

Questionnaire on the impact of COVID-19 on intercountry adoptions under the 1993 Adoption Convention

<i>Identification for follow-up purposes:</i>	
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I. OVERARCHING QUESTIONS	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
1.	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, has your State modified intercountry adoption procedures under the 1993 Adoption Convention? If so, what has your State done to ensure that the safeguards and procedures of the Convention have been, and continue to be, respected?</p> <p>There were no changes related to the 1993 Adoption Convention. Several temporary changes were made in accordance with local legal documents, taking into account the restrictions of the pandemic period in the Republic of Lithuania. The main and most important are the extended deadlines related to the submission of documents of families intending to adopt in the Republic of Lithuania to the State child rights protection and adoption service under the Ministry of social security and labour (heirenafter - the Service).</p>
II. OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 (cases in transition only)	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
2.	<p>What measures, if any, did your State take to deal with cases where the child had already been matched with prospective adoptive parents, but no adoption decision had been issued at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in your State? How many children were in such a situation?</p> <p>Children who had been mached with prospective adoptive parents were only few. The main problem in such cases was that the families, due to the pandemic situation in their countries, could not provide the Service necessary documents for the further conduct of the intercountry adoption procedure. In such cases, the Service always extended the time-limit for obtaining documents, taking into account the individual situation of each family. Requests and information were provided to the Service by a family representative - an accredited bodies or Central authorities. Currently, international adoption procedures for all children who are already been mached with propective adoptive parents are organized and not suspended. In order to make the international adoption procedure as convenient and professional</p>

	<p>as possible some innovations had been made, for example: communication between the prospective adoptive parent and the child was organized remotely, using modern technologies, depending on the situation, some adoption cases were heard in the Vilnius Regional Court remotely, decisions on adoption have also been taken remotely.</p>
3.	<p>What measures, if any, did your State take to deal with cases where the adoption decision had already been issued, but the child was still in the State of origin at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in your State? How many children were in such a situation?</p>
	N/A
<p>III. DURING COVID-19 (cases in transition and new cases)</p>	
	<p><u>States of origin only</u></p>
4.	<p>Has your State adapted, and if so how, the following stages of the adoption procedure:</p> <p>a) Declaration of adoptability of the child:</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>b) Matching:</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>c) Socialisation period:</p> <p>Communication between the prospective adoptive parents and the child organized remotely, using modern technologies. Looking at each case of an adopted child very individually and in the best interests of the child.</p> <p>d) Support and counselling to adoptable children:</p> <p>Support and counselling to adoptable children is responsibility of legal representatives of the adoptable children (social workers in children care homes (orphanages). They prepare the child for adoption. During this particular pandemic period, social workers provided supportive information to children who had been matched with prospective adoptive parents to help children understand the situation, for example, why the family cannot come to visit the child as soon as possible, why the communication is possible only online, remotely, etc.</p> <p>e) Adoption decision:</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>f) Other stages:</p> <p>N/A</p>
	<p><u>Receiving States only</u></p>
5.	<p>Has your State adapted, and if so how, the following stages of the adoption procedure:</p> <p>a) Eligibility and suitability of prospective adoptive parents:</p>

	<p>N/A.</p> <p>b) Support and counselling to prospective adoptive parents:</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>c) Other stages:</p> <p>N/A.</p>
IV. USE OF TECHNOLOGY	
	Both States of origin and receiving States
6.	<p>Has the use of technologies (e.g, videoconferencing) evolved in the adoption procedures in place in your State since the outbreak of COVID-19 in your State? Please specify:</p> <p>a) any benefits and challenges:</p> <p>The use of technology has grown very strongly since several months of quarantine in the country. Only remote work was possible, which would not have been possible without the use of technology. The Service on 12th of May in 2020 organized a meeting of accredited bodies, which took place remotely. Representatives of organizations, who work abroad, also had the opportunity to participate directly. Most importantly, that the organization of the international adoption procedure did not stop with the help of technology - family selection commissions for children and the international adoption commission, which makes decisions on the possibility of international adoption of children to foreign nationals for adoption, were organized remotely. New experiences were discovered in organizing remote events, conferences, various meetings. Visible benefits - convenience, speed of decisions, save time convenient participation for everyone, the ability to adapt to the current situation without stopping work. We believe that part of the work of organizing remote meetings will remain in the future. Challenges include - the threat to the security of personal data, proper planning of work and work to prevent workers from burning.</p> <p>b) if your response to question 72 (“Use of new technologies”) of the 2020 Questionnaire on the practical operation of the 1993 Adoption Convention (Prel. Doc. No 3) has changed:</p> <p>N/A</p>
V. POST COVID-19: LOOKING AHEAD	
	Both States of origin and receiving States
7.	<p>Has your State developed any practices during this pandemic period that would be useful to mainstream into regular work practices? If so, please elaborate on what those practices are and how you plan to go about mainstreaming them into regular work practices:</p> <p>Remote meetings will be hold in future as well.</p>

8.	<p>Please share any good practices and lessons learned by your State which may be applied in the event of another pandemic or similar state of emergency:</p> <p>The Service has tested and shared good practice on the organization of various commissions remotely. This is especially important when the members of the commission are from different organizations. Distance meetings are convenient for everyone to participate and make decisions faster. Another innovation is the signing of documents with an electronic signature. It's convenient, fast and operative.</p>
<p>VI. ANY OTHER COMMENTS</p>	
	<p><u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u></p>
9.	<p>Please insert here any other comments you may have:</p> <p>Please insert text here</p>