

Summary of Case Report AJB-2800/2020

OPCAT Visit to the Harmónia Integrated Social Care Institute of Heves County

On May 21, 2020, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, who is responsible for performing the tasks of the OPCAT National Preventive Mechanism (hereinafter the "NPM") and his staff members paid a visit to the Harmónia Integrated Social Care Institute of Heves County (hereinafter the "institute").

The visit aimed to investigate the fulfilment of measures with regard to the prevention of COVID-19 cases. Due to the state of emergency declared by Government Decree No. 40/2020. (III.11.), the visit was previously announced to the institute.

The members of the visiting group, wearing protective equipment, monitored the circumstances and daily activity of the residents with regard to the restrictions introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also examined whether the institute disposes of enough protective equipment and sanitizers, using it in an adequate manner.

The visit also examined the personal and material surrounding of the residents, and the medical check-up during the state of emergency.

At the time of the visit, there were 156 residents out of which 43 inmates were minors and 154 inmates were living with cumulative disabilities, i.e. the intellectual disability was combined with moving-, seeing-, talking-, behaviour disorder or other health disease.

The number of the status of the professional personnel was 115, out of which 94 places were fulfilled. The status of the medical doctor was not fulfilled, the institute applied the medical staff in the framework of mandate. The medical doctor visited the institute on daily basis and made check-ups during 3 hours-time. The report suggested to keep the issue of the fulfilment of the permanent position on the agenda.

The institute fulfilled the necessary measures in order to prevent the COVID-19 infection. The rooms and the corridors of the institute were regularly cleaned up, all the surfaces were sanitized. Until the date of the visit infection was not detected within the institute.

Due to the result of the preventive measures the inmates were not allowed to move within the units of the institute, as a result some inmates could not fulfil their daily work, they could not be together on the playground, go to the nursery or to the school outside the institute.

Most of the inmates did not have regularly family contacts, which situation became worse due to the restriction of visits. The report suggested to the head of the institute to take care that all possible of alternative communications (Skype, telephone calls, letters) be made available for the inmates and their relatives.