

Newsletter



ENOC News & Announcements

ENOC Bureau met in Strasbourg

The first 2018 meeting of the ENOC Bureau took place on 11-12 January in the premises of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France) where the ENOC Secretariat is based. The Bureau discussed in detail the ENOC work plan for 2018, planned events, projects, budget and operations of ENOC working groups. The Bureau also discussed and decided to better structure the initiatives of the network and the responsibilities of the ENOC Bureau by setting up a yearly calendar of activities and strategical planning of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau. On the same occasion, the ENOC Bureau met with Ms. Gabriella Battaini-Draconi, Council of Europe Deputy Secretary-General, and with Ms. Regina Jensdottir, Head of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division to present the ENOC/ENYA 2017 statement on Comprehensive Relationship and Sexuality Education and to introduce the new working theme for 2018 related to children's right to mental healthcare. Discussions with Council of Europe authorities also focused on exploring further areas of cooperation and coordination and meaningful participation of ENOC in Council of Europe child rights related initiatives and reviews.

The next Bureau meeting will take place on 19 March 2018 in Brussels (Belgium) where the Bureau is also planning to meet with European Union's authorities.

ENOC recommendations on "Safeguarding and protecting the rights of children on the move: The challenge of social inclusion"

A regional meeting organized by the Greek Deputy Ombudsman for Children's Rights together with ENOC and UNICEF on "Safeguarding and protecting the rights of children on the move: the challenge of social inclusion" took place on 13-14 November 2017 in Athens, Greece. Twenty one ENOC member institutions participated in the meeting while nineteen ENOC members contributed to a previously distributed questionnaire aiming to collect relevant data on the situation of children on the move across Europe in order to critically inform the meeting's discussions and assist in the preparation of a series of recommendations.

A full set of relevant recommendations on the issue of social inclusion of children on the move were worked out (Day 1) and presented at a special event (Day 2) as an outcome of the meeting. The background report and other relevant documents and information are available [here](#).

ENOC work plan for 2018: events & activities

The ENOC work theme for 2018 is related to *children's right to mental health care*. Annual activities will focus on the priority theme which will be tackled at Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and at young people's (ENYA) level. On mental health, a special working group assisted by an expert advisor and led by the French Ombudsperson for Children's Office will facilitate the drafting of the future position statement on the same subject. A data collection through a questionnaire and a working seminar to mark progress on the issue will be organized in June 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. On the same occasion, a capacity building session on methodologies and techniques to empower children's participation in all settings will take place on Day 2 of the ENOC Dublin Seminar.

On the ENYA front, the call for participation in the project is still open until 5 March 2018. An ENYA Seminar will take place end of June in Barcelona.

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ENOC 2018 Spring Seminar

An ENOC working seminar (Day 1) on *Children's right to mental health* and a capacity building session on *Methodologies and techniques to empower children's participation in all settings* (Day 2) will take place on **7-8 June 2018** in Dublin, Ireland. The seminar is kindly hosted by the Ombudsman for Children's Office Ireland. Please email the ENOC Secretariat to register (ENOC members only) before **31 March 2018**.

Deadlines:

ENYA project	>5 March 2018
ENOC questionnaire on mental health	> 5 March 2018
ENOC questionnaire on intercountry adoption	>15 March 2018

CRC statement on ending child immigration detention

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) released on 21 February 2018 a statement urging European countries to end detention of children in the context of immigration.

“EU law should not allow for child immigration detention, even as a last resort, and the reform of the Common European Asylum System is a timely opportunity to ban this practice,” said Renate Winter, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. While the EU law stipulated that migrant and asylum-seeking children may be placed in detention as a last resort, if it is in their best interests, CRC Chair Renate Winter stressed that detaining children whether unaccompanied or on the basis of their or of their parents’ status is never in the best interests of the child and amounts to a violation of its rights. The CRC called on EU and Member States to redirect resources from detention centres to alternative non-custodial, human rights based solutions. See the full statement [here](#)

UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty: questionnaire released

The [questionnaire](#) for the UN Global Study on Children deprived of liberty has been finally released after difficulties related to securing the necessary funds for conducting the study. Prof. Nowak, the appointed independent expert leading the study, has invited Governments in close cooperation with field offices of relevant UN Agencies, NHRIs and other essential stakeholders, such as NGOs, to provide coordinating responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire is made available in Arabic, Chinese, French, English, Spanish and Russian.

New UNICEF report: every 7 minutes an adolescent is killed by an act of violence

[A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents](#) uses the latest data to show that children experience violence across all stages of childhood and in all settings: **Three quarters of the world’s 2- to 4-year-old children** - around 300 million - experience psychological aggression and/or physical punishment by their caregivers at home. Worldwide, **around 15 million adolescent girls** aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts in their lifetime. Globally, **every 7 minutes** an adolescent is killed by an act of violence. Find more about the [#ENDviolence](#) campaign [here](#)

Two more Working Groups, one on intercountry adoption and another one on children on the move will be operating throughout 2018. The ENOC 22nd Annual Conference and General Assembly meeting are scheduled to take place on 19-21 September 2018 in Paris, France.

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

CRC & MWC Joint General Comments on the Human Rights of Children in the Context of International Migration

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW Committee) jointly adopted [two general comments on the human rights of children in situations of international migration](#). The Joint General Comments represent guidance for governments on how to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by all UN member states except the USA) and, for those governments that have also ratified it, the Migrant Workers’ Convention (the guidance contained in these joint general comments is equally applicable to all State Parties of the CRC, as they are built on the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The adoption of the Joint General Comments followed a wide-spread consultation process involving States, United Nations agencies and entities, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders from every region of the world.

FRA publication: Mapping minimum age requirements concerning the rights of the child in the EU

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a new set of findings on differences in legal minimum ages to help the EU and its Member States eliminate inconsistencies, protection gaps and seemingly arbitrary restrictions resulting from different age thresholds. To highlight these differences the agency mapped the national legal age requirements in various areas across the EU.

The agency’s [report](#) covers differences in legal minimum ages in the field of marriage and sexual activity; citizenship; political participation; health; and religion. The findings underline the wide differences in the limits set by Member States across different areas. They point to the need to improve the way age limits are set to achieve consistency and better balance the need to protect children with the need to empower children. Further findings will be released in 2018. They will cover migration and asylum, access to justice, social and economic rights, the digital world and LGBTI issues.

FRA: child friendly justice-easy to read version released

Last year, the FRA published a report on child-friendly justice with a focus on the child’s perspective. The report ‘[Child-friendly justice: Perspectives and experiences of children involved in judicial proceedings](#)’ is based on interviews with 392 children in nine EU Member States. It identifies the barriers children face along with possible solutions and a number of promising practices already in use. In an effort to make the report accessible to everyone, this year FRA has published the [Easy-to-read version of the report](#). For further information, you can visit FRA [Rights of the Child webpage](#).

Council of Europe’s Lanzarote Committee: 2nd implementation report published

The Council of Europe’s (CoE) Lanzarote Committee published a new [report on the protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust: workable strategies](#) on February 13th, 2018. In this report, the Committee analyses the strategies used by 26 European countries to protect children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust (extended family and persons close to the child who exercise influence over the child). According to the report, state-parties to the Lanzarote Convention are undertaking effective steps in this field. Enabling children to take an active part in the development and adoption of policies is a highly promising practice. Almost all parties’ national authorities cooperate with civil society organisations and the private sector in awareness-raising, education and training of people working with children to prevent child sexual abuse. The report stresses the important role of the media in informing about child sexual abuse paying particular attention to the full respect for the privacy and the rights of the child. Further information on the report is available [here](#).

Council of Europe launched a newly revised version of Internet Literacy Handbook

This [new edition](#) takes into account a myriad of changes, although the object of the Handbook still remains, namely to offer families, educators and policy-makers sufficient technical know-how to allow them to navigate, with young people, through communication technology. The new edition also expands the scope of the factsheets anchoring previously “new” concepts of digital citizenship and digital parenting. The Handbook is designed to be easy to use and helpful, and includes 26 factsheets arranged under 6 thematic headings which can be downloaded in full or per chapter and individual factsheet. More information [here](#)

Let Children be Children. Lessons from the Field on the Protection and Integration of Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe

The New SOS Children's Villages/Eurochild [report](#) offers 16 inspiring practices that showcase how the child protection services are responding to the needs of refugee and migrant children in Europe. The 16 case studies feature solutions and promising examples from Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, the Netherlands and United Kingdom. A range of services and programmes running across Europe for unaccompanied and separated children and families are highlighted in the report, including quality family and community-based alternative care to unaccompanied and separated children; support to young people in their transition to adulthood; the promotion of alternatives to detention; afterschool programmes and guardianship services to empower children and young people as they go through migration procedures and integrate into a new society.

Updates from ENOC members

- ✓ **The Human Rights Defender (HRD) of the Republic of Armenia** published a legal analysis on the [Guidelines of its activities in the child rights protection field](#). Among the main priorities in the children's rights field of the HRD is to promote the right of every child to live and grow up in a family environment thus supporting the deinstitutionalization process. In this vein, an international Conference on [The Right of the Child to live in a family](#), organized by the HRD's Office and UNICEF, took place in November 2017 in Yerevan, Armenia. An [ad hoc report](#) on the activities of custodian and guardianship bodies and commissions has also been recently published by the Child Rights Protection Unit of the HRD. And not less important, a [new website](#) dedicated to children's rights has been put in place to facilitate children's access to different materials and advice but also providing the possibility for children to file a complaint directly to the Defender.
- ✓ **The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden** recently published a [summary](#) in English of its [report](#) on *Unaccompanied children who disappear in Sweden*. The report was commissioned by the Swedish Government to the Ombudsman for Children to find out the reasons for the high number of UAM in Sweden going missing. It has been reported that 1,736 UAM went missing between January 2014 and October 2017 with a very few who returned or have been found. The report presents children's own narratives about why they disappear and how it is to live under these circumstances. Based on the findings of the report, the Ombudsman for Children elaborated specific recommendations to help prevent an added number of children disappearing. An English translation of the full report will be available before the summer.
- ✓ **The Chancellor of Justice of Estonia** published an English summary of the [overview](#) of its activities for the period September 2016-September 2017. In Estonia, the function of the independent ombudsman for children is performed by the Chancellor of Justice. The task of the Ombudsman for Children is to ensure that all the authorities, institutions and persons that make decisions concerning children respect the rights and best interests of children. [Part of the report](#) concerning respect of children's rights in Estonia covers areas such as: children and sport, children and health, education, reception of UAM, children and the police, child labour, lowering the age of voting and political campaigning in schools, etc.

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **19 March 2018:** ENOC Bureau meeting, Brussels (Belgium)
- ❖ **21-23 March 2018:** 4th meeting of the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on the Rights of the Child (CAH-ENF), Strasbourg, France
- ❖ **11-12 April 2018:** Lost in Migration II Conference on *The protection of children in migration: from European priorities to local realities*, organised by Missing Children Europe, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **28-30 May 2018:** 2018 World Congress on Justice for Children on *"Strengthening justice systems for children: Challenges, including disengagement from violent extremism"*, Paris, France

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

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