

Newsletter

❖ ENOC News & Announcements

In this issue:

ENOC News & announcements	1
Update on European & International activities in the CR field	2-3
Update on ENOC member institutions' activities	3
Publications	2-3

Upcoming Events:

25-26 June 2019:
ENYA Forum "Let's Talk Young, Let's Talk About Children's Rights in the Digital Environment"
Brussels, Belgium

25 June 2019:
ENOC Bureau meeting
Brussels, Belgium.

4-6 June 2019:
24th meeting of
Lanzarote Committee
Strasbourg, France



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ENOC Spring Seminar

On 9 May 2019 ENOC a working Seminar addressing the annual priority theme on **children's rights in the digital environment** and a full day capacity building session on the 10th May related to **increasing and improving general child protection policies, and policies related to GDPR, media and young people**. The two day event took place in the BBC-Media City UK, in Manchester, and was hosted by the [Children's Commissioner for England](#). The event brought together forty four participants, among which representatives of twenty four ENOC member institutions. Speakers representing the business, academic, and non-governmental sectors addressed the audience on Day 1. An [interactive session](#) between pupils from the Chorlton High School and Manchester Communication Academy and Facebook and Google representatives kept the discussions lively and the atmosphere dynamic. Balancing digital participation & protection, child health & online marketing, digital accountability & transparency were among the main aspects covered on Day 1. In its efforts to increase the capacity of its members in the child protection field, the Day 2 presentations and discussions covered issues related to reducing online harm and the emerging digital risks through the activities of Children's Ombudspersons, and in general how to improve and keep up to date general child protection policies & procedures within ENOC members and at ENOC. See more information and some of the presentations from the event [here](#)

New ENOC Statement release in April 2019

ENOC released an [ad hoc statement](#) on April 21st related to **the situation of children on the move on rescue vessels in the Mediterranean awaiting for safe disembarkation**. The statement lists a number of specific recommendations addressed to competent Government bodies reminding them that a migrant child is first and foremost a child and as such entitled to protection independently of his/her immigration status. ENOC called on Governments to ensure, first of all, that safe disembarkation and reception procedures are immediately carried out; to protect all children, whether accompanied or not, adequately and immediately upon their arrival in internal waters; to ensure that all the CRC rights are fully & effectively respected and implemented; to consider unaccompanied minors as minors and to activate age-assessment procedures, through a holistic approach, only in the case of serious doubts about their minor age.

Two more ENOC statements in progress....

ENOC is currently working on two more statements: one on the annual theme of **children's rights in the digital environment**; and a second one on **ending detention of children for immigration purposes & in all circumstances**. The two statements are expected to be adopted at the next ENOC General Assembly meeting in September 2019, in Belfast, UK.

❖ Update on European and International activities in the CR field

6th meeting of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child

The Council of Europe (CoE) Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) held its 6th meeting in Strasbourg, France, on 21-22 May, with Mme Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou (Greece) in the chair. It gathered representatives from Council of Europe member States and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. The ENOC Chair, Ms. Geneviève Avenard, and the ENOC Secretariat participated in the meeting on behalf of ENOC. Discussions covered progress made under the current [Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#) and ongoing activities in various priority areas, namely the protection of children from violence, children's rights in the digital environment and child participation. The Committee also looked at issues including the Draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Human Rights Principles, the Draft Guidelines on age assessment for children in migration, the organization of the upcoming Mid-term evaluation of the CoE Strategy, etc.

First Regional Conference addressing Online child sexual exploitation and abuse (EndOCSEA@Europe)

The Council of Europe (CoE) organized the first Regional Conference of the [CoE's project to end child sexual exploitation and abuse @ Europe](#) (EndOCSEA@Europe) on 16-17 May in Strasbourg. While the exact number of victims of OCSEA is unknown, more than 79% of reported victims are children aged between 4 and 13 years old. This crime is often transnational and ever evolving. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about OCSEA, and to strengthen effective responses by States, NGOs and the private sector, to prevent and combat the crime, to uphold the rights of the child and protect children in the digital environment.

Earlier in April, the Council of Europe ran an [International Conference](#) aimed at strengthening civil society participation in implementing and monitoring the Lanzarote Convention i.e. in preventing and protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse. The ENOC Secretariat attended the two events on behalf of ENOC.

Roundtable to mark the 5th anniversary of the entry into force of the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure (OPIC)

On 30 April 2019 in Geneva, to mark the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the entry into force of OPIC and the 30th anniversary of the CRC in 1989, Child Rights Connect together with a number of other organisations and UN based partners organised a closed and informal discussion with selected States and partners aimed at: identifying good practices with regard to ratification processes and implementation of OPIC; discussing difficulties encountered in the process of ratification and implementation and possible solutions; building more solid and evidence-based arguments about the benefit of OPIC on a national level, in particular for States; and building and strengthening partnerships and joint actions around advocacy for OPIC ratification and effective implementation. The ENOC Chair, Geneviève Avenard, participated in the event on behalf of ENOC.

12th EU Forum on the rights of the child

Eighteen Ombudspersons/Commissioners for Children or representatives participated in the 12th EU Forum on the rights of the child "*Where we are and where we want to go*", which took place in Brussels on 2-3 April 2019. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UNCRC and the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of [...]

Publications:

2017 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

The European Commission published its 8th [annual report](#) on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The report covers the year 2017, giving an overview of instances where the European institutions took into account the Charter in their legislative and political work. It provides a number of concrete examples that illustrate the Charter's relevance in addressing the challenges the EU is facing in the protection of fundamental rights, among others improved responses to hate crime, hate speech and violence against women.

KidsRights Index 2019

The [KidsRights Index](#) was published on 14 May by the international children's rights organisation KidsRights and the Erasmus University Rotterdam. It ranks how countries adhere to and are equipped to improve children's rights. It comprises a ranking for all UN member states that have ratified the CRC for which sufficient data is available, a total of 181 countries. It covers five domains: right to life, right to health, right to education, right to protection, enabling environment for Child Rights. Thus, Iceland ranks first in the international rankings and is followed in the top 5 by Portugal (2), Switzerland (3), Finland (4) and Germany (5). Afghanistan (181), Sierra Leone (180), Chad (179), Equatorial Guinea (178) and the Central African Republic (177) are at the lowest places in the rankings.

[...] Fundamental Rights, the Forum was an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved so far and to identify key challenges and priority areas for the future. A special focus was given to protection of children in migration, child participation, and children's rights in the digital world. Find more information [here](#).

❖ Update on ENOC member institutions' activities

➔ **A new Ombudsman for Children, Ms. Elina Pekkarinen, has been appointed in Finland: Welcome onboard the ENOC family!**

Norway: Submission to the General Comment on Children's rights in the digital environment

The Committee on the Rights of the Child decided in 2018 to develop a General Comment on children's rights in the digital environment. The purpose of the General Comment is to identify the impacts of the digital environment, and the measures required by States in order to meet their obligations to protect children's rights and to ensure that other actors, including business enterprises, meet theirs. In this context, the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children submitted [its comments](#) on 15 May 2019. It calls on the General Comment to be a framework for how the CRC applies in the digital environment, in order to face important issues like children's participation, child rights impact assessment, children's digital resilience, freedom of expression, the right to education, the right to privacy, etc. After consideration of the inputs provided, the Committee will prepare a first draft of the General Comment for additional consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Scotland: Two Scottish teenagers became the youngest people to ever address the UN Committee against Torture.

On 6 May 2019, following the [Recommendation of young human rights defenders](#), EJ Carroll and Katrina Lambert, both 18, supported by the Children's and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, gave evidence on Scotland's human rights record to the UN Committee against torture. They gave a presentation based on the joint submission made by the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Children's Commissioners. This included serious human rights violations affecting children and young people across those countries. For example, they raised concerns that the age of criminal responsibility raised from 8 to 12, in Scotland, fell short of the internationally recommended age of 14. They insisted on the necessity to involve children and young people in decision-making processes: "We are so excited to have this opportunity to address the Committee but we don't want to be an exception to the norm; children and young people should be included here and in other places of influence", said Katrina. See the Committee against torture's findings [here](#).

Latvia: Press Statement on the situation in out-of-family care and the need for immediate change

The Latvian Ombudsman and the Auditor General have carried out two independent studies on the efficiency of the Latvian out-of-family care system, and have come to the same conclusion: the existing system of protecting children's rights and the system of out-of-family care should be reformed. They highlighted the lack of understanding by responsible officials, and the inefficient supervision of the Orphan's Courts by the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights and of social service providers by the Ministry of Welfare. Read the press statement [here](#).

Understanding the impact of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children: A European Study, *The International Journal of Children's Rights*.

The article, published on 10 May 2019 under the authorship of Sara Imanian and Nigel Patrick Thomas, reports a study of the impact of Independent human rights institutions for children. A survey was launched among ENOC members and enquired into the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes of their work. The results showed wide variation in the situation, aims and methods of working of the institutions, along with some strong commonalities. A conclusion was that the impact of such institutions has to be understood in a grounded way, and pre-designed general indicators are therefore of limited value. One product of the research is a template, developed collaboratively with the institutions, which can be used to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of their work. Read the article [here](#), and the template and guidance on impact evaluation [here](#). If you do not have access to the article, please contact the ENOC Secretariat.

European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

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