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Editorial:

Children's Rights and their Protection

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The first issue of "Horizons of Education," which will be printed in 2014 marks a new chapter for the publication which henceforth will be a quarterly journal. The journal has also be revamped in terms of its graphics. These changes are due to a raising of the standards of the journal as well as more closely meeting the needs of the reader.

The current issue of our journal is devoted to the widely recognized problem of children's rights. The idea of children's rights emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a legal institution recognized around the world, children's rights appeared at the turn of the nineteenth / twentieth century. Nowadays, we observe the large and ever growing process of their codification, both at the national and international level. One can find plenty of binding international agreements, many more documents belonging to so-called "soft law" and numerous domestic law acts regarding child rights issues and defining standards for their protection. Individual units, institutions and states are committed to their implementation and respect.

Among the articles written by foreign and Polish authors you will find papers on issues related to the nature of children's rights, their implementation and their protection.

We are introduced to the theme of the rights of children by Marta Prucnal in her article *On Children's Rights*. The author begins with a presentation of the universal definition of "a child" incorporated into the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The author continues her thoughts with the presentation of the concept of rights and children's rights. She presents two main theories of rights – "interest" and "choice" theory and explains children's rights place within those theories. She discusses the frameworks of children's rights presented by M. Freeman and J. Eekelaar, the contemporary concept of children's rights

described by M. Balcerek, E. Czyż and K.A. Bentley, the evolution and codification process of children's rights and the means of their protection.

The theme of children's rights is developed by Marta Kosowska-Ślusarczyk in her article *The Portrait of a Contemporary Child. The Discussion in the Context of Children's Rights in the Light of the Findings of Janusz Korczak*. The author analyzes some documents by Janusz Korczak, such as *Prawo dziecka do szacunku (The Child's Right to Respect)*, *Jak kochać dziecko. Dziecko w rodzinie (How to Love a Child. The Child in the Family)*, *Prawidła życia (Regulations of Life)* and other selected writings. She analyses a child's right to life, to be what it is, to property, to his / her own opinion, to play and free time. The author concludes with statement that despite many differences between Korczak's vision of children's rights and the contemporary portrait of the child, one should always remember the "Old Doctor's" belief that childhood is a unique phase; separate moment that should always be respected since once it ends, it will be repeated.

Łukasz Kosowski in his article *Mtoto. Children's Rights in the Post-Colonial World* examines the meaning of "postcolonialism." He looks at human rights and children's rights from an interdisciplinary perspective and "discusses the need of understanding the diversity, and reinventing international dialogue in terms of education of youth for sustainability."

Two authors discuss criminal law regulations referring to children – Farhad Malekian in his article *The International Criminal Law of Children on War Crimes* carries out his analysis from an international perspective, whereas Hangameh Ghazanfari in her article titled *Criminal Responsibility of Children in Iranian Penal System in the Light of New Penal Code* – from a national one. In his study Farhad Malekian presents the concept of international criminal law and focuses on its part which is the international criminal law of children. He describes the mandate of international criminal law for children, identifies international crimes against children and characterizes international criminal responsibility for the recruitment of children. He underlines that children are protected subjects both in times of peace and war and their rights "should be regarded as peremptory parts of international criminal law and therefore inalienable." Hangameh Ghazanfari deals with the issue of determination of the age of

criminal responsibility of children which she considers to be “one of the most challenging legal issues associated with child rights in Iran.” The author analyses the Iranian penal system in light of its compliance with Iranian religious rules on the one hand and binding international conventions on the other.

Małgorzata Kozak’s article entitled *A Child’s Right for Protection against all Forms of Violence – Polish Legislation and Pedagogical Perspective* is devoted to the problem of violence towards children. The author describes definitions of violence towards a child, the Polish legal context of this phenomenon and its socio-legal consequences. She tries to find out what the sources of violence towards children are and indicate the role of various institutions and organizations in the context of violence prevention.

Last but not least, Aneta Rogalska-Marasińska in her article *Children’s Right to Learn about Multicultural Europe in Future Teachers’ Education* underlines a child’s need and right to learn about “itself and about other people from the background of his/her own culture and in relation to the culture of those others” so that he or she could build sincere relations with other people. The author states that teachers should be educated in such a way as to make them conscious about that needs of a child and so that they are prepared to teach children how to develop the idea of openness and understanding.

On behalf of the entire Editorial Board I wish you an enjoyable and beneficial read.

Marta Prucnal