

Newsletter

Update on ENOC Activities

ENYA young representatives met in Belfast

Under the leadership of the Northern Irish Presidency of ENOC, a 2nd ENYA meeting took place in Belfast on July 25th & 26th, 2011. Twenty young people from 10 different countries within Europe were welcomed by the ENOC President Patricia Lewsley, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for children and young people, to work together on issues affecting children: violence, health, education and internet. The ideas born from those working group discussions will be presented at the ENOC Annual Conference to the Ombudspersons. The meeting was marked by the tragedy in Norway, and the young advisors and their coordinators paid tribute to the victims and their families.

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

A new EU Directive to combat sexual abuse and exploitation of children and child pornography

On July 12, 2011, the European Parliament voted on a draft directive to fight against child pornography and against different forms of sexual abuse of children within the EU. The draft directive sets out minimum penalties for about 20 criminal offences to do with sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and child pornography. This innovative law specifies to member states the importance to collaborate to stop this phenomenon. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110711IPR23756/html/Child-sex-crimes-EP-to-crack-down-on-child-abusers-and-web-pornography>

4th meeting of the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Child and Youth Participation (MJ-S-CYP)

The 4th meeting of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Child and Youth Participation (MJ-S-CYP) took place on June 20th and 21st, 2011, at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France. Six children and young people from Finland, Slovakia and Moldova participated in a joint meeting with the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Advisory Group at the European Youth Centre. The objective for the children and young people was to give their input, as discussed in national focus group meetings, on the draft Council of Europe Recommendation on child and youth participation. The draft recommendation is currently submitted for comments and a final version will be agreed upon at the final meeting of the group at the end of the year.

"Methods for assessing the age of migrant children must be improved"

In August 2011, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, published a Human Rights Comment on methods for assessing the age of migrant children. Commissioner Hammarberg draw the attention on three key points: X-ray method used by some states is pointed out to be inefficient and non-benefit for young migrants' health, and can never determine exact age; the need for a multidisciplinary assessment; and last but not least the need to respect and trust children.

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"Life Sentence: Romani Children in Institutional Care"

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organization which promotes Roma rights through strategic litigation, research and policy development, advocacy and human rights education. The ERRC has recently issued a report entitled *Life Sentence: Romani Children in Institutional Care* which draws up the Romani children's situation in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, and Romania. The report can be found on the website of the ERRC under: <http://errc.org/cms/upload/file/life-sentence-20-june-2011.pdf>

Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

The 1st Meeting of the Committee of the Parties in charge of the implementation of the Convention will take place on the 20th and 21st September 2011, in the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France. The Convention entered into force on the 1st July 2010.

The 57th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The 57th Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) session took place in June 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. The CRC recommended prohibition of corporal punishment to the countries which presented their reports. The 46th session of the Committee against torture which took place in the same time also reiterated the prohibition of corporal punishment.

Upcoming session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The 58th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) will take place from 19 September to 7 October 2011. Among others, Iceland, Greece, and Sweden will be reviewed on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocols. Different Organizations and NGOs have submitted alternative reports to the CRC Committee such as International Disabilities Alliance which has suggested recommendations towards Iceland and Greece.

Commissioner Hammarberg referred in his comment to the ENOC position statement on unaccompanied minors published back in 2006. For the full text of the Human Rights Comment, please follow: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1818617&Site=CommDH&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015

The Council of Europe Conference on the new 2012-2015 Strategy for the Rights of the Child will take place on the 20th and 21st November 2011 in Monaco. The Program's overall goals in 2012-2015 will be to provide guidance, advice and technical assistance to member states in the implementation of existing Council of Europe standards. Through the Council of Europe's Platform on the Rights of the Child, all stakeholders will be able to share good practices and to evaluate emerging challenges in order to find solutions to them. The Council of Europe recently launched a consultation with external partners on the draft strategy which is still ongoing.

CRC Complaints mechanism adopted by the UN Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council adopted in June 2011 the draft text of a complaints mechanism, also referred to as a "communications procedure," for children and their representatives to bring legal action against violations of children's rights. This mechanism aims to strengthen the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989). The final adoption will be in December 2011.

Human Rights Council passed the first resolution on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity

On the 17th June, the Human Rights Council passed the first resolution on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Human Rights Council also asked the OHCHR to investigate on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation to evaluate the phenomenon. The right to non-discrimination is set out by Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and includes all kind of discrimination even "adolescents' sexual orientation" as specified in General Comment n°4 (CRC Committee, 2003).

UN Security Council annual debate on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)

On July 12th 2011, the UN Security Council held its annual open debate on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). During the open debate, the Council unanimously adopted Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1998 (2011) expanding the UNSC's monitoring and reporting mechanism to include the grave violation of attacks on schools and hospitals as a trigger for its implementation.

2011 Global Progress Survey on Violence against Children

Ms Marta Santos Pais, UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, launched recently a global survey to assess progress in the process of follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children and to assess measures undertaken for the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Study. The global survey provides a strategic occasion to gain perspective on progress achieved, reflect on good practices and factors of success in children's protection from violence, and boost efforts to overcome persisting challenges. In this context, interested ENOC members can contribute to the survey via: http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/documents/surveys/Global_Progress_Survey_on_Violence_against_children_2011_en.pdf

CRC 2011 Day of General Discussion: "children of incarcerated parents"

On September 30th, 2011, the Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold the 2011 Day of General Discussion on the topic "children of incarcerated parents". The rights of these children are set out in Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Two Working Groups will work all over the year on the subthemes: "Babies and children living with or visiting a parent in prison" and "Children left 'outside' when their parent is incarcerated".

Update on member institutions' activities

Cyprus' Commissioner for Children's Rights organized a summer workshop for children on "Human Rights Education for Children"

From July 4th to 8th, 2011, the Cypriot Commissioner for Children's Rights run a summer workshop on "*Human Rights Education for Children*". 16 children aged from 12 to 17 years participated in this workshop. They were informed on child rights and invited to contribute to the office's work. They could exchange and comment news and events in relation with children's rights. The program included a broad variety of activities, such as experiential educational activities from Compass and Compasito (the manuals on Human Rights Education published by the Council of Europe), presentations, discussions, games, poster making, simulations, role-plays, creation of short films on children's rights, discussions with a political refugee regarding the rights and experiences of asylum seekers and a world traveler in relation to the right to Education as experienced all over the world and screenings of short films.

Norwegian Ombudsman for Children's office reacts in view of terrorist attacks

Further to the terrorist attacks Norway has been victim on July 22th, 2011, the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children's office has set up a crisis phone line for children and young people. Following the tragic event and its large coverage by the media, the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children Office issued information and advice on "*How do we talk with children about the traumatic events in Norway?*" The Ombudsman emphasized on the fact that that news is designed for adults and may harm or can make upset children for different reasons. Therefore and primarily, parents have to know how to communicate with young people on those traumatic events. He also warned parents and teachers about signs they have to be attentive to in order to be able to detect any psychological trauma faced by children and young people. <http://www.barneombudet.no/english/talktochildren/>

Corporal Punishment ending in Slovenia

In July 2011, a new Family Code has been adopted by the Parliament of Slovenia, where a new Article 7 prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children by parents and other persons confirmed. The adoption of a new law ending corporal punishment of children in Slovenia is one step further of the global tendency in Europe to stop punishing children by physical and/or corporal forms of punishment that diminish their integrity and dignity.

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **14-16 September 2011:** 15th ENOC Annual Conference & General Assembly meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- ❖ **29-30 September 2011:** 9th Council of Europe Conference of Health Ministers, Lisbon, Portugal
- ❖ **6 October 2011:** European Commission-Petition Committee of the European Parliament Seminar on "Handling of Complaints on Fundamental Rights", Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ **20-21 November 2011:** Council of Europe Conference on the new 2012-2015 Strategy on the Rights of the Child, Monaco
- ❖ **23 November 2011:** EU Forum on the Rights of the Child, Brussels

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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European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

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