

UPR written statement – ESTONIA

My name is **Triin Sooäär**, I am 17 years old and I am representing the Estonian Union for Child Welfare which is the Estonian oldest NGO in this field, being almost 2 times older than me.

Since I was very little, I have believed that every child is like a young star waiting to start shining. BUT ...many shadows will not always let those stars shine.

It leads me to the last Estonian UPR ...and as I think that child-friendly language is important, I will translate it in a way that everyone could understand. UPR is the universal periodic overview that includes sharing best human rights practices around the globe.

In our last Estonian UPR there were many important topics connected to the rights of the child and I will cover a few of them.

In the beginning, I planned to learn all the difficult words to sound smart. However, in the end I decided that I will do my best to make it sound not smart but easy for everyone, including children.

- Different places don't have equal opportunities.
- There are not enough support specialists.
- More than $\frac{1}{3}$ (one third) of people still have an attitude that it is ok to physically punish a child.
- In Estonia it is defined by law that a person under the age of 18 is not entitled to psychiatric care without parental consent. The amendment to the law has been waiting in the Parliament of Estonia for more than a year because of different political oppositions.

We conducted a nationwide survey where we asked children's opinion if psychiatric care should be equally available also for minors.

We received hundreds of replies and additional comments. Here is one of them, from a **16-year-old girl**: *“This disease does not ask for age, gender or place of residence and sometimes the causes of children's mental problems may be their parents.”*

To conclude my speech, it is important:

- To take action in the topics presented in Estonian UPR
- To ensure that decision-makers know and understand the value of working not only FOR children but also working WITH children.

Children need to be included already from the beginning as it is **THEIR LIFE** we are talking about.

What if children have more answers and more solutions than adults could ever expect?