

SPECIAL EDITION - 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNCRC

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019

# NEWSLETTER



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## ENOC MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES FOR THE CRC30



### • Seminar of the Catalan Ombudsman

The Catalan Ombudsman and the Deputy Ombudsperson for Children's Rights organised a special seminar on 25 November 2019. They analysed the progress and challenges of the UNCRC in the framework of the activities of the Catalan Ombudsman. Several children and young people participated in the event and made recommendations on how to improve their rights. Two round tables formed by children and young people analysed the shortcomings and challenges regarding children's rights. Find the program [here](#).

### • "Caroline listens... to children and young people": campaign of the Flemish Children's Rights Commissioner

Caroline Vrijens and her office launched a campaign to celebrate the CRC30 called "Caroline listens to children and young people". They invited children from primary and secondary schools to send short [videos](#) in which they talk about their experience of article 12 of the CRC ("when did you really feel heard and your opinion taken into account by adults?").

The Flemish Children's Rights Commissioner also visited several places to listen to the experiences and opinions of children with specific needs. She visited 3 primary schools and organised different activities on participation. 3 classes of secondary were also invited to visit the Flemish Parliament and the Children's Rights Commissioner's Office for an educational day program. On 20 November 2019, Caroline Vrijens presented her [Annual Report 2018-2019](#) "Children want to be heard" in the Flemish Parliament.



### • Joint session of children and parliamentarians in Croatia on 20 November 2019

The Ombudsman for Children in Croatia, together with the Alliance of Societies "Our Children" and UNICEF Croatia, organised a joint session with children and parliamentarians in the Croatian Parliament. Children aged 12-19, including members of the Network of Young Advisors of the Ombudsman for Children, participated in this event and presented 11 topics related to important issues of their everyday life: child participation, school system in Croatia, the problem of lack of quality extracurricular activities, poverty and inequalities, child safety in traffic, the right to health, children's rights in the digital environment, peer violence, etc.



- **Children’s takeover of the Finnish Government**

On 20 November 2019, 100 children aged 5-17 from all over Finland took over the Finnish government. They participated in joint workshops with fifteen ministers, the Chancellor of Justice, parliamentarians, the Ombudsman for Children and officials. Six workshops focusing on children’s rights issues such as climate change, digital environment, discrimination, and participation were organised at the Government Palace. The results of the debates were presented to the Government during a Children’s Session. This Session also provided an opportunity to prepare the Children’s Declaration to be submitted to the Government.



- **“It’s time to act!”, Joint Conference of the Children’s Defender France and UNESCO**

On November 20 2019, the French Rights’ Defender and the Children’s Defender, together with UNESCO, organised a “reversed conference”, with more than 400 children and young people taking over the floor. Children led the conference and challenged political figures, NGOs and experts on issues such as participation, education, protection against all forms of discrimination and violence, etc.

They presented some of the 276 proposals made in the national consultation “I have rights, listen to me!” led by the Rights’ Defender. This national consultation was organised in partnership with nearly 50 associations and allowed 2200 children to express views on the improvement of their rights.

During the conference, the French President Emmanuel Macron announced measures to stiffen penalties for the consultation of child pornography images, and to strengthen parental control on the internet. Find more information [here](#).



- **Celebrations of the 30th Anniversary of the CRC in Iceland**

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UNCR, the Ombudsman for Children in Iceland, in collaboration with UNICEF and Save the Children Iceland, published an article each month throughout the year on one of the core articles of the CRC. The Ombudsman for Children Salvör Nordal co-hosted a weekly radio program for 10 weeks at Rás 1. The focus was the CRC and its impact on children in Iceland. You can find the articles and the podcasts [here](#).



The Ombudsman for Children in Iceland also held a Children's Forum at the Concert Hall Harpa in Reykjavik on the 21st and 22nd of November 2019. Children as well as members of parliament, representatives from state institutions, social partners and organisations working with children discussed different issues related to children's rights. Around 500 people participated in this discussion including 250 children aged

11-15, and 50 children aged 16-17 who moderated the debates and drafted the minutes. The outcomes of the debates were presented to the government of Iceland.



- **The Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents' book on the 30th Anniversary**

The Italian Authority organised a conference called “Rights in growth, new challenges for children and adolescents” in Rome on 19 November 2019. Several round tables gathered experts, representatives of institutions and civil society to discuss present and future challenges for the rights of the child in Italy. These included: child-friendly cities, strengthening the system of prevention and protection, the inclusion of vulnerable children, educational poverty, the protection of wellbeing and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, etc. On this occasion, the volume “the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the rights of the child: achievements and perspectives”, written by teachers, academicians and researchers, was presented. The first part of this volume focuses on the international dimension of the UNCRC and challenges ahead, and the second on the implementation of the UNCRC in Italy. The book is available in Italian [here](#). The abstracts are available in English [here](#).

- **Practical toolkit and step-by-step plan “The best decision for the child” launched by the Ombudsman for Children in the Netherlands**

On 19 November 2019, the Ombudsman for Children in the Netherlands launched a practical toolkit and a step-by-step plan called “The best decision for the child”. These documents can help every professional working with or for children to prioritize the best interests of the child. It includes four practical steps to follow when making decisions for children (how to investigate what is best for the child's development, what are the other interests at stake, how to make a trade-off between the best interest of the child and all other interests, how to discuss the decision with the child). The toolkit and the plan were launched by children and the Ombudsman for Children in the Netherlands during a seminar in The Hague, where professionals working with children, policy makers and children examined how to make the best decision for children. You can find the practical toolkit [here](#) and the step-by-step plan [here](#).





- **2000 children celebrate 30 years of children’s rights in Northern Ireland**

On World Children’s Day, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People organised a Rights Challenge at the Science and Discovery center W5 in Belfast. 2000 children and young people of all ages from across Northern Ireland successfully completed a series of challenges to become rights defenders, learn more about their rights and help NICCY decide how to better protect children’s rights in the future. NICCY also hosted a Children’s Summit to debate the incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law. Delegates included more than 100 children and young people and senior representatives from across government and the statutory, community and private sectors. At the Summit, NICCY launched a new animation calling for incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law produced in partnership with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). Watch the video [here](#).

- **13th Warsaw Seminar on Human Rights, Poland**

On 19 November 2019, The Polish Ombudsman for Children, together with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organised the 13th Warsaw Seminar on Human Rights titled “Rights of the Child in the light of the European Convention on Human Rights”. The Seminar was dedicated to children’s rights in the light of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. The conference provided an opportunity for various stakeholders to discuss the standards of protection, challenges and implementation problems as well as priorities for action and good practices in the field of children’s rights protection.



- **Young People’s Human Rights Gathering in Scotland**

The Young People’s Human Rights Gathering is a 3 day residential event organised every year by the Children and Young People’s Commissioner. This year’s event was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. Almost 60 young people from all over Scotland, as well as past and present Commissioners gathered to think about how things have changed since the UNCRC was adopted, what needs to change in Scotland so that rights are respected, and how the office can change. Learn more [here](#).



To mark International Children’s Day, Bruce Adamson, the Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland and his team held rights workshops in schools

and then went on to celebrate at the Scottish Parliament with groups of children and young people and members of the Scottish Parliament. The Commissioner also wrote to all members of the Scottish Parliament to urge them to ensure the full and direct incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law. Read the letter [here](#). The Scottish Government have now committed to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law by 2021.

- **Incorporation of the UNCRC into Swedish law**

On 20 November 2019, the Children’s Ombudsman in Sweden broadcast a web conference. The subject was what will happen with the incorporation of the UNCRC into Swedish law. Indeed, the Riksdag voted to make a Children’s Convention law. This law will come into force on 1 January 2020. Currently, 94 countries have incorporated the UNCRC into their national legislation. They also created a child-friendly [website](#) “my rights”, to allow children and young people to learn more about their rights and the UNCRC.



Mina Rättigheter

Här kan du lära dig om dina rättigheter



- **Children’s Rights’ Schools in Ukraine**

The Representative of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for the Rights of the Child and Family Aksana Filipyshina met with students at the Educational Center of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 20 November. They discussed the issue of cyberbullying and protection of children’s rights in the digital environment. Aksana Filipyshina also spoke about the role of Ombudspersons in the protection of the rights of the child. The Commissioner’s office also organised 2-days trainings “Children’s Rights’ School” for children in schools from different regions of Ukraine on the rights of the CRC, national child protection mechanisms and the role of the Commissioner. These training days were designed for children aged 14-17 who discussed different cases of violation of the rights of the child and made appeals for protection.



## UPDATE ON EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Joint Statement of the Children’s Rights Ombudspersons Network in South-East Europe (CRONSEE) on the occasion of the 30th anniversary**

The Annual Meeting of CRONSEE was organised on 17 October 2019 in Albania and was dedicated to the role of Ombudspersons in the protection and support of refugee and migrant children. CRONSEE released a joint statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary on 19



November 2019. It called on governments in South East Europe to “invest additional efforts in supporting and protecting all children, particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as children on the move”. Read the statement [here](#).

*South East Europe Children’s Rights Ombudspersons Network (CRONSEE) was established in 2006 at the initiative of the international organization Save the Children. It is composed of 14 national and sub-national Ombudspersons Institutions from the region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia and Kosovo).*

- **Council of Europe Conference “#Redefining Power: Strengthening the rights of the child as the key to a future-proof Europe”**

To mark the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC and to celebrate the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), the Council of Europe organised a conference under the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 13-14 November 2019. The conference brought together government representatives, members of parliament, representatives of international and European organisations, child rights defenders and other experts for discussions on the achievements, challenges and trends in children’s rights, with children playing an active part throughout.

**Koulla Yiasouma**, ENOC Chair and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, was invited to speak at the high-level plenary session of Day 1. She presented ENOC and the importance of independent children’s rights institutions across Europe. She highlighted the key priorities and challenges that Commissioners and Ombudspersons for Children face today in upholding children’s rights. Those are among others, the right to be heard and to be given enough space and respect by local, national and international governments. You can find her speech [here](#).

**Geneviève Avenard**, ENOC Past-Chair and Children’s Defender France participated in the Closing session of the conference in “fish-bowl” format. She challenged the panel of this session with a question on what the panelists will do to improve child participation.

Find more information (program, background documents, etc) on the event [here](#).

- **European Parliament Resolution on Children’s Rights**

On 26 November 2019, the European Parliament adopted with a strong majority a Resolution on Children’s Rights to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. The Resolution highlights the need to put children at the heart of all EU policies and legislations and stresses that the best interests of the child should always be a primary consideration in all decisions concerning them. It paves the way for the next European Commission’s Strategy on children’s rights and identifies specific areas of intervention for the EU. Those areas are among others, violence against children with a special focus on child sexual abuse and exploitation, child-friendly justice, children in migration, vulnerable children and child participation. Some of the key measures are the appointment of a EU Special Representative on Children’s Rights, and the creation of a EU Child Protection Centre. You can read the Resolution [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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- **Child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child**

In 2019, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary, UNICEF and Child Rights Connect jointly developed the official child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child (aimed at children aged 10-17) as well as visual icons for the Convention overall and for each of the main Convention articles. Children participated in the development of the child-friendly text and icons via a global Children’s Advisory Team established by Child Rights Connect, with additional input into the text from over 100 children via Child Rights Connect’s global network of NGO partners. You can find the Child-friendly Convention [here](#).

- **UNICEF report “For every child, every right. The Convention on the Rights of the Child at a crossroads”**

In connection with the 30th anniversary of the Convention, UNICEF published a report “For every child, every right. The Convention on the Rights of the Child at a crossroads”. This report is intended as an advocacy tool to celebrate the achievements of the past three decades and generate dialogue on the critical work that remains. Based on the latest available data, the report outlines a selected set of issues that need urgent attention, for example child survival and the risks posed by poverty, climate change, etc. It also advocates for all stakeholders to recommit to the Convention, stepping up their efforts to fulfil its promise in the next 30 years. The report concludes that where there is political will and determination, children’s lives and well-being will improve. Read the report [here](#).

## ENOC VIDEO STATEMENTS FOR THE CRC30

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To celebrate the CRC30, ENOC launched a communication campaign and released video statements of 14 ENOC members (Albania, Belgium Flemish, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, Wales) every day throughout November on its Twitter account. You can find all the videos on our [website](#).

ENOC also launched its new visual identity. Learn more [here](#).



### ENOC SECRETARIAT

Council of Europe "Agora Building"  
Office n° B507V  
67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
Tel. +33 3 90 21 54 88  
E-mail: [secretariat@ombudsnet.org](mailto:secretariat@ombudsnet.org)  
Find us on the Web: [www.enoc.eu](http://www.enoc.eu)

*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@enoc.eu](mailto:secretariat@enoc.eu)*



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