

Quick Response Request

Submitted by: Association of Kosovo Municipalities

Date: June 2011

Subject: The association was interested to find out who is competent for Social Services in NALAS member countries - the local or central government. AKM also was interested to gather information on how social services are functioning, how they are financed and finally if there is a real decentralization of Social Services in the countries from the region.

Background: AKM needed this information to organize a Regional Conference on Social Services and they needed the respective information to see which of the local authorities of the region manage themselves the social services, in order to invite that in the conference and to exchange experiences.

1. Summary of the Results

The responses collected showed that generally the competences in the field of social services are shared: the line ministries and other central institutions are responsible for elaboration of the policy and legal framework, monitoring, etc., while local authorities are responsible for the provision of these services. In Moldova for instance, although the local governments have some attributions in the field of social services, this is not a decentralized competence. The social workers are employed by rational administration (second level of local public administration), but they activate in the municipalities and the municipalities need to provide them offices and other support. The financing of the social services in Moldova is also done by different levels of the public administration: the social services for minors and the incapable persons that are under the tutelage of the local authority of the 1st level are financed from the local budgets, while the social services for vulnerable families, victims of human trafficking, elderly people, etc. – this is a competence of the rational administration. In Serbia, social care is mostly provided at the national/state level, although last years it has been partly transferred to local authorities. The responsibility for cash benefits to the poor, such as social assistance and child allowance, lies with the Republic. Under the Law on Social Care and the Provision of Social Safety of Citizens, municipalities should regulate and finance the entitlement to day care services, equipment for residential care beneficiaries, entitlement to one-off assistance and temporary accommodation in a shelter. In Bulgaria social services are decentralized. They are local activity and are financed through the municipal budgets. According the statistics 77 % of all services that are provided on local level are social services. According our legislations providers of social services can be: the state, the municipalities, individuals and companies/ registered as providers/.

2. Detailed answers

Albania

1. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for policy, legislation, programming assistance funds, payments for people with disabilities and social services, rates and service standards and controls their implementation at all Levels, central and local public and private sector.
2. Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Inspectorate Relief raises Economy-friendly, Paying for People with Disabilities and Social Services, which controls the operation and implementation of legislation and institutional structures depending on its net and sections of assistance in municipality, and approves the documentation specified in Article 26 paragraph 5 letter "c" of this law.

3. Procedure of performing control of these inspectorates determined by the Council of Ministers.
4. For evaluation and monitoring of policy implementation, achieving the standards for economic assistance, payment for persons with disabilities and care services, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs collects information, statistics and reports from local governments. Content, periodicity and statistical indicators defined by the Decision.

Croatia

The matter is regulated by the Law on Social Welfare which was brought just recently (Official Gazette No. 57; 25 May 2011):

http://www.mzss.hr/hr/content/download/6019/47034/file/ZSS_57_2011.pdf

or

<http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/default.aspx>

Comparing to other countries, Croatian Law is very big (132 pages) and it collects all provisions concerning social care and welfare. In general – activities and responsibilities are divided on different ruling levels.

There is also a long-term strategy:

http://www.mzss.hr/hr/content/download/6031/47076/file/Strategija_kona%C4%8Dno-travnja.pdf

The responsible Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

http://www.mzss.hr/hr/zdravstvo_i_socijalna_skrb/socijalna_skrb

Digest:

Article 4

(1) The Republic of Croatia provides measures of social policy and develop programs and plans of

social welfare, creates environment for the development of social welfare activities and supports and encourages the development of self-help, self-subsistence users, and various forms of voluntary work in the field of social welfare, taking care of regional differences.

(2) The ministry responsible for social welfare services (hereinafter: Ministry) monitors activities of social welfare, together with the local (regional) and local governments organizes and coordinates the activities of social welfare.

(3) Funds for operations and the exercise of rights in social care established in this Act provided by the Republic of Croatia and the local (regional) and local government, under the conditions and manner prescribed by this Act and special regulations.

Article 5

(1) Local (regional) governments shall exercise its rights, duties, tasks and goals in social welfare activities in a way that they will:

- Organize the establishment of the Council of Social Welfare and the adoption of the social plan in its area,

- Organizes and implements measures and activities in accordance with the social plan in its area,

- Proposes to develop the necessary capacity of the network of social services in its area, in accordance with their social agenda and strategy of development of social welfare in the Republic of Croatia and gives preliminary ruling on a network of public social services from

Article 160 of this Act;

- Harmonize and coordinate the activities of associations and other legal and natural persons performing social welfare activities in its territory,

- Provides funding and organization of social welfare institutions founded by it

- In cooperation with the Ministry ensures the implementation of social policies and services Social Welfare in sparsely populated and underdeveloped areas and the islands.
- (2) Local government units perform activities of local importance, which directly realize the social needs of citizens.

Article 6

- (1) Activities of social care are performed by the Republic of Croatia, local (regional) and local government, welfare agencies, NGOs, religious community and other local and foreign legal and natural persons in accordance with the requirements of this Act.
- (2) Legal and natural persons engaged in social welfare in paragraph 1 this article preschool, school and health facilities, police, judicial and other governmental bodies and other legal and natural persons under special laws take care of families, children and other people who cannot take care of themselves, are obliged to cooperate with each other.

...

Article 7

- (1) Welfare institutions are established to exercise the right to financial assistance and social services under this Act and carrying out other activities in social welfare activities.
- (2) Welfare institutions may be established by the Republic of Croatia, the unit of (regional) and local governments and other domestic and foreign legal and natural persons under conditions prescribed by this Act and the institutions.
- (3) By way of derogation from paragraph 2 this Article, the founder of the Institute for Social Welfare in the county (in hereinafter the Office) is the Republic of Croatia.

Montenegro

In the Law on Local Self-Government ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro", no. 42/03, 28/04, 75/05, 13/06, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", no. 88/09 od 31.12.2009) there are two paragraphs in Article 32 that are dealing with this issue:

The Municipality, in accordance with the law, shall:

- In accordance with the possibilities, participate in the provision of conditions and improvement of sectors of: health protection, education, social and children protection, employment and other sectors of interest for the local population, and carry out rights and duties of a founder of institutions established within these sectors, in accordance with law;
- In accordance with the possibilities, regulate and provide resolving housing issues for persons with social needs status and persons with disabilities, and support humanitarian and non-governmental organizations working within these sectors;

These activities are being financed by municipal own resources without state transfers.

According to the Law on Social and Children Protection ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro", no. 78/05), municipality can:

- Implement programs for implementation of the Strategy for Development of Social and Children Protection of Montenegro, which shall be adopted by Government of

Montenegro. If a municipality implements such program, it would be financed by municipal resources (Article 7);

- Establish an Institution for Social and Children Protection (such as: institution for accommodation of children and youth, institution for accommodation of adult disabled persons and elders, institution for children vacations and recreation, social centre, and centre for consultation, research and vocational activities related to social and children protection). In that case, it would be financed by municipal resources without state transfers

Moldova

The national legislation of the Republic of Moldova applied to offer the response for the task:

1. Law on local public finance № 397/16.10.2003// Official Bulletin 248-253/996, 19.12.2003;
2. Law on local public administration № 436/28.12.2006// Official Bulletin 32-35/116, 09.03.2007;
3. Law on social assistance № 547 of 25.12.2003// Official Bulletin 042, 12.03.2004;

Description of current situation within Republic of Moldova

According to the Regulation regarding the establishment and operation of Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, approved by the Government at 14th of March 2007, the Ministry has a mission of ensuring the implementation of Government constitutional priorities regarding the development, promotion and implementation of state policy concerning social protection of family and child aiming the provision of social security and support the population standards of living.

Art. 43 lit. h) Law on local public administration stipulates that: "district council decides to put on record socially vulnerable people who need to improve their housing conditions according to Law on housing".

In the same context, Law on local public administration provides in art. 14 lit. y) that: "local council contributes to accomplishment of protection and social assistance measures, ensure child protection; decides to put on record socially vulnerable people who need to improve their housing conditions, establish and ensure functioning of charitable institutions of local interest".

Art. 29 lit. j) Law on local public administration stipulates that "mayor leads, coordinates and controls the activity of local public services, ensures providing of civil status service, of guardianship authority, contributes to accomplishment of measures of social assistance and welfare".

Art. 8 (4) Law on local public finance stipulates that "from the budgets of villages, towns are financed – social assistance for population, including protection of young families and families with many children, protection of mother and child rights, of elderly and lonely, in the part outside the jurisdiction of other authorities".

Art. 8 (4) paragraph 4 Law on local public finance stipulates that "from district budgets are financed the expenses related to provision of social assistance and maintenance of social assistance institutions".

Art. 6 paragraph (3) Law on social assistance stipulates that "Measures of social assistance are accomplished by personalized, preventive or current programs and activities, organized and

guaranteed by authorities of local and central public administration, as well as other bodies or organizations of civil society”.

Art. 6 paragraph (4) Law on social assistance stipulates that “Social assistance programs are developed by central and local government authorities and are coordinated with Ministry for Labor, Social Protection and Family. In developing these programs are involved, as social partners, nongovernmental organizations, individuals and legal entities from the country and abroad, representatives of civil society in Moldova.”

Article 10 of Law on social assistance stipulates:

Social services category includes services offered by the state institutions for every citizen and also services provided in specialized institutions (day or night social centers, shelters for elderly, rehabilitation and prosthetic centers,), placement in institutions of social assistance, home services provided by social service departments, home examination by councils of medical expertise of vitality.

Local public authorities organize provision of social services according to existing social problems in territorial area.

Article 14 of Law on social assistance provides the role of local government authorities in organizing social assistance at local level

(1) Local government authorities analyze social problems, initiate the study and analysis of the situation in social domain on its jurisdiction and, based on obtained results and starting from real financial possibilities, adopt and develop local strategies to support disadvantaged people and families, approve social assistance programs and exercise control over their implementation, provides necessary human, material and financial resources to solve urgent social issues.

(2) Local government authorities may, independently or in partnership with representatives of civil society, establish specialized institutions and services of social assistance.

(3) Local council establishes within the Town Hall a unit of social worker, subordinated both to town hall and division of social assistance and protection of family, which ensures mediation between applicants for social assistance and mentioned division or other institutions and organizations rendering social services.

Article 22 of Law on social assistance provides funding sources

(1) Activities of social assistance are financed by state budget, budgets of territorial-administrative units, local and republic funds of social support for population, donations, sponsorships, as well as contributions from beneficiaries of social assistance.

Unfortunately, social services in Moldova are not decentralized. Many obligations and competences are attributed to local governments in regard to social services, but it is not their primary obligation to deal with these matters according to Law on administrative decentralization.

According to legislation of the Republic of Moldova, when attributing competences to local governments, central governments should expressly stipulate in legislative and normative acts that these competences are delegated. Also, Law on local public finances stipulates that all the expenses for execution of delegated attributions should be covered from state budget, and not from local budget.

Legislation of the Republic of Moldova regarding social services still has to undergo several amendments and adjustments in order to comply with decentralization principles.

Serbia

1. The Basic Assignment of Responsibilities

Social care in Serbia is mostly provided at the national/state level. The responsibility for *cash benefits to the poor*, such as social assistance and child allowance, lies with the **Republic**. At the same time, those are the only benefits targetted to the poor, since they depend on the material status of the family, that is, the household. The Republic is also responsible for caregiver's allowance, which is paid from the budget to persons with disabilities, elderly and immovable persons, according to criterion of a non-material nature.

A certain number of social care services in Serbia is also financed and regulated at the central level. Thus, the responsibility for *residential institutions for beneficiaries, foster care, that is, placing a child with a family other than its own*, as well as *social work services*, including diagnostic, treatment and consulting services, which are provided by the centres for social work, also lies with the Republic.

Supervision over the implementation of the relevant laws and accompanying regulations, *supervision over the work of social care institutions and inspectorate supervision* are carried out by the ministry in charge of social affairs. Supervisory activities related to professional work are performed by the Social Care Institute as the assigned tasks. The responsibility for social care improvement programmes also lies with the Republic.

In some segments of social care in Serbia certain functions of the central authority have been delegated¹ and deconcentrated². Thus, the relevant municipal offices collect the data and documents necessary for approving entitlements to child allowance, while centres for social work at the municipal level collect the documents and bring decisions concerning social assistance, caretaker's allowance and placing the beneficiary in a social care institution. In this connection, the beneficiaries, amount of entitlement and necessary documents are defined at the central level, while payments are centralized and made from the Republic's budget.

¹ Delegation is a form of decentralization which implies that some activities are transferred from the central government level to local self-government units (municipalities).

² Deconcentration implies the transfer of certain activities and competences from the ministries or national services to sectoral organizations at the local level.

Social care has been partly transferred to **local authorities**. Under the Law on Social Care and the Provision of Social Safety of Citizens, municipalities should regulate and finance the *entitlement to day care services, equipment for residential care beneficiaries, entitlement to one-off assistance and temporary accommodation in a shelter*. The municipality, that is, the city will stipulate the conditions and method for the realization of these entitlements.

The Law also stipulates that municipalities may also determine other entitlements in the area of social care, greater scope of existing entitlements and more favourable conditions for their realization should they provide the funds from the local budgets. The municipality/city also finances additional social work services in the centres for social work, provided in the context of competences at the local level. Since the founders of these centres are local self-government units, they are also responsible for the building, furnishing and modernization of these social care institutions. The financing of social care improvement programmes in a local environment also falls within the competence of local self-government units, or the autonomous province.

Over the past years, the non-governmental sector has also been included in the provision of social care services, which refers specifically to associations of persons with disabilities. However, various studies have shown that the services provided by the non-governmental sector are often unsustainable and based on the project finance principle. The private sector is primarily involved in the provision of residential services for the elderly and has no access to government funds.

2. Competences at the Local Level

The entitlement to home care is primarily granted to persons with disabilities and elderly people. It implies help in doing housework (cleaning the flat, buying food and other necessities, maintaining personal hygiene and the like).

The entitlement to day care is granted to children and adults with disabilities, as well as to elderly people. In order to provide this entitlement, the local self-government unit can set up and/or finance day care centres and clubs for children and persons with disabilities, for children and youth with behavioural impairments, as well as for elderly persons. When the founder of these institutions is another legal or physical person, the criteria for their functioning are laid down by the relevant local self-government unit.

Under the Law, a local self-government unit also provides other funds necessary for the purchase of the **beneficiary's equipment for residential placement or placement with a foster family** or, in other words, the purchase of clothes and shoes, in addition to covering transport costs, if the beneficiary or his/her relatives cannot cover them.

The entitlement to one-off assistance in cash or in kind is granted to a person who suddenly or momentarily found himself/herself in a state of social need. The amount of one-off assistance must not exceed the average pay per employee in the Republic in the month when such payment is made. In practice, one-off assistance is often granted to the poor for satisfying their extraordinary medical needs. At times, it is also granted to MOP beneficiaries who, due to the low amount of allowance, need additional funds for securing the basic necessities of life. Since this entitlement is financed by local self-government units under the Law, they also set the eligibility criteria and amount of entitlement.

The entitlement to shelter implies the provision of short-term accommodation for persons found to be vagrant, begging and the like, as well as the provision of accommodation for persons who need temporary care until an appropriate form of permanent care is found.

Most municipalities, especially large and urban ones, grant special discounts within **additional entitlements** to social assistance recipients for the payment of utility services, basic food assistance, fuel assistance, assistance for school supplies for poor children and the like. There are also soup kitchens as special programmes for the poorest at the local level, which were mostly financed by donors during the 1990s.

3. The Availability of Social Care Services at the Local Level

The Law stipulates that local self-governments must provide specified and/or all explicitly mentioned forms of social care, if there is a need for them in a local environment. Due to the lack of financial resources, attaching priority to other activities and, frequently, insufficient information, coupled with the lack of interest on the part of local authorities, social care services at the local level are underdeveloped³.

The data on the availability of social care services at the local level, their quality and the coverage of specified vulnerable groups are not systematically collected. At the Republic level, the attempts

³ Matković Gordana, *Decentralizacija socijalne zaštite u Srbiji*, CLDS, 2006.

are now being made to begin monitoring the number and kinds of priority services on a regular basis.

In 2004, according to the data collected during the interviews in 30 local self-government units, the municipalities in Serbia earmarked less than 2% of their budgets for social care⁴. This share varied between 0.1% and 5% in specified environments⁵.

Various studies conducted over the past years show that almost all municipalities in Serbia finance only one-off assistance, which have evidently been recognized as the necessary form of additional social care at the local level. However, social care services have been introduced only in a smaller number of municipalities. Numerous and widely varied social care services are mostly available in big cities, especially in Belgrade, while some day care services for persons with disabilities and/or home care programmes are available only in one-third of municipalities.

According to the 2007 data,⁶ almost 30% municipalities provide day care services for children and persons with disabilities, thus including 1400 beneficiaries. In 123 municipalities in Serbia such services are not available. Since the funds are provided according to the project finance principle, even 30% of the already established day care institutions do not have the sustainable sources of finance. All these institutions belong to the non-governmental sector. During the period 2000-2007, 37 new day care centres were opened, while the total number of beneficiaries more than tripled.

In 2007, home care, as a social care service, was available in only 50 municipalities (30%)⁷. However, it is estimated that in a greater number of municipalities this service, often combined with a home care service, was provided under the programmes of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. According to the latest data for 2009, 80 municipalities in Serbia have introduced and now finance home care services for 7500 beneficiaries⁸. At present, another 16 municipalities partly finance such services for 700 beneficiaries, using the SIF funds, whereby they have assumed the obligation to fully finance these services as of 2010. In early 2004, home care services were available in 35 municipalities to only 2000 beneficiaries.

⁴ Ibid, p. 36.

⁵ Lišanin Mića, *Finansijski aspekti reforme sistema socijalne zaštite*, paper presented at the conference devoted to *Poverty and Social Policy in Serbia*, World Bank, 2006.

⁶ Matković Gordana, *Dnevni boravak kao pravo i usluga u sistemu socijalne zaštite*, CLDS, 2008.

⁷ Satarić Nadežda, Rašević Mirjana, *Vaninstitucionalna zaštita starijih ljudi u Srbiji – Jaz između potreba i mogućnosti*, Amity, 2007.

⁸ Amity data.

During the past years, a great number of municipalities elaborated local social care development plans. Thanks to donor support provided by the DfID, UNDP/EC and Norwegian Government, 122 municipalities have elaborated such plans in the past two years.

Some municipalities have also started to develop completely new services, which are not specified by the current law, such as: personal assistant services for persons with disabilities, shelters for victims of family violence, assisted living for persons with disabilities and for young adults as they embark upon independent living (halfway homes), SOS telephones and the like.

Among other local projects/programmes, one can also observe a great number of widely varied intersectoral activities geared to specified vulnerable groups, including the provision of housing for refugees and disabled war veterans, legal aid to refugees, shelters for victims of human trafficking, pre-school education of children from marginalized groups, independent living and integration programmes for young adults, support programmes for young adults with behavioural problems, Roma integration programmes, education of professionals and parenting education programmes.

The development of social care services at the local level has also been significantly encouraged by donor funds, as well as by creating two special mechanisms for encouraging the reforms at the national level: the Fund for Financing Associations of Disabled Persons (2002) and Social Innovation Fund (2003). Both Funds represent the mechanisms for decentralization and reform of the system, since they finance local projects and new alternative services, which are not a part of the system, or are insufficiently developed. In addition, both mechanisms encourage partnership between the governmental and non-governmental sectors by attaching priority to joint projects and encouraging the transfer of good practice. During the past six years, the Social Innovation Fund financed projects to the amount of 6 million euros.

4. Constraints on the Process of Social Care Decentralization in Serbia

Without going into the evaluation of the issues of significance for general decentralization processes, such as the general level of democratization of society, extent of corruption at the local level, transparency in local budget spending, or the possibility of the citizens and non-governmental sector to exert influence on local authorities, it is necessary to point to the major constraints on the decentralization process, which are directly related to the area of social care.

Differences among municipalities in size and the level of development are certainly one of the limiting factors to the further decentralization of Serbia. Out of a total of 167 municipalities in Serbia, more than a third has less than 20 thousand inhabitants, while every tenth municipality has over 100 thousand. According to the estimates of the Republican Development Bureau, the range of municipalities' development levels was 5.4:1 in 2008⁹.

These differences are even greater when we compare per capita funds earmarked for social care – the range is 113:1. Moreover, per capita expenditure on social care in one half of municipalities amounted to less than 100 dinars in 2006¹⁰ (DfID, 2006, p. 9). Small municipalities, which are mostly underdeveloped, cannot take advantage of economies of scale; they dispose of small budgetary funds and have serious problems with administrative capacity.

It must be emphasized that in Serbia there are **no regions**, so that the decentralization issue is considered in the context of the division of competences between the central/national and municipal levels. The non-existence of regions poses a serious constraint in view of the fact that, according to the logic of good governance, this intermediate government level would be perfect for the transfer of a considerable number of competences in the area of social care. The establishment of some form of inter-municipal cooperation which could, albeit in part, overcome the problem of the non-existence of regions, also encounters numerous difficulties. In Serbia there is also a very pronounced problem related to inter-municipal payments for services, which aggravates any form of cooperation from the very beginning.

The **capacities** of local authorities in Serbia are not at such a level so as to enable a fast transfer of competences and responsibilities in the area of social care. “The local self-government is not sufficiently autonomous or sufficiently interested in satisfying the citizens' needs by developing widely varied services in their midst“ (Republika Srbija, 2006, p.10).

Many local authorities in Serbia do not have:

- A complete and systematized picture about the social needs in their environment. The existing data are mostly partial. They are kept in a number of different institutions and are confined to determining the number of beneficiaries of legally defined entitlements.

⁹ Republican Development Bureau, *Izveštaj o razvoju Srbije 2008. godine*, Belgrade, 2009. p. 54

¹⁰ DfID, *Strategija razvoja socijalne zaštite u Srbiji: Ključna pitanja finansiranja*, 2006.

- The data on financial resources which are earmarked for social care in the Republic's or local budget, or out of extrabudgetary resources.
- Information about social care programmes, which are carried out in their municipalities and fall within their sphere of competence. In some cases they even do not know what these programmes actually imply.
- Social care programmes are not attached political significance or, in other words, they are not considered significant for attracting voters. The least favourable situation is in small municipalities, in less developed ones and in those where there are no donor or special republican programmes.

Although the professional capacity of centres for social work is certainly greater, there are evident problems concerning the municipalities which do not have such centres (they have the offices of the municipal centres), while small municipalities even have problems in recruiting some experts (psychologists and, in some cases, social workers). In general, however, these centres are also faced with resistance and misunderstanding concerning the reform orientation and suspicions about deinstitutionalization as the desirable direction of reforms, while placing the beneficiary in the centre of the system can still be considered a distant aim.

In the government strategy of social care reform it is mentioned that the potential constraints on the implementation of reforms are posed by “non-uniformity of professional capacities and working conditions“, as well as “resistance to something new and unknown, insufficient and incomplete information possessed by potential entities in charge of activities, fear of losing jobs»¹¹.

One should point out that an especially significant restraint is posed by the fact that the **potential beneficiaries of social care** are not an interest group; they are excluded from participative processes, have no access to the centres of power and do not know how to articulate their needs. This is certainly one reason why the largest government debt in relative terms, which was inherited in 2000, was the debt to the beneficiaries of social care.

The Serbian citizens, especially the poorest ones, are not sufficiently informed about their social rights either at the local or the central level. According to the findings of the 2003 Living Standard

¹¹Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, *Strategija razvoja socijalne zaštite*, Belgrade, 2006, p. 43.

Survey, almost 40% of the poor do not receive assistance, because they are not informed about the existence of various social programmes.¹² The recent in-depth interviews with MOP beneficiaries have also confirmed these findings¹³.

The non-empowerment of vulnerable groups in Serbia is especially pointed out by the fact that, due to stigma, some needs are concealed, especially when persons with disabilities are in question. The UNICEF report on poor and excluded children explicitly points to the fact that parents often *hide* children with developmental disorders and that they are insufficiently informed how they can help them¹⁴ (UNICEF, 2007, p. 30).

It is also clear that the **control and regulatory mechanisms** in Serbia at the central level are not sufficiently developed to cope with a high level of decentralization, regardless of whether it is the question of the transfer of competences to the local level, or the inclusion of the private and non-governmental sectors in the provision of services. There is also no possibility of penalizing the municipalities which do not fulfil their legal obligations in the area of social care.

Finally, it should be pointed out that underway are numerous projects which will enable the elimination or, at least, alleviation of some obstacles standing in the way of speeding up the decentralization process. The elaboration of minimum standards for specified services is in the final phase; the new law will also stipulate provisions on accreditation and licencing, while the efforts are also being made to improve the work of inspectorate services.

¹² Milanović Branko, *Socijalni transferi, nejednakost* in: Siromaštvo i reforma finansijske podrške siromašnima, Ministry of Social Affairs, CLDS, Beograd, 2003.

¹³ Matković Gordana , *Uticaj ekonomske krize na porodice sa decom korisnike materijalnog obezbeđenja*
UNICEF, 2009. *Draft*.

¹⁴ UNICEF, *The State of Children in Serbia 2006: Poor and Exluded Children*, Belgrade, 2007, p. 30.