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State Obligations to Protect Children's Rights under the European Convention on Human Rights: The Case of Albania

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Abstract

This paper examines the obligations of the Albanian state to protect children's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), with particular emphasis on the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and its influence on domestic legal reforms. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines legal analysis with comparative and empirical data, the study evaluates the implementation of European standards within the Albanian child protection system. The research analyzes national legislation, institutional mechanisms, and international reports to assess key areas, including access to justice, protection from abuse, education, healthcare, and the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law. The findings indicate that Albania has made significant legislative and institutional progress, particularly through the adoption of Law No. 18/2017 and the establishment of child protection structures. Nevertheless, important challenges remain regarding institutional independence, effective monitoring, inter-institutional coordination, and equal access to services, especially for children living in rural areas and those with special needs. The paper concludes that the effective implementation of children's rights requires stronger institutional capacities, closer alignment with ECtHR jurisprudence, and the development of evidence-based policies that promote the best interests of the child and ensure practical compliance with international human rights standards.

Keywords: Child Protection; ECtHR; European Convention on Human Rights; Human Rights; State Obligations