

Newsletter

ENOC News & Announcements

ENOC Bureau met with stakeholders in Brussels

The 2nd ENOC Bureau meeting took place on 18 March 2018 in Brussels, Belgium. On the same occasion, the ENOC Bureau met with young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland who participated in a project called "[It's our Brexit Too: Children's Rights, Children's Voices](#)". The young people presented the outcomes of the project to the Bureau and on the next day to relevant EU authorities.

On the 19th March 2018, the ENOC Bureau held a number of meetings with different stakeholders. It first met **Ms. Jana Hainsworth**, Secretary-General of Eurochild, and agreed to an annual exchange to coordinate advocacy efforts on children's rights in Europe. Then the Bureau met **Mr. Vytenis Andriukaitis**, [European Commissioner on Health and Food Safety](#) to discuss children's right to mental healthcare as part of ENOC's priority theme for 2018. Further meetings were held with the EC Coordinator on the Rights of the Child, **Ms. Margaret Tuite** and with the EP Intergroup on Children's Rights Coordinator, **Mr. Emilio Puccio**. The Bureau then held a final meeting with the Co-Chair of the [European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights](#), **Ms. Anna Maria Corazza Bildt**. They shared most recent and relevant information on their respective activities and agreed on a regular and enhanced cooperation and coordinated action on issues of common interest. ENOC has formally applied and has been since granted membership to the Intergroup. Further details on the different meetings [here](#)

ENOC Chair at the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child meeting

The Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) held its 4th meeting on 21-23 March 2018 in Strasbourg, France. Topics on the agenda concerned, among others: child-rights budgeting; equal opportunities for all children with a special focus on children's rights and safeguards in the context of migration; participation of all children and reaching out to children; a life free from violence for all children; child friendly justice for all children; and rights of the child in the digital environment. The ENOC Chair, **Mr. Tuomas Kurttila**, participated in the meeting on behalf of ENOC. On the same occasion, the ENOC Chair took part in a special meeting with **Ms. Afshan Khan**, UNICEF's Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Special Coordinator, Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe who was invited to address the CAHENF Committee. While mutual support and joint activities between UNICEF Regional Office and ENOC have been taking place on a regular basis for the last couple of years, the ENOC Chair and **Ms. Khan** discussed how to further strengthen mutual cooperation and coordination on particular issues such as on migrant children along with how to mutually reinforce advocacy efforts in Europe.

ENOC Chair at the launch of Eurochild's new Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Together with other key partners such as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Council of Europe, FRA, and UNICEF Europe, the ENOC Chair, **Mr. Tuomas Kurttila** has been invited to participate in a pre Eurochild General Assembly session on 18 April 2018 in Brussels where the three key objectives of the new [Eurochild Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#) have been discussed with external child rights actors. At this special session, Eurochild invited its allies in civil society and international

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ENOC 22nd Annual Conference & 22nd General Assembly meeting 19-21 September 2018 Paris, France

The 22nd ENOC Annual Conference on "*Children's right to mental healthcare*" will take place on **19-20 September 2018** and the 22nd ENOC General Assembly on **21 September 2018** in Paris, France. The Conference host is the Office of the French Deputy Ombudsperson for Children. Registrations will be open soon and until August 15th. External participation is possible only upon invitation.

UNICEF report “Progress for every child in the SDG era”

Over half a billion children live in countries unable to measure progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to UNICEF new data. The UNICEF report, [Progress for every child in the SDG era](#), is the first thematic report assessing performance toward achieving the SDG global targets that concern children and young people. The report warns that 650 million children live in countries where at least two-thirds of the SDGs are out of reach without accelerated progress.

New PICUM manual on regularisation of children, young people & families

Regularisations are a common policy tool with numerous benefits for states, individuals and families, and the communities and economies they live in. Almost all EU member states have regularised undocumented residents in the past 22 years, through regularisation mechanisms, programmes, or a combination of both. Drawing on the learning from the implementation of regularisation schemes in Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the UK, PICUM has produced a [manual](#) on regularisations of undocumented children, young people & families. Clear status determination procedures that provide children and young people with a secure and long-term residence status are crucial to ensure they fully enjoy all of their rights and to promote their well-being. The executive summary & recommendations are available [here](#)

Using coercion to fingerprint children looking for safety is unacceptable

Missing Children Europe, together with 22 other signatories, urged the EU to exempt children and vulnerable groups from all forms of coercion in the EURODAC Regulation, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. While fingerprinting can be justified for improving the protection of children, especially when they go missing, the use of coercive measures to do so violates several children’s rights. Read more information on the joint call [here](#)

organisations to share their ambition to progress the realisation of children’s rights in practice. It was also an opportunity for all participants to identify opportunities for greater collaboration at national and European level.

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

European Parliament adopts resolution on the protection of children in migration

At the initiative of the European Parliament (EP) Intergroup on Children’s Rights - @Childmanifesto, the EP voted on 3 May 2018 the very first [Resolution](#) exclusively focused on ALL children in migration. The resolution calls on the EU member states to take a number of appropriate actions to guarantee the rights and needs of all migrant children are respected. Those actions include, among others: accommodate migrant children and children with families in non-custodial, community-based placements; appoint a guardian within 5 days upon arrival of the child; appoint a child protection officer in all hotspots & facilities hosting children and children with families; provide psychological support to child victims of violence and sexual exploitation; provide immediate access to healthcare and education on equal foot with EU national children; speed up the relocation of the remaining eligible children in Greece and Italy; prevent childhood statelessness via adequate legislation reforms, etc.

New FRA publications in a series “Mapping minimum age requirements concerning the rights of the child in the EU”

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released in April 2018 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. The new set of findings of the web-publication, available in the form of interactive maps, covers differences in legal minimum ages in the field of [asylum and migration](#) (age assessment and fingerprinting of children in asylum procedures) and the [digital world](#). A separate web-publication focusing on mapping minimum age requirements devoted to children in the field of [justice](#) has been released at the same time. In the same vein, two opinion reports devote themselves to especially analyse the most striking issues as regards [children in justice](#) as well as [asylum and migration](#).

Council of Europe (CoE) issues new policy guidelines to protect children of imprisoned parents

Some 2.1 million children in Europe have one of their parents in prison. These children may experience trauma, stigma, anxiety, and loss of parental care and material status which may be detrimental to their well-being, personal development and sometimes life. The CoE Committee of Ministers adopted on April 4th, 2018 a [recommendation](#) recalling that children of imprisoned parents are entitled to the same rights as other children, including regular contact with their parents, except if it is considered contrary to child’s best interests. Maintaining child-parent relations can positively impact not only the child, but also the imprisoned parent, prison staff and environment, and by better preparing the prisoner for release and social reintegration, also protect society in general, the Committee of Ministers stresses. See the full press release [here](#)

Putting children’s well-being on the agenda

Many school-age children in Europe struggle with mental health issues and health systems fail to support them and their families effectively. Similarly, justice systems across Europe fail to ensure that children who are either victims, witnesses or perpetrators of crime are treated in a way that is appropriate for their age. Over recent years, different European and international organisations have regularly expressed concern both about the handling of mental-health conditions amongst children and about the appropriateness of judicial procedures for children. The Committee of Social Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) of the CoE held on 24 April 2018 in Strasbourg a special meeting to discuss key challenges and policy responses in the areas of children’s mental health and child-friendly justice, building upon the conclusions of a related Seminar having taken place in November 2017 in London. The Seminar [report](#) has been launched on the same occasion.

EUROCHILD Advocacy Toolkit on promoting child participation in public decision-making

In March 2018, Eurochild launched, with the support of the Council of Europe, a new [Advocacy Toolkit](#) aiming to engage children and young people in advocating for children’s right to participate in decision-making processes, thus promoting child participation at different administrative levels and in various contexts. The kit includes tools and methods meant to empower children to contribute to change in public decision-making. This change will lead to the engagement of more children from diverse backgrounds. The Toolkit is intended to be used by NGOs working with children and young people, as well as government officials at national, regional and local level, who want to engage with children and young people.

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Emphasis on Children's Rights in Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights' 1st Quarterly Activity Report 2018

Inclusive education, as an effective vehicle for overcoming a number of restraining situations for a great number of students, such as segregation between ethnic communities, Roma children and children with disabilities as well as support to unaccompanied migrant children and the abolition of detention of migrant minors constitute issues of focal interest in the (former) [Commissioner of Human Rights Activity Report for the first quarter of 2018](#).

The new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, [Ms. Dunja Milatović](#), who took up her duties on 2 April 2018, confirmed the continued interest and focus of the Commissioner's Office in the children's rights field. The new Commissioner will focus in her upcoming country visits and statements on issues such as long term consequences of drastic austerity measures on children; detention of migrant children; inclusive education; the rights of LGBTI children; and the situation of returnees.

Updates from ENOC members

✓The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and the Ombudsman for Children (OCO) in Ireland held a Conference involving over 100 young people to explore the impact of Brexit on Children's Rights. They worked with a cross border Steering group of 22 young people, who developed and then led the event in Newry last November. Together they explored how Brexit might affect children and young people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and provided key decision makers with the opportunity of hearing directly from the young people of their concerns. A special report [It's Our Brexit Too: Children's Rights, Children's Voices](#) representing the views, hopes and fears of 120 young people from both sides of the island has been published and introduced by young representatives supported by NICCY and OCO to relevant UK and European authorities. The report outlines considerations and protections that should feed into decisions on areas such as education, child protection, freedom of movement, family life and health. You can read the Summary report [here](#) and the Discussion Guide [here](#) Further information on the project can be found on the website of [NICCY](#) and [OCO](#).

✓The Ombudsman of Latvia published in April 2018 a [summary](#) in English of its annual 2017 report. The summary emphasises the main matters and issues that show systematic problems or are of particular importance for the public. One of the sections of the report is dedicated to children's rights. In 2017, the Ombudsman of Latvia carried out a number of targeted actions mainly based on received complaints, signals or ex officio investigations connected to the child rights field. The annual report reflects on issues related to the rights of orphans, of children without parental care or those in institutional care; on access to education including to pre-school education; on the rights of children of Latvian nationals living abroad; the prevention of statelessness among children and the right of children to citizenship; the right of children to maintain relationship with both parents when the parents live separately unless this is not in the child's best interest, etc.

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **31 May-1 June 2018:** High Level Global Conference on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Malta
- ❖ **6 June 2018:** ENOC Bureau meeting, Dublin, Ireland
- ❖ **7-8 June 2018:** ENOC working Seminar on Children's Mental Health (Day 1) and a capacity building session on methodologies and techniques to empower children's participation in all settings (Day 2), Dublin, Ireland
- ❖ **28-29 June 2018:** ENYA Forum "Let's Talk Young, Let's Talk About Mental Health", Barcelona, Spain

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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