

# ENOC 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

**“COVID-19 & Children's Rights:  
Learning for the Future”**

**Athens, Greece**

**\*The Conference programme is set  
in Central European Time**

**27-28 September 2021**  
ENOC Annual  
Conference

**29 September 2021**  
ENOC Annual  
General Assembly

**Institut Français de Grèce**  
31 Sina str., Athens



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## Table of contents

This year's Conference. What a year!.....	05
What a year indeed!.....	06
About the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC).....	09
Children's Rights in the Greek Ombudsman.....	11
Conference program.....	12
Conference Speakers.....	17
ENOC Statutes.....	27
ANNEX A.....	35
ANNEX B.....	40





## This year's Conference

# What a year!

This has been an exceedingly long and difficult period for everyone, but it has been particularly stressful and complicated for children. One of our advisors from this year's youth council shared that the days of covid were a mere smudge in time that deserves no recollection.

Nevertheless, a recollection is required for two reasons. On a personal level, families and children have to identify and treat their wounds. And on an institutional level, it is imperative to fully comprehend the impact that the covid measures had on children's rights as well as understand the already existing factors that contributed to the shortcomings of the child protection system in each of our regions and countries.

For that purpose, ENOC has set up two working groups. With the support of experts, the first WG has conducted a survey on the ombudspersons' experience in all ENOC jurisdictions, while the second one -being a productive collaboration with UNICEF ECARO- has applied Child Right Impact Evaluation methodology in 12 countries. Both of these approaches aimed to collect quantitative and qualitative data to allow us to properly assess the impact of emergency measures on children's rights in order to create evidence-based interventions and recommendations for the present and future. Our young advisors who participated in the European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA) project also worked together, despite the challenges, and shared their perspectives and recommendations on the impact of this crisis as well as their expectations from states and institutions.

The findings proved what we had suspected all along. The ENOC synthesis report on the impact of emergency measures introduced in response to the covid-19 pandemic on children's rights, highlighted the fact that "... Governments across the jurisdictions primarily responded to the pandemic as a public health emergency which led to a lack of attention to the physical, mental, social or economic impacts on children as a group or on particular groups of children". We now know that there has been an increase in domestic violence against children and that the designated services failed to effectively respond

to this challenge. We know that the educational needs of children were not met and that we had an unsettling increase in absenteeism and drop-out rates. We know that their social life was undermined and so was their time for play and other cultural activities. We are also aware that they were exposed to emotional stress, online abuse (such as cyberbullying and grooming) and dealt with other mental health challenges while the response of the system was unfortunately inadequate. Last but not least, we know that we failed to listen to children carefully and failed to include their experiences and views in our collective narrative.

For the upcoming months or even years, we may have to adjust to new norms and regulations and face ongoing violations, and in the aftermath of the crisis, new health, social and economic challenges lay ahead. Ombudspersons who have already invested a great deal of effort in finding - if not inventing - a balance between the protection and promotion of children's rights in the crisis, the public health emergency, and the principal of proportionality, must remain vigilant and active.

ENYA recommendations and your views and suggestions on the measures and on the pandemic's impact in general will be discussed during our Conference in a hopefully interesting and productive manner, and it is a great honour and pleasure to have you with us either physically present or online.

For those of you physically present, we hope that you will find the time and opportunity to explore Athens and we wish you all a safe and beautiful stay.



**Theoni Koufonikolakou**  
*Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Greece*

## Message from the Outgoing Chair

# What a year indeed!

The ENOC Annual Conference is always an important event, but this year the opportunity to come together, to share our knowledge and experience, and to develop recommendations takes on additional significance as we focus our attention on Covid-19.

The pandemic has been not just a health emergency, but also a human rights emergency. Children and young people's rights to education, health, family life, play, and to gather with friends have been infringed to protect public health. Those whose rights were already most at risk have been disproportionately affected; disabled children, black and minority ethnic children, care-experienced children, young carers, and those living in poverty.

We all had to adapt our ways of working and change our priorities to respond to the challenges of the pandemic. It has been a huge challenge but it is also a testament to the skill and dedication of our staff and Young Advisers across ENOC. It is unfortunate that ENYA has had to be entirely online this year, but the Young Advisers and ENYA coordinators have done an amazing job and I look forward to their contribution to the conference.

As always, I would like to pay special tribute to the hard work and dedication of ENOC Coordinator Polina Atanasova and ENOC Assistant Coordinator Coralie Da Silva without whom the Network would simply not function.

I would also like to thank the Bureau members for their leadership and commitment to our work, and the working group on standards who are building on our work last year to improve the functioning of our Network.

It was a shame that we were not able to have the conference physically in Edinburgh last year and that the continuing risks have meant that we need to have hybrid conference this year in Athens. For most of us that means we haven't seen ENOC colleagues since 2019 in Belfast. Whether you are attending in person or online this year, I hope you will make the most of the opportunity to refresh connections across the network.

children said:  
“ I don't want to do  
distance learning,  
it's better  
in the classroom! ”

I would like to thank Theoni Koufonikolakou and her team in Athens, along with the ENOC secretariat, for all of the preparatory work they have put in for this important conference. It will provide a focal point for the powerful work that the experts, the Working Group, ENYA and the whole network has been undertaking over the last year.

Covid has highlighted the importance of working with key partners, in particular the European Commission which provides significant funding for our work. Our partnership continues. This year we welcomed the launch of Child Guarantee and the Strategy on the Rights of Child which will provide a comprehensive EU policy framework to ensure the protection of rights of all children, and secure access to basic services for vulnerable children.

We have continued to work closely with our other key European partner the Council of Europe which is developing a new Strategy on the Rights of the Child. We have regularly presented our work at European forums over the last year and these European partnerships will be essential as we disseminate the learning and the recommendations from our Covid work.

We have further developed our close working relationship with the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council and our work with the Committee on the Rights of the Child which welcomed our development of the common framework on Children's Rights Impact Assessments and is following our Covid work closely.

Our joint project with UNICEF on multi-country impact assessment of COVID-19 states' measures on children's rights to protection and our work with the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty have showed the potential of closer working relationship with global partners. We also have exciting new opportunities to explore further developments on strategic litigation with global colleagues.

Outside of Europe we have continued to build relationships with Childrens Commissioners and Ombudspersons. We have had productive meetings with colleagues in New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa and Argentina as well as strengthening ties with colleagues in Central Asia through our UNICEF partnership, some of whom will be joining us at the conference.

The strength of our network is the expertise that you all bring together – ENOC and ENYA. I would like to thank you all for your contributions over the last year.

Whether you are attending the conference online, or joining us in Athens, I look forward to seeing you again.



**Bruce Adamson**

*Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland  
ENOC Chair*

children said:  
“ I want to have my  
lessons at school,  
not on  
the computer! ”



# About the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)

The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) is a not-for-profit association of independent children's rights institutions (ICRIs). Its mandate is to facilitate the promotion and protection of the rights of children, as formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ENOC includes 43 institutions in 34 countries within the Council of Europe, 23 of which EU countries. Membership is limited to independent institutions in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. The decision-making powers are held by the General Assembly, composed of all full members, and the Bureau, composed of the Past Chair, the current Chair, the Chair-elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer and two ordinary members. The ENOC Secretariat, based in Strasbourg, ensures the coordination of the activities of the network. Every year, ENOC members choose one specific subject affecting children's rights and requiring careful consideration at ENOC members' and European level. A range of activities such as working seminars, trainings, exchange of views and annual conferences are organised. These annual activities help gather and share country specific information, and promote and disseminate common findings and recommen-

ations via position statements.

ENOC launched in 2010, with the support of the European Commission, the European Network of Young Advisors – ENYA – a child/young people participatory project supported by ENOC members. The purpose of the ENYA project is to actively involve children and young people in ENOC's annual work, especially through the organisation of an ENYA Forum where young people from across Europe gather to share views and experience and to come up with common recommendations on ENOC's priority subject. These recommendations are addressed at ENOC level and reflected in the ENOC Position Statement on the same issue.

## ENOC Bureau Composition (2020-2021)

- The current Chairperson, Mr Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
- The Chairperson elect, Ms Theoni Koufonikolou, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Greece
- The past Chairperson, Ms Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
- The Secretary, Ms Deborah McMillan, Children's Commissioner for Jersey
- The Treasurer, Ms Salvör Nordal, Ombudsman for Children, Iceland

### ENOC Secretariat:

Ms. Polina Atanasova – ENOC Coordinator  
Ms. Coralie Da Silva – ENOC Assistant Coordinator

The Secretariat can be contacted at:  
ENOC (European Network of Ombudspersons for Children)  
secretariat@ombudsnet.org / +33.3.90.21.54.88  
Council of Europe, « Agora » Building, Office n° B5 07V  
67075 Strasbourg Cedex



# Children's Rights in the Greek Ombudsman



The Greek Ombudsman is an independent authority stipulated in the Greek Constitution. Law 3094/2003 assigned the Ombudsman the mission of defending and promoting children's rights. The decision was followed by the appointment of a Deputy Ombudsperson for children's rights and the creation of a new Department in the Independent Authority, staffed by an **interdisciplinary** team of experts in 2003.

Within its mandate to protect and promote Children's Rights, the Department is responsible to investigate and intervene in cases of violations that occur **either by public authorities or by private entities or individuals**.

The Authority has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guide for all its interventions and monitors its implementation across the country. The Ombudsman's scope of competencies includes:

- **Handling complaints:** Following a complaint filed by a citizen regarding a child's rights violation, the Ombudsman intervenes to protect and restore that child's rights. Anyone aware of such violations, including children themselves (who are able to use the Ombudsman's hotline), can file a complaint. If necessary, in cases of serious violations, the Ombudsman acts on its own initiative (*ex officio*).
- **Advocacy interventions:** The Ombudsman systematically works to uphold the legal framework and administrative practice with the standards of the Convention by submitting recommendations to the competent authorities and the government.
- **Performing inspections:** The Ombudsman monitors the conditions of living of children in juvenile correctional institutions, childcare institutions, detention centers, police stations, registra-

tion and identification centers, camps etc. to ensure the early identification of violations and evidenced based interventions.

- **Setting up networks of actors:** The Ombudsman established the Network for the rights of Children on the Move and the Network for Deinstitutionalization and alternative care that consist of international organizations, non-governmental organizations, public agencies, regional services, and other significant actors. These synergies ensure coordinated advocacy interventions but also provide valuable additional information to the Authority regarding the developments in the field.
- **Raising awareness** on children's rights. For that purpose, the Ombudsman:
  - **Establishes youth councils** to ensure children's participation in the public dialogue and to allow them to express their views on the impact of policies, laws, and practices.
  - **Undertakes initiatives to inform** and guide parents.
  - **Systematically organizes training activities** for professionals working with children, especially teachers.
  - **Visits children** in schools, care or penal institutions, youth clubs, services, etc. in order to inform children of their rights, to listen to their views, and to learn about their needs, problems, and suggestions. Online meetings with children in schools replaced the visits during the pandemic crisis.
  - **Publishes special reports** to raise awareness with regard to the country's compliance with the UNCRC.

▶ **08.00-09.00**

Registration and refreshments

▶ **09.00-09.45**

Conference Opening Addresses

**Andreas Pottakis** *Greek Ombudsman*

**Bruce Adamson** *ENOC Chair, Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland*

**Theoni Koufonikolakou** *ENOC Chair-elect, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Greece*

**Ewa Kopacz** *Vice President of the European Parliament and Coordinator on children's rights*

**Dubravka Šuica** *European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography*

**Kostas Bakoyannis** *Mayor of Athens*

**ENYA opening video**

▶ **09.45-10.30**

Presentation of ENOC's report "COVID-19-learning for the future": Findings and Challenges

**Simon Hoffman** *Professor of International Human Rights and Joint Coordinator of the Observatory on Human Rights of Children at Swansea University*

**Rhian Croke** *Independent Children's Rights Adviser/Researcher*

▶ **10.30-10.45**

Break and Refreshments

▶ **10.45-11.45**

Panel discussion on child mental health during the pandemic crisis

Moderator:

**Theoni Koufonikolakou** *ENOC Chair-elect, Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Greece*

**Gerasimos A. Kolaitis** *Professor of Child Psychiatry, Head of Department of Child Psychiatry, Athens University Medical School*

**George Nikolaidis** *Psychiatrist, former Chair of CoE's Lanzarote Committee, Director of Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare, Institute for Child Health*

**George Giannakopoulos** *Child Psychiatrist, Assistant Professor of Child Psychiatry, Athens University Medical School*

**Sally Holland** *Children's Commissioner for Wales*

**Q & A**

▶ **11.45-12.30**

Presentation of the ENOC-UNICEF project

**Afshan Khan** *Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia UNICEF*

**Véronique Lerch** *Expert of the ENOC-UNICEF project*

**Vanessa Sedletzki** *Expert of the ENOC-UNICEF project*

▶ **12.30-13.30** Lunch

▶ **13.30-13.50**

Initiatives of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) - Council of Europe

**Maria-Andriani KOSTOPOULOU** *Chair of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), Council of Europe*

# Day 1

27th September 2021

## A deep dive into the impact of the crisis

### ▶ 13.50-15.00

Workshops Session on the impact of COVID-19 measures

- The Right to Education  
(Moderator **Kjersti Botnan Larsen**)
- The Right to Health  
(Moderator **Elisabeth Dahlin**)
- The Right to Protection from Violence and Abuse  
(Moderator **Bruce Adamson**)
- The Right to an adequate Standard of Living  
(Moderator **Koulla Yiasouma**)
- The Right to Participation  
(Moderator **Theoni Koufonikolakou**)

### ▶ 15.00-15.20

Coffee Break

### ▶ 15.20-16.30

Plenary Session: Feedback from Workshop rapporteurs and discussion

**Moderator:**

**Koulla YIASOUMA** Northern Ireland  
Commissioner for Children and Young People

### ▶ 18.00-22.00

Evening Programme

### ▶ 12.00-13.00

Lunch

# Day 2

28th September 2021

## ENYA Recommendations and ENOC's next steps

### ▶ 08.30-09.00

Refreshments

### ▶ 09.00 -12.00

ENYA 2021 Project:  
Let's talk young, let's talk about  
the impact of COVID-19  
on children's rights

**General ENYA Coordinator:**

**Suzanne Garcia Imbernon** Task Manager, Office of  
the Commissioner for Children-Malta

### ▶ 13.00-14.00

Panel Discussion: What's next?  
A strategy for the future

**Moderator:**

**Bruce Adamson** ENOC Chair, Children & Young  
People's Commissioner Scotland

**Velina Todorova** Vice Chair of the UN  
Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Valeria Setti** European Commission  
Coordinator for the rights of the child

**Regina Jensdottir** Head of the Children's Rights  
Division Council of Europe

**Dragoş Pişlaru** Member of the European  
Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Intergroup  
on Children's Rights

Q & A

# Day 2

## 28th September 2021 ENYA Recommendations and ENOC's next steps

### ▶ 14.00-15.30

Plenary session: Update from ENOC members on positive recent child right related developments in their jurisdiction.

**Moderator:**

**Caroline Vrijens**, *Children's Rights Commissioner (Flemish), Belgium*

### ▶ 15.30-15.40

Closing of ENOC Conference

### ▶ 15.40-16.00

Coffee Break

### ▶ 08.30-09.00

Refreshments

### ▶ 09.00-09.45

Opening of Annual General Assembly

**Moderator:**

**Bruce Adamson** *ENOC Chair (2020-2021), Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland*

- Election of new ENOC Bureau

- Discussion on Membership Application Working Group

### ▶ 16.00-17.00

Discussion on ENOC's Position Statements (only for ENOC members):

- COVID-19 & Children's Rights: Learning for the Future

- Violations of the Human Rights of Children on the Move in the context of pushbacks

### ▶ 18.30-20.30

Optional Athens Sightseeing Guided Walking Tour

# Day 3

## 29th September 2021 ENOC 25th General Assembly (only for ENOC members)

### ▶ 09.45-12.00

**Moderator:**

**Theoni Koufonikolakou**

*ENOC Chair (2021-2022),*

*Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Greece*

- Presentation of ENOC annual activities

- Presentation and approval of ENOC annual accounts

- Endorsement of ENOC position statements

- Update on progress from the Working Group on Standards & Values

- Discussion on next year's priorities

### ▶ 12.00 Lunch

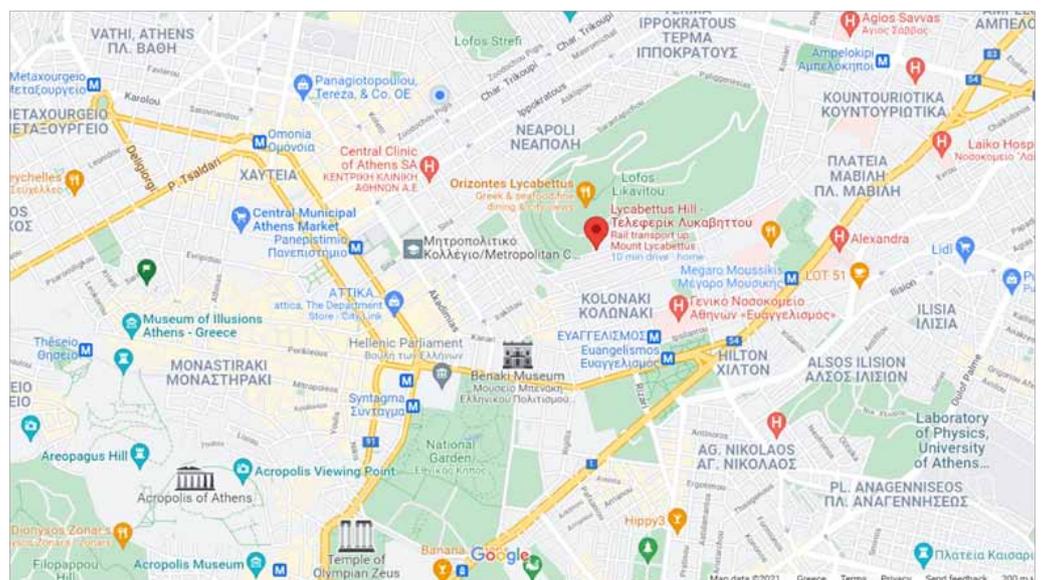
## Welcome Dinner

A group dinner for Conference participants in Athens will be held at “Orizantes Lycabettus” on Monday, September 27 at 7 pm. This restaurant is located on Lycabettus Hill which is the highest point in Central Athens at 277 meters above sea level. Participants will enjoy modern Mediterranean cuisine with a panoramic view of the city including historic sites such as the Acropolis, the Temple of Olympian Zeus and the Panathenaic Stadium. Lycabettus Hill has the best view in Athens and is especially popular for enjoying the sunset.



Additional information about the dinner venue is available at <http://www.orizonteslycabettus.gr/>

Each participant will be provided a round-trip, complimentary cable car ride which brings passengers directly to the entrance of the restaurant. The cable car embarks from the base of the hill at Aristippou 1, Athina 106 76. Location Link <https://goo.gl/maps/QB9zKXqfFzYyPNTU9>



## Athens by night”

A complementary sightseeing walking tour for Conference participants on Tuesday, September 28 at 7.30 pm with the support of “This is Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau”.





# Conference Speakers

(in order of appearance)

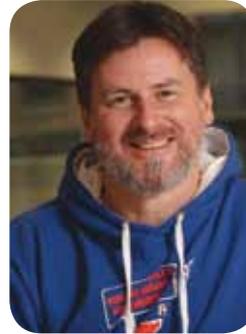


## Andreas I. Pottakis,

**Greek Ombudsman**

Mr. Pottakis studied Law at the Universities of Athens and Oxford where he was awarded a doctorate (D.Phil.) in EU Public Law. He has lectured at various European Universities, in the

UK, in Italy, in Turkey and in Greece where he has also pursued a career as a lawyer before the Supreme Court. He is a professor and the Provost for postgraduate studies at the European Law and Governance School (ELGS), and the Alternate Director of the Academy of European Public Law. From 2011 until 2015, Andreas Pottakis served as legal advisor to the General Secretariat of the Hellenic Government, while from 2015 until early 2016 he was appointed at the position of Head of the Legal Office. He has published extensively on a wide range of areas, including, inter alia, European Public Law, Comparative Law, Constitutional and Administrative Law, and the legal protection of Human Rights



## Bruce Adamson, ENOC Chair, Children and Young People's Commissioner, Scotland

Mr. Adamson is a lawyer with over 20 years of experience in human rights. He has been the Children and Young People's

Commissioner Scotland since 2017, responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights of children and young people across Scotland. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner, he was a member of Scotland's Children's Panel for 13 years, working directly with children in need of care in protection or in conflict with the law, listening to their experiences and making decisions about their safety and wellbeing. Bruce co-chaired the Rights working group of Scotland's Independent Care Review and is a former Chair of the Scottish Child Law Centre.

Over the last four years the Commissioner's office has worked closely with children and young people to secure legislative change in relation to the age of criminal responsibility, comprehensive protection for children from physical punishment, and the incorporation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scots law. They have undertaken strategic litigation on issues relating to child poverty and care experienced children. They have carried out investigations into restraint and seclusion in schools, and children whose liberty is at risk.

Bruce has acted as an international expert for the United Nations, Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE, and during the Covid-19 pandemic has advised the WHO on children's rights. He has been a member of international advisory groups on issues such as child human rights defenders, strategic litigation, and reform of the European Court of Human Rights. He was previously the United Nations representative for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.



## Theoni Koufonikolakou,

**ENOC Chair-elect,  
Deputy Ombudswoman for  
children's rights,  
Greece**

Ms. Theoni Koufonikolakou is the Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for children's rights.

She is also the chairperson-elect of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC).

As an attorney at law she has worked on human rights protection and domestic violence tackling cases. She has cooperated with NGOs providing legal aid to vulnerable populations. In addition, she has worked with the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) as a researcher and instructor in adult education, and the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) in family protection cases.

She is currently a PH.D candidate with the Law School of the University of Athens and she holds a Master's degree in Political Science and Sociology from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Her scientific interests relate to social inclusion and family protection policies as well as initiatives that address the issues of poverty and deprivation.



## Ewa Kopacz, Vice President of the European Parliament and Coordinator of Children's Rights

Ewa Kopacz was born in 1956. She finished the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical University of Lublin, where she graduated in

1981. She attained the second degree of specialisation in pediatrics and family medicine. Until 2001, she worked at the local clinics in the Masovian Province and headed the health care facility in Szydłowiec.

Ewa Kopacz became active in local politics in the 1980s joining the United People's Party.

In the 1990s, she joined Freedom Union and chaired the party's structures in the province

of Radom. In the years 1998-2001, she held the position of a Mazovian Regional Assembly councilor. In 2001, Ewa Kopacz joined Civic Platform.

Elected for the first time as a deputy to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland in 2001, she was subsequently re-elected in 2005, 2007 and in 2011. In 2005, she became the head of the Health Committee as well as she worked as the chairperson of the Civic Platform structures of the Masovia Province. In 2007, she became a Minister of Health and she remained in that position until 2011 when she became the first woman in Poland to serve as Marshall (Speaker) of the Sejm (2011-14). In the years 2014-2015, she served as leader of the Civic Platform. On 22 September 2014, Ewa Kopacz was sworn in as Prime Minister of Poland and remained in the office until 16th of November 2015.

Following the 2019 election to the European Parliament, Ewa Kopacz has been serving as

a Member of the European Parliament and became one of its Vice-Presidents. In July 2019, she was entrusted with the role of the European Parliament Coordinator on Children's Rights.



## Dubravka Šuica, European Commission Vice- President for Democracy and Demography

Since December 2019, Dubravka Šuica is Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and

Demography. Mrs Šuica a Croatian politician from the city of Dubrovnik, where she served for two terms as its first female mayor and was awarded the 2006 World Mayor Award. Dubravka Šuica entered politics in the 1990s as a Member of the Croatian Democratic Union and served as a Member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice-Chair of the EU Integration Committee. Between 2004 and 2009 she was a Board Member of the Union of the Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia. During ten years she was the Vice-President of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. From 2013 to 2019 Dubravka Šuica served as a Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee. In June 2019, Šuica was elected as first Vice-Chair of EPP Group in the European Parliament. Since 2012, she is the Vice-President of EPP Women.



## Simon Hoffman,

Professor

Simon Hoffman (PhD) is a Professor of Human Rights at Swansea University and a Joint Coordinator of the Observatory on Human Rights of Children. He carries out research on

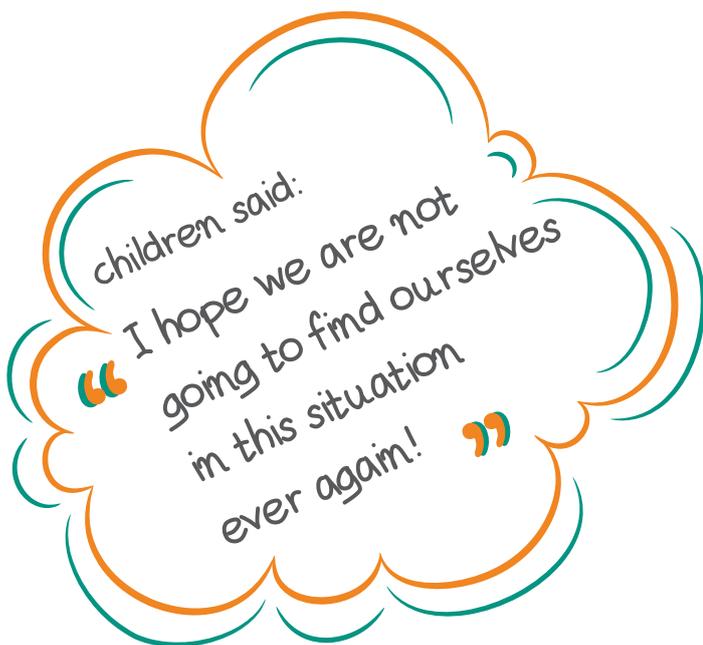
human rights, and in particular social rights and the rights of children, with a focus on better implementation through law and policy. Simon has a depth of experience of leading research projects on human rights and children's rights, and is regularly called on to provide advice, training and consultancy on children's rights. In his capacity as a joint coordinator of the Observatory on Human Rights of Children he has provided evidence to the Senedd/Welsh Parliament and the UK Parliament, as well as consultancy services on children's rights to a range of organisations (e.g. the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Wales, and the Council of Europe Committee of Local and regional Authorities). As a member of the Welsh Government Children's Rights Advisory Group Simon advises Ministers on children's rights implementation in Wales. He is also convenor of the Wales Human rights Stakeholder Group and a member of the NGO led Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group, which provides a direct link to Wales-national child-focused NGOs.



## Rhian Croke,

Children's Rights  
Adviser/Researcher

Ms Croke is an independent Children's Rights Adviser/Researcher, with a depth of experience, offering research, training and consultancy on children's rights. Rhian is currently conducting research for ENOC into the impact of Covid 19 Emergency Legislation on children's rights across ENOC member states. In her capacity advising the Children's Hospital for Wales, she presented at the International Journal of Children's Rights conference on Covid 19, with an article published June 2021. Rhian has also been conducting research into children's rights and sustainable development, with an article published in Social Sciences, March 2021. Rhian has advised and conducted research for the Children's Commissioner for Jersey and the Children's Commissioner for Wales on the development of a children's rights approach for public bodies. Rhian successfully secured funding to establish the first children's legal centre in Wales and was an adviser to the campaign that won the commitment to the first Welsh Youth Parliament. As Coordinator of the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group, Rhian played a pivotal role, leading children's rights monitoring and reporting, published many reports, successfully advocated for children's rights policy and law reform and managed the delivery of many children's rights projects. Rhian has presented evidence to Welsh Parliament, delivered children's rights training to parliamentarians and civil servants and was a member of the first Welsh Government Advisory Group on Children's Rights. Rhian has a PhD from the Law School at Swansea University, an MPhil in Social Sciences from the University of Cape Town and an LLB from the University of Edinburgh.





## **Gerasimos A. Kolaitis,**

**Psychiatrist MD, PhD.**

Mr. Kolaitis is Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Head of the Department of Child Psychiatry, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, at the “Aghia

Sophia” Children’s Hospital; Director of the Post Graduate Training Programme (MSc) “Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychiatry”, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. He has participated in numerous European projects e.g. Psychotherapy of Childhood Depression, Mental Health Europe, COSIP, EUMAP, EDIG, CAMHEE, MILESTONE, and the Euro Asian Child Mental Health Services (EAC-MHS); he has also participated in the Generation R Study as visiting Professor at the Erasmus University Medical Center-Sophia Children’s Hospital (Rotterdam, NL). He has more than 160 publications in peer-reviewed international journals and textbooks, and more than 50 in Greek journals and textbooks (mean impact factor=3,812, about 2300 citations, h-index= 25, i10-index= 45). He is the author of the book “Modern Child and Adolescent Psychiatry” (Athens: BETA Publishers, November 2020, in Greek).

was Advocacy and Networking Consultant of Lumos project in Greece also coordinating the Deinstitutionalization program for Greece and an emergency intervention project institution for children with disability. He is national representative of Greece to WHO for CAN-related issues and CoE’s Lanzarote Committee for more than a decade, in which he has been elected Member of its Bureau (2014-2016), Vice-Chair (2016-2018) and Chairperson (2018-2020)



## **George Nikolaidis,**

**Psychiatrist, MD, MA, MSc, PhD.**

George Nikolaidis studied Medicine and Psychiatry. He was awarded with a PhD on “Epidemiology”, an MSc in “Philosophy of Mental Disorder” from KCL-

UoL and an MA in “Psychoanalytic Studies from UoSheffield. His scientific interests include a range of issues involving Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Protection, Public Health Sciences and Epidemiology. He was involved as Scientific Coordinator or as Main Researcher in research, training and clinical projects related with child protection, violence and epidemiology. Since 09/2005 he is the Head of Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare of Institute of Child Health; from 11/2014 up to 03/2020 he had been Scientific Coordinator of the Day Center “The House of the Child” providing treatment to children victims of abuse/neglect of the NGO “The Smile of the Child”; from 11/2014 until 03/2019



## **Georgios Giannakopoulos,**

**Psychiatrist, MD, PhD.**

Mr. Giannakopoulos is an Assistant Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Department of Child Psychiatry, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University

of Athens, “Aghia Sophia” Children’s Hospital, Athens, Greece. His research primarily focuses on developmental epidemiology, trauma-related disorders, child and adolescent psychodynamic psychotherapy, and the interplay between parent and child mental health and illness. He also works with child and adolescent psychiatric inpatients. He has authored or co-authored numerous publications in international peer-reviewed journals and book chapters.





## **Sally Holland,** **Children's Commissioner for Wales**

Ms Holland became Wales' third Children's Commissioner for Wales in April 2015. In April 2022 her seven-year term of office will end and she will return to her previous role as Professor of Social Work at Cardiff University. As Commissioner Sally's statutory remit is to protect and promote children's human's rights, acting as an independent advocate for all children in Wales. During her term she and her team have secured statutory, right-based anti-bullying guidance in schools, statutory guidance on a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, the removal of the legal defence of 'reasonable punish-

ment' for physical punishment in the home and the funding of regional residential therapeutic centres for young people who need specialist support with mental health, behavioural and social issues.

During the pandemic the Commissioner and her team conducted large, rapid surveys of children's experiences in the lockdown periods in May 2020 and January 2021, hearing from more than 1 in 20 children in Wales each time. The surveys were used extensively by the government to inform their children's rights impact assessments for pandemic decisions. In February 2021 they also published the first formal, statutory review of Welsh Government's functions by any Commissioner. The review examined the Government's decision to pause plans to strengthen regulations relating to home education and safeguarding in independent schools. In her final year Sally is continuing to push a 'no wrong door' approach to children's mental health services.



## **Afshan Khan,** **Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia UNICEF**

Ms Khan is the UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, and the Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe. She is based in Geneva.

Ms. Khan has been an international public servant for over 30 years. Previously she was the Director of Emergency Programmes for UNICEF, and she has also held other senior positions including Director of Public-Sector Alliances and Resource Mobilization; Associate Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa; and the UNICEF Representative in Jamaica. Ms. Khan has extensive field experience including assignments in Kenya; Mozambique; Democratic Republic of Congo; and Colombia. She also has broad United Nations-wide expertise stemming from assignments with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (IASC) in Geneva; the Executive Office of the Secretary-General; and the United Nations Development Group. From 2012 to 2014 Ms. Khan took leave from the United Nations to become the CEO of Women for Women International. In that role, she was responsible for setting the strategic vision and mobilizing the necessary resources for women rebuilding their lives after war. Ms. Khan was born in Hyderabad, India, and grew up in Montreal, Canada. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from McGill University.



## **Veronique Lerch,** **Independent Human Rights Consultant**

Ms Lerch is an independent human rights consultant specialised in child rights and with extensive experience in strategy and policy development, capacity-building, advocacy, communication and management. She worked most recently for Amnesty International, the European Commission and UNICEF. Véronique previously led the Liaison & Advocacy Department of SOS Children's Villages International, a large child rights organisation.



## Vanessa Sedletzki,

**Independent Human Rights Consultant**

Vanessa Sedletzki is an international consultant with over 20 years of experience in human and child rights. She worked for more than a decade with UNICEF at its Headquarters in New York and at the Innocenti

Office of Research in Florence, Italy. Her involvement has spanned a wide range of child rights and child protection topics. She has focused in particular on the link between children's daily experiences and policy approaches, through independent institutions, access to justice, and child-friendly services. A multilingual professional fluent in English, French, Italian and Spanish, she interacts with a diverse array of audiences and has authored a number of publications.



## Dr. Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou,

**Chair of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDEFN), Council of Europe**

Ms Kostopoulou is a human rights lawyer at the Supreme Court of Greece and a consultant of the Council of Europe on human

rights issues, including children's rights. She is the Chairperson of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDEFN) and previously was the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Council of Europe for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) and Chairperson of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Responses to Violence against Children (CAHENF-VAC). She is also member of the Consultative Board of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) of the Council of Europe.

She holds a PhD (summa cum laude) from the Faculty of Law of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and four Masters' degrees: in Family Law, Faculty of Law, University of Strasbourg (mention Très Bien), in Civil Law, Faculty of Law, University of Athens (first-class honours), in International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Athens and in Labour Law, Faculty of Law, University of Athens (first-class honours). She is the author or co-author of around 40 publications on human rights issues, including the book "The individual application under the European Convention on human Rights: Procedural guide", Council of Europe Editions, 2019 (co-authored with L.-A. Sicilianos, former President of the European Court of Human Rights).





## Kjersti Botnan Larsen

is a senior adviser at the Ombudsman for Children in Norway. She has previously worked in the educational sector in Norway and holds a master degree in pedagogics and in law.

the Council of Europe. As Deputy Director General of the National Board of Trade (Kommerskollegium) she specialized in WTO accession for developing countries, free trade and trade facilitation including chairing the Trade Facilitation Board and leading the bilateral cooperation with China and other countries on trade facilitation. She also initiated and founded Open Trade Gate Sweden to facilitate imports from developing countries.

During apartheid, she was in charge of the official government cooperation with the ANC exile government and for humanitarian support to the anti-apartheid movement (faith based organizations, businesses, academia, trade unions etc) in South Africa.

In the private sector, she has served as Board Member of New Wave Group, listed global company and as Member of the Global Advisory Board of IKEA, People and Planet Positive.

As Secretary General of the National Council of Swedish Youth (LSU) she headed the international platform of 87 Swedish Youth Organizations.

She studied Political Science and Economics at Uppsala University and holds an MA from the University of Hanoi. Fluent in English, Vietnamese, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Born in Seskaro in the Botnic Sea, now living in Stockholm. Married with three children. Very fond of spending time outdoors, in the archipelago as well as in our family house in Cyprus. Keen skier, enjoy learning about new cultures and countries.



## Elisabeth Dahlin Ombudsman for Children Sweden. Deputy Chair of University of Uppsala as well as of the Anna Lindh Academy at the University of Malmo

Her previous positions include Secretary General of Save the Children Sweden (Radda Barnen), one of the largest child focused

NGO's in Sweden. Until re-joining the government in September 2018 she was a member of the Global Board of the Global Partnership to end violence against children, GPVAC, of the UN.

As Career diplomat in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, she worked as Ambassador and Director of the Partnership for Global Responsibility and part of the governing board of the UN Global Compact. She has served as a member of staff at the Swedish Embassies in Zambia, Brazil and Vietnam as well as at the UN in New York and



## Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Ms Yiasouma took up appointment as NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) in March 2015. She trained as a social worker and previously worked in probation, NI Women's

Aid and prior to her appointment was the Director of Include Youth for almost 17 years. She has also been involved in the boards of a number of voluntary and community based organisation as well as non-departmental public bodies. She is a passionate advocate for the rights of all children, especially those with the most challenging behaviours, and she represented these issues on these bodies.

As a Human Rights institution, the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People is appointed by the First and Deputy First Ministers and tasked to promote and safeguard the rights and best interests of children and young people across Northern Ireland. This includes advising public authorities, and holding them to account in a variety of ways, on their delivery of children's rights. Koulla set key strategic priorities for her term in Office. These include addressing educational inequalities, tackling child poverty, improving emotional and mental well-being and addressing the on-going legacy of the conflict on children and young people. Koulla is of Greek Cypriot origin and is married with two daughters. She was born in London and is therefore an avid Arsenal supporter.



**Suzanne Garcia**  
Imbernon is the ENYA Co-ordinator from Malta and is this year's General ENYA Coordinator

She has over 12 years of experience working in the field of children's rights with a special interest in child participation. Suzanne has

been involved in ENYA since its inception in 2009



**Velina Todorova,**  
Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Ms Todorova is a lawyer (1981) and Ph.D. in Sociology of Law (1989), Associate Professor on Civil and Family Law at the Law Faculty, Plovdiv University and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

She has an extensive experience in research and in law making in the areas of human rights protection, social protection and family law (1997 to date). Publishes nationally and internationally and is both expert (2001) and a member (2014-2019) to the Commission on the European Family Law, member to the European Family Law (FLEUR) since 2019. National Programme Manager for International Labour Organisation (ILO - IPEC) and a founder of the Agency for Child Protection (2001). She has always combined her academic career with a strong activism as a member and supporter of various human rights initiatives and NGOs. A Deputy Minister of Justice (2011-13). Member to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017-2021, 2021-2025).



**Valeria Setti,**  
European Commission Coordinator for the rights of the child

Ms Setti is the European Commission Coordinator for the rights of the child since September 2018. In this capacity, Valeria works across Commission's departments to

help make sure that the rights of the child are considered in all relevant policies and actions. Valeria and her team are responsible for the implementation of the recently adopted EU strategy on the rights of the child.

Prior to that, Valeria worked in DG Migration and Home Affairs, coordinating the work on migrant integration as well as leading the organisation of the European Migration Forum, an annual platform for dialogue between EU institutions and civil society on the issues of migration.

Before joining the Commission, Valeria worked for Missing Children Europe, and was responsible for the expansion of the 116 000 hotlines for missing children.

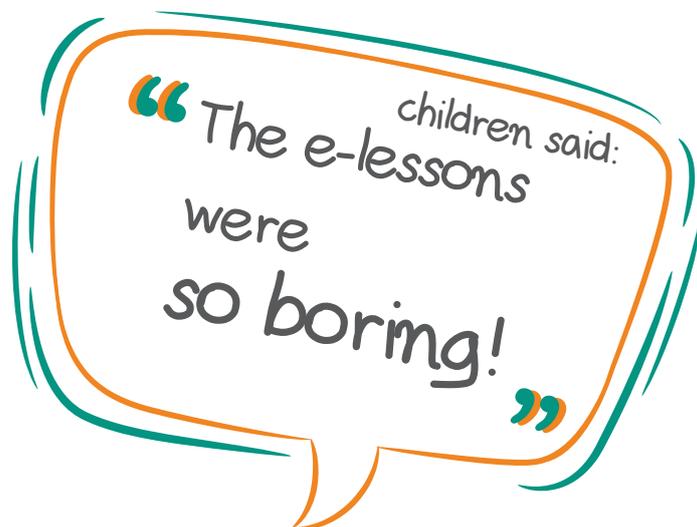


## Regína Jensdóttir,

**Head of the Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe**

Ms Jensdóttir holds a law degree from the University of Iceland and a postgraduate degree (D.E.A.) from the University of Strasbourg in international public law. Since 1998 she has been working for the Council of Europe

and since 2010 she has led the Council of Europe work in the area of the rights of the child, in her capacity as the organizations Coordinator for the rights of the child and the head of the Children's Rights Division. In these capacities she is responsible for the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child, the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), and of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention) and its monitoring committee which follows how states put the Lanzarote Convention into practice. She has also led the development of the work on children's rights in a number of areas such as violence against children, equal opportunities, child participation, children in alternative care, child friendly justice and children's rights in the digital environment.



## Mr Dragoș Pîslaru,

**Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Intergroup on Children's Rights**

An economist by heart, Dragoș holds a PhD in economics at the National Economic Research Institute (INCE) of the Romanian Academy and an MA in International Relations from the London School of Economics.

He worked as a researcher, professor, consultant and successful entrepreneur, eventually serving as Romania's Minister for Labour. He helped kickstart numerous international projects on social affairs, rural development, social policy, labour markets and digitalization, among other topics and ran one of the first start-up accelerators in Romania.

He is a firm believer in evidence-driven policy and in lifelong learning and upskilling as vital components for a healthy labour market and a prosperous economy. Dragoș is a current Member of the European Parliament, where is coordinating the work of the Renew Europe Group in the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, while at the same time is following economic affairs, being most recently the EP Co-rapporteur on the Recovery and Resilience Facility. As a father of four boys, he is dedicated to the fight against child poverty and wants to champion the cause of EU support for children and youth.



## Caroline Vrijens,

**Children's Rights Commissioner  
(Flemish), Belgium**

Ms Vrijens holds a law degree with a specialisation in International and European Law. She also obtained a postgraduate degree in Social Profit and Public Management. Caroline worked the last three years for an international NGO as an advocacy expert for the target group children in youth care. There she published the report 'Ordinary children in an unusual situation' (SOS Children's Villages, March 2017). She pulled the Leaving Care campaign and developed an innovative project to further deinstitutionalise youth care in Flanders. From 2007 to 2014, she worked as a policy officer within the Flemish government on the implementation of the Integral Youth Aid and worked on participation of children and young people and children's rights. Caroline Vrijens has been the Flemish Commissioner for Children's Rights since 1 August 2019. The Children's Rights Commissioner's Office detects signals from children, young people and professionals. It mediates, investigates complaints and advises the policy ([www.kinderrechtencommissariaat.be](http://www.kinderrechtencommissariaat.be))





children said:

I MISS  
MEETING  
MY  
FRIENDS!

## The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children Statutes as amended November 2020<sup>1</sup>



### Preamble

Independent Children's Rights Institutions (ICRIs) are public bodies, independent of the government, whose mandate is to protect and promote the rights of the child as set out in legislation. ICRIs protect and promote the rights of the child as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its three Optional Protocols, on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on a communications procedure, as well as under other United Nations human rights treaties, and the European human rights framework, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. They monitor the implementation of the rights of the child at national level, advise national governments on how to fully realise the rights of the child, conduct awareness-raising activities, and engage with children and young people.

In line with the Paris Principles, the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols, and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment no. 2 on the role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, ICRIs ensure that children, young people, and adults understand the rights of the child, children and young people know how to contact them, listen to all children and young people's views, including those most marginalised, involve children and young people in their daily work, work closely with children's and young people's organisations, monitor State compliance with their international human rights obligations, investigate where children's human rights are not being respected and report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the status of children's rights in their countries. In order to protect and promote the rights of the child, ICRIs also conduct awareness-raising, capacity-building and educational activities in many areas including, inter alia, education, information, training, research, production and distribution of publications, advocacy, dissemination of messages in the media, and advising governments on compliance with international human rights standards.

<sup>1</sup>Original Statutes approved May 2006 in Dublin, amended in September 2011 in Warsaw, in October 2012 in Nicosia, and in November 2020 at the annual general meeting of the ENOC General Assembly.



## Article 1: Creation and name

**1.1** The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) is a not-for-profit association of independent children's rights institutions (ICRIs). Its mandate is to facilitate the promotion and protection of the rights of children, as formulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

**1.2** While encouraging understanding and mutual support, ENOC respects the free and open exchange of ideas in the framework of different national or regional policies. ENOC does not, in any way, assume the responsibilities of its members, but supports its members in executing their proper mandates within their respective country or region. ENOC has adopted Standards for independent children's rights institutions which its members agree to aspire to respect. (See Annex A).

**1.3** The office of the Network is established in the headquarters of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France.

## Article 2: Objectives of ENOC

ENOC has no profit-making intentions and its objectives are:

**2.1** to promote and safeguard children's rights and to work on strategies for the fullest possible implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

**2.2** to serve as a forum of colleagues for the exchange of information, capacitybuilding and professional support among the members;

**2.3** to promote the establishment of independent children's rights institutions (ICRIs) in countries worldwide and offer support to such initiatives, and to maintain an overview of other activities around the world and share more broadly beyond ENOC;

**2.4** to stimulate contacts and support with and among other ICRIs worldwide and their networks;

**2.5** to ensure, through advocacy and policy work, that relevant European-wide bodies place child

rights at the centre of their activities, legislation and policies, and adopt a child rights approach to their work;

**2.6** to promote the active participation of children and young people in decisionmaking processes, legislation, and policies concerning them. ENOC aims to implement such active engagement with and participation of children and young people in every aspect of ENOC's work and decision-making, including inter alia through consultations, engagement, and other activities; and

**2.7** to initiate and coordinate strategic interventions on policy and litigation affecting children's rights agreed by at least two-thirds of full members of ENOC.

## Article 3: Organisation of ENOC

**3.1** ENOC has a General Assembly, a Bureau, and a Secretariat (see Articles 11, 12 and 13).

**3.2** The General Assembly consists of all full members. While members are the ICRIs, they are represented within ENOC by the person who holds the mandate or their delegated representative. Should a delegated representative attend on behalf of the mandate-holder, the mandate-holder should inform the Bureau in writing in advance and confirm the decision-making powers of the delegated representative.

**3.3** Both the General Assembly and the Bureau have decision-making powers within ENOC. The General Assembly can delegate decision-making to the Bureau in conformity with article 12.5.7.

**3.4** The Bureau consists of seven persons, the past and current Chairperson, the Chairperson-elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer of the Network and two ordinary members.

**3.5** The Secretariat assists the Bureau in carrying out its responsibilities.

## Article 4: Membership

**4.1** There are two categories of membership of ENOC – full and associate. Full membership of

ENOC is open to independent children’s rights institutions within Council of Europe member states which meet all of the following criteria:

- The institution is established through legislation approved by parliament, which provides for its independence.
- The institution has the function of protecting and promoting children’s rights. This function is established through legislation.
- There are no provisions in the legislation which limit the institution’s ability to set its own agenda in relation to this function, or which prevent it carrying out significant core functions suggested in the Paris Principles and ENOC’s Standards (see Annex A).
- The institution must include or consist of an identifiable person or persons concerned exclusively with the protection and promotion of children’s rights.
- Arrangements for appointment of ombudspersons, commissioners and members of a commission must be established by legislation, setting out the term of the mandate and arrangements for renewal, if any.

**4.2** The institutions must hold authority, set down in legislation, to advocate for, protect and promote the rights and best interests of the child.

**4.3** Institutions may be constituted separately or may form part of an independent national or regional human rights institution. In all cases they must meet the above criteria.

#### **Article 5: Applications for membership**

**5.1** Requests for membership are addressed to the Bureau of ENOC and considered by the membership application working group, which makes a recommendation to the Bureau. Applications will be considered for both full and associate membership. Where the criteria in article 4 are not met, the institution may be considered for associate membership if it demonstrates it is actively seeking to meet these criteria.

**5.2** Applications should contain the law establishing the institution and other information relevant to the criteria set out in article 4. The membership application working group reviews all applications, requests additional information if necessary and makes a recommendation to the Bureau. The Bureau considers this recommendation and, if it determines that the application meets the criteria for either full or associate membership, circulates a recommendation to all full members, made on the basis of the criteria in article 4. Any full member may request that the recommendation be referred to the General Assembly for further discussion. If there are no such requests, the Bureau will inform the applicant institution either that it is accepted as a full member or, where it is considered not to meet the criteria in article 4, may invite it to become an associate member. If an institution is informed that it does not meet the criteria for full membership, and/or is not invited to become an associate member of the Network, it may appeal in writing to the General Assembly.

**5.3** The membership status of those accepted as associate members will be reviewed by the Bureau every three years.

#### **Article 6: Membership fees**

**6.1** All full and associate members are expected to contribute to the Network’s resources by paying annual membership fees. Members who join the Network between January and June pay the full annual fee and those who become members between July and December pay half the annual fee. The Secretariat will invoice members for these fees once per year at the beginning of the financial year.

**6.2** A working group on membership fees will be established every four years. The working group will review and propose annual membership fees to the General Assembly and, once agreed upon by the General Assembly, subsequent membership fee invoices issued by the Secretariat will reflect the decision of the General Assembly.

**6.3** If a member cannot pay its membership fees they may be waived in part or in full, at the discretion of the Bureau and where the Bureau is satisfied that the member cannot pay the amount in

full for that year due to reasons beyond its control. A membership fee waiver will apply for a period of one year, but a member must inform ENOC of any improvement of its ability to pay the membership fee within that year. A member can apply for a maximum of two consecutive waivers.

**6.4** Any full or associate member who wishes to apply for a waiver is expected to submit a copy of their agreed budget for the year ahead, and cover letter or email to the Bureau at least 90 days in advance of the ENOC financial year, which runs from January to December. The Bureau will discuss a possible waiver and communicate its decision to the member by email.

**6.5** At the request of a member the ENOC Bureau will provide supporting documentation addressed to the funding body of the member to reiterate the importance of ENOC membership to the work of ICRI, the obligation set out in the Paris Principles and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment no. 2 for the state to provide funding for ICRI, and risk of dismissal for non-payment of fees.

### **Article 7: Rights and responsibilities of full members**

**7.1** All full members have equal status within ENOC. All have the right to fully participate in the work and decision-making of the Network.

**7.2** All full members have the right to submit a proposal or a request related to the work of ENOC to the General Assembly and/or the Bureau.

**7.3** All full members have the right to present themselves as a candidate for the position of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer of ENOC or ordinary Bureau members or to propose another full member as a candidate for these positions.

**7.4** All full members of ENOC are expected to attend the annual meeting of the General Assembly.

**7.5** All full members undertake to submit an update on their activities for the annual meeting of the General Assembly and to provide updated information as necessary for ENOC's website.

**7.6** Full members are expected to promote ENOC and its aims in all appropriate activities. They may only represent ENOC with the prior agreement of the Bureau.

**7.7** Full members are required to inform the Bureau immediately of any changes in the legislation establishing the institution or other developments that may affect their fulfilment of the criteria for full membership as set out in Article 4.

### **Article 8: Associate members**

**8.1** Associate members should be supported by the Network and the Bureau to work towards becoming full members through guidance and capacity-building efforts. There should be a review of associate members' status every 3 years to review progress made and assess whether associate members can become full members. There is no time limit on associate member status and members can remain associate members so long as they continue to protect and promote the rights of the child and meet the criteria under article 4.

**8.2** Associate members may attend and participate in ENOC meetings and ENOC activities and information-sharing. At the discretion of the Bureau, certain meetings, parts of meetings or other ENOC activities may be open only to full members.

**8.3** Associate members are invited to submit an update on their activities for the annual general meeting of the General Assembly and to provide updated information as necessary for ENOC's website.

**8.4** Associate members are expected to promote ENOC and its aims in all appropriate activities. They may only represent ENOC with the prior agreement of the Bureau.

### **Article 9: Resignation and dismissal**

**9.1** A full or associate member of ENOC can resign at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the Bureau.

**9.2** The Bureau may recommend to the General Assembly that a full member be reclassified as

an associate member if the institution no longer meets the criteria for full membership set out in article 4. The General Assembly shall vote on this as its next annual general meeting.

### 9.3 The Bureau may suspend:

- a full or associate member if the institution has brought ENOC into disrepute meaning any attitude, statement or similar in contravention of the rights and principles of the UNCRC or the spirit and objectives of the Network, or the institute has violated ENOC's child protection policy;
- a full or associate member if the institution has not attended three consecutive annual meetings;
- a full or associate member if the institution has not paid fees for 2 consecutive years without a formal waiver.

9.4 Any suspension by the Bureau must be justified and communicated to the member concerned. The member concerned must be given one month from receipt of communication to respond to the decision and can request a meeting with the Bureau to discuss further.

9.5 All suspensions must be confirmed by the General Assembly. Where the suspension occurs within three months of the next annual general meeting, the decision will be taken at that point. If not, an online extraordinary general meeting of the General Assembly shall be called. Prior to the vote, the Bureau and the member will have the opportunity to be heard. Otherwise, the suspension will be considered void. This suspension is renewable for one year.

9.6 The Bureau may also propose, by reasoned opinion, the dismissal of a member from the Network. A proposal to dismiss a member will be a matter of last resort and according to criteria of proportionality. This proposal must be justified and communicated to the member concerned and to the General Assembly in writing. The removal of a member is the General Assembly's responsibility, which decides on the basis of the Bureau's report and any written reply received from the member.

Where the proposal for dismissal occurs within three months of the next annual general meeting, the decision will be taken at that point. If not, an online extraordinary general meeting of the general assembly shall be called. Prior to the vote, the Bureau will present its proposal and the member will have the right to be heard by the General Assembly. The decision, which is final, is brought to the attention of the member concerned.

9.7 Following dismissal, a member cannot reapply for membership immediately and must wait a minimum of one year before reapplying, and demonstrate change in circumstances as part of the application.

9.8 In case of dismissal, the Bureau will inform the national authority concerned of the General Assembly's decision in writing.

9.9 In case of resignation, suspension or dismissal, the membership fees are calculated pro rata and refunded to the institution concerned.

## Article 10: Resources

To carry out its activities and finance its operations, ENOC is authorised to draw on the following resources:

- Membership fees;
- Grants, donations or other contributions from governmental, intergovernmental or other bona fide, rights-based transparent philanthropic bodies, in line with ENOC's aims and objectives. This is subject to approval by the Bureau, which will assess whether the body concerned meets the appropriate criteria, after consultation with the General Assembly.

## Article 11: General Assembly

11.1 The General Assembly consists of all full members and is the highest authority of ENOC.

11.2 The General Assembly holds an annual general meeting. During the annual general meeting,

the General Assembly approves the accounts and budget of the association. The General Assembly can decide to establish temporary working groups on specific Network issues.

**11.3** Upon request of two-thirds or more of the full members, an additional extraordinary general meeting of the General Assembly may be called.

**11.4** At its meetings, the General Assembly follows a decision-making process based on the principle of consensus. No decisions shall be made at a meeting of the General Assembly unless a quorum is present. The quorum is two-thirds of the full members of ENOC. In instances when it is not possible to reach a consensus, a vote can be held, requiring a two-thirds majority of those full members present and voting.

**11.5** Voting is conducted in a transparent manner. All members cast their vote simultaneously. Votes will be recorded and available for scrutiny afterwards.

**11.6** A secret vote may be requested by the Chair or at least five voting members represented at the meeting. As regards decisions concerning policy statements to be issued by ENOC, dissenting members may always register a reservation.

**11.7** The ENOC Statutes can be amended by decision of an annual general meeting or extraordinary general meeting of the General Assembly on the proposal of any full member.

**11.8** If an extraordinary general meeting of the General Assembly decides to dissolve the Network, any remaining assets of ENOC shall be transferred to a not-for-profit children's rights organisation to be determined by the meeting.

## **Article 12: Bureau of ENOC**

**12.1** ENOC is managed by a seven-person Bureau, consisting, as noted in article 3.3, of the current and past Chairperson, the Chairperson-elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer of the Network and two ordinary members. Whenever the current Chair is unable to carry out his/her function, for whatever

reason, the Chairperson-elect will take over the function of chairperson.

**12.2** The Chairperson-elect, Secretary and Treasurer of ENOC and two ordinary members are elected by the General Assembly during its annual general meeting. The application process for Bureau membership is opened via official notification from the Secretariat three months prior to the Annual General Meeting.

**12.3** The quorum of the ENOC Bureau is four. In instances where it is not possible to reach a consensus, a vote can be held, requiring a simple majority of those members present.

**12.4** The Chairperson-elect is elected for a three-year period in total. The elected individual begins his/her functions upon election. The Chairperson-elect then becomes Chair in their second year at the beginning of the following annual General Assembly meeting, and becomes the former Chair at the beginning of the next annual General Assembly. The Secretary, Treasurer and ordinary members are elected for a one-year term and may be re-elected for a maximum of two further consecutive terms (three years in all). They take up their post immediately following election. Where a member of the Bureau is unable for whatever reason to carry out his/her functions, the Bureau may fill the post until the next annual meeting with a former member of the Bureau.

**12.5** Under the leadership of the Chairperson, the Bureau is collectively responsible for:

**12.5.1** co-ordinating the Network and keeping full and associate members informed of its work,

**12.5.2** Ensuring relations with other relevant bodies and organisations in the field of children's rights on the international level,

**12.5.3** Organizing the annual meeting of the General Assembly,

**12.5.4** Reviewing and making recommendations to the General Assembly on applications for membership,

**12.5.5** Developing strategies to further strengthen ENOC and increase its visibility,

**12.5.6** Overseeing the administration of any funds or assets of the Network,

**12.5.7** Carrying out any other mandate given by the General Assembly,

**12.5.8** The representation of ENOC in cases before the court as either plaintiff or defendant.

### Article 13: Secretariat

**13.1** The Secretariat is appointed by the Bureau based on criteria set by the General Assembly. The Secretariat is guided by the Bureau.

**13.2** Its functions include the following:

**13.2.1** facilitating the networking activities of ENOC's full and associate members;

**13.2.2** assuring the availability of information about ENOC and ENOC member institutions, including the maintenance of the ENOC website;

**13.2.3** daily management of the financial operations of ENOC, including the preparation of regular statements of accounts for the Bureau and annual accounts for the General Assembly, as well as arranging for independent auditing of accounts;

**13.2.4** supporting the organisation of the annual general meeting and any extraordinary general meetings and preparing reports on them; and

**13.2.5** maintaining a register of decisions of the General Assembly and the Bureau.

### Article 14: Child protection policy

All members must comply with the ENOC child protection policy. This is referenced in Annex B.

### Article 15: Approval of Statutes

These Statutes were approved by an extraordinary founding general meeting of the General Assembly held for this purpose in Dublin, Ireland on May 5, 2006. The Statutes have been subject to amendments by the General Assembly held in Warsaw, Poland on September 15, 2011, in Nicosia, Cyprus on October 12, 2012, and on November 18, 2020 at the annual general meeting held online and hosted in Edinburgh.

### Article 16: Applicable law

These statutes were drafted according to the Alsatian law on associations – Code Civil Local, art. 21-97 III – which will serve as the reference for any matters not explicitly mentioned in these statutes.

# ANNEX A

## ENOC's Standards for independent children's rights institutions

These Standards are aspirational; not all ENOC member-institutions meet all of the Standards. But its members agree that parliaments and governments should be encouraged to review the status of existing institutions in the light of the Standards and to ensure that the design of new institutions conforms with the Standards and with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

ENOC believes that in order to be effective in monitoring, promoting and protecting the human rights of children, a human rights institution must conform with the Paris Principles, the UNCRC and the European Convention on Human Rights. The full text of the Principles is reproduced below. The following is an unofficial summary of the key implications of the Principles, relating them, where appropriate, to children's human rights in particular:

### Competence and responsibilities

An independent institution set up to monitor, promote and protect the human rights of children must:

- be established by legislation;
- have as broad a mandate as possible in relation to the monitoring, promotion and protection of children's human rights, based on the UNCRC;
- have the right to provide and to publicise opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports on its own initiative or at the request of other authorities on any matter concerned with the promotion and protection of children's human rights, including:
  - o legislative or administrative provisions and provisions relating to judicial organisation, intended to preserve and extend the protection of human rights. The institution will consider legislation, etc., in force and proposed and when necessary recommend adoption of new legislation, etc., or amendment;
- any violation of children's human rights which it decides to take up; o preparation of reports on human rights in general, or on more specific matters; o drawing the attention of the Government/Parliament to violations, making proposals for remedies and when necessary commenting on the position and reaction of Government/Parliament.
- promote and ensure harmonisation of national legislation with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and all other international human rights instruments

relevant to children's rights to which the state is a party, and

- promote their effective implementation;
- encourage ratification of or accession to any such instruments;
- contribute independently to the monitoring and reporting process under the UNCRC and other relevant instruments;
- co-operate with the United Nations and with UN and other agencies, regional institutions and national institutions of other states competent in the promotion and protection of children's rights;
- assist in formulating and executing programmes for the teaching of and research into human rights;
- publicise human rights and efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, in particular racial discrimination, by increasing public awareness, through information, education and making use of the media.

### Composition, independence

The institution must have adequate funding to enable it to have its own staff and premises in order to be independent of Government. It must not be subject to financial control which might affect its independence.

A photograph of children walking away from the camera in a school hallway. They are wearing white shirts and dark pants, and carrying colorful backpacks. The image is overlaid with a teal gradient. A white speech bubble with a drop shadow is positioned in the upper right, containing text. The children in the foreground are holding hands, suggesting a line or a group activity.

children said:  
“ I miss talking  
with my  
classmates! ”

Arrangements for appointment of ombudspersons, commissioners and members of a commission must be established by an official act, setting out the duration of the mandate and any arrangements for renewal. The composition and methods of appointment of the institution must be appropriate to enable effective cooperation with, for example, appropriate non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional organisations, universities, Parliament and Government departments.

### Methods of operation

The institution must be able to:

- freely consider any questions falling within its competence, whether submitted by Government or taken up on its own initiative;
- hear any person and obtain any information and any documents necessary for assessing situations falling within its competence;
- speak freely to the public, directly or through any media;
- meet regularly and whenever necessary in the presence of all its members duly convened;
- establish working groups and set up local or regional sections to assist it in discharging its functions;
- maintain relationships with other bodies responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights including with a broad range of non-governmental organisations.

### Hearing and considering complaints

Some institutions will be authorised to hear and consider complaints from individuals or groups. If this is the case, additional principles are proposed to base such functions on. Without prejudice to the other principles, the institution may:

- seek an amicable settlement through conciliation, or through binding decision within limits prescribed by law; or, where necessary, on the basis of confidentiality;
- inform the complainant of his rights and of

available remedies and promote access to them;

- hear complaints or transmit them to any other competent authority within the limits prescribed by the law;
- make recommendations, in particular for changes in law, regulations and administrative practice which might have remedied the situation complained of.

### Designing human rights institutions for children

In addition to conforming, as above, with the Paris Principles, ENOC believes that the design and development of the institution must take full account of the special status of children and the particular difficulties for children in exercising their rights.

The legislation establishing the institution must be linked explicitly to promoting implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - thus covering children's economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. Conformity with the Paris Principles requires the institution to consider all other relevant human rights instruments which the state has ratified or acceded to.

The legislation must include provisions setting out specific functions, powers and duties relating to children and their rights, linked to the Convention. "Children" should be defined as in Article 1 of the CRC. For example:

- duties to pay particular regard to the views of children, to take active steps to maintain direct contact with children, organisations of children and organisations established to promote children's rights; and to promote respect for the views of children throughout society;
- the institution must be readily accessible to children and able to respond to any individual communications from children.
- powers to have regard to the situation of children in the family, in schools and in all other institutions;
- powers to consider the promotion and protection of children's rights in relation not only to government but also to private bodies;

- the right to have access to children in all forms of alternative care and all institutions which include children;
- the right to report freely and separately on the state of children's human rights.

The institution must review whether children have access to advice and advocacy and complaints procedures and services, and make appropriate recommendations. The institution must seek to ensure that children and adults are aware of the principles and provisions of the CRC.

The institution must include or consist of an identifiable person or persons concerned exclusively with the promotion of children's human rights – a Children's

Ombudsman, Children's Rights Commissioner or Children's Rights Commission. This should be a person/people who can bring status and public and political respect to the office. They should have a high public profile and so enhance the status and visibility of children. The institution will need to ensure awareness of its existence and mandate amongst children, using appropriate channels including for example schools, other institutions which accommodate children, youth organisations and media used by children.

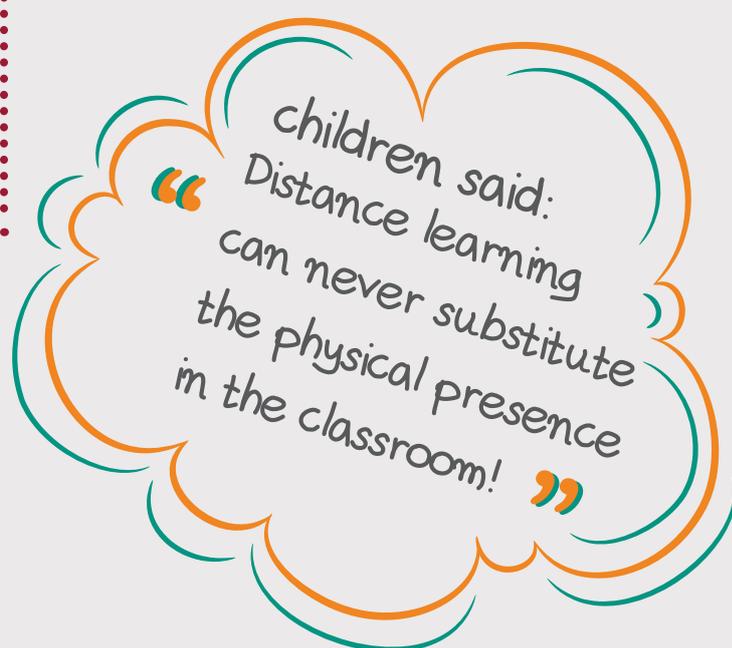
The institution needs to have appropriate, multi-disciplinary staffing dedicated to the promotion and protection of children's human rights and a ring-fenced minimum budget to enable it to work effectively. A transparent procedure for appointments should be established, for example including advertising the appointment publicly and/or establishing an appointments committee including, e.g., children, children's NGOs, governmental representatives, etc.

### **Responding to complaints from children and their representatives**

If an institution includes in its mandate considering and responding to complaints from children it will need to take account of the particular difficulties for children in making complaints. Complaints procedures designed with adult complainants in mind are most unlikely to be used significantly by children. The institution will need to ensure, for example:

- that its mandate and powers are well and appropriately publicised to children and their representatives throughout the jurisdiction in a form and language they can understand, with special attention to very young children, disabled children, children in difficult circumstances and in all institutions;
- that children have free and easy access to the institution, for example through free telephone lines, e-mail access and local offices;
- that it is able to give advice and refer children to appropriate bodies;
- that there are clear confidentiality policies, explained to children and others before they use the institution's services.

Children themselves should be involved in the design and review of complaints procedures and advice and advocacy systems.







children said:  
It was good  
to be with  
my family,  
but I missed  
my social life!

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## ANNEX B

**ENOC's Child Protection Policy can be found here:**

<http://enoc.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/Child-protection-policy-FV.pdf>

**Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles) :**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/statusofnationalinstitutions.aspx>

**United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment no. 2 (2002)  
on the role of independent national human rights institutions  
in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child:**

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fGC%2f2002%2f2  
&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fGC%2f2002%2f2&Lang=en)