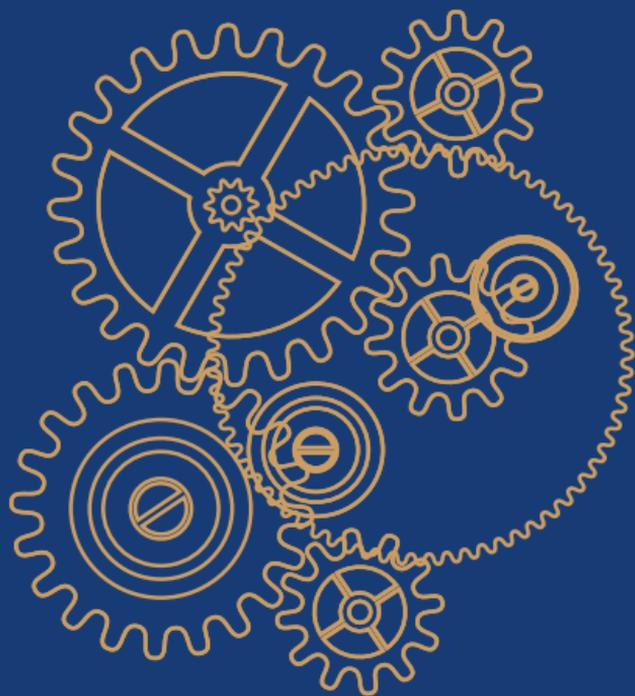


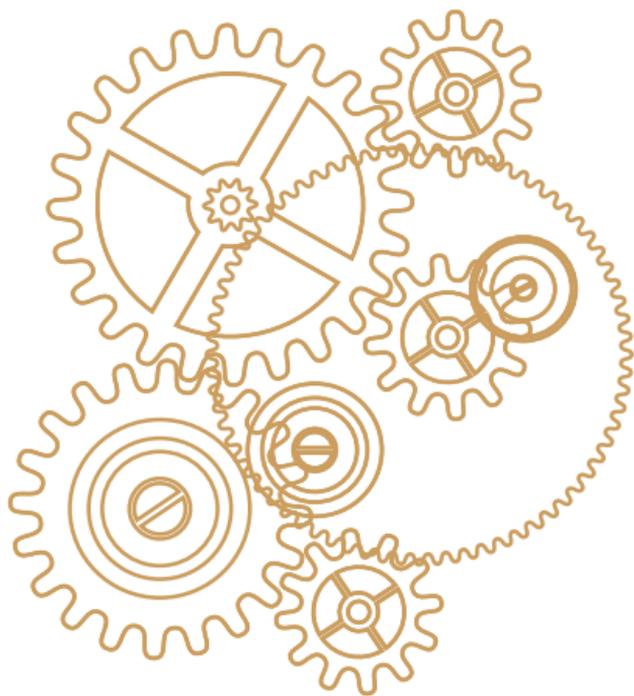
Council of Europe



PASSPORT

to your rights

Council of Europe



PASSPORT

to your rights

Welcome to a journey

Life is an amazing journey. We travel with many people on the road ahead and we all want our trip to be as safe, exciting and happy as possible. One very good way to make this happen is to respect other people's rights. And this applies to everyone – children and adults alike.



As a boy or girl aged under 18 you have certain specific rights. A list of these rights, as well as steps governments must take to help you exercise them, is set out in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



You have certainly been told that there are things you do not have the right to do or to say. You are not allowed to damage anyone's belongings, to steal, to hurt or insult people. But did you know that you also have rights?

This passport will take you on a journey through some of your rights. The journey has six pit stops on the way to your final destination. At each stop, you will learn more about what your rights are, and you will be asked to do a small exercise. Once this is done, you can collect a visa to the rights that you have just explored. It means that you can better defend yourself when people do not respect these rights and that you will also be able to help other children do the same.



First step –

*Your right to survive, to protection
and to development*



Your survival, your protection and your development

- You are entitled to have your interests protected in all decisions that concern you and not to be discriminated against, for example because of your origins, opinions, beliefs or sex.
- You have the right to life and to a balanced and healthy physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
- You have the right to food, clothing, housing and health protection.



- You have the right to protection against all forms of exploitation, abuse and physical and psychological violence, including what happens in the family and in establishments that look after children.
- You are entitled to a high standard of education to ensure the fullest possible development of your personality, talents and abilities. Your education must teach you to respect the rights and freedoms of others and prepare you for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality and friendship among all peoples.
- You are entitled to a wide range of objective information.
- If you have a mental or physical disability, you have a right to lead a life of dignity, so that you can integrate into society, develop your personality and enjoy maximum autonomy.
- You have a right to rest, leisure, play and recreational, artistic and cultural activities in an environment which is age appropriate and respects your rights.

Get your visa:

Talk to your teacher and volunteer to explain these rights to your classmates. You can even propose to make a poster for the school.



Second stop –

*Your identity,
your private life and your family*

Your identity, your private life and your family

- You have the right to a name, a nationality and the protection of your identity. If you belong to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority, you may not be deprived of your right to lead your own cultural life, to practise your religion or to use the language of your group.



- You are entitled to protection of your privacy. No one may interfere unlawfully in your private life or that of your family. Your home, your correspondence, your honour and your reputation are protected by law.

- Your parents have joint responsibility for your upbringing and development. They have the right and the duty to offer you guidance in how you should exercise your rights and respect your obligations.
- You have a right to know who your parents are and to be brought up by them, unless this is not in your interests.
- You have a right to know where your parents are and to enter another country to join them. Your parents have the same right towards you.
- In the event of separation, you are entitled to be consulted on all decisions concerning your relations with your parents. If you are separated from your parents, or from one of them, you have the right to see them regularly, unless this is not in your interests.
- Adoption may only be authorised if it is in your interests.

Get your visa:

Who are you?

Put your picture here



First name:

Surname:

Nationality/ies:

Father's name:

Mother's name:

Address:

.....

What am I proud of?

.....

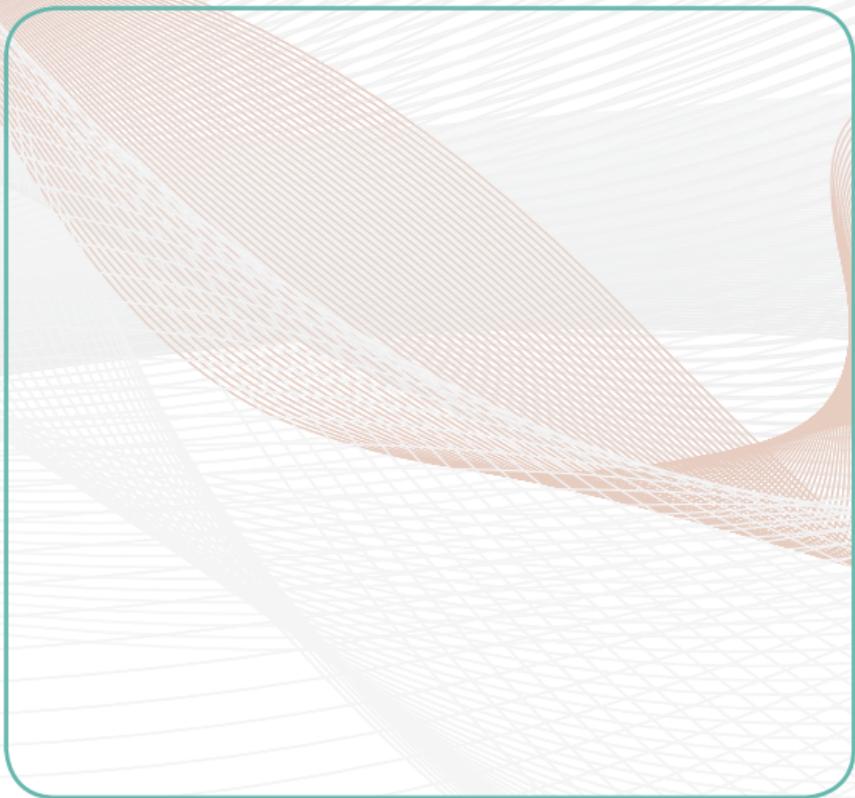
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Get your visa:

Who can you become?

Imagine yourself in 2040
and draw your picture here



Languages:

Studies:

Profession:

Hobbies:

Married?

Children?

I have travelled to

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Third stop –
Your freedoms

Your freedoms

- Freedom of opinion: as soon as you are capable of doing so, you are entitled to give your opinion on anything that concerns you. Your opinion must be taken into account.



- Freedom of expression: you have the right to express yourself freely and to seek, receive and disseminate information.
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Freedom of association: you are entitled to associate with other people and take part in meetings.

There are limits to these freedoms. You must respect the rights and freedoms of others, and must not pose a threat to society or to yourself.

Get your visa:

Make a list of situations at home, at school or in your city where you wish your opinion would be listened to.

1. At home

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-
-

2. At school

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-
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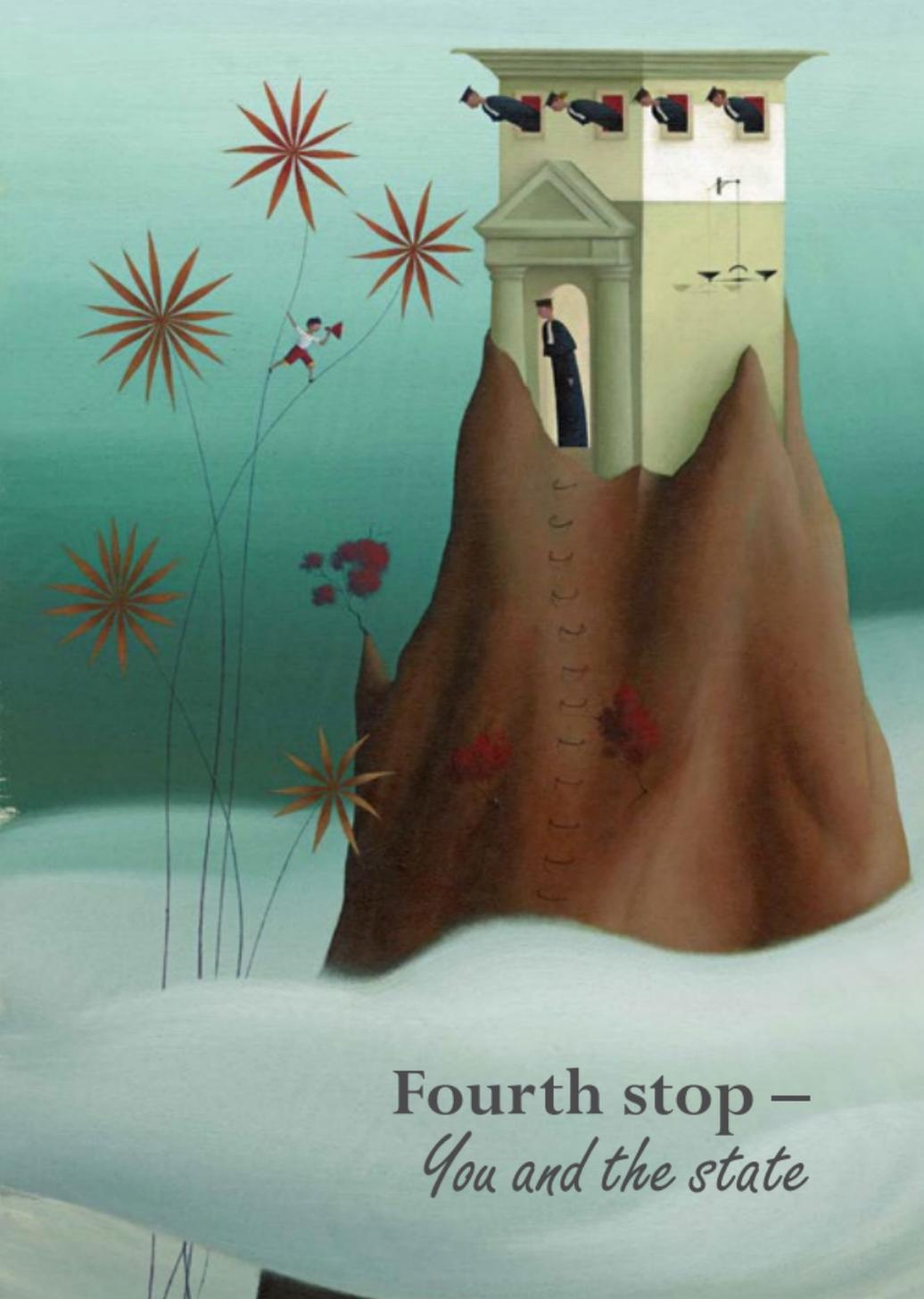
3. In your city

-
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-
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-
.....

Get your visa:

The Internet is a fantastic tool to learn and share. However, it can also hide some dangers. Play the online game Through the Wild Web Woods to learn how to protect yourself on the Internet. It exists in many languages.

www.wildwebwoods.org



Fourth stop –
You and the state

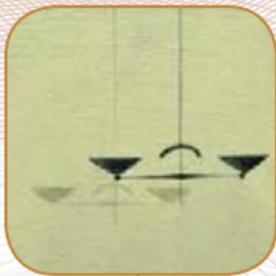


You and the state

- The state must do whatever is necessary to enable you to exercise your established rights and freedoms.
- The state must protect you and assure your well-being. It must help your parents or the people who care for you by establishing institutions and services to look after your interests and your well-being.
- If you cannot live with your family, the state must protect and help you. It must find a solution that takes account of your past and your culture, and you will be entitled to have your situation regularly reviewed.
- If you have suffered violence, the state must help you and assist your return to a normal way of life.



- You are entitled to justice. The state must ensure that the justice system is adapted to your specific rights and needs.
- You may not be subjected to torture or cruel or degrading treatment or punishment.
- You may not be executed or imprisoned for life.



- You may not be arrested unlawfully. Detention must be the last possible option. It must be as short as possible and take account of your needs and your age. In detention, you must be separated from adult detainees or prisoners and, other than in exceptional circumstances in your own interests, you will have the right to remain in contact with your family.



- In wartime, the state must protect and care for you. If you are under 15 you may not be recruited into any armed forces.

International conventions are contracts between states. These contracts lay down rules that must be obeyed, but they also encourage states to take measures that are still more favourable to children. If the law of your country is more favourable to you than a convention, it is the national law that must be applied.

Get your visa:

Imagine and describe the perfect country for children.

It should

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Can you think of some ways your country can help children:

- with disabilities

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- who have had to escape their country

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- who have been beaten

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Fifth stop –
*International organisations
and you*



International organisations and you

States have established numerous international organisations. Some, like the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe, were set up to protect human rights, prevent conflicts and develop fairer and more prosperous and democratic societies. Nearly all international conventions are produced by these organisations, which then take steps to ensure that states respect the rights that they lay down.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To assess how well a state is doing, the Committee on the Rights of the Child looks at information provided by the country and also listens to the views of independent human rights institutions (including children's commissioners and ombudspersons), non-governmental organisations (such as national charities) and children and young people.

After considering all this information, the Committee on the Rights of the Child drafts a document called "concluding observations" on the country it has assessed. These set out the committee's assessment of progress in implementing

the convention in that country, points to areas of concern and makes recommendations to improve the situation of children in that country.



Children can also bring cases before the European Court of Human Rights. For instance, the Court found that one country violated the Convention because it did not protect children against corporal punishment in prison, school and the home. Another country was found not to have looked after a girl who was travelling alone.

There are also international organisations that are not formed by governments, but of charities. They play a very important role in advising and convincing governments to better protect children's rights.

Get your visa:

Search the Internet and check:

1. the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning your country:
www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/.

2. what the Council of Europe is doing for children's rights:
www.coe.int/children.

3. the many interesting video and audio resources about children's rights in Unicef's MAGIC website:
www.unicef.org/magic.

4. the website of the Child Rights Information Network, where you can find an amazing amount of information coming from governments, charities and all kinds of international organisations www.crin.org.



Sixth stop –
Defending your rights

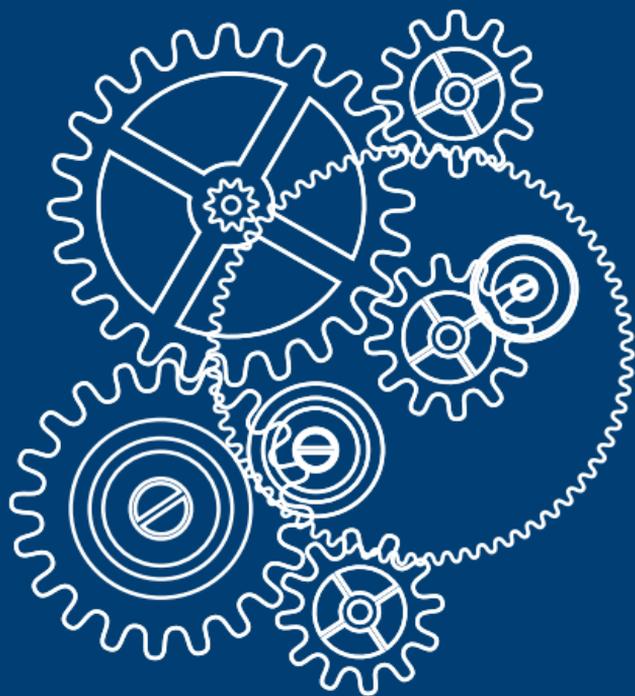
What if these rights are not respected?

The exercise of certain rights may be restricted for valid reasons, for example to protect you from significant danger or to take account of your maturity or age. Some rights, such as those to life, education, health and protection against violence or exploitation, may never be restricted, even by parents or teachers. If you think your rights have been violated, you may:

- speak to trusted people, such as your parents, teachers, doctors, friends, social workers or the people who look after you;
- call a special telephone number for child victims of violence to speak to a person who will be able to advise you;
- go to the police, make a complaint and ask the state for protection;
- contact a children's ombudsman or a voluntary association that defends children's rights;
- in certain circumstances you can even take your case to the European Court of Human Rights.



Council of Europe



Congratulations!

Congratulations!

You now have all the visas you need to better defend your rights.

We are sure you have enjoyed this journey through your rights. It is important that you share all that you have learnt with the adults around you and with other children. You certainly have a lot of ideas on the things that could be done to improve the lives of many children. We hope you will feel like doing all you can so that your ideas are put into practice!



With best wishes for your future adventures from our team

Do you feel like sharing your thoughts with the Council of Europe?

You can :

- send us an e-mail to children@coe.int
- send us a letter or a drawing to:
“Building a Europe for and with children”
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex , France

Don't forget to add your name, your country and your age!
We'll publish some of the messages and the drawings on our website.



**A photo gallery
of my friends and family**

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