

Newsletter

ENOC Activities

ENOC Thematic Seminar on «The specific role of Ombudspersons for children to make children's voice heard and their rights enhanced »

According to the ENOC 2010 programme and objectives, a thematic seminar on the issue of the specificity and independence of Ombudspersons for Children institutions has been organized in Rabat, Malta on 6-7 June 2010, thanks to the kind invitation of the Commissioner for Children office in Malta. The Seminar brought together around 30 participants, including 12 Ombudspersons but also Ombudspersons' advisors and representatives of International organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The ENOC Chair, Ms Dominique Versini and the Commissioner for Children of Malta, Ms Helen D'Amato addressed the participants. Representatives of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights office, the Council of Europe Programme "Building a Europe for & with children" and of the European Commission addressed the participants and presented their recent and upcoming activities/projects in the children's rights area. Mr Peter Newell, ENOC expert advisor, presented the preliminary results of the mapping exercise on the role, functions, mandate but also difficulties and challenges faced by Ombudspersons for children offices across Europe. Based on the questionnaire's first results and following the workshops on visibility & independence, monitoring of implementation of the rights of the child, advocacy, effective remedies for breaches of children's rights and promotion of children's voice and their direct contact with Ombuds offices, participants drafted and agreed upon a series of recommendations that will be further submitted for adoption by the ENOC General Assembly next October in Strasbourg. A full file containing the report, the recommendations and a background paper will be made available on the ENOC website after the October Conference.

2nd ENYA Coordinators' meeting, 4-5 June 2010, Rabat, Malta

After a 1st ENYA Coordinators' meeting back in February and after the launching of the ENYA forum last April, the 2nd ENYA Coordinators' meeting aimed to: review the state of play of the ENYA electronic forum; provide statistics and other relevant information on the intensity of the exchanges between young people and review the forum's topics; receive feedback from the Coordinators and the thematic moderators as to the difficulties encountered before, during and after the launching of the e-forum; and especially to prepare the terms and details of the young people's participation in the annual meeting next October in Strasbourg. ENYA Coordinators, seven Ombudspersons and two young people from Malta involved in the ENYA project and in the e-forum were present. Participants have been addressed by the ENOC Chair, by the Commissioner for Children of Malta and by the Honourable Clyde Puli, Parliamentary Secretary for Youths and Sports of Malta before the launching of the discussions. Discussions concerned the strong and weak points of the e-forum including the main topics and the sub-questions, suggestions for improvements of young people's participation in the forum and on how to keep the discussions alive, the sharing of responsibility between Coordinators but also the proceedings of selection of young delegates for the annual meeting, their preparation for and issues that will be on the agenda of the ENYA meeting in October. Thus, to date 33 young people and 15 Coordinators are scheduled to participate in the forthcoming ENOC (and ENYA) Annual meeting on 7-9 October 2010 in Strasbourg, France. The key achievements of the ENYA project and young people's own and common recommendations on the topic of violence, health, education and internet will be published later in October.



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Members' commitments for the Annual Conference: reminders

Dear ENOC members,
In the context of the upcoming Annual conference and General Assembly meeting on 7-9 October 2010 in Strasbourg, you are kindly reminded that you are committed to send to us by **end of August** your annual update (long paper version) as well as the PPT version using the attached template.

The PPT version will be used as a support during your 2-3 min presentation of your institution's annual activities. Please do not miss to bring hard copies of your updates if you want to make them available for the other participants.

Concerning your working group contributions on the two (out of four) selected by you topics, please make sure to send your inputs to the thematic Moderator and to the other members of the working group at any time between now and **3rd of September**.

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

ENOC Chair, Ms Dominique Versini, at the Council of Europe Vienna Conference

On the occasion of an International Conference on "National Integrated Strategies to Eliminate Violence Against Children" organized by the Council of Europe and the Federal Ministry of Economy, Sport and Youth of Austria on 20-21 May 2010 in Vienna, the ENOC Chair has been invited to intervene on the topic of bullying and cyber-bullying. The ENOC Chair underlined the importance for Governments but also for Ombudspersons to tackle the two phenomena. Ms Versini recommended that National Action Plans with clear preventive and protection measures be elaborated in association with children and young people. She also gave a few examples of Ombuds for children offices that have already worked or are currently working on addressing the issue of bullying. However, Ms Versini stressed out that there is no at ENOC level a common strategy to tackle the issues of school and cyber bullying. Nevertheless, in the framework of the ENYA project and the ENYA e-forum, participating young people are invited to express their experience and opinion on the subject matter.

Public Consultation on the European Commission's Communication on the Rights of the Child (2011-2014)

On June 11 the European Commission launched a public consultation that will help shape more child friendly legislation at an EU and national level. This online consultation is open until the 20th August to all those who have an interest in protecting the rights of children. The consultation looks at certain specific areas identified by professionals working in this field and seeks public guidance on: child friendly justice and children's participation in the justice system; justice policies safeguarding children's rights, such as in the framework of family mediation; protecting vulnerable groups of children. A report summarizing all the contributions received through this consultation will be published later in the year and will subsequently feed into a new Communication on the Rights of the Child. In the same time the Commission is gathering the opinions of children through focus groups, which will be published in October. At ENOC level, the ENOC Presidency is preparing a contribution covering the major part of the questions and issues put forward in the public consultation. The Flemish Children's rights Commissioner will also contribute to the questionnaire, focusing on the issue of "child poverty" and "justice policies safeguarding children's rights".

Opinion of the European Union's Committee of the Regions

Last June, the EU Committee of the Regions adopted an Opinion on the local and regional cooperation to protect the rights of the child in the European Union. In its opinion, the Committee of the Regions underlined one more time the positive role played by National Children's Ombudspersons and called upon a stronger and close two way cooperation between Children's Ombudspersons and Local and regional authorities.

The Opinion is made available in several languages under: <https://toad.cor.europa.eu/corwipdetail.aspx?folderpath=CIVEX-V/001&id=20588>

In addition, a study on "Local and regional cooperation to protect the rights of the child in the EU" has recently been published under:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PresentationTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=af0f2805-1590-42da-a888-3ea9ec798e06&sm=af0f2805-1590-42da-a888-3ea9ec798e06>

Entering into force of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

On July 1st the CoE Convention on the Protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse came into force after having been signed by 39 of the Council of Europe's 47 member states, five of which have also ratified it.

It is the first international instrument to tackle all forms of sexual violence against children, including abuse perpetrated within the family environment. Apart from sexual abuse, child prostitution and pornography and coercing children into participating in pornographic performances, the convention also deals with grooming and sex tourism. The Council of Europe will accordingly be launching an awareness-raising campaign in Rome (Italy) on 29 November, the aim being to eliminate sexual violence against children.

The full text of the Convention: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=201&CM=8&DF=&CL=ENG>

Regional Consultations on the drafting of General Comment n° 13 on Article 19 of the UNCRC

Regional Consultations on the drafting of General Comment n° 13 on Article 19 of the UN CRC is currently being conducted by ISPCAN and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD). While substantive feedback is needed by the Committee's Editorial Group by 15 August 2010 so that an initial "Draft 3" could be submitted for discussion to the Committee on the Rights of the Child during its September session, the survey will remain online until **31 October 2010** for further comments on regional experiences in general and on implementation of the final version of GC13.

For those who are interested to participate in the survey, please follow the following link: <http://www.iicrd.org/node/473>

UNICEF Innocenti published a report on “the Role of civil society in implementing the General Measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre published recently a working paper, prepared by former CRC Committee member **Nevena Vučković Šahovića**.

The Working paper stresses the important role played by civil society, and in particular NGOs, in the implementation of the CRC.

Drawing on concluding observations of the CRC Committee and case studies of civil society activities, the paper highlights a wide range of issues and challenges faced nowadays by civil society, including financial crisis, poverty, globalization, and varying levels of political commitment.

Based on the examples provided, many of which draw on the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and case studies of civil society activities, the paper lists recommendations for follow-up by key actors. In so doing, this paper seeks to provide concrete recommendations to government, the committee, and actors at national, regional, and international level.

To download the publication: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/cgi-bin/unicef/Lunga.sql?ProductID=603>

Start of the official talks on the European Union’s accession to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

Official talks started on July 7th on the European Union's accession to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission, marked the beginning of this joint process at a meeting in Strasbourg. They discussed how to move the process forward so that citizens can swiftly benefit from stronger and more coherent fundamental rights protection in Europe.

The EU's accession to the ECHR will place the EU on the same footing as its Member States with regard to the system of fundamental rights protection supervised by the ECHR in Strasbourg. It will allow for the EU's voice to be heard when cases come before the Strasbourg Court. With accession, the EU would become the 48th signatory of the ECHR. The EU would also have its own judge at the ECHR in Strasbourg. Accession will also provide a new possibility of remedies for individuals. They will be able to bring complaints - after they have exhausted domestic remedies - about the alleged violation of fundamental rights by the EU before the European Court of Human Rights.

For more information on the process of adhesion, please follow: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/reding/index_en.htm and/or <http://www.coe.int/T/SECRETARYGENERAL/SG/>

The European Council adopted “Europe 2020”, a new strategy for jobs and growth

On 17 June 2010, the European Council adopted a new strategy for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, “Europe 2020”. The Strategy constitutes a coherent framework for the EU to mobilise all of its instruments and policies and for the member states to take enhanced coordinated action. It will promote the delivery of structural reforms. The European Council confirmed the 5 EU headline targets which will constitute objectives guiding the action of Member States and the European Union. Among the principal targets, of particular interest are those that concern the improving of education levels, in particular by aiming to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10% and by increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%; promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.

The full text of the European Council’s conclusions is made available under: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/115346.pdf

3rd meeting of the European Roma platform

Co-organized by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission, the third meeting of the integrated European Platform for Roma inclusion took place in Brussels on 17th June 2010.

The third meeting of the Platform focused specifically on the discussion of a roadmap proposed by the Spanish Presidency, providing a midterm framework of stakeholder actions and expected outputs for the Platform.

Among the key issues to be addressed by the Platform includes the one concerning the education area and more specifically: early child education and care; the issue of Roma in special schools; measures to prevent early school leaving and academic failure; desegregation in educational centres in urban and rural areas; secondary and tertiary Education - with a view to securing access to employment; access to the education system and changes in the educational system.

For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=849&furtherNews=yes>

Update on member institutions' activities

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The Ombudsman for Children, Ireland published its 5th Annual Report

The report includes, among others, issues concerning: children's separation from and access to their siblings; difficulties for children in accessing special care placements and appropriate supports and therapeutic interventions; the lack of any statutory obligation on the State to provide aftercare support to young people leaving care; significant delays in accessing suitable health services for children and young people; difficulties for parents and guardians in accessing integrated services to meet their children's needs; and the amount of time, energy and resources needed by parents or guardians to advocate on behalf of their child and the effect that this is having on family life. The full text of the report is made available under: <http://www.oco.ie/assets/files/publications/Annual%20Report/Children'sOmbudsmanAnnualreport.pdf>

The Ombudsman for Children of Republic of Srpska published its 1st Annual Report

Following the establishment of the office of the Ombudsman for Children of Republic of Srpska in 2009, the 1st annual report covering the period June-December 2009 has been recently published. The Report highlights the need for new attitudes towards children, better understanding and consistent application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, its basic principles and requirements, greater accountability of those who care for children and better cooperation between institutions working in the same field - the realization and protection of children's rights. Full text of the report is available in English under: http://www.djeca.rs.ba/uploaded/Annual_2009.pdf

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **8-10 September 2010:** Expert conference "Europe de l'Enfance" on the *European and international policy agenda on children, youth and children's rights*, organized in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, in Antwerp, Belgium
- ❖ **6 October 2010:** ENOC Seminar on the Council of Europe mechanisms of protection on the rights of the child, Strasbourg, France
- ❖ **7-9 October 2010:** ENOC 14th Annual Conference dedicated to the theme of "Listening to children and involving them in the promotion and implementation of their rights" and General Assembly meeting, Strasbourg, France
- ❖ **14 October 2010:** 5th EU Forum on the Rights of the Child, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **20 October 2010:** Conference on "Unaccompanied Children: what protection at European level?" organized by the Council of Europe, the NGO "France terre d'asile" and the Association "Thémis", in Strasbourg, France

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).

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