

What is decided in the child's care proceedings?

Judicial proceedings begin right after your child has been taken away from you and the purpose is to determine where the child should be placed. As a first step, the court will commission detailed expert opinions on the child's parents. The court will also gather information on the child's other relatives living in Slovakia or elsewhere. During the proceedings, which can sometimes take a few months, children are temporarily placed in a foster care where they stay until the court's final decision.

How can the court decide?

After having considered all the facts, the court may decide to return the child to its parents. The parents must respect the rules set by the court in order for the situation not to recur. Should the court find the parents incapable of raising children, the next option in line is for the child to be brought up by his/her relatives living in Slovakia or elsewhere. If the relatives are not suitable for raising children either, the court may place the child under long-term foster care. In extreme cases, the court may decide that the child should be adopted.



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Národný projekt

Podpora Centra pre medzinárodnoprávnu ochranu detí a mládeže
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Tento projekt sa realizuje vďaka podpore z Európskeho sociálneho fondu v rámci Operačného programu Zamestnanosť a sociálna inklúzia

PRIESTOR NA VAŠU PRÍLEŽITOSŤ



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THE POTENTIAL RISKS AND ADVICE ON WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS TAKEN BY SOCIAL SERVICES

If you live abroad and the social services in your country of residence are beginning to show increased interest in your child, it is important to be watchful and realise that each country has different rules when it comes to child care. It is generally known that the rules in the countries of western and northern Europe are stricter than those in Slovakia. That is why dealings with social services can lead into extreme cases, such as your child being removed from your care. Thus it is important to know how to avoid such situations and what to do should they occur. This brochure offers you valuable advice on what to do in certain situations and where to turn to.

How to prevent problems with social services when abroad?

First of all, it is very important to realise that you are currently in the territory of a foreign country which has different rules and regulations. It is essential that children attend school regularly. They must be clean and dressed decently. It is the parents' obligation to register their child at a general practitioner's office and to take the child for regular medical check-ups. Every child must be provided with suitable conditions for healthy development. Social services abroad make sure each child has their own ample place for studying and sleeping at home.

Disciplinary slap – yes or no?

This term is completely unknown abroad in relation to the upbringing of children. When trying to discipline your child, a slap will not do any good. Quite the contrary, it can get you into the sort of trouble you can hardly imagine in Slovakia. The public perceives such behaviour as a serious violation of the child's care duties and quite often those who witness such a conduct report it to social services which then investigate the case.

What to do if social workers start to pay more frequent visits to your household?

The key is to understand the reasons behind these visits and to come to understand

what it is that social workers want you to do. It is essential to keep a cool head, to not panic and to cooperate. You can divert the attention of social workers by addressing the above mentioned issues and improving the overall care of your child. If you start to worry that social workers might take your child, do not hesitate and contact us. We shall provide you with the necessary assistance and advice on what to do in your particular situation.

Has your child been taken away and you don't know what to do?

If you find yourself in this difficult situation, it is essential to contact us immediately. It is important to let us know via e-mail or phone without hesitation. You can also contact Slovak embassy or consular service. When contacting us, or the embassy or consular service, it is important to stay calm and to provide truthfully all relevant information.

What specific information should you provide us with if they take your child?

In order to make it possible for us to help you, we need to know the following:

- First name, surname, and the date of birth of the child
- First names, surnames, and the dates of birth of both parents
- The address of your current residence abroad

- Your last address in Slovakia
- Reasons for the child's removal as stated by the social care authority
- Description of the entire situation from your point of view
- Information about the length of your stay abroad
- First names, surnames, dates of birth, addresses of your direct relatives in Slovakia
- First names, surnames, dates of birth, addresses of your direct relatives in the country of your current stay
- Name of the social service authority abroad which has taken your child
- Information on any on-going judicial proceedings

The steps the Centre will take in handling such a situation

On receiving the above mentioned data and information about the child taken from your care, we will contact the social service concerned. In its capacity as a state authority of the Slovak Republic the Centre endeavours to use all legal means to try and help to get children back to their biological families. Our main activity is to exchange information with social services abroad and to interact with courts in ongoing judicial proceedings. With the help of Slovak social services we will try and identify the relatives who can be granted custody of the child previously taken by social services.