

It is important to have someone to represent children's rights: children do not have voting rights as adults and their voice is not heard because adults think they know what is best for them. Sometimes children know best.

It feels good to be able to speak in the name of children and fight for the things that are important to them – the NYA gives weight to children's views.

The NYA forum enables an informed discussion on issues that concern us; NYA meetings always provide an opportunity for teamwork, but also for great fun. I'll never forget that experience.

What I like about the NYA is that adults listen to us and that we can express our opinions on important issues. We are encouraged to speak, but also to listen to and respect others.

The NYA bonds us as a team while allowing us to feel important as individuals. We are proud when the whole group accepts our opinions.

It is important for us that adults support us and take us seriously; we would like to feel that they really understand us and that we can make changes.

Our message to children: Let your voice be heard! Don't be afraid to speak up and stand up for yourselves – someone will always hear you!

What are NYA members saying about the NYA?



Contact the Ombudsman for Children ...

if you think that your rights or the rights of a child you know have been violated or denied;
if you notice any injustice done to children in society;
if you want to propose a solution to a problem that affects children;
or if you have an idea about how to improve the position of children in your school, home, neighbourhood, city or country.



Send an e-mail to
mojglas@dijete.hr

or write to us at the address below

**Ured pravobraniteljice
za djecu
Teslina 10
10000 Zagreb**

In addition to the Office of the Ombudsman in Zagreb, there are also offices in

OSIJEK - Šetalište P. Preradovića 7/1

RIJEKA - Trpimirova 3

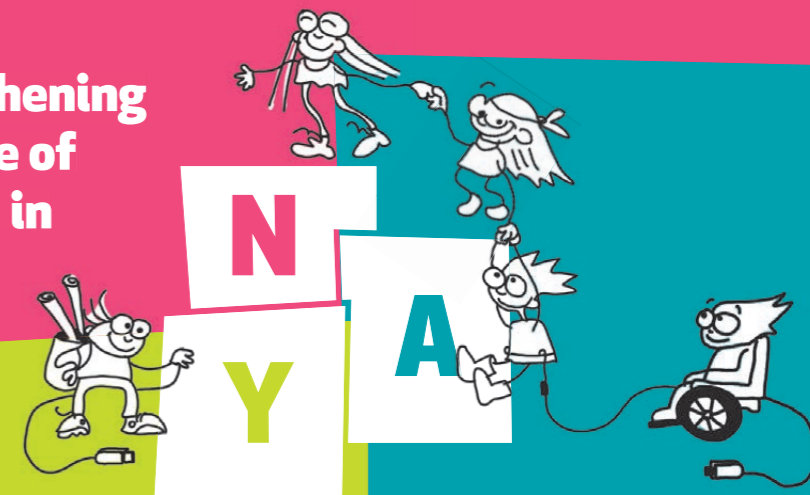
SPLIT - Braće Kaliterna 10

You can read about
the NYA here
www.dijete.hr



NETWORK OF YOUNG ADVISORS

NYA – Strengthening the voice of children in society



The Ombudsman for Children protects children's rights, monitors how children's rights from the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** are realised in Croatia, proposes amendments to laws and issues recommendations to improve the protection of children's rights and interests. He or she also represents children, making sure that their voice is heard. The Ombudsman communicates directly with children and young people, trying to find out what they think is important, what they would like to change and how.

The Ombudsman **encourages children to express their views**, conveys their proposals and messages to government representatives and **urges adults to respect children's views** when deciding on matters that affect them.

The Ombudsman gets a lot of help from the **Network of Young Advisors – NYA**.

What is the NYA?

The **NETWORK OF YOUNG ADVISORS** to the Ombudsman for Children – **NYA** is a standing advisory and collaborative body consisting of children and young people from the whole of Croatia. The NYA has 25 members: children and young people aged 12 to 18. NYA members are elected as individuals and not as the representatives of their schools, cities or counties.

The NYA mandate lasts three years.



How do you become a member of the NYA?



The Ombudsman for Children publishes a **tender for NYA membership** and any child above the age of 12 can apply.

New NYA members are elected by current NYA members and the expert team of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children.

NYA members are elected taking into account that they come from all parts of Croatia and that their living conditions and circumstances are as diverse as possible.

NYA members act as



ASSOCIATES – they propose discussion topics to the Ombudsman and actions to be implemented by his or her Office; they take part in designing and planning NYA activities; together with the Ombudsman, they present the Office's initiatives and actions to children and adults; they carry out surveys on children's rights among their peers.

AMBASSADORS – in their schools and cities, they communicate information on children's rights and possibilities to protect them as well as on the role and work of the Ombudsman for Children and the NYA; they talk with their peers and inform the Ombudsman of their opinions and suggestions; they encourage children to contact the NYA and the Ombudsman and tell them about issues and problems that require more attention and action on the part of adults, about the type of support young people need and want from adults and about the areas in which children want to participate more actively.

ADVISORS – they exchange opinions on current topics via an e-forum and at their meetings; for example, when new laws are adopted and public consultations held on issues important for children and young people, they share their experience and information with the Ombudsman, while also proposing changes and possible solutions to problems.

How does the NYA work?

E-forum – NYA members log in a closed electronic forum (accessible only to them) with their user names and passwords.

NYA meetings – Meetings are held two to three times a year at the national level, with participation by NYA members from the whole of Croatia. Meetings may be held in regional offices – in Osijek, Split and Rijeka – and in the central office in Zagreb.

Conferences – NYA members, together with the Ombudsman for Children, participate in conferences and panels on children's rights and represent children's views.

Media – NYA members inform the public on their activities through the media, expressing their opinions on matters important to them.

