

# Newsletter

## ENOC News & Announcements

### ENOC at the Council of Europe mid-term review strategy conference “Growing with children’s rights”

The ENOC Chair, Bernard De Vos, and ENOC members from Belgium, Croatia, England, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Poland and Republika Sprska participated at the Council of Europe Conference “Growing with children’s rights” at end of March in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The conference marked the mid-way stage of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015 the overarching goal of which is to achieve effective implementation of existing children’s rights standards. The aim of the conference was to assess progress achieved in the first two years of the Strategy’s implementation. At the high level plenary session the ENOC Chair spoke about persisting and emerging challenges in protecting children’s rights in Europe from Ombudspersons for Children’s perspective. A number of ENOC members made presentations on different topics during the roundtable sessions. All the presentations and Conference related information are available on the Council of Europe Dubrovnik Conference 2014 website at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/Dubrovnik/DubrovnikConference2014\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/Dubrovnik/DubrovnikConference2014_EN.asp)

### ENOC Chair supported the launch of the National Action to Address Child Intentional Injury Report

Supported by the ENOC Chair, Bernard De Vos, and Vice President of the European Parliament, Isabelle Durant, the European Child Safety Alliance launched a report in March 2014 on child intentional injury describing the prevalence of intentional injuries to children in the European Union, including maltreatment, peer to peer violence and self-directed violence, examining the uptake of national level policies addressing intentional child injuries in over 25 EU Member States. The report includes a multi-country overview of actions related to leadership, children’s rights, capacity and data to facilitate European-level planning to support national level efforts. The report also includes individual country policy profiles describing evidence-based actions to address child intentional injury in these four areas up to July 2013. The report contains a foreword from the ENOC Chair, and a video support message was released on the day of the launch. The full report, country profiles and recommendations are available at: <http://www.childsafetyeurope.org/archives/news/2014/march-20-intentional-injury-report.html>

### ENOC at a consultation meeting on “Investing in children: a challenge and a task for Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

Under the auspices of the Greek Presidency of the EU, and in collaboration with the European Commission and Eurochild, the Greek Ombudsman organized on 9 May 2014 in Athens, Greece, a consultation meeting on the implementation of the European Commission’s 2013 recommendation “Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage”. ENOC was represented at the meeting by Tam Baillie, ENOC Chair-elect and Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People. Together with ENOC members from Ireland, Netherlands and Greece, he participated in a round table dedicated to the implementation of the EC recommendation in relation to other measures for the protection of children’s rights in EU countries.

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### Announcement: ENOC 2014 Annual Conference & General Assembly meeting

The ENOC 18th Annual Conference on “*The impact of austerity on the realisation of children’s rights*” will take place on 22-24 October 2014 in Edinburgh.

Registrations for the Conference will be open as of Mid-June 2014. Practical and hotel related information will be sent to all ENOC members and invited observer organisations/experts in the coming days.

! For non-ENOC members, participation in the Conference is possible only upon prior agreement by the ENOC Bureau and/or upon invitation.

## ENOC joined 38 leading organisations urging the European Council to protect migrant children's rights

At the moment when the European Union is developing the new strategic guidelines on the future of Justice and Home Affairs policies, 38 leading organisations in the fields of human rights, education, health, and social inclusion, including the UN CRC, UNICEF, OHCHR and ENOC, called on the European Council to use the opportunity to advance on its achievements and commitment to every child, including migrant children in vulnerable situations, by making children's rights a strategic and actionable priority for Home Affairs policy in the coming years. The call was launched at the initiative of PICUM-the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants. The joint letter can be read at: <http://picum.org/en/news/picum-news/43959/>

### On the same subject:

✓ENOC 2013 statement on "*Children on the move: children first!*" <https://www.crin.org/docs/ENOC%20statement%20children%20on%20the%20move%202013.pdf>

✓ENOC documentary on "*Children on the move: children first!*", <http://vimeo.com/75947923>

## EC study on children's involvement in judicial proceedings published

28 individual country profiles and a comparative overview on children's involvement in criminal judicial proceedings in the role of suspects/offenders, victims and witnesses in the EU has been recently published by the European Commission following the EC Communication of 15/02/2011 identifying the lack of reliable, comparable and official data on the situation of children in Member States. See the publication at: [http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en\\_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=DS0313659](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=DS0313659)

More information on the consultation meeting is available at: <http://www.0-18.gr/investing>

## ENOC representative at the meeting of the Council of Europe Network of Coordinators for Citizenship and Human Rights Education

In the framework of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe held on 20-21 May 2014 in Baku/Azerbaijan its 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Network of Coordinators for Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The meeting was devoted to the topic of "*Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education*". David Lallemand, a representative of the ENOC Chair, made a presentation on the meeting's theme at the opening session.

For more information: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/News\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/News_EN.asp)

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

### European Commission shed light on problem of international families and consults on further action

In April 2014, the European Commission published a report on the legal problems couples from different nationalities across Europe still face when they try to resolve cross-border disputes concerning their marriage or the custody of their children. While the report pointed out that EU rules already in place have brought numerous benefits to citizens in settling disputes, it also reveals critical shortcomings in legal frameworks. In order to explore possible solutions, a public consultation on the application of the current rules is online until 18 July, 2014. At the same time, a Europe-wide awareness campaign will provide targeted information to international families on cross-border parental child abduction and child custody and visiting rights in order to improve their understanding of their rights and obligations. For more information: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-451\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-451_en.htm)

### European Commission gathers input on how to best protect children from violence

In April 2014, the European Commission launched an online public consultation to help EU Member States develop integrated and effective child protection systems. The input will result in EU guidance providing information on EU legislation and policies relevant to these systems. It will clarify where the EU can support national child protection systems, and showcase good practices in looking after children in cross-border as well as in national contexts. The online survey (deadline: 3 July 2014) and further information are available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/fundamental-rights/opinion/140402\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/fundamental-rights/opinion/140402_en.htm)

### Fundamental Rights: challenges and achievements

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights published in June 2014 its annual 2013 report outlining practical suggestions about how to ensure people in the EU can have their rights better protected and mapping out the fundamental rights challenges and achievements that took place over the course of 2013. A special chapter (Chapter 4) is dedicated to children's rights and to the protection of children in the EU with a special focus on child poverty, violence against children and child-friendly justice.

The full report is available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2014/how-strengthen-europes-fundamental-rights-protection-fra-suggests-ways-forward>

### Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights' released a comment on protecting children's rights in a digital world

"*Protecting children's rights in the digital world: an ever growing challenge*" is the theme of the recently published comment of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks. While the internet remains an important source of information for children where they can exercise many of their rights, it goes hand in hand with growing risks for children of violations of their rights. Thus, children's rights are threatened in many ways so there is a need to develop adequate responses to these threats by empowering children to protect themselves -- by creating a safe environment for children on the internet, and by developing human rights education online. The full text of the comment is available here: <http://humanrightscomment.org/2014/04/29/protecting-childrens-rights-in-the-digital-world-an-ever-growing-challenge/>

## Launch of the Call for a Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and a consultation meeting in June 2014

After the successful launch in March 2014 of the call for a global study on children deprived of liberty, a one-day expert consultation is to be held on 13 June 2014 in Geneva. The consultation will aim to gather opinions, inputs and recommendations from the participants in order to further guide the Call to the United Nations General Assembly. It will also define the framework for the future Global Study and its concrete impact in generating reforms that will effectively see the deprivation of children's liberty as a measure of last resort, for the shortest appropriate period of time.

## Updates from ENOC members

✓ Annual 2013 report of the **Ombudsman for Children of Republika Srpska** approved by the National Assembly. Compared to previous years, the report highlights again the high number of complaints concerning the protection (or lack thereof) of the rights and interests of children in cases of divorce or separation of parents. The report also pointed out that not all forms of violence, abuse and child neglect are recognized and therefore protection systems and state reactions remain inadequate. The report makes a series of recommendations addressed to competent authorities to ensure compliance of national laws and practices with recognized standards for the protection of the rights and interests of children. The report is available here: <http://www.djeca.rs.ba/uploaded/ANNUAL%20REPPORT%202013ENG.pdf>

✓ The Youth Advisors Team (YAT) of the **Cyprus Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights** is now provided for by law. The amendment was proposed by the Cypriot Commissioner and is of great importance, as the role of YAT is now officially recognised, aiming to reinforce the work and the mission of the Commissioner in protecting children's rights in Cyprus. According to section 13 of the legislation, the YAT, which is renewed annually, consists of children between the ages of 13 to 17 with a balanced representation of Cypriot Society in terms of geographical area, sex, age, ethnic background, religious beliefs, cultural origin and social groups -- including children with disabilities. The Commissioner, in consultation with the YAT, determines the procedure for selection of the team, the manner of its operation, the duration and mode of renewal of its term, as well as any other matters relating to its smooth and effective operation. The role of the YAT is, inter alia, the 1) exchange of views with the Commissioner on any matter relating to children's rights, 2) development of positions, proposals and recommendations and their submission to the Commissioner on any matter relating to children's rights, 3) discussion with the Commissioner on any matter which the children deem important, and 4) participation in activities of the YAT in other countries and/or in programs of ENOC.

✓ The **Human Rights Defender of Armenia** released its annual 2013 report. One separate chapter is dedicated to children's rights where the report points out states' failure to protect and promote the rights of the child in a number of areas. Child begging, de-institutionalisation of orphanages, foster care, child adoption procedures especially for children with disabilities, child birth registrations, etc. are among many other areas detected by the Human Rights Defender where serious problems persist and require concrete actions from competent state authorities for improving the conditions of children and for guaranteeing respect for their basic rights and needs. A summary report in English is available at: <http://pashtpan.am/en/library/library/page/101/type/3>

## Upcoming Events

- ❖ **13 June 2014:** expert consultation meeting on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty Geneva, Switzerland
- ❖ **22-24 October 2014:** 18<sup>th</sup> ENOC Annual Conference on "The impact of austerity measures on the realisation of children's rights", Edinburgh, Scotland

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](mailto: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-B5 08V  
67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
Tel. +33 3 90 21 54 88

E-mail:  
[secretariat@ombudsnet.org](mailto:secretariat@ombudsnet.org)

Find us on the Web:  
[www.ombudsnet.org](http://www.ombudsnet.org)

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