

Newsletter

Update on ENOC Activities

ENOC 14th Annual Conference: follow up activities

The ENOC 14th Annual Conference took place on 7-9 October 2010 in the premises of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France. The Conference brought together 33 Ombudspersons for children and their advisors, but also representatives of observer Ombudsman institutions, NGOs and International Organizations such as the European Commission, Council of Europe, UNICEF, the UN Committee on the rights of the child etc. In the same time, 35 young people and 16 Coordinators coming from 15 countries within largest Europe met in parallel on the same occasion to discuss and conclude on four priority issues concerning violence, education, health and the use of new technologies. Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Ms. Maud de Boer Buquicchio, Vice-President of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Mr. Jean Zermatten, representative of the European Commission's Justice Directorate-General Mr. Aleksandar Romanovic and UN SG Special Representative on Violence against Children, Ms. Marta Santos Pais addressed participants of the Conference.

In the aftermath of the Conference, the four Ombudspersons for Children that chaired each thematic group are working on the first draft of the common Ombuds-young people recommendations. Their draft common proposals will be posted on the ENYA forum for further discussion by and with young people before being finalized.

ENOC members' summaries of their annual activities and key note speeches and presentations that have been presented during the Conference are posted on the ENOC website under <http://www.crin.org/enoc/meetings/index.asp>

A Conference report is under preparation and will be circulated to all members before the end of the year.

ENOC submitted comments on the proposal for a draft OP to the CRC to provide a communications procedure

As it was announced at the ENOC Annual Conference last October by Ms. Leda Koursoumba, Chair of the ENOC WG on Children's Access to Justice, members of the working group under the lead of the chair prepared a series of written comments on the proposal for a draft OP to the CRC to provide a communications procedure. ENOC's comments have been further discussed and agreed upon by the rest of the Network and sent to the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council's Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), Mr. Drahoslav Štefánek. The OEWG will hold a session from 6th to 10th of December in Geneva where all the stakeholders involved in the drafting process will be discussing the draft OP article by article trying to reach a consensus on the content. The written comments provided by ENOC will contribute to the discussions and will be further stand up for by Ms. Leda Koursoumba, who will participate in the working session on behalf of ENOC.

The full text of the ENOC comments are made available under: <http://www.crin.org/enoc/resources/infodetail.asp?id=23575>

ENOC submitted a new application for funding under the European Commission's Fundamental Rights and citizenship Programme

As it has been proceeded over the previous years, on November 22nd, ENOC submitted a new application for funding through the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Commission towards Network's operating costs for 2011. A decision from the European Commission is expected in March-April 2011.



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ENOC membership fee

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

Since the end of the year is approaching, we are kindly reminding those of you that have not afforded yet their membership fee for 2010 to do so ASAP and preferably before the end of the year.

Concerning the membership fee for 2011, we would be extremely grateful if you could honour your commitments as early as possible in 2011.

Happy Christmas and end of the year celebrations to all of you in advance!!!

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: Refugee Children should have a genuine chance to seek asylum

CoE Commissioner for Human Rights underlined once again the special attention that Governments should pay to the situation of refugee children when setting up or revising their own Asylum System. In this context, Commissioner Hammarberg identified key points that Governments are invited to take into consideration: children should be interviewed independently and separately when possible; possible grounds for asylum should be addressed through this interview; special training should be provided to those that carry out the interviews; prompt appointment of competent guardians for separated and unaccompanied minors; and importance should be attached to children's grounds for asylum in the judicial process.

The full text of the article is available under:

http://commissioner.cws.coe.int/tiki-view_blog_post.php?blogId=1&postId=71

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

EU Conference on "Who Cares? Roadmap for a Recommendation to fight child poverty"

On 2-3 September 2010, the EU Belgian Presidency, in cooperation with the King Baudouin Foundation, UNICEF and Eurochild, organized a conference on child poverty which aimed to commit each Member State to take into account the problems of children living in poverty and to find solutions to reduce the level of child poverty. A number of ENOC members were present at the event while Ms. Maria Kaisa Aula, Ombudsman for Children in Finland and ENOC Treasurer delivered a key note speech on the issue of child participation. Ms. Aula underlined the close relationship between the principle of best interests of the child and children's rights to freedom of expression and participation. She pursued that children need to be given the opportunity to express freely themselves when determining what their best interests are. Ms. Aula considered that the principle of the best interests of the child should be more explicitly highlighted in the proposed EU recommendation on child poverty.

For more information on the Conference: www.eutrio.be

Expert Conference "Europe de l'Enfance": The European and international policy agendas for children, youth and children's rights

From 8 to 10 September 2010, the Belgian EU Presidency invited experts to participate in the 'Europe de l'Enfance' expert conference, organized in Antwerp, Belgium - in order to create synergies and coherence between European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. Three priority themes have been discussed at the conference in addition of having paid a special attention to child poverty. Among the three priority themes: an overview of the different European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights; the new EC communication concerning a strategy on the rights of the child, to be adopted in Spring 2011; criteria for early childhood education and care services in the framework of European cooperation in education and training. A number of ENOC member institutions (Northern Ireland, France, Poland, Catalonia, and Finland) took part in the conference while Ms. Dominique Versini, ENOC Chair, participated in the debate on the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. Ms Versini's intervention was based on the ENOC contribution to the EC consultation via questionnaires organized during summer 2010 on a number of issues on which the EC sought the views of its external partners. (ENOC's contribution will be made available on the ENOC website soon)

5th EU Forum on the Rights of the Child, 14 October 2010, Brussels

The 5th EU Forum on the Rights of the Child was of a particular interest since the first after the Lisbon Treaty. Therefore, for a first time the explicit objective of promoting rights of the child in internal and external policies is included among the Union's objectives. In her address EC Vice-President, Ms. Viviane Reding presented the four priority areas that the new EC Communication for an enhanced EU Strategy on the rights of the child will be addressing: **child friendly justice, combating violence against children, special focus on vulnerable groups of children including those in institutional care and detention, and child poverty.** Two important issues have been put on the top of the Forum's agenda: child friendly justice and child participation. A high number of ENOC members participated in the Forum. Ms. Patricia Lewsley, ENOC Chair, made a contribution on the topic of child-friendly justice. The main points outlined by the ENOC Chair on the issue concern the interlink between children's participation, children's best interests and a child friendly justice. According to Ms. Lewsley, justice cannot be child friendly if concerned children are not associated to the justice process at all the stages of the procedure, if their best interests are not assessed by taking into consideration their views and opinions.

For further information on the Forum: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/children/forum/policies_children_forum_en.htm

European Parliament is addressing the issue of child sexual abuse, exploitation and child pornography

The Civil Liberties Committee of the European Parliament examined on November 15th ways to strengthen EU efforts against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and child pornography. MEP Rapporteur Roberta Angelilli reported that the EU is currently working on the revision of the framework decision on the subject which dates back to 2004. Belgian Federal Minister of Justice supported the initiative by stating that this piece of legislation is one of the priorities of the EU Belgian Presidency. Responsible Ministers from EU Governments will discuss the issue in December while the EP will vote on the report in February 2011. For information: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/017-94330-316-11-46-902-20101112STO94319-2010-12-11-2010/default_en.htm

continues

CRIN published the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council

CRIN has undertaken an extensive analysis of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), to assess the extent to which children's rights are addressed and how NGOs and other organizations are engaging with this new mechanism. The report assesses the status of children's rights in the first seven sessions of the UPR (112 countries reviewed), examining the extent to which they are addressed, and which children's rights issues receive prominence and which are neglected. The report also looks into experiences NGOs have had in using the UPR, drawing on successes achieved and challenges faced by a broad range of children's rights organizations. CRIN interviewed a number of children's rights focused organisations, including international NGOs, national NGOs, Ombudspersons and academic bodies, to get their experiences in engaging with all stages of the UPR process, from pre-review report submission and lobbying activities, through to post-review follow-up strategies.

The full report is available under: http://www.crin.org/email/crin_mail_detail_popup.asp?crinmailID=3422#aa

More EU action to safeguard the rights of children of separated parents

The EP Petitions Committee stated on 26 October that cross-border family disputes and the protection of children's rights, especially of those with separated parents, are matters that the EU needs to address. Compulsory recognition of national courts' decisions on custody and visits, special training for judges on parental responsibility in cross-border separations and encouragement for family mediation should give more legal certainty to international couples. Commission Vice President Viviane Reding took part in the discussion and reported that an Action Plan on children's rights in the field of justice (including proceedings on parental responsibility) will be further elaborated by the EC and a revision of the regulation on recognition of judgments in matrimonial matters and parental responsibility (Brussels II-a) is also on the Commission agenda. For more information: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20101025IPR90073>

PACE Recommendation on child abuse in institutions

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted on 5 October 2010 Recommendation 1934 (2010) on Child Abuse in institutions: ensuring full protection of the victims. Taking note of the large number of discovered cases of child abuses in institutions in several member countries, the Assembly recommended that the Committee of Ministers ask members states to take a series of measures to address the issue and to report to the Assembly of the effective implementation of the measures undertaken in this respect.

The full text of the PACE recommendations is available under: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta10/EREC1934.htm#1>

Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice adopted

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted on November 17th European Guidelines on child friendly justice. The Guidelines intend to enhance children's access to and treatment in justice. During the drafting process, a large number of children and young people have been consulted and their views reflected in the Guidelines. Key themes of the Guidelines include family, mistrust of authority and need for respect and the importance for children and young people to be listened to. A full report of children and young people's contributions will be produced soon. To consult the Guidelines: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/default_en.asp

Council of Europe launching campaign to stop sexual violence against children

On 29 November 2010 in Rome (Italy), the Council of Europe is launching a campaign to stop sexual violence against children. Campaign's main objectives are: to promote the signature, ratification and implementation of the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; to equip children, their families/carers and societies with knowledge and tools to prevent sexual violence against children and in doing so to raise awareness of the full extent of sexual violence against children. Through the campaign, the Council of Europe wants to empower governments, parliamentarians, professional networks, civil society, parents and children, enabling them to take the necessary steps to stop sexual violence against children. More information on the campaign is available under: http://www.coe.int/T/TransversalProjects/Children/News/Sexual%20violence/Campaignlaunching_en.asp

Eurochild's 7th Annual Conference: Brighter futures - Building effective partnerships to end child poverty (3-5 November 2010, Sweden)

Eurochild - a European network of organisations promoting the rights and welfare of children in Europe - took the opportunity of its 7th annual conference to look at how all stakeholders can work together to end child poverty. The conference had three overarching objectives: In the framework of EY2010 against poverty and social exclusion, highlight the importance of EU efforts in helping member states fight child poverty and social exclusion, and bring suggestions of how this effort can be reinforced in the future; demonstrate why investment in children and families must remain a top political priority, even in times of scarce public finances; show practical examples of working together to end child poverty and how this leads to better outcomes for children. This includes demonstrating cooperation between NGOs, local/regional authorities and other service providers; the role of researchers; and the benefits of direct involvement of children and families.

For further information: http://eurochild.org/index.php?id=208&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=336&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=185&cHash=7c800f03be53bd7209cfa48f7970113c

Update on member institutions' activities

The Ombudsperson for Children of France published its annual report and a thematic report on "financial insecurity and the protection of children's rights"

In the EY2010 against poverty, la Défenseure des Enfants, Dominique Versini, dedicated its annual 2010 thematic report to the consequences of poverty and financial insecurity on the protection of children's rights in terms of daily life, housing, school life, and maintaining of family ties. On this occasion, a Conference bringing together different stakeholders and partners working on the ground has been organized in early October in order to detect and analyse the deficiencies of the current policies on fight against poverty and social exclusion. The recommendations produced at the end of the 2 day Conference aim to reach the UN objective to reduce by 2020 the number of (2 million) children that live in poverty in France. The recommendations have been submitted to the President of the Republic and to the Parliament on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the CRC. The annual and the thematic reports are made available (only in French) under: <http://crin.org/enoc/resources/publications/>

The Children's Rights Commissioner of the French community in Belgium published its annual report on 20 November

On the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the CRC, the Children's Rights Commissioner of the French Community in Belgium submitted to the President of the Parliament and to the Minister-President of the French community its annual 2009-2010 report. If questions of mistreatment, divorce and separations remain of concern, this year witnesses a high increase of requests related to the field of education, in terms of complaints or information requests. The full text of the report (only in French) is made available under: <http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infodetail.asp?id=23570>

Two more annual reports have been recently published: Annual report of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (<http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infodetail.asp?id=23591>) and annual report of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (<http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infodetail.asp?id=23592>)

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **1-2 December 2010:** 3rd meeting of the Council of Europe Ad Hoc advisory Group on child participation, Vienna, Austria
- ❖ **7-8 December 2010:** High-level Fundamental Rights Conference on "Ensuring Justice and Protection for All Children" organized by FRA and the EU Belgian Presidency, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **8 December 2010:** Public hearing on preventing undocumented women and children from accessing health care: fostering health inequalities in Europe, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **9 December 2010:** ENOC Bureau meeting, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **17 December 2010:** Council of Europe Hearing on the draft Recommendation "the rights and the status of children & parental responsibilities", 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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