

Newsletter

❖ ENOC News & Announcements

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Upcoming Events:

13-14 November 2019 – Council of Europe Conference, “Redefining Power: Strengthening the rights of the child as the key to a future-proof Europe”.

20 November 2019: 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



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ENOC 23rd Annual Conference and General Assembly: Two new statements released

The **23rd ENOC Annual Conference “Offline/Online: A Child’s World. Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment”** took place on 25-26 September 2019 at the Hilton Hotel Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK. The Conference was hosted by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Koulla Yiasouma, who on the same occasion took over the Chairmanship of ENOC for the coming year. ENOC and ENYA members, joined by children’s rights advocates, Council of Europe, EU and government representatives and NGOs explored the challenges and opportunities offered by the digital world. They discussed, among other things, the need for effective regulation, for greater consumer protection, parental use, health effects, etc.

The **European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA)**, an ENOC led child participation project gathering young advisors from 18 ENOC countries/regions, participated in the conference and presented their [recommendations](#) on how to protect and promote children’s rights in the digital environment. Young people’s recommendations have also been fully reflected in ENOC’s 2019 position statement on children’s rights in the digital environment.

On 27th September 2019, ENOC also held its **23rd General Assembly meeting**, where the new **ENOC position statements on children’s rights in the digital environment and on ending child immigration detention** were endorsed. The **new ENOC Bureau** was also elected, and the priorities of the Network for 2020 discussed. The new ENOC Bureau is now represented by: **Koulla Yiasouma**, ENOC Chair, **Geneviève Avenard**, Children’s Defender France and ENOC Past-Chair, **Bruce Adamson**, Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland and ENOC Chair-elect, **Niall Muldoon**, Ombudsman for Children Ireland and ENOC Secretary, and **Salvør Nordal**, Ombudsman for Children Iceland and ENOC Treasurer.

See information/materials related to the 2019 annual theme - children’s rights in the digital environment - [here](#) and conference information [here](#). The new ENOC Statements are available [here](#).

❖ Update on European and International activities in the CR field

PECS workshop "Family as a hub for social policies", 9-10 October, Rome

The European Social Cohesion Platform of the Council of Europe (PECS) and the Department for Family Policies of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers [Joint Workshop](#) on "Family as a hub for social policies" took place on 9-10 October 2019 in Rome, Italy. The Joint Workshop was divided into 4 working sessions respectively on: work-life balance and company welfare; family measures to promote the increase in the birth-rate in Europe; support services for children witnessing violence and children orphaned by domestic crimes; and eradication of child poverty.

Bruce Adamson, ENOC Chair elect, participated in the 4th session on eradication of child poverty. He presented the standpoint of Independent children's rights institutions on the issue and highlighted the importance of political will and leadership to make change and combat child poverty.

The joint workshop was followed by the **4th meeting of the European Social Cohesion Platform**. The Platform exchanged views on the draft work plan for 2020-2021 and made proposals for future activities.

European Commission's feasibility study on a potential "Child Guarantee" – Workshop on "Children living in precarious family situations", 22-23 October, Rome

In 2015, the European Parliament called on Member States to make a real commitment to develop policies to fight child poverty. Following this call, the Parliament requested the European Commission in 2017 to explore, via a three-phase Preparatory Action, the feasibility of a possible "[Child Guarantee](#)" for **vulnerable children** in the EU Member States. The aim of the guarantee would be to ensure that every child living in poverty has access to free healthcare, education and childcare, and to decent housing and adequate nutrition.

To implement the first phase, the Commission has launched a large-scale **study assessing the feasibility** and added value of a possible Child Guarantee scheme. The study focuses on four groups of children that are particularly vulnerable: children with disabilities, children residing in institutions, children with a migrant background, and children living in precarious family situations. To provide quality input into this study from all relevant stakeholders, the Commission organised an expert workshop for each of the above vulnerable groups between September and October 2019.

Koulla Yiasouma, ENOC Chair, represented ENOC at the workshop on children living in precarious family situations in Rome on 22-23 October 2019. She highlighted examples of the work of Ombudspersons for Children to improve the lives of individuals or groups of children living in precarious situations.

European Commission Conference "Protecting and promoting the rights of the child through EU-funding (REC Programme)", 24 October, Brussels

The ENOC Coordinator participated in the Conference "Protecting and promoting the rights of the child through EU-funding" organised by the European Commission's rights of the child team on 24 October 2019 in Brussels. The objective was to improve the quality of project proposals submitted under DG JUSTICE's Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme, and their implementation. This conference was an opportunity to share good practices, promote projects and discuss key policy priorities and challenges.

Publications

Norway: "Young people thoughts on the digital environment" Report

The Youth Advisors of the Norwegian Ombudsperson for Children, who took part in the ENYA 2019 project, published a report with their assessments and recommendations for a safer digital environment. Read the full report in English [here](#).

General Comment No.24

On 18 September 2019, **General Comment No. 24 on children's rights in the child justice system** was published. It replaces the General Comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice. It reflects the developments that have occurred since 2007 as a result of the promulgation of international and regional standards, the Committee's jurisprudence, new knowledge about child development, and evidence of effective practices, including those of restorative justice. It also reflects concerns such as the trends relating to the minimum age of criminal responsibility and the persistent use of deprivation of liberty. Read the full comment [here](#).

New OPIC Website

Child Rights Connect developed a [website](#) on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (OPIC). The aim is to provide a better understanding, for both adults and children, on the OPIC, while including information and analysis of its ratification status, as well as on any pending cases with the Committee.

❖ Update on ENOC member institutions' activities

Wales: Annual Report and Accounts 2018-2019

On 4 October 2019, the Children's Commissioner for Wales published her Annual Report & Accounts 2018-2019. This report covers the main areas of work undertaken by the Commissioner's office over the period 1 April 2018 until 31 March 2019 to support children and young people across Wales. It includes recommendations to Welsh government, for example regarding the denied access of young people with additional learning needs to post-16 education, due to lack of suitable, accessible and safe transport. You can also find key figures of the previous year. For example, the Commissioner's Office consulted with over 10,000 children and young people to inform their new three-year work plan. Read the report [here](#).

Congress on "Child parents relationships are a right. Contact centres for families in Europe"

A number of ENOC members among which **Geneviève Avenard** (France), **Bernard De Vos** (Belgium/French speaking community), **René Schlechter** (Luxembourg), and **Andres Jimenez** (Andalusia/Spain), participated in a Congress on "Child parents relationships are a right. Contact centres for families in Europe". It was organised in Brussels by the French, Belgian, and Spanish Federations, FFER, FESER and CEMIN on 17-18 October 2019. The Congress examined the application and evolution of the right to family relationship (article 8-1 UNCRC) and the right to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests (article 9-3 UNCRC). It gave insights into the different legal framework, policies and practices in Europe, especially regarding the establishment of "contact centres".

Attending Ombudspersons for Children participated in a workshop to present the views and advocacy of independent children's rights institutions on the issue. Read the programme [here](#).

Two new countries prohibit all corporal punishment of children

On 20 September 2019, the Parliament of **Georgia** adopted the **Code on the Rights of the Child** which explicitly prohibits corporal punishment of children in all settings. In relation to the home setting in particular, the Code explicitly prohibits all forms of corporal punishment and other humiliating punishment (for "education" purposes) (article 24.5).

On 3 October 2019, the Scottish Parliament adopted the **Children Act** (Equal Protection from Assault) in a historic move which sees **Scotland** becoming the first nation in the United Kingdom to provide children with equal protection from assault. Section 1 of the Act abolishes the common law defence of "reasonable chastisement".

There are now 58 states worldwide which have prohibited all corporal punishment of children, with Georgia also becoming the 34th Council of Europe member state to do so.

Learn more about the Code on the Rights of the Child of Georgia [here](#), and about the Children Act of Scotland [here](#).

Publications

Publication of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty

The new Global Study on children deprived of liberty was presented to the UN General Assembly in New York on October 8, 2019. The study examined the situation of children detained in the administration of justice, in immigration detention, in orphanages and other institutions, living in prison with their caregivers, and detained in the context of armed conflict and national security. It found that deprivation of liberty aggravates existing health conditions in children and can cause new ones to emerge, including anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and post-traumatic stress. Psychiatric disorders for children in detention can increase tenfold during detention, and detention is correlated with early death among children once released. The Global Study's estimate of at least **1.5 million children deprived of liberty** is most likely a substantial undercount, due to uneven data collection and reporting. Read the full study [here](#).

European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

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