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ENOC NEWS

ENOC 2023 Synthesis Report on Independent Children's Rights Institutions (ICRIs)

The publication of the ENOC 2023 Synthesis Report sheds light on the **critical role of Independent Children's Rights Institutions (ICRIs)** in upholding children's rights, as recognized by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The report emphasizes the shared objective of ICRIs to protect and promote children's rights across diverse national contexts, highlighting the need for adequate powers and operational capacity, enhanced visibility, accessibility, and engagement with children.

Click here to access the ENOC thematic page on ICRIs



ICRIs must possess certain key characteristics to effectively monitor, promote, and protect children's rights. These include autonomy from the government, a legislative mandate ideally constitutionally protected, and adherence to consultative, inclusive, and transparent establishment processes. Additionally, ICRIs should operate in accordance with the general principles of the CRC, ensuring children's rights are respected without discrimination, their voice is sought and given due weight, and their best interests are taken as a primary consideration.

ICRIs should

- Be accessible to all children
- Be empowered to submit recommendations to relevant authorities
- Support children in legal cases
- Investigate individual complaints
- Report independently on the state of children's rights to the public and Parliament, and internationally
- Collaborate with national and international bodies

ENOC Bureau Statement on Human Rights Violations against children in the Gaza Strip

The ENOC Bureau expressed concerns on the gravity of the human rights crisis affecting children in the Gaza Strip, emphasizing the unprecedented scale of violations. The conflict in Gaza left no child untouched, causing widespread distress, trauma, displacement, and deprivation of basic necessities. The ENOC Bureau condemned any targeted attacks on civilians, children, or first response facilities, as such actions violate international humanitarian law and the UNCRC. As independent advocates for children's rights, the ENOC Bureau also called on the international community to use all available means to halt and prevent further violations, ensuring the protection and well-being of all children in the Gaza Strip. It called on all parties involved in the conflict to respect and ensure respect of international humanitarian law, particularly in safeguarding the rights of children in conflict zones.

The ENOC Bureau joined the [UN Committee on the Rights of Children's call for a humanitarian ceasefire and unhindered delivery of food and aid](#). It underlined that while famine is looming in North Gaza and across other parts, children pay, again, the highest toll with their lives and health irreversibly affected.



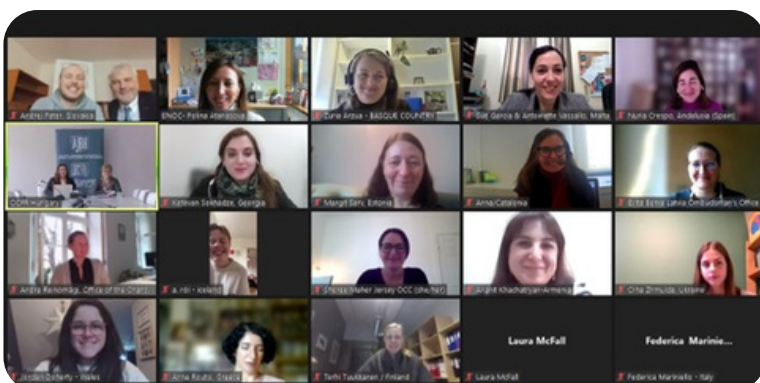
Click here to access the statement



ENOC Training Session on Child Participation

On 27 February 2024, ENOC held its annual training session on child participation. This year's edition was dedicated to child participation and child protection practices and challenges when involving children from alternative care. More than 40 participants attended the training, among which the 16 ENYA country Coordinators. The session **provided theoretical and practical tools to safely and meaningfully engage with children in alternative care.**

Next step: the ENYA Forum in Bratislava on 1st and 2nd of July !



**LET'S TALK YOUNG,
LET'S TALK ABOUT THE
PROTECTION AND
PROMOTION OF THE
RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN
ALTERNATIVE CARE**

ENOC Training Seminar
27th February 2024







SAVE THE DATES !



Brussels
4th meeting of the EU Network on Children's Rights

30 April 2024



Tallinn
ENOC Spring Seminar

3-4 June 2024



Bratislava
ENYA Forum

1-2 July 2024



Helsinki
ENOC 28th Annual Conference

18-19 September 2024



Helsinki
ENOC 28th General Assembly

20 September 2024



Democracy and you ! EU Child Participation Platform

Speak up for democracy! The [EU Child Participation Platform](#) provides a safe space for young people to voice their thoughts on European laws and policies that affect them.

Through the 'We Want to Hear from You' democracy survey, young people and children are encouraged to respond and share their perspectives on democratic participation, what they believe works well, desired changes, and their own experiences.

Find the survey in your language [HERE!](#)
Available until April 19th



Mapping Child Protection Systems in the EU

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) mapped the current situation of child protection systems across the EU to support further efforts for improvement.

It gives an **overview of the state of such systems at national level and developments since 2015, and promotes the improvement of integrated child protection systems.**

Find the update [HERE.](#)

Release of ENOC 27th Annual Conference report : The strength of Independent Children’s Rights Institutions : upholding children’s rights in Europe

ENOC released its 2023 Annual Conference report titled "[The Strength of Independent Children’s Rights Institutions: Upholding Children’s Rights in Europe](#)". Held on 19-20 September 2023 in Brussels, Belgium, and hosted by the office of the Children's Rights Commissioner for Flanders, the Conference brought together over 130 participants i.e. Ombudspersons and Commissioners for Children from across Europe, ENYA young people and Coordinators, and other key stakeholders and partners.

The report highlights inspiring discussions by international experts on strategies for ICRI to enhance their influence and impact at the national and international level. From serving as bridges between children’s needs and policy-making to addressing challenges posed by anti-child movements, the report offers valuable insights and recommendations for advancing children's rights in Europe.

EU & INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS FIELD

EU - European Commission proposes to strengthen criminal law rules to fight child sexual abuse

In February 2024, the [European Commission proposed stronger criminal laws to combat child sexual abuse](#), addressing the growing threat of both offline and online abuse, which affected 1.5 million children in the EU in 2022.

The **proposed updates** aim to broaden the definition of offenses, strengthen prosecution, and enhance support for victims and survivors, granting them extended timeframes for reporting, rights to financial compensation, and increased support. **These measures represent a crucial step towards ensuring the safety and protection of children across the EU.**



CoE - Commissioner for Human Rights’ Issue Paper on Human Rights and Gender Identity and Expression

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights released an updated Issue Paper titled "**Human Rights and Gender Identity and Expression**".

The key message it seeks to highlight is that trans people must be able to enjoy their human rights on an equal footing with everyone else. **Issues of concern for trans children and young people are mainstreamed throughout the text, among others, in the sections on legal gender recognition, education, and access to healthcare.**



[Click here to read the report](#)



CoE - First implementation report of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child

In March 2024, the first implementation report on the Council of Europe's efforts to achieve the key objectives outlined in its [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2022-2027\)](#) was published.

This report, covering activities from 2022 to 2023, **outlines progress made in six key areas**: freedom from violence for all children, equal opportunities and social inclusion, access to and safe use of technology, child-friendly justice, and child participation.

While significant progress has been achieved through ongoing engagement with member states, partnerships with other organizations, and consultation with children, challenges remain. However, efforts must be intensified to overcome institutional, financial, and human limitations and ensure continued progress.

Read the first implementation report [HERE](#).



UN - Draft General Comment No. 27 on Children's Rights to Access to Justice and Effective Remedies

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is currently drafting General Comment No. 27 on **children's rights to access to justice and effective remedies**. It highlights that access to justice is crucial for combating inequalities and advancing accountability.

The GC will clarify concepts and terminology, empower child rights-holders, establish efficient complaints mechanisms, and ensure legal aid and the right to be heard for all children. It will stress the need for mobilizing resources at all levels to ensure full access to justice for children.

Read the full concept note [HERE](#).



UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Cancels Upcoming Session

Under unprecedented circumstances, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has announced the cancellation of its May 2024 session due to lack of funds, caused by unpaid dues by some countries. This highlights a broader trend of weakening human rights monitoring within the UN due to budget constraints.

The canceled session would have examined the child rights records of eight countries, including Ecuador, Ethiopia, and Iraq, addressing issues such as violence, attacks on schools, and ill-treatment in detention centers.

This cancellation hampers the committee's ability to make recommendations for change, impacting children's rights globally. Many experts and NGOs have deplored this decision.

Read the UN statement [HERE](#).



New CoE report : Children as defenders of human rights : A Study on CoE Member States

This is the **first ever study of national challenges and responses** regarding the recognition, protection and empowerment of children acting as "child human rights defenders" in CoE Member States.

The study emphasises the need for mechanisms to protect child human rights defenders from harm, and legal provisions that encompass their rights fully.

It offers recommendations for Member States to **strengthen support for child human rights defenders**, including integrating the concept into national legislation, and providing child-friendly information and protection from harm.

Read the report [HERE](#).



UNESCO : Children's and youth literature, a flourishing genre

It's often said that the new generation no longer reads, and that screens have replaced books.

In reality, children's literature is in good shape. Books continue to hold a special place in the hearts of young people, even though youth literature faces ongoing challenges in gaining recognition as a distinct literary genre.

Find UNESCO's latest issue on this subject [HERE](#) !



ENOC New Team Member

Exciting news !

We are delighted to welcome a new team member at the ENOC Secretariat in Strasbourg.

A warm welcome to Clara, our new Assistant Coordinator!



ENOC is co-funded by the European Union's Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. The content of this publication represents only the views of ENOC and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

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If you have any suggestions or if you would like to include any information or upcoming events in our newsletter, please send the details to secretariat@enoc.eu

UPDATE ON ENOC MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

JERSEY – New Children’s Commissioner

On 20 March 2024, Carmel Corrigan took office as the new Children’s Commissioner in Jersey. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Carmel as she took on this important role for the children and young people in Jersey.



Welcome Carmel and the best of luck in your new role!

We are looking forward to working together at ENOC!



BELGIUM (Wallonia) – 2022/2023 Annual Report and Memorandum of the Delegate for Children’s Rights

In November 2023, the Annual Report and Memorandum of the Delegate for Children’s Rights of the French speaking community in Belgium, Solaÿman Laqdim, was published (available [HERE](#)). It covers various themes, including violence against and among children, migration, poverty, mental health, and child participation.



BELGIUM (Flanders) – New annual report of the Supervisory Committee for Youth Institutions (CVTJ)

In March 2024, Supervisory Committee for Youth Institutions established within the Flemish Commissioner for Children's Rights, published its annual 2023 report on the lives of young people in closed-mandate facilities (available [HERE](#)). The report underlines that although there were clear differences in pace between facilities, institutions, and establishments, efforts were made to provide the best possible support for young people and to further adapt their operations to the needs and rights of young people, particularly those in detention.



HUNGARY – 2022 Report on the Activities of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights in Hungary published its annual 2022 report (available [HERE](#)). The report covers a wide range of areas including the state of protection and promotion of children’s rights with regards to reception conditions of Ukrainian children in Hungary, the situation of children with disabilities, and discrimination against Roma children.