

# Newsletter



## ENOC News & Announcements

### Announcement: ENOC 2017 Annual Conference & General Assembly meeting

The ENOC 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference and General Assembly meeting will take place on **19-21 September 2017** in Helsinki, Finland. The theme of the ENOC 2017 Conference will be *“Relationship and sexuality education: implementing the right of children to be informed”*. The Conference will focus on relationship & sexuality education, the right to information and on how to measure and research children’s well-being.

All ENOC members will be invited to contribute to discussions in plenary on the Conference theme but also to report on their domestic activities or latest challenges or achievements. External participation is only possible upon invitation. The Conference programme and other details will follow in May 2017. Conference information will be also available on the [ENOC website](#)

### Launch of ENYA 2017 activities

ENOC has successfully been granted funding under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Commission for the implementation of its 2017 activities, especially those related to the children and young people’s ENYA participative project. A call for participation in ENYA 2017 *“The Road to RIO-Respect, Information, Opinion: Exploring and empowering youth identity and relationships”* project was launched in January 2017. ENOC members from Azerbaijan, Catalonia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland, Scotland and Wales expressed interest to contribute to the project. This year’s ENYA activities will be supervised and coordinated by a panel of three members - the Ombudspersons for Children from Catalonia, Greece and Malta and by an ENYA General Coordinator-the ENYA Coordinator from Malta. The ENOC Secretariat will provide administrative and other support, as needed. An ENYA Forum will take place at end of June in Paris, France. Regular information on ENYA activities will be uploaded on the ENOC website.

### Call for participation in the ENOC Working Group on Children on the Move

The ENOC Bureau is inviting interested ENOC members to join the ENOC electronic working group (WG) on ‘Children on the Move’ to be coordinated by Mr. George Moschos (Greece). The Group’s activities for 2017 aim at collecting and exchanging information among its members on major policy developments, challenges, good and/or bad practices at national level regarding the level of protection of the rights of children on the move. A short questionnaire will be circulated later among WG members. Members of the working group will meet later this year (possibly with the support of the EU) to discuss and adopt a revised ENOC call to the EU and other relevant institutions in order to address shortcomings and improve child rights protection mechanisms, based on the collated information. A special focus will also be given to failures of relocation mechanisms for migrant families and children. Expressions of interest should be sent to the ENOC Secretariat by end of March 2017.

### Inside this issue

ENOC news & announcements:	1
Update on European & International activities in the CR field	2
Update on ENOC member institutions’ activities	3
Upcoming events	3

### ENOC 2017 Spring Seminar

A Seminar on ENOC’s 2017 work theme is tentatively scheduled to take place at end of May. Location still to be confirmed.

This year’s Seminar will have two aims: 1) To discuss and define the terms of the future ENOC statement on *Relationship and Sexuality Education: implementing the right of children to be informed*; 2) To provide a capacity-building support to newly established or newly appointed ENOC members. The Seminar should last for two days. While the ENOC Bureau is currently exploring different venues, if your institution may be interested in hosting the Seminar (there are no costs for the host member), please email the ENOC Secretariat.

## Two refugees, generations apart, tell their story in new UNICEF film

A new UNICEF [film](#) presenting the parallel stories of a young Syrian refugee and a World War II child refugee was released on 3 February 2017 as a stark illustration of the challenges that refugee children continue to face.

The 120-second film switches between the stories of Ahmed, 12, from Damascus in Syria, and Harry, 92, from Berlin, Germany. During the film, the two tell their individual stories of being forced to flee their homes and their harrowing journeys in search of safety. Despite being separated by over 70 years, the two stories contain many similarities, and the film interposes footage of Syrian refugees with historical footage from World War II.

In the film, Ahmed and Harry describe horrific details of their experiences, including attacks on schools and homes, being forced to flee in fear of their lives, and dangerous journeys on land and sea. Harry finally found sanctuary in the United Kingdom, where he has lived ever since, whilst Ahmed reached safety in Sweden, where he was reunited with his family and is now back in school. You can download the full film here: <http://weshare.unicef.org/Folder/2AMZ/IFDD778>

**Data:** Children now make up more than half of the world's refugees, despite the fact they account for less than a third of the global population. In 2015 around 45% of all child refugees came from just two countries - Syria and Afghanistan - while roughly three-quarters of the world's child refugees come from just 10 countries. Syria accounts for the largest number of child refugees, with more than 2.3 million child refugees registered with UNHCR, with Afghanistan accounting for a further 1.3 million.

## Missing Children Europe: 10 recommendations to end the disappearance, suffering & exploitation of children in migration (#LostinMigration)

Based on the research, expertise and recommendations put forward at the "[Lost in Migration: Working together in protecting children from disappearance](#)" Conference (26-27 January, Malta), **10 operational and policy recommendations and 7 cross-cutting recommendations** on the overall policy framework, data and funding have been endorsed together with over 45 child rights organisations. These [recommendations](#) include aspects on improving accommodation and reception conditions, ensuring access to trained guardians for children, the rights of children to be heard and informed and more.

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

### 10<sup>th</sup> European Forum on the Rights of the Child: the protection of children in migration

Twelve ENOC members took part in the [10<sup>th</sup> European Forum on the rights of the child](#) focusing on the protection of children in migration. The Forum took place on 29-30 November 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. The main topics the Forum addressed were: challenges and opportunities for the protection of children in migration towards durable solutions, including integration, for children in migration; along with aspects related to identification and protection, reception, access to asylum procedures and procedural safeguards, etc. One of the main speakers was Mr. George Moschos, ENOC Treasury and Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights, Greece. A side event organized on 28 November 2016 addressed the issue of guardianship and the role of the guardian in safeguarding the best interests and wellbeing of unaccompanied and separated children.

### Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights issued a Human Rights Comment on Ending Migrant Detention

In his latest Human Rights Comment released at the end of January 2017, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, proposed that states adopt a 5 step plan to abolish migrant detention, calling on them to make it a priority action to present roadmaps, including a firm deadline, for the abolition of child detention. The Commissioner reiterated what he has repeatedly stated in previous comments and reports that "there are no circumstances in which the detention of a child for immigration purposes, whether unaccompanied or with family, could be in the child's best interest." For this reason, the Commissioner insisted on the complete abolition of the detention of migrant children, as an absolute priority for all states. Making available effective and efficient alternatives to detention is one of the key solutions for ending migrant detention, including detention of children, whether accompanied or not.

### The rights of children in biomedicine

In Mid-January, the Council of Europe Committee on Bioethics (DH-BIO) published a study prepared at its request by researchers from Uppsala University Department of Law (Sweden) on the challenges posed to the rights of the child by scientific and technological developments in biomedicine. The [study](#) will be used as the basis to analyse existing international legal standards, assess their relevance to address the challenges identified and, where appropriate, define further action at intergovernmental level. The study will also contribute to the preparation of the international conference which will mark the [20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Oviedo Convention](#) on 24-25 October 2017 in Strasbourg, France.

### FRA published a report on child-friendly justice from the child's perspective

The Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union (FRA) has published on its new report on "[Child-friendly justice: Perspectives and experiences of children involved in judicial proceedings as victims, witnesses or parties](#)", on 22 February 2017. The report is based on interviews with 392 children in 9 Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain and the UK. It complements the FRA's 2015 report containing [professionals' perspectives](#) on child-friendly justice. More than 2.5 million children across the EU are involved each year as victims, witnesses, or parties to judicial proceedings. The children interviewed underlined the importance of being heard with understanding and respect. This points to the need for clear and practical guidelines, as well as training for all professionals who come into contact with children. Children also want to be kept informed throughout the proceedings about developments in the case and about their own rights. This demonstrates the necessity for age-appropriate information before, during and after trial. It was also clear from the interviews that many situations cause children to feel uncertain and unsafe. It is however vital for Member States to put in place procedural safeguards to cater to the needs of children. See more on the report (press release, summary etc.) [here](#).

### FRA issued an opinion on tightening fingerprinting safeguards for migrant children

Further to the European Commission's proposal to revise the Eurodac regulation, the European Parliament asked the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to provide an Opinion on the fundamental rights impact of the proposal on children. In its [January 2017 Opinion](#), FRA concluded that the proposal to revise the rules governing the EU's large-scale biometrics database, Eurodac, may jeopardise or enhance the rights of migrant children. The FRA Opinion examines the impact on children and suggests greater emphasis on child protection. It also reveals how this particularly vulnerable group needs stronger child protection safeguards to ensure they are not coerced to give fingerprints, they understand what is happening to them and their right to asylum is not affected. Read more information [here](#)

*continues*

## Updates from ENOC members

- ✓The **Chancellor of Justice of Estonia** published a [summary of its annual report 2015-2016](#) in February 2017, now also available in English. The first chapter of the report is dedicated to the protection of the rights of children and young people in Estonia and covers a wide range of issues such as: can children be left alone at home or in a car; children and the media; restrictions on the use of smart devices at school and children's camp; the organization of evaluation tests; recognition of and intervention in special educational needs; issues covering access to education; regulation on shelter services for children & young people; inspection visits to school for children requiring special education measures due to behavior problems, etc. The report also contains information on different activities aimed at promoting and raising awareness of children's rights among children themselves but also among professionals and the general public.
- ✓The **Ombudsman for Children of Croatia** announced the ratification of the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure by the Croatian Parliament on 10 February 2017. Croatia thus became the 32nd country in the world to have ratified the protocol, that will enter into force three months after ratification.
- ✓On 14 February 2014, the Parliament of **Lithuania** voted unanimously to adopt amendments to the relevant law, thus prohibiting all corporal punishment of children. The amending law recognizes in its Art.4 children's right "to be protected from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment, by their parents, other legal representatives, persons living with them or other persons". This reform makes Lithuania the 52nd state worldwide to fully prohibit all corporal punishment of children; it is the 31st Council of Europe member state and the 22nd European Union state to do so.
- ✓**Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland** published a new report, [Coping is difficult, but I feel proud: Perspectives on mental health and wellbeing of young carers](#) in February 2017. The report matches young carers and their perceptions of their health and well-being against a comparable sample of young people without caring responsibilities. The study explores the mental health and wellbeing of young carers in Scotland— and reveals that more than one in four are doing the caring on their own. It finds that: more than a quarter of young carers are the sole carer for those they care for; more than a half of young carers at least occasionally have overnight care responsibilities; and more than one in three young carers have to at least occasionally dress or undress the person they care for. It also finds that being a young carer is not all negative and in fact young carers have greater feelings of self-worth than their counterparts who do not have caring responsibilities. Find out more about this research [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

- ❖ **29-31 March 2017:** 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), Strasbourg, France
- ❖ **11-12 April 2017:** Council of Europe pilot training Seminar on 'Monitoring places where children are deprived of their liberty as a result of immigration procedures', Strasbourg, France
- ❖ **24 April 2017:** High-level meeting on *Europe's challenge to ensure a rights perspective for children in migration*, organised by the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, and the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden in Stockholm, Sweden
- ❖ **11-12 May 2017:** COFACE Annual Conference on "Families on the Move", Brussels, Belgium

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@ombudnet.org](mailto:secretariat@ombudnet.org) (Re: ENOC Newsletter).

### MARCH 2017

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