

Newsletter

Welcome

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of our new ENOC Newsletter. With the help of Polina in Strasbourg and Ana here in my office we have tried to put together some information that we hope will offer you up to date information related to our work as Ombudspersons for Children and decisions of the ENOC Bureau.

ENOC Bureau recent activities

The ENOC Bureau spoke by teleconference early in November as there were a number of activities ongoing. The following decisions were agreed at that meeting:

2009 ENOC Annual Conference

The 2009 ENOC Annual Conference will be held in Paris. A potential date may be **23-25 September** (to be confirmed by Dominique Versini).

This event will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the UN CRC.

The title and themes of the Conference will be taken during the Bureau meeting which will be held on December 8th, 2008.

I have been in contact with Rimante who has been gracious about this as I know she was keen to host the conference in Vilnius. Rimante has asked me to inform you of their conference in Vilnius on December 15th (see upcoming events for more details).

EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme

A new application has been made to the European Commission for funding for 2009 through the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme. This application is for € 100k. If we are successful, our intention is to enhance the ENOC Secretariat by appointing someone to work with Polina in a co-ordination role of our work across Europe. The application was submitted on November 13th. I have spoken with Guido Lanzke, the programme manager, who tells me that we can expect to hear in the early part of 2009. I will let you know as soon as we hear.

The 2008 funding has been issued very late and will be used to reimburse existing projects or work already carried out. There are **two outstanding commitments** made under 2008 application for funding through the EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme. A mapping exercise on child participation and a thematic seminar on child participation.



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Thank you all for returning the questionnaires on child participation. Rachel Hodgkin is collating and analyzing all the information. This information will be presented as part of the seminar on December 8th (see upcoming events).

Polina is organizing the thematic seminar for December 8th 2008, the day before the European Forum on the Rights of the Child. Hopefully we will see some of you there. The Seminar will take place on December 8th, 2-6 pm, at the Flemish Parliament, Room Rubens, Leuvenseweg 27, 1000 Brussels (Nearby metro station: Madou).

The Seminar will focus on child participation thus including a first evaluation of the recently launched ENOC comparative study on the same topic. We are currently working on the Seminar Programme. In due time, it will be circulated to EU/ENOC members by email.

On this matter, we would like to recall all members that the deadline for submitting the questionnaire was November 28th. We strongly encourage all colleagues to participate in this initiative and send their responses ASAP to Polina.

ENOC Membership

Dear Friends:

As you know, the strength and effectiveness of our Network depends on its member's participation and contributions.

So, for everyone whose membership came to an end, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to renew your ENOC membership.

Warm Regards,

The ENOC Family

Visit to Croatia

On behalf of ENOC, Polina (Strasbourg Secretariat) carried out from November 18th to 22nd a three day field visit to Croatia. She visited the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children of the Republic of Croatia and met with Mila Jelavic, the Ombudsperson for Children, the two deputies and the staff members.

19 November: After 5 years of existence, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children of Croatia launched on its own initiative an external evaluation of the work accomplished by the Office in relation to legislation, competence, means of reporting, authority and effective independence, accompanied by an assessment of effectiveness achieved at the individual and general levels. Thus, the Office approached, as external evaluators, experts from Croatia and abroad, representing UNICEF, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and experts from the field of psychology and constitutional and family law. On November 19th, a presentation of the experts' evaluation of the work of the Office took place in the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia. The staff members of the Ombuds Office and Polina attended the presentation.

20 November: Together with Mila Jelavic and three staff members of the Office, Polina visited a technical high school in Zagreb where she met with 30 pupils. The aim of the visit was to discuss with the pupils (16-17 years old) about their difficulties in school and in applying to the upcoming university entrance exams.

21 November: Together with Mila Jelavic and the half of the staff from the central office (Zagreb), Polina visited the regional office in Osijek (250 km away from Zagreb) and attended a panel discussion on professional training in high schools.

My sincere thank you to Mila and her staff for their warm welcoming and generosity of time during this visit.

Conference Attendance

3rd World congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents

Lora Vidovic from Croatia (lora.vidovic@dijete.hr) and Ankie Vandekerckhove (kinderrechten@vlaamsparlement.be) from Flanders represented ENOC at the 3rd World Congress. We appreciate the support offered by UNICEF IRC to ENOC in this regard.

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **8 December 2008:** ENOC Seminar on Child Participation, Flemish Parliament, Brussels.
- ❖ **9 December 2008:** 3rd European Forum on the Rights of the Child, Berlaymont, Schuman Room, Brussels.
- ❖ **10 December 2008:** Opening ceremony of the new venue of the Catalan Ombudsman at Passeig Lluís Companys 7 in Barcelona.
- ❖ **15 December 2008:** International Conference "Child – Victim of Sexual Abuse", Parliament Conference Hall, Vilnius (contact Audrone Bedorf at aubedo@lrs.lt).
- ❖ **27-28 February 2009:** "Best Interests of the Child Conference", University of Toronto, Toronto (contact Betty Noaks at bnoakes@unicef.ca).
- ❖ **6-7 April 2009:** "Child-Friendly Europe", Congress Centre, Prague.
- ❖ **20-22 April 2009:** "Children and the European Union: Legal, Research and Political Perspectives", University of Liverpool, Liverpool.

Also, to all of you interested in volunteering to seat on the **Optional Protocol to the CRC** group, please send an e-mail to ENOC Secretariat.

The ENOC website needs your input to continue to grow. Send us information about new web resources, research or data related to Children's Rights.

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).

Happy Christmas

To all of you ombudspersons for children and your hard working staff, we wish you all well and hope you get a chance to put your feet up over the Christmas period.

Warm wishes
Emily Logan
ENOC Chairperson

DECEMBER 2008

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ENOC Office will be closed for the Holidays from December 24th to January 5th.

European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

Council of Europe - D Building
Office 208-210
67075 Strasbourg
Tel + 33 3 90 21 54 88
secretariat@ombudsnet.org

Find us on the Web:
www.ombudsnet.org