedonia are engaged in child labor, including in begging. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Macedonia lacks recent, comprehensive data on the nature and extent of child labor in the country, including activities involving farming, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation. The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside formal employment relationships. In addition, the use, procurement, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs is not criminally prohibited.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Macedonia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation.(1-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Macedonia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	18.3 (44,161)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	86.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	19.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		89.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2009, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2011.(8)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming,* including grapes,* watermelon,* peaches,* peppers,* cucumbers,* tomatoes,* and apricots* (9, 10)
Services	Street work, including vending small items,* cleaning vehicle windshields,* scavenging, and begging (4-6, 9, 10)
	Working in commercial car washes* (9, 10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 11, 12)
	Forced begging (1-3, 5)
	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (3, 11, 13, 14)
	Forced labor as wait staff and dancers in restaurants,* bars,* and nightclubs* (1, 2, 14)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Macedonia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

The majority of children involved in child labor in Macedonia engage in street work, such as begging, cleaning vehicle windshields, and vending cigarettes and other small items in open markets and at bars and restaurants.(2, 5, 6) Some children engage in begging to help support their families, while others are forced to beg. The majority of children involved in street work, including begging and forced begging, are of the Roma ethnicity.(1-3, 5, 6) Macedonia lacks recent, comprehensive data on the nature and extent of child labor in the country, including activities involving farming, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

The majority of victims of child trafficking in Macedonia are girls, ages 14 to 17, who have been trafficked domestically for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, mostly near the cities of Tetovo and Gostivar.(1-3, 11, 13) Girls in Eastern and Central Macedonia have been identified as being at particularly high risk for human trafficking.(15) Girls, particularly Roma girls, are also trafficked for forced marriages in which they are subject to sexual and labor exploitation.(3, 11, 13)

In 2015, more than 920,000 migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers transited legally and illegally through Macedonia. Although most migrants who transited the country during the first half of 2015 were men, the number of unaccompanied child migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from various countries, including Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, increased from October to December 2015.(3, 16) In November, the Government began enforcing restrictions that only allowed admission into the country to individuals from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Due to this policy, hundreds of migrants, including an unknown number of children, were prevented from entering Macedonia.(16) As a result, illegal migration increased.(16) Most of the migrants denied entry were from Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Morocco, Liberia, Palestine, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast.(14, 17) Children transiting through the country, either legally or illegally, are vulnerable to trafficking for labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Unaccompanied Afghan children between ages 13 and 15 were especially vulnerable to being subjected to labor exploitation through debt bondage.(3, 16) Additionally, research could not determine whether the Government denied access to education for children detained in a Reception Center for Foreigners, known as *Gazi Baba*.(18)

The Laws on Primary Education and Secondary Education provide for education in Macedonian and Romani, along with the languages of several other ethnic minorities.(1) Some communities with a predominantly Roma population have access to Romani-language kindergarten and primary school classes.(19) However, the Government was unable to fully meet the demand for instruction in Romani due to a shortage of qualified teachers.(1) In addition, some Roma children had difficulty accessing education due to a lack of birth registration.(1, 12, 20) Schools for children with intellectual disabilities and classes for children with disabilities in mainstream schools have disproportionately high enrollment rates of Roma children. Sources attributed this phenomenon to discrimination against Roma children, based, in part, on faulty screening procedures for assessing intellectual disabilities or these children being enrolled into these programs without screening.(1, 21-23) Increased government funding for programs to eliminate barriers to education has raised school attendance rates among Roma children.(1) Barriers remain, however, and increase Roma children's vulnerability to child labor.

During the reporting period, the Government improved the accessibility of some school buildings for children with physical disabilities, incorporated technology to assist students with disabilities, and assigned educators with specialized training to some mainstream schools to support teachers who have children with disabilities in their classes. However, a pervasive social stigma against individuals with disabilities persists.(1, 22, 24)



II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Macedonia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 42 of the Constitution; Section 7 of the Labor Relations Act (25, 26)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 7, 63, 66, and 67 of the Labor Relations Act (26)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Rulebook on the minimum occupational safety and health requirements for young workers (27, 28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 11 of the Constitution; Articles 418, 418-c and 418-d of the Criminal Code (25, 29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 418-c and 418-d of the Criminal Code (29)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 190-193b of the Criminal Code (13, 29)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 62 of the Law on Defense (21, 30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 4, 5, 47, and 172 of the Law on Primary Education; Article 3 of the Law on Secondary Education (31-33)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 44 of the Constitution (25)

* No conscription (34)

In 2015, the Government amended Article 418-d (Trafficking in Children) of the Criminal Code to criminalize trafficking for child begging, substitute the term “child” for “under aged person,” and increase the penalties prescribed for clients of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation to a minimum of 12 years of imprisonment.⁽⁵⁾ However, the Government removed the criminal offense outlined under Article 191-a, which specifically criminalized prostitution of a child.^(3, 5, 35)

As part of an effort to protect vulnerable refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, including children, from being trafficked, the Government amended the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection during the reporting period to allow foreign nationals who express in writing when they reach the border that they intend to file for asylum 72 hours to either freely pass through the country or submit a formal application for asylum. This legislative change allowed persons transiting through Macedonia to access public services and use public transportation, which, for some people, reduced their vulnerability to trafficking.⁽³⁾

In December 2015, the Government formally adopted standard operating procedures (SOPs), which the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), UNHCR, and smaller NGOs collaborated to draft, for addressing the needs of unaccompanied and separated migrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking children transiting through the country. These SOPs describe how government officials should handle their initial contact with these children, create a preliminary referral system to gather information, and require the appointment of both a guardian and an interpreter to attempt to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking.^(3, 16)

Macedonia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside formal employment relationships.(5, 26) In addition, laws related to illicit activities are not sufficient, as the use, procurement, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs is not criminally prohibited.(29, 36)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
State Labor Inspectorate (SLI)	Enforce labor laws, including child labor laws, and transmit cases of suspected criminal law violations to the Public Prosecutor. Inspectors conduct a minimum of 60 inspection visits per month, including both targeted and complaint-based inspections.(37) Operates as an autonomous agency.(19, 38)
Department of Social Inclusion within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP)	Work with the police to seek out street children in need of assistance and track cases of forced child labor.(15, 19)
Centers for Social Work (CSWs) within the MLSP	Work with the Ombudsman's Office to register complaints about hazardous child labor. Investigate children's participation in street work, such as vending and begging.(38) Work with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to form mobile teams consisting of one plainclothes officer and one social worker to identify street children, including child laborers, and remove them from hazardous situations. In 2015, these mobile teams identified and registered 78 street children, more than 95 percent of whom were Roma.(3, 5)
Ombudsman's Office	Work with the MLSP's CSWs to register complaints about hazardous child labor. Includes a special unit for the investigation of violations of child rights.(38)
MOI	Enforce criminal laws, including laws related to hazardous child labor. Investigate cases of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities through its special police unit for organized crime, corruption, and human trafficking.(38)
Office of the National Referral Mechanism	Accept reports of potential victims of human trafficking, including children. Refer potential cases of human trafficking to law enforcement authorities for investigation, and refer potential victims to receive social services(15, 39) During the reporting period, representatives from the NRM and social workers were allowed to participate in the initial investigative process, which included the identification interview.(3) Children found to be victims of child trafficking are removed from the situation, placed in shelters for trafficked children, and given immediate medical and psychological care.(39)
Public Prosecutor's Office	Prosecute possible criminal law violations, including those involving the worst forms of child labor.(40) Has an Organized Crime and Corruption Unit with four prosecutors dedicated to cases of child abuse and the worst forms of child labor. The Skopje Basic Prosecutor's Office, a subunit of the Public Prosecutor's Office, has eight prosecutors dedicated to child abuse cases.(14, 39)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Macedonia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	69 (14)	79 (5)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (38)	Yes (5)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	No (38)	No (5)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	No (38)	No (5)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	No (38)	No (5)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	26,872 (5)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (38)	0 (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	N/A	N/A

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (38)	Yes (5)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (38)	Yes (5, 14)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (38)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (14, 38)	Yes (5, 14)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (38)	Yes (5, 14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (5, 14)

Although the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) does not have a complaint mechanism to receive child labor complaints, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) receives child labor complaints through Centers for Social Care and the Office of the Ombudsman and refers complaints to the SLI.(5)

In previous years, data about inspections that the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) conducted were not regularly shared among offices because a central database did not exist. This led to inspectors preparing for inspections without knowing the results of previous visits, and labor and occupational safety and health inspectors, who inspected approximately 10–20 percent of the same entities, writing their own reports without having a mechanism to learn about the findings in each other's inspections.(37) In 2014, the Government separated the SLI from the MLSP to begin functioning as an independent entity.(38) Research could not determine whether issues with a lack of data sharing on inspections among the different offices at the SLI and between the SLI and MLSP remain.

Although the Government formally adopted the SOPs to provide assistance to unaccompanied and separated children transiting Macedonia in December 2015, a source indicated that there were concerns with how the Government handled situations involving these children. During the year, the Government assigned random adult refugees guardianship of unaccompanied children, granting them legal control over the children and their travel documents.(16) This increased the unaccompanied minors' risk for being trafficked, as there were anecdotal reports that some of these guardians extorted and abused the children assigned to them. UNHCR staff worked with local authorities to end this practice and improve implementation of the SOPs.(16)

Operators of a hotline that receives inquiries regarding human trafficking and provides emotional and psycho-social support to callers were trained on early indicators of human trafficking. In 2015, these operators received approximately 400 calls from citizens; however, research could not determine how many of these calls were related to child labor.(3) The MLSP drafted an analysis of the data from this hotline during the reporting period, which focused on the connection between high-risk families and children who are subjected to labor exploitation. The MLSP also collaborated with the National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration to develop new early indicators of human trafficking to identify proactively more victims in the future.(3)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Macedonia took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	No (38)	Yes (3)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (38)	Unknown (5)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (38)	Yes (3)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (14)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (14)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (14)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	7 (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (14)

Macedonia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2015, 255 police officers, including members of the Border Police, and social workers received training on trafficking in persons from various organizations, such as the MOI Unit for Border Relations and Migration, IOM, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, and UNHCR. Also, the National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration, MLSP, and MOI, with the support of the German International Cooperation Agency, provided specialized training to Police Academy cadets on human trafficking issues.⁽³⁾ A total of 13 judges and 6 prosecutors participated in training sessions and conferences on trafficking in persons held by the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, the Council of Europe, and the Public Prosecutors' Association. Training on the prevention of human trafficking and how to assist potential child trafficking victims was provided to 14 employees of orphanages and the center for juvenile delinquents.⁽³⁾

According to records from the Government's Centers for Social Work, in 2015, mobile teams of social workers and police from the MOI removed 78 children from street work—more than 95 percent of whom were Roma—and took them to daycare centers. In three cases, the MLSP revoked parental rights due to abuse and negligence, and it also filed criminal charges in 11 cases against parents who allegedly abused or neglected their children.⁽⁵⁾ Additionally, the MLSP removed 20 children from their families and subsequently placed them in either foster homes or institutions for homeless children.⁽⁵⁾

During the reporting period, the government officially recognized three victims of child trafficking, all of whom were female. Two of the victims were trafficked for the purpose of forced marriage in Italy and Croatia, and one for sexual and labor exploitation in Macedonia.⁽¹⁴⁾ Government authorities referred all three victims to a shelter, where they received the full range of protection and assistance available to victims. Two of the victims were domestic and remained in Macedonia, while the third was a foreign national and was subsequently repatriated to Albania.⁽¹⁴⁾

In 2015, the special police unit of the MOI had five officers, who participated on the mobile teams with social workers and were dedicated to investigating crimes involving child trafficking and other worst forms of child labor. The MOI also had 80 officers dedicated to enforcing laws against child abuse and exploitation throughout the country's 38 police districts.⁽⁵⁾

The Prosecutor's Office suffers from underfunding, and the process required to investigate and gather evidence for human trafficking cases can be lengthy and complex.⁽³⁹⁾ Consequently, although human trafficking cases are given high priority and tried by the Organized Crime and Corruption Prosecutor's Unit at the main court in Skopje, these cases sometimes remain in the court system for years without conclusion.^(38, 39) Despite the Government's acknowledgement that trafficking of children remains a problem in the country, civil society organizations have voiced concern that the Government's attention has shifted away from taking concrete action to address it, such as by proactively identifying child trafficking victims, in favor of focusing on the refugee and ongoing domestic political crises.⁽³⁾

During the reporting period, prosecutors obtained prison convictions against seven defendants for trafficking in children. Four defendants were each issued four-year sentences for trafficking in children. ⁽¹⁴⁾ One defendant was issued a six-year prison sentence for trafficking in children. Three were convicted of trafficking in children for labor, and two, for sexual exploitation.⁽¹⁴⁾ Two defendants were issued 11-and-a-half year suspended sentences each, for trafficking in children for sexual exploitation.⁽¹⁴⁾ Information on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties implemented for criminal acts involving worst forms of child labor other than child trafficking were not available.

In 2015, the Border Police did not use a formal, robust screening process to identify potential human trafficking victims because they processed the entry of hundreds of migrants. However, some Border Police and NGO workers who had been trained on indicators of human trafficking conducted initial screenings using visual indicators, such as multiple children traveling alone.⁽¹⁶⁾ In cases in which migrants, refugees, or asylum-seeking children presented indicators of being trafficked, the Border Police or other MOI personnel were required to follow established procedures to contact the MOI's Anti-Trafficking Unit. However, a source indicated that government officials did not always observe these procedures due to security concerns and prioritizing the processing of these migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers quickly to move them through and out of Macedonia.⁽¹⁶⁾ Additionally, an NGO identified 94 potential victims of human trafficking among the migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking populations; research could not determine whether any of these individuals were children. Upon being notified of these cases, the Government did not investigate them further, due in part to the limited amount of time the potential victims stayed in Macedonia.⁽³⁾

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Children	Coordinate efforts to protect children's rights, including by preventing and eliminating child labor, through the provision of social services.(38) Develop and oversee implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Rights of the Child.(3, 41)
National Coordination Body for Implementation of the Action Plan for Prevention and Countering Sexual Abuse of Children and Pedophilia	Implement the National Action Plan. Led by the MLSP and made up of representatives from relevant ministries and NGOs.(27, 41) Maintain a hotline for reporting sexual abuse of children and children on the street.(27, 39, 42)
National Coordination Body for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect	Oversee implementation of the National Action Plan for Prevention and Countering Abuse and Neglect of Children. Members of this body include representatives from civil society and the WHO and UNICEF country offices.(43)
National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration	Coordinate the work of all institutions involved in combating trafficking in persons. Led by the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons, 14 representatives from 9 governmental institutions participate on the Commission.(38) Includes the Sub-Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Children, which serves as an advisory body to the Commission on all forms of child trafficking.(3, 19, 38)

Although the National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration organized regular meetings in 2015 to assess the overall situation in Macedonia regarding trafficking in persons, it played a limited role in coordinating efforts on prevention or protection among NGOs and the three local anti-trafficking in persons committees.(3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Macedonia has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Action Plan for Children on the Streets (2013–2015)	Aimed to combat the harmful effects of street work by providing street children with services, including education.(44) Intended to provide a systemic and holistic response to the issue of children on the streets, with an emphasis on social services, health care, and inclusion in the educational system.(27, 44)
National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration (2013–2016)	Focuses on preventing human trafficking by reducing the vulnerability of at-risk populations, reducing the demand for the purchase of sexual services, improving victim identification, and increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons for forced begging and other forms of labor exploitation.(11) In 2015, the National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration, with input from the international community and NGOs, amended this plan to add a funding directive for each goal and objective that outlines the ministry responsible for allocating resources to achieve that specific activity. This change facilitates the budget allocation process and allows for ministries to be held accountable for their role in combating trafficking in persons.(3)
National Strategy for the Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010–2020)	Addresses children's rights, such as social protection, social inclusion, health, education, and employment.(38) Includes goals of increasing birth registration among Roma and other minorities, expanding patrol services to identify and support street children, and improve the provision of social services for children involved in street work and begging. Implemented by the MLSP.(38, 45)
National Action Plan for Prevention and Countering Abuse and Neglect of Children (2013–2015)*	Aimed to provide a safe living environment for children by improving prevention and detection of abuse and neglect of children, as well as by providing treatment and rehabilitation of children who have been victims of abuse and neglect. Outlined a strategy for the implementation of these improvements on a national and local level.(19)
National Plan of Action on the Rights of the Child (2012–2015)	Aimed to promote equity, inclusion, and efficiency in the provision of services for children, such as health care and education.(46) Included providing direct assistance to withdraw children from child labor, rehabilitating victims, and providing children with better access to primary education.(47)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

Macedonia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Despite the changes to add a funding directive for each goal and objective in the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration during the reporting period, a lack of sufficient government funding for this plan remained a challenge to its implementation.(3)

The implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Rights of the Child has been slow, with no funds specifically earmarked for its proposed activities, monitoring, or evaluation.(11) Research could not determine whether any of the goals or objectives of this plan were met during any of the years it was active, and, if so, what the results of the efforts to implement this plan were.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Macedonia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Conditional Cash Transfer Program†	Government program that provides cash assistance to certain Roma students who stay in school, discouraging their involvement in street work and begging.(39)
Day Centerst	MLSP program that operates three government day centers and supports two others operated and partially funded by NGOs. One of these centers provides services, including education, health care, and counseling, to children working on the streets.(1) The Government also supports a small transit center for street children.(1) During 2015, day centers provided services to 78 children, a decline from 100 children in 2014.(3, 38)
Center for Victims of Human Trafficking and Transit Center for Foreign Victims of Trafficking†	In 2015, the Government discontinued its partnership with two NGOs to jointly run the Center for Victims of Human Trafficking, which was the first shelter of its kind in Macedonia that received all of its funding from the Government and local self-government institutions to provide housing, basic services, and reintegration services to victims, after the Government elected to no longer grant funding to the NGOs overseeing its operations.(3, 27, 48) The Government also provides partial support to the Transit Center for Foreign Victims of Trafficking, which is operated by NGOs.(48)
CSWs*	Government program of approximately 30 facilities that provide services to vulnerable groups, including street children and child victims of human trafficking. Services include counseling, education, and assistance with obtaining registration documents.(13, 38) CSW staff members have been trained on human trafficking issues.(48)
Social Worker, NGO Joint Mobile Teamst	Government social workers from CSWs and representatives of NGOs formed joint mobile teams to do outreach work in three major municipalities to detect human trafficking victims and at-risk individuals, including street children. Teams then worked to find solutions to address the needs of these vulnerable persons, including providing support to human trafficking victims and their families, and implementing reintegration programs.(27) The Government ended its partnership with NGOs to staff and run these joint teams in April 2015. These joint mobile teams were separate from the mobile teams of one social worker from a CSW and one plainclothes police officer from the MOI discussed in Table 5 of this report.(3) The Government also funds education seminars for parents on the dangers of allowing children to work and beg on the streets.(39)
Program to Reduce Demand for Commercial Sex Services	Government partnership program with Saints Cyril and Methodius University and the NGO Happy Childhood that organizes seminars and screens films to raise awareness about trafficking in persons. These events featured speakers, including lawyers and doctors, and materials that focused on reducing the demand for commercial sex services, such as discussions about some severe legal and medical consequences of procuring those services.(3)
Training for Foster Families as an Alternative Accommodation Option for Child Trafficking Victims*	MLSP program to train foster families to accommodate child trafficking victims as an alternative form of protection to having them receive services in a shelter. The MLSP also designed and began implementing a program to train social workers to provide assistance to child trafficking victims placed with foster families in Skopje and Veles.(3)
Inclusion of Roma Children in Preschool Education†	MLSP project implemented in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund and 19 government units. Aims to support the integration of Roma children by increasing the number of Roma children in preschool.(49)
Children-at-Risk: Breaking the Cycle of Social Exclusion of Children in Macedonia	MLSP and UNICEF-implemented project focusing on improved social protection for street children. Developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for addressing the needs of street children, and supports the Government's goal of greater inclusion of the Roma population.(50)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Macedonia.

Government funding for programs dedicated to combating trafficking in persons decreased from approximately \$431,000 in 2014 to approximately \$47,000 in 2015.(3, 13) As a result of this steep decline in funding, research has determined that the Government made no efforts to raise awareness about the dangers associated with trafficking in persons. In order to compensate for discontinuing funding to the NGOs operating the Center for Victims of Human Trafficking, the MLSP began training foster families as an alternative accommodation option for child trafficking victims who would have otherwise gone to the Center.(3) Research could not determine whether these child trafficking victims received the same level of care that they would have if they had been placed in the Center.(3)

The number of day centers is insufficient to reach all vulnerable children in need of assistance.(15)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Macedonia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that labor law protections apply to all children, including self-employed children and children working outside formal employment relationships.	2015
	Ensure that the law prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including the use, procurement, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2013 – 2015
Enforcement	Provide training on new and existing child labor laws to labor inspectors.	2014– 2015
	Make information regarding labor law enforcement publicly available, including SLI's funding amount and the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites and by desk review.	2015
	Provide labor inspectors with an electronic system to record and share data on inspections, including the number of inspections and the number of violations found, and the number of citations issued by the SLI and the MLSP to a particular entity. Make this data publicly available.	2009 – 2015
	Make information publicly available on the number of investigations, violations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed for criminal acts involving worst forms of child labor.	2014 – 2015
	Reduce the vulnerability to child trafficking of unaccompanied children either transiting through Macedonia or seeking asylum in the country by effectively implementing the SOPs and ending the practice of granting random adult refugees guardianship of these children.	2015
	Provide sufficient funding to the Prosecutor's Office.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure law enforcement agencies screen migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to identify child trafficking victims and investigate these cases.	2015
Coordination	Increase the National Commission for Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration's coordination role among NGOs and local anti-trafficking in persons committees.	2015
Government Policies	Provide sufficient funding to implement the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children engaged in child labor, including those working in farming and street work and being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2015
	Reduce barriers to education by increasing the number of teachers who can provide education in the Romani language, ensuring that children are able to obtain registration documents, and eliminating the placement of children in school for children with intellectual disabilities on the basis of ethnicity.	2014 – 2015
	Increase funding dedicated to combating child trafficking, and ensure that child trafficking victims receive assistance that addresses their specific needs.	2015
	Increase the number of day centers to ensure all vulnerable children in need receive assistance.	2009 – 2015

Macedonia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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