

Newsletter

Upcoming ENOC events: further details

ENOC training workshop on complaints mechanisms for children's rights violations

A training workshop on European and International complaints mechanisms for violations of children's rights will take place on **4-5 June, 2012** in The Hague (The Netherlands), kindly hosted by the Dutch Ombudsman for Children Office. The workshop will focus on three main complaints systems: the one before the European Court of Human Rights, the collective complaints mechanism before the European Committee of Social Rights, and the newly established communications procedure under the CRC. The workshop is mainly addressed to staff members of Ombudspersons for Children Offices dealing with legal issues and/or with children's complaints at national level or providing legal advice to children or their representatives on how to seek redress for violations of their rights. Further information on the event is available under <http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infoDetail.asp?id=28097>

ENOC 16th Annual Conference & General Assembly (10-12 October, 2012, Nicosia): registration is open...

ENOC member institutions that intend to participate in the Annual meeting are kindly invited to register by emailing the completed registration form to the ENOC Secretariat. ENOC participants are also encouraged to proceed to the reservation of the hotel at the latest by **July 31st, 2012**. After this date, accommodation and preferential rates are not guaranteed. Registration and hotel booking forms are available under <http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infoDetail.asp?id=27531>

Update on European & International Activities in the Children's rights field

Copenhagen Conference (EU) on children's rights and the prevention of child poverty

As part of the Danish Presidency of the European Council 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration in collaboration with the European Commission and the Intergovernmental Group L'Europe de L'Enfance has held on 19 March 2012 a conference on children's rights and the prevention of child poverty.

The conference gave special attention to the following aspects of social protection in order to prevent social exclusion:

- Child poverty in EU Member States
- Mainstreaming the child's rights approach in key policies
- Access to family support measures, early childhood education and care(ECEC) and child participation

Ms. Leda Kouroumba, ENOC Chair Elect and Cyprus' Commissioner for Children's Rights made a presentation on effective child participation in policy-making and implementation (<http://crin.org/enoc/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=28347&flag=news>). For further information on the Conference, check out <http://eu2012.dk/en>

34th session of the European Parliament's Working Group on Improving the Quality of Childhood (QoC)

The 34th QoC session that took place on April 11, 2012 in the premises of the European Parliament was dedicated to "Improving the quality of childhood as a challenge to European institutions: reflections from the Ombudsmen for Children". Ms. Maria Kaisa Aula, Ombudsman for Children of Finland has been



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REMINDER

Those ENOC members that have not paid yet their membership fee for 2012 are kindly requested to proceed to the payment at their earliest convenience.

UPDATE on ENYA

Young people from 8 countries have already been registered to participate to the ENYA e-forum where two types of questions are on the way to be posted. The questions have been elaborated by the Ombuds working groups on justice administration for children, and on institutional care with the support of the ENYA Ombuds Coordinator, Patricia Lewsley. The questions concern two main areas: juvenile delinquency- prevention and rehabilitation processes, and respect of the rights of children living in institutional care.

For those ENOC members who are interested by young people's discussions on the two topics, you may log in through www.crin.org/enya using your log in details.

New CoE Commissioner for Human Rights spoke in Brighton about the importance of NHRIs

On the occasion of the High Level Conference on the future of the European Court of Human Rights that took place on 18-20 April, 2012 in Brighton (UK), the new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Nils Muiznieks, talked about the need for CoE member states to have effective national human rights structures, children's ombudspersons included. He also pointed out that to be effective and efficient such institutions should be given proper mandates and adequate funding to ensure their independence. However, he reported that as a consequence of the economic crisis, many of these structures have been weakened through budget or staff cuts and some of them been done away with altogether.

The full text of the speech is available under <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1933677>

invited to participate and to make a presentation focusing on the following aspects and questions: assessing the role of European institutions in promoting the rights of the child & a good quality of childhood; reflections on the perceived effects on the well-being of children of some EU policies; how to strengthen the notion of the best interest of the child and the voice of children & young people in EU deliberations; how to develop child friendly services; concrete wishes vis à vis the EP, the EC and the Council of the EU. To receive a copy of Ms. Aula's presentation, please email the ENOC Secretariat.

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights released a letter addressed to the UK Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State Justice

On March 15th, 2012 CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg addressed a letter to the UK stating that the UK juvenile justice system should focus more on rehabilitation since despite some progress the system remains excessively punitive. "The relative ease with which children are put in custody raises questions as to the compatibility of this approach with the ECHR and the CRC" said the Commissioner. In his letter, the Commissioner also spoke about the low age of criminal responsibility in the UK which remains lower than the average in Europe, on alternatives to imprisonment, and on the separation of juveniles from adult offenders which is not always the case in Northern Ireland. The full text of Commissioner's letter and the reply of the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State Justice are available under: http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/News/2012/120315UK_en.asp

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights recommended to Luxembourg further steps to protect individual rights in migration policies and juvenile justice

After a 2 days visit to Luxembourg in March, Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg draw the attention of Luxembourg's authorities to the following questions: given the current increase in the number of people seeking asylum in Luxembourg, the Commissioner invited the authorities to pay a special attention to the human aspect and not only to the material conditions of the reception facilities. Thus, respect of the privacy of families, access to psychological support, especially for vulnerable persons, decent cash allowances remain crucial, according to the Commissioner. He also talked about the ongoing reform of the penitentiary administration in order for Luxembourg to comply with the principle that no minor is to be put in an adult prison unless they are over 16 and have committed a serious offence. The full text is available under: http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/News/2012/120312Luxembourg_en.asp

Council of Europe recommendation on participation of children & young people adopted

On March 28th, 2012 the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation addressed to member states on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 in decision-making (CM/Rec(2012)2). This ground-breaking recommendation was developed following comprehensive reviews of the reality of child participation in several member states and, for the first time in the Council's history, with the direct involvement of children in the work of the drafting Committee. The recommendation covers the rights of children and young people to be heard in all settings, including in schools, in communities and in the family as well as at the national and European level. The full text of the recommendations is available under: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1927229&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) Conclusions focus on protecting children against corporal punishment

At the beginning of 2012, the European Committee of Social Rights published its conclusions on the 2011 examination of states under the European Social Charter and the Revised Social Charter, which included a focus on protection of children from corporal punishment in the family. The Committee has previously established that conformity with the Charters requires *prohibition of all corporal punishment, including in the home*. While noting that many states had achieved the necessary law reform since they were last examined on the issue - currently 22 of the 47 Council of Europe member states have enacted laws prohibiting all corporal punishment - the Committee found that many had not done so. For these states, the Committee concluded that they are not in conformity with the Charter or Revised Charter because corporal punishment is not prohibited in all settings: Andorra, Armenia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The full text of the conclusions is available under http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Conclusions/ConclusionsIndex_en.asp

UN Human Rights Council discussed rights of children deprived of their liberty & children of incarcerated parents

The protection of children's rights in the administration of justice and of those whose parents are incarcerated was on the agenda of the annual full day meeting of the Human Rights Council specially dedicated to children's rights. The discussions focus on difficulties to access data on the number of children deprived of their liberty, on the lack of independent mechanisms to safeguard children's rights in justice system, the impact of the children's deprivation of liberty on their psychological, development, and mental health, the rehabilitation process, special protection needs to children whose parents are incarcerated, etc. For further information [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/5902E5FEB3D43784C12579BB004F6E75?OpenDocument&cntxt=E1454&cookieLang=en](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/5902E5FEB3D43784C12579BB004F6E75?OpenDocument&cntxt=E1454&cookieLang=en)

Updates from ENOC members

- ✓ Back in April 2012, Ireland's Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan published a report on "*Homeless Truths: Children's experience of homelessness in Ireland*" based on a consultation the OCO has carried out (September-December 2011) to gain insight into young people's first-hand experience of assessing and using homelessness services. The report is available under <http://www.oco.ie/issues/current-issues/homeless-children.html>
- ✓ In March 2012 Dr. Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England published findings from her School Exclusion Inquiry in her report "*They Never Give Up On You*". It found most schools work hard to cater for troubled students. However, for the first time on record, schools have admitted illegally excluding children. The report is available under http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/press_release/content_465
- ✓ In April 2012, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People published *report on disabled children and young people*. The report covers areas such as education, self-directed support, short breaks and transition to adulthood. It also draws attention to the specific barriers faced by deaf children, children with learning disabilities and those with mental health issues. The report is available under <http://www.sccyp.org.uk/news/in-the-news/commissioner-publishes-report-on-disabled-children-and-young-people>

Upcoming Events

- ❖ 4-5 June 2012: ENOC training workshop on European and International complaints' mechanisms for children's rights violations, the Hague, the Netherlands
- ❖ 3-4 July 2012: Council of Europe meeting on "Monitoring children's rights in Europe", 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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European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

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