

## ENOC NEWS

### Publication of ENOC ad hoc position statement on Child Human Rights Defenders

On 24 April 2023, ENOC published an [ad hoc position statement on recognising and strengthening the protection of Child Human Rights Defenders](#). ENOC recognises the important role of Child Human Rights Defenders (CHRDs) in current society and expresses concerns about their safety due to the intersecting vulnerabilities the group faces as both children and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). The policy statement calls on States, national, regional, European and international authorities, and on all other relevant stakeholders to **recognize** the crucial role and value of CHRDs' public action, **empower** them to claim their rights, and **develop clear and CHRDs-tailored standards and mechanisms**. The recommendations urge relevant actors, including the private sector, the media, and adults in general, to recognise and encourage the public involvement of CHRDs as well as to respect, protect and fulfil the rights they hold both as children and Human Rights Defenders.

### Key recommendations:

- Recognise the critical role played by CHRDs in the protection and promotion of human and children's rights
- Protect CHRDs in the exercise of their rights, ensure access to child-friendly information about their rights, effective support and remedies
- Develop legislation, standards and tools that specifically promote, protect and defend CHRDs as a separate group of HRDs
- At the UN level, systematically include specific recommendations on CHRDs in concluding observations to States parties
- Strengthen the legal status of CHRDs, and support them claim their rights and seek redress for violations

### ENOC'S CONTRIBUTION TO EXTERNAL EVENTS

#### ENOC Chair participation at a CoE event on Artificial Intelligence

The CoE Commissioner for Human Rights held on **30-31 March 2023** in **Amsterdam**, the Netherlands, an exchange of views with NHRIs/ICRIs on the influence of AI on human rights. The ENOC Chair, Salvör Nordal, participated in the event on behalf of ENOC. The Commissioner and the 30 heads and senior representatives of national human rights institutions, equality bodies and

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Ombudsperson institutions of Council of Europe member states discussed their **experiences, challenges and promising practices** with respect to the implementation of the [2019 Recommendation 'Unboxing AI - 10 steps to protect human rights'](#). Participants also underlined the need for more comprehensive and human rights-based approaches to the use of AI and stressed important challenges in terms of transparency and access to information about the use of automated decision-making systems, including in public administrations.



### 2nd meeting of the EU Children's Participation Platform Advisory Board (AB)

On 15 March 2023, the EC held the 2nd meeting of the EU Children's Participation Platform Advisory Board in Brussels, Belgium. During the meeting, a training on child safeguarding and meaningful, inclusive, and safe child participation was provided by Prof. Laura Lundy and Prof. Cath Larkins to the members of the Advisory Board. AB members also learned more about the progress of the EU Children's Participation Platform, found out more about how they can contribute to the Platform and its development, and discussed working methods, including an update on the Rules of Procedure, onboarding of child members of the AB and how to best work with them. **ENOC was represented at the meeting by Suzanne Garcia Imbernon (Commissioner for Children's Office, Malta), ENYA General Coordinator 2023. Suzanne was appointed by the Bureau as a permanent representative of ENOC at the AB for the next two years.**

### EU Network for Children's rights meeting

As a member of the [EU Network for Children's Rights](#), ENOC was invited to participate in the second meeting of the Network, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 16 March 2023. **Caroline Vrijens, ENOC Chair-elect and Flemish Children's Rights Commissioner, and Suzanne Garcia Imbernon (Malta) ENYA General Coordinator 2023, represented ENOC at the meeting.** In the session addressing best practices in the child participation field, **Suzanne was invited to present ENYA (European Network of Young Advisors) – ENOC's child participation project set up in 2010, and in the development of which she was closely involved.** The rest of the meeting was structured around presentations and breakout sessions on the EU Children's participation platform and on the integrated child protection systems initiative, followed by presentations on the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, and a **roundtable discussion on future work of the Network.**

**SAVE THE DATES!**

 **Stockholm**  
**[ENOC Spring Seminar](#)**  
29-30 May 2023

 **Strasbourg**  
38th Lanzarote Committee meeting & capacity building events  
30 May-2 June 2023

 **Malta**  
ENYA Forum  
4-5 July 2023

 **Brussels**  
ENOC Annual Conference  
19-20 September 2023

 **Brussels**  
ENOC General Assembly  
21 September 2023



## Presentation of the Annual Report 2022 and Work Programme 2023 to the Committee on Legal Affairs

On 21 March 2023, **Ewa Kopacz, EP Vice-President and Coordinator on Children's Rights** presented her [Annual Report 2022 and Work Programme 2023](#) to the Committee on Legal Affairs. The main responsibilities under her Mandate:

- Coordination of the EP activities in the field of children's rights;
- International child abduction and other cross-border family disputes;
- Specific issues in the field of children's rights.



## Combating discrimination against Roma through history teaching

Ahead of [International Roma Day](#) on 8 April 2023, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, called on all states to ensure that the [history of Roma](#) is never forgotten, but instead valued and taught to society at large. Different actions can be implemented in this respect, as stressed by the CoE Committee of Ministers in its [Recommendation \(2020\)2](#) on the **inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials**.

## Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) Plenary Meeting

On 28-29 March 2023, **ENOC, represented by the ENOC Chair's Office (Iceland), participated in the 7th Plenary Meeting of the CDENF** held in Reykjavik, Iceland. The ENOC representative, Sigurveig Thorhallsdottir, presented an update on ENOC's current and forthcoming activities and introduced the outcomes of ENOC's 2022 work in the area of Children's Rights and Climate Justice. The Strategic Objectives addressed in the Plenary included: Freedom from violence for all children; Equal opportunities and social inclusion for all children; Access to and safe use of technologies for all children; Child-friendly justice for all children; Giving a voice to every child; and Children's rights in crisis and emergency situations. You can read the abridged report [here](#). A [high-level Conference "Investing in Children, the Key to Prosperity"](#), organised within the framework of the Icelandic Presidency of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers followed on 30 March 2023 in Reykjavik.

# EU & INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS FIELD

## EP - Debate on the violation of international law and human rights of children from Ukraine forcibly deported to or retained in Russia

On 1 March 2023, at the request of the **EP Coordinator on Children's Rights, Ewa Kopacz, the EP Subcommittee on Human Rights organised an exchange of views on the deportation of children to Russia from Ukraine**. The aim of the meeting was to focus attention on the plight of children forcibly deported to Russia from Ukraine and to discuss the significance of such action under international and humanitarian law, in follow up to the recommendations outlined in the [European Parliament Resolution on 15 September 2022](#).

## CoE - Launch of an interdisciplinary outcomes report on the potential implications of the EU's Proposal for a Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse

On 1 February 2023, the [Lanzarote Committee](#) held an exchange of views with the European Commission on the EU's Proposal for a Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse ("[proposed EU Regulation](#)"). As part of this exchange, Dr Mark Leiser and Dr Sabine Witting, legal academics presented a [report](#) on the potential implications of the proposed EU Regulation.

## CoE - Commissioner for Human Rights comment on "conversion therapies" for LGBTI+ people

On 12 February 2023, Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered a **Human Rights' Comment on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (SOGIE) conversion practices**. Highlighting that globally, children and young adults are at far greater risk of being subjected to such conversion practices, the Commissioner joined the [IESOGI](#) in finding that the subjection of a child to SOGIE conversion practices can never be in their best interests (Art. 3 CRC). The Commissioner stressed that SOGIE conversion practices interfere with several human rights, and that, as confirmed by the [UN Committee Against Torture](#) and [SR on torture](#), are **capable of reaching the threshold of ill-treatment, prohibited under Art. 3 ECHR**. You can read the full comment [here](#).

## CoE - Publication of the report on Roundtable with human rights defenders organised by the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

On 23 March 2023, the report "[Human Rights Defenders in the Council of Europe Area in Times of Crises](#)" based on a round-table with HRDs from across Europe held in Dublin in October 2022, was published by the Office of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights. In view of the alarming deterioration of the situation of human rights defenders in Europe, **Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights**, urged member states of the Council of Europe to recommit to and implement, in good faith, human rights standards that recognise their prime responsibility to protect human rights defenders. The report asserts that it is **equally essential that states recognise and publicly acknowledge the crucial contribution HRDs make** to the promotion and protection of groups such as **women, children, LGBTI people, migrants and ethnic minorities** and refrain from misusing criminal proceedings against human rights defenders for providing humanitarian assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

## CoE - Publication of Thematic report of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) on legislation and policies related to begging, with a special focus on children

The thematic report of ADI-ROM focused on the situation of the most vulnerable Roma children occasionally or consistently resorting to begging or forced to beg was published on 1 February 2023. The report **analyses the socio-economic context as opposed to the socio-cultural one** and endeavours to present and analyse the **nexus between begging and trafficking in human beings and the relevant legislation and policies** in the host and partner countries to address the issues. You can find the thematic report [here](#).

## UN - Update from the 52nd Human Rights Council: Annual Day on the Rights of the Child

The 52nd session of the Human Rights Council put forth children's rights and provided a platform for child human rights defenders to express themselves on issues of global importance. On 10 March 2023, the Annual Day of the Rights of the Child took place at the Human Rights Council with a focus on the digital environment. Children, including Mariana (12 years old from Colombia), Nidhi (14 years old from India) and Kidus (17 years old from Ethiopia), stood at the centre of the morning dialogue, making up, for the first time in the history of the Human Rights Council, the majority of the panel. It was also the **first time a High Commissioner for Human Rights had the chance to have a conversation with children in this format. Several Member States and civil society organisations also encouraged child participation by allocating their speaking slot to child representatives.** Child Rights Connect delivered a joint statement with member organisations for the occasion and an overview of the Annual Day can be found in [this article](#).



### UN Committee on the Rights of the Child joint statement calling for the urgent repatriation of children in Northeast Syria

The CRC Committee issued a [joint statement](#) together with the Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights while countering terrorism calling for the **urgent repatriation of children from Northeast Syria** as they enter their fifth year of detention. The experts affirmed that "it is of the **utmost importance that comprehensive rehabilitation programmes are in place when children are repatriated**".



### New Save the Children Report "Safe for Some: Europe's selective welcome to children on the move"

The [report](#) draws on Save the Children's research, interviews with children, and experience across 13 countries in Europe. It highlights how European governments and institutions collaborated and created a system that **prioritised the protection of children fleeing a devastating conflict.** The report also addresses the **systematic violence that other children continue to suffer at certain EU borders**, the pushbacks, and - in general - the shortcomings of national asylum systems that continue to fail children in migration in Europe.



### Updated ECtHR Factsheets:

- [International child abductions](#)
- [Protection of Minors](#)
- [Interim measures](#)



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## UN Committee on the Rights of the Child election of Chair and Vice-Chairs

On 8 May 2023, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child elected its new Chair Ann Skelton (South Africa), and Vice-Chairs:

- Sophie Kiladze, Georgia
- Luis Ernesto Pedernera, Uruguay
- Bragi Guðbrandsson, Iceland
- Rinchen Chopel, Bhutan



European Network of Ombudspersons for Children  
@ENOChildren



Congratulations to the new CRC Committee Chair Ann Skelton @askelton\_CCL & Vice-Chairs on their election!

We look forward to #strengthening our ongoing cooperation with the Committee 🍷

Thank you to the outgoing Chair Mikiko Otani & Vice Chairs for their support to ENOC! 🙏



## UPDATE ON ENOC MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

### ARMENIA - Election of new Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia

On 12 April 2023, Ms. Anahit Manasyan was elected the New Human Rights Defender of Armenia by the RA National Assembly, for a term of six years and started performing her duties on 13 April 2023.

### CATALONIA - Appointment of the new Deputy for the Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents

In April 2023, Ms. Aida C. Rodríguez Giménez was appointed as Deputy for the Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents by Esther Giménez-Salinas i Colomer, the Catalan Ombudswoman.

### ESTONIA - Publication of Annual Report 2021/2022 of the Chancellor of Justice

Estonian Chancellor of Justice Ülle Madise published the summary of her office's activities covering the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. You can read the report [here](#) and download its pdf version from the website.

### NORTHERN IRELAND - Dissemination of Training Module on CRIA

Following ENOC's work/issue of its [Annual Statement 2020 on CRIA](#), NICCYP recently completed development of its [Training Module on Child Rights Impact Assessments](#) – tailored to Northern Ireland - and created its [Children's Rights module](#) as a precursor to CRIAs. The Training Module on CRIAs was disseminated via sessions with the Government Departments and Agencies to **encourage good practice at the outset of developing legislation, policies and strategies relating to children and young people**. Supporting documents like NICCYP CRIA Guidance and CRIA Template for dissemination can be found [here](#). NICCYP has also made available a '[Child Rights Explainer](#)', a short animation providing an overview of adults' role in delivering children's rights.