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Upcoming Events

Save the dates !

14 December 2021:

Parliamentarians for Children: Taking stock of collaboration, progress & new opportunities to promote & protect children and youth (UNICEF ECARO)

15 December 2021:

Internal session on presenting the outcomes of the ENOC/UNICEF project on multi-country impact assessment of COVID-19 states measures on children's rights to protection

Newsletter

September – November 2021

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ENOC 25th Annual Conference COVID-19 & Children's Rights: Learning for the Future

The **ENOC 25th Annual Conference "COVID-19 & Children's Rights: Learning for the Future"** took place in a hybrid format online and in Athens on **27-28 September 2021**. The 25th ENOC General Assembly consisting of the election of the new ENOC Bureau was held directly after, on 29 September 2021. The hybrid event brought together 168 participants, 123



online and 45 in-person in Athens, thus including 81 participants from ENOC member institutions, 37 young people and their coordinators involved in the European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA) project, observer Ombudspersons for children from Europe and worldwide, observer non-governmental organisations operating in the children's rights field, representatives of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe, and international experts.

The conference was an extremely valuable experience bringing together these essential attendees to engage in important dialogues which took a deep dive into the pandemic crisis including topics such as mental health, physical health and education. The full conference report can be found [here](#). During the 25th ENOC General Assembly, ENOC members shared their developments of the past year and voted on and endorsed two statements: one on [children on the move and pushbacks](#) and one on [Covid-19 and Children's Rights](#). ENYA played an essential role in this year's conference with meaningful and thorough presentations of their recommendations regarding many fields of children's rights such as health, education, poverty, violence, participation and the digital environment. ENYA's full report of recommendations can be found [here](#). Other presentations, videos and addresses from the conference are available [here](#).

Fundamental Rights Forum 2021

Several ENYA Young Advisors and **ENOC Chair, Theoni Koufonikolakou** participated in the **Fundamental Rights Forum 2021** on 11-12 October in Vienna. Young Advisors Leonardo, Ally, Ángela, Penelope, Nikola, Flavio, Angelo, and Ellie joined. Several were in person while others joined the panel discussion remotely, representing 5 ENOC members (Albania, Catalonia, Greece, Malta, Italy, Scotland, Slovakia, and Northern Ireland). The discussion, moderated by Theoni, provided an opportunity for participating young people to share their experiences of involvement in the ENYA 2021 project, present their recommendations, and advocate for the children's participation in decision making. The Young Advisors shared their perspectives on the mental health crisis created by the pandemic and the digital environment, the rise of violence and poverty due to COVID-19 restriction measures, unequal access to quality education, physical health and how these issues should be addressed in their schools, communities and home countries. A recording of this event can be found [here](#).

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and Alternative Care

Past ENOC Chair, Bruce Adamson, presented at the Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and Alternative Care on 16 September 2021. His address focused on 'Access to Justice and accountability for children and young people in alternative care, their families and adults

who grew up in care'. Bruce highlighted accountability by stressing the fact that action now is needed more than ever. Especially given the Covid-19 pandemic, he stated that delivering change and justice is necessary during this extremely difficult time for children living in alternative care. He discussed current developments taking place in Scotland, across Europe and in ENOC which are fighting for these changes. His full presentation can be found [here](#).

World Congress on Justice With Children

ENOC Chair, Theoni Koufonikolakou represented ENOC at the **2021 World Congress on Justice With Children** on 15 November during a panel on Equal access to justice and discrimination due to migration background. She described the mistreatments of children on the move and how these reports and accounts show young asylum seekers desperately must be advocated for. She discussed illegal pushbacks and how children are obstructed which is occurring around Europe. She also mentioned how to address this issue including increasing children's participation and respecting their perspectives, the need to prioritize and invest more in children's rights in Europe and exposing the strain that the crisis has put on specific countries and that all countries should equally distribute the responsibility to ensure children have access to their right to protection. Learn more about the program and initiative [here](#).

ENOC endorsed Child Rights Connect's Position Paper

Child Rights Connect calls for the UN to take further action on child rights mainstreaming. Their [position paper](#) underlines that the demographic of children is the only group who has a specific human rights treaty but remains without a dedicated UN strategy to address their rights which leaves many children's rights neglected, underdeveloped or violated. ENOC endorsed this statement to contribute towards raising awareness about this issue and urged the UN and member States to advance children's rights as laid out in the UNCRC. Learn more about ENOC's endorsement letter [here](#). Four weeks later, Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination, Mr. Volker Turk responded to Child Rights Connect in a letter expressing agreement with identified gaps and informed about a new development of a "Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming". Read more about the response [here](#).

CDENF Webinar on COVID-19 & Intrafamily Violence

On 22 November, the CDENF held a webinar series including a discussion on the impact of COVID-19 related measures on intrafamily violence. ENOC Chair, Theoni Koufonikolakou, presented ENOC's 2021 research findings regarding the increase of intrafamily violence which occurred during the pandemic as well as the shortcomings and inefficiencies of the related support services. She also listed some of the ENOC recommendations on the matter especially those re of specific reforms for long term solutions and strategies. Read more [here](#).

○ Update on European and International activities in the Children's Rights field

UNCRC Ruling on Climate Change

On 11 October 2021, the UNCRC passed a monumental ruling finding that a State party can be made accountable for the effects of their

carbon emissions on the rights of children both in and outside of that country. 16 children from 12 different countries filed a petition against Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany and Turkey in 2019. The children argued that these five high carbon emitting countries neglected essential protective measures to safeguard children's rights to life, health, and culture. The petition overall argues that the devastating effects of climate change are not only real, but the damage to the environment is collective, yet every State must uphold their individual responsibility especially because these effects threaten the wellbeing of children to most, mentally and physically. More details of this historic ruling are found [here](#).

Publications

The State of the World's Children 2021

UNICEF's State of World's Children 2021 focused on children's mental health. It details the harrowing effects the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictive measures have had on children. Not only have children been confined to the home, but the report highlights how much the economic factors of the pandemic have created a more difficult situation for vulnerable children living in poverty. The report provides statistics of the number of children and adolescents battling mental health conditions. It presents further research and insight into the types of issues young people face and what is most common for each demographic based on gender, age etc. Most of all, the publication exposes the number of children with these realities which go untreated. UNICEF explains the complexities to address this gap, but nonetheless stays persistent in explaining the incredible importance of supporting children's mental health as well as lists recommendations. Find the report [here](#).

Council of Europe: The European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

18 November 2021 is **End Child Sexual Abuse Day** and the Council of Europe published two leaflets on this matter. The documents provide a summary of why this issue needs urgent attention, the complexities of stopping sexual abuse against children and what initiatives the Council of Europe has enacted and plan to implement to combat sexual abuse against children. The Council of Europe recognizes and discusses the implications lockdown measures during the Covid-19 pandemic has had on these occurrences. Therefore, the Council of Europe calls for all policy makers, non-governmental sectors, professionals and parents to raise awareness on this European Day and helps prevent these crimes. With direct education and awareness through schools and communities, persecutors can be punished and victims protected more efficiently. Read the leaflets [here](#) and [here](#) or learn more on the [website](#).

The Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) approved the next Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) during its Plenary session on 15 October. Next, there will be a submission to the Committee of Ministers for adoption at the beginning of 2022. This Strategy will further implement and mainstream children's rights into Council of Europe committees and encourages member States to do the same. Read more [here](#).

EU Council veto on the new EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child regarding LGBTIQ+ Youth

On October 7th, two EU member countries vetoed the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child** due to a section which mentions LGBTIQ+ children as especially vulnerable. The Council meeting report is found [here](#). The justification came from a stance that the Strategy puts LGBTIQ+ activists' goals above the needs of children. The future of the Strategy for now is unclear, and many reactions and speculations of next steps ongoing. The European Parliament Child Rights Intergroup, among many other entities and stakeholders, issued a special [statement](#) on the matter.

UNICEF report on Climate Crisis, a Children's Rights Crisis

In August, UNICEF released a report on the climate crisis integrating a new Index: Children's Climate Risk Index. This measure uses data to quantify the number of children living with the hazards created by the climate crisis effectively understanding that children are uniquely vulnerable in the global climate change crisis. The Index accounts for children who are exposed to stresses, shocks and environmental dangers as well as encompasses the vulnerability of child groups. The objective of this new tool is to provide an outlook on the damages the climate crisis has and will have on development and increasing inequality impacting children. Learn more and find the full report [here](#).

o Update on ENOC members' activities

Guide from Sweden: The Rights of Children and Young People on Digital Platforms

As mentioned by the Swedish Ombudsperson during the 25th ENOC Conference, this is the [link](#) to the report, **The rights of Children and Young People on Digital Platforms**. The report details the reality of the online world in that children's rights must be safeguarded regarding dangerous influences, the complexities of regulating the digital environment, personal data and privacy, age control, profiling and other important related topics.

Scotland Webinar on COP26 and Guide to Children's Rights at Protests

On 4 November, The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland hosted an interactive webinar with Child Rights International Network and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to discuss the **COP26 Summit**. **Bruce Adamson** was joined by experts and Young Advisors. The event focused on children's rights, justice and how young people can and should be involved in decision making due to the climate crisis directly violating children's right to health and development. See more [here](#).

A new comprehensive guide **Your Human Rights at Protests** describes, in child-accessible language, the reality of protests beyond the importance of speaking up for beliefs. It details children's rights to safety and privacy as well as what to expect in cases of violence or arrest. See the full guide [here](#).

New Report on Coronavirus and Children's Commissioner for Wales

A new report 'Coronavirus and Us' details the actions the **Children's Commissioner for Wales** has taken since March 2020 to combat the effects of the pandemic on children's rights. It discusses accountability, surveys and perspectives of children's experiences during the pandemic, how the Commissioner addressed the problems and what government measures were enacted. Find the report [here](#).

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