

ENOC-The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

Child Protection Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) is a not for profit association of Independent Children's Rights Institutions operating in Council of Europe member states and is based in Strasbourg / France. Its mandate is to facilitate the promotion and protection of the rights of children, as formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other activities ENOC organizes consultation meetings and other activities in which children and young people participate and express their views and opinions on various subjects connected with their rights.

2. SELECTION AND INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENOC'S ACTIVITIES

Every ENOC member is responsible for the terms and conditions/criteria of selection and involvement of children in its activities according to its national legislation and internal policies. Agreements on the terms of participation are made between members' representatives, children and their parents or guardians. ENOC members are responsible for the supervision of implementation of these terms.

3. ENOC MEMBERS' COMMON CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND COMMITMENTS

During ENOC common activities involving children and young people, such as parallel projects, communication via internet, consultations, elaboration of common documents, meetings and residential events, ENOC members agree on the following child protection principles and commit themselves to respect and supervise their implementation.

ENOC members' staff or volunteers working with children, children participating in common projects and their parents are informed about ENOC child protection policy.

The main legal basis for all ENOC activities with and for children is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Among children's rights under the UNCRC that guide ENOC's approach to child protection are: the right of the child to protection from discrimination (Article 2); the right of the child to have his/her best interests considered as a primary consideration in all matters affecting him/her (Article 3); the right of the child to express his/her views freely in all matters affecting him/her, in accordance with his/her age and maturity (Article 12); the right of the child to privacy (Article 16); and the protection of children from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19).

ENOC members commit themselves to provide a safe environment for children, with whom they work, to treat them with dignity and respect and to protect them from all forms of harm and abuse, including exploitation. The best interests of children will be paramount at all times. All staff of the involved institutions that come into contact with children and young people in the context of an ENOC activity has a duty to safeguard and promote the rights of children. On the occasion or suspicion of any form of abuse against children participating in ENOC activities, the matter will be reported without delay to the appropriate authorities of the member state country where the abuse occurred.

Activities taking place via internet, such as debates, exchange of information, opinions and data on activities, uploading photographs and other data, take place only after receipt of written consent by all the named individuals participating. All (young) participants will receive written information with respect to national and international legislation on protection of personal and sensitive data and dignity of all persons involved, with particular sensitivity on the rights of children. In every case of operation of an electronic forum, a web platform or any other similar communication tool, its rules should be announced by the moderators of the activity to all participants. Members of staff of the ENOC's office or of ENOC members are designated to supervise the respect of these rules and to impose the agreed in every case consequences to anyone violating them.

When residential events take place, which involve travelling and overnight accommodation for children, a written informed consent by parents and/or guardians will be required and supervision of children will take place by the designated member(s) of staff of involved ENOC members, according to previously set terms and rules.

All responsibilities for the protection of the rights of children participating in ENOC events and activities lie with the respective members of the Network who are participating in the events and their designated staff. ENOC secretariat and administration have a duty to inform ENOC members and staff about the Child Protection Policy of the Network, but do not hold any responsibilities for children participating in such events.