

Newsletter



ENOC News & Announcements

ENOC working theme for 2016

The new ENOC Bureau met on 15 October, 2015 to discuss the details of ENOC 2016 work programme and the new application for funding. After consideration of a number of proposed themes, the ENOC Bureau agreed on the issue of **equal opportunities for all children in education** as a priority topic for 2016. ENYA activities will be organized around the same priority area. Further details and a call for participation in the new ENYA project will be circulated end of November.

ENOC19th Annual Conference “Violence against Children”: follow-up

The 19th ENOC Annual Conference on the theme of “*Violence against children*” took place on 22-23 September 2015 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The Conference was attended by 90 participants, including Ombudspersons for Children and advisors, representatives of the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, NGOs, academics and other professionals. A number of eminent speakers addressed the Conference such as: Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the UNSG on Violence against Children, Ms. Mariëlle Dekker, Director of Augeo Foundation, Ms. Corinne Dettmejer, Dutch Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children, Ms. Regina Jensdottir, Head of Council of Europe Children’s Rights Division, and many others. Two breakout sessions, one with workshops on the Conference theme and a second one on ENOC member countries’ updates followed by a presentation of ENYA activities and the screening of the ENYA video on violence against children completed the conference agenda. The Annual Conference was followed by the 19th Annual General Assembly meeting of ENOC which took place on 24 September 2015 in The Hague. The General Assembly elected a new Bureau, discussed ENOC business and approved the ENOC statement on violence against children, and an additional statement on children on the move. Concerned by the ongoing migration situation in Europe, the GA decided to set-up a Task Force on Children on the Move made of ten ENOC members in charge of monitoring and reporting on the current situation of children affected by being on the move in Europe. Mr. Marc Dullaert, Dutch Ombudsman for Children took over the chairmanship of ENOC from Mr. Tam Baillie, Commissioner for Children and Young People Scotland, Ms. Edita Ziobiene, Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights of Lithuania, has been elected Chair-elect, Mr. George Moschos, Deputy Ombudsman for Children’s Rights of Greece, has been elected Treasurer and Ms. Maria Jesus Larios, Deputy Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights of Catalonia, has been renewed at the position of Secretary.

Full Conference information (agenda, list of participants, presentations and reports) is available here: http://enoc.eu/?page_id=402

The outcomes of ENYA 2015 activities (’52 minute video) are available at: http://enoc.eu/?page_id=479

The ENOC position statement on violence against children and the joint ENOC-SRSG on Violence against Children statement can be read at: http://enoc.eu/?page_id=186

The ad-hoc statement on children on the move and further information on the Task Force on Children on the move can be found here: <http://enoc.eu/?p=1254>

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[Joint Letter to the European Council](#)

ENOC joined 58 leading organisations in the fields of human rights, child rights, health and social inclusion, to express concern at the lack of attention afforded to children’s rights at recent policy discussions and developments by the European Council, Foreign Affairs Council and other competent EU bodies to address the recent increase in refugees and migrants arriving in Europe. [The joint open letter](#) urges the Heads of Government and Ministers to develop and implement concrete measures towards a comprehensive and rights-based strategy ensuring effective protection for all children affected by migration, including in the upcoming meeting at European level.

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights HR Comment: Inclusive Education vital for social cohesion in diverse societies

In a recently published Human Rights Comment, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, expressed deep concern regarding serious shortcomings in the education systems of an increased number of European states. These states fail to guarantee to all groups of children, especially to those from migrant or Roma origins, from socially disadvantaged groups or those with disabilities, an inclusive and quality education. The Commissioner insisted on the devastating impact on social cohesion and reconciliation especially in multi-ethnic societies of exclusion from or divisions in education. Drawing attention to all binding instruments on the issue but also to provided data and evidences, the Commissioner reminded the basic CRC principle requiring every child's right to quality education on the basis of equal opportunities. The Commissioner also pointed out that austerity budgets can never justify sub-standard education for any group of children. Read the full text of the HR Comment [here](#).

SRSB annual report calls for faster progress in securing children's protection & creating a world free from fear & violence

The 2015 annual report of the SRSB-VAC to the UN General Assembly highlights the continuing toll that violence takes on the lives of children around the world and calls for urgent and enhanced efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against children. According to UN data, almost a billion children between the ages of 2 and 14 are subject to physical punishment by their caregivers; 84 million girls are victims of emotional, physical, or sexual violence by their husbands or partners; 8% of global homicides affect children under the age of 15. The report also welcomes progress in consolidating international standards and national laws for ending violence against children, including the increasing number of countries with comprehensive legal bans. Click [here](#) to read the report.

Update on European & International activities in the children's rights field

EU study on children's involvement in criminal, civil and administrative judicial proceedings

This study sought to gather all available data/statistics in Member States (and on international databases) on children's involvement in justice, and in order to allow for accurate interpretation of the data, to describe the legislation and policy in place for children's involvement in justice, using the Council of Europe guidelines on child-friendly justice as a template. Given the scope of the study, work was phased and publications were released progressively. All data/statistics gathered is available at: www.childreninjudicialproceedings.eu

FRA (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) published a report on guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the EU

Of the several hundreds of thousands of people trafficked in the EU, one in six are children. Existing guardianship rules for such children, who are often without parental care, frequently leads to inadequate support and protection, finds the latest report from FRA published on 16 October 2015. Guardians are a key element of protection systems for children who cannot have their interests represented by their parents. This report, [Guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the EU](#), explores the key features of guardianship systems across all EU Member States (28) that have been established to meet the needs of children without parental care. It includes those at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking or other forms of violence and exploitation. The report also points out the strengths and weaknesses of national guardianship systems which vary greatly from country to country, even within countries. This comparative report complements the [handbook on guardianship for children deprived of parental care](#) that should soon be available in all official EU languages.

FRA Children and Justice: Launch of animation films

In the context of FRA work in the area of children and justice, in October 2015 the FRA published a series of animation films about rights that children should enjoy when being involved in judicial proceedings. These rights include a child's right to be heard, their right to protection and legal representation, and their right to be informed about what is going on. These awareness-raising films are targeted at children, mainly 12 years and older, and should support professionals such as social workers and lawyers when working with children. The films are available in 9 languages (EN, FR, DE, BG, ES, ET, HR, PL, RO). FRA has also produced a version without voice over for further translations. All versions can be embedded and downloaded at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/rights-child/videos>

FRA and the Council of Europe to launch a guide to European law relating to child rights

On 20 November 2015, on the occasion of Universal Children's Day, the Council of Europe and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights will launch their Handbook on European Law relating to the rights of the child. It is the first comprehensive guide to European law in the area of children's rights, taking into account both the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). It contains references to relevant EU Regulations and Directives, the European Social Charter and the decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights, as well as other Council of Europe instruments. The guide will be made available online at the website of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/children>

The Council of Europe is launching End Child Sex Abuse Day: 18 November

On 18 November, the Council of Europe is launching the 1st European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. The objectives of the European Day are to raise public awareness of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, and the need to prevent such acts; facilitate open discussion on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse and help prevent and eliminate the stigmatization of victims; promote the ratification and implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, a unique legally binding instrument that obliges Parties to criminalise all forms of sexual abuse of children and spells out the ways to fight it. A special video is launched on 18 November. For further information on the Day, click [here](#)

Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities report “Championing children’s rights in times of austerity”

The report examines the impact of the global economic crisis and austerity measures in Europe on children’s rights. It focuses on significant issues affecting children and their families that arise for local and regional authorities in Council of Europe member States, and discusses how local and regional authorities might discharge their responsibility to promote children’s rights even at times of state-led austerity cutbacks in public funding and public services. It introduces a number of case studies highlighting initiatives at local and regional level that have contributed toward safeguarding children’s rights during the economic crisis and the period of austerity measures. Click [here](#) to read the full report and recommendations.

Updates from ENOC members

- ✓ **The Danish National Council for Children** submitted a stakeholder report to the Danish Universal Periodic Review in the UN scheduled to take place in January 2016. Among the issues raised are the need to mainstream in Danish legislation the principles of the best interests of the child and the right of the child to be heard in decisions affecting him/her. The submission also focused on the lack of awareness among Danish children of the CRC and their rights and lack of access to remedy for violation of their rights. Issues concerning certain groups of children, such as children with disabilities, refugee or asylum seeking children and children in the criminal justice system, are also addressed. The full text of the submission is available [here](#).
- ✓ **The Ombudsman for Children of Poland** submitted in July 2015 his alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the state of progress in implementing the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Poland, and on the state of enforcement of the Committee’s recommendations from October 2002. To read the full report, click [here](#).
- ✓ **In July 2015 the four UK Children’s Commissioners (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)** issued a joint alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the context of the examination of the 5th periodic report of the UK under the UNCRC. A joint report, which is issued every seven years, aims to look at the state of advancement of the implementation of the rights and principles laid out in the UNCRC by the UK Government. While the 2015 report is wide ranging, the report focused on five key areas: the impacts of austerity on UK children and young people in terms of reduced service provisions in health, education, early intervention and youth sectors; mental health services for children and young people vastly underfunded; safeguarding in the context of child abuse; the situation of young offenders; UK Government’s lack of significant progress around several of the UN Committee’s recommendations from 2008. Read [here](#) the full report.
- ✓ **The Ombudsman for Children of Ireland** has welcomed the decision of the Irish Government to introduce an amendment to the Children First Bill abolishing the defence of reasonable chastisement. On 11 November 2015, the Irish Parliament adopted legislation repealing the common law defence of “reasonable chastisement” of children, making Ireland the 20th EU state to achieve total prohibition of corporal punishment, the 29th Council of Europe member state, and the 47th state worldwide. For more information on the subject, click [here](#)

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **18 November 2015:** [European Day](#) on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
- ❖ **7-8 December 2015:** European Commission Conference “[Growing together in a barrier-free Europe](#)”, 2015 edition focuses on children and young people with disability, Brussels, Belgium

If you have any suggestions, or if you would like to include any information or upcoming events in our newsletter, please send the details to secretariat@ombudsnet.org (Re: ENOC Newsletter).

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European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

Council of Europe
 “Agora” Building
 Office n°B5 07V
 67075 Strasbourg Cedex
 Tel. +33 3 90 21 54 88
 E-mail:
secretariat@ombudsnet.org

Find us on the Web:
www.enoc.eu

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