

Newsletter

Update on ENOC Activities

ENOC Business: bureau meeting & 1st meeting of the ENOC working group on statutes & standards

The ENOC Bureau met on 16 May in Brussels to discuss issues related to the upcoming ENOC Annual Conference next September in Warsaw; the state of play of the ENOC survey on children in institutional care; the re-launch of the ENYA forum, and a possible ENYA meeting; and outstanding applications for membership to ENOC.

The 1st meeting of the ENOC Working Group on the ENOC Statutes & Standards (WGSS) took place on 7 June 2011 in Brussels. Members of the group discussed whether the ENOC statutes and standards need to be revised/updated and if so which provisions would need to be changed. A full set of documents containing the group's suggestions as to possible changes to the two key ENOC documents will be sent to all ENOC members for consideration well in advance of the Warsaw Conference.

Update on European & International activities in the children's rights field

New EU rules on maintenance payments benefiting to children and families

New EU rules have started to apply and will make children across the EU benefit from speedier maintenance payments when families split up. The new rules set up an EU-wide system for facilitating the recovery of maintenance payments, so that absent parents will no longer be able to evade their obligations. The Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner insisted on the fact that "The interests of children must always come first."

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/763&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

EU Conference on missing children in Europe

On 25 May 2011, in order to mark the International Missing Children's Day and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Missing Children Europe, a reception was held at the European Parliament. The day after, a conference on missing children in Europe had been organized by the European Commission together with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and with the support of Missing Children Europe.

During the conference, awareness was raised about the «116 000» hotline which is reserved by the European Commission for missing children. Member state representatives, national operators and experts on the missing children hotlines, child alert mechanisms and child-friendly justice attended the conference, exchanging good practices, and identifying practical tools to help remove the obstacles for the implementation of the hotline in all EU Member States.

http://www.oijj.org/agenda_ficha.php?home=SI&cod=4746&pags=0&idioma=fr



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Upcoming ENOC Annual Conference: deadlines

*All ENOC members & invited observers are kindly reminded to register for the Annual Conference by sending their registration forms to the ENOC Secretariat by **July 15th**.*

*Participating ENOC member institutions are invited to send summaries (long & PPT versions) of their annual updates to the ENOC Secretariat by **August 15th**. Hard copies of the text versions of the updates should be provided and made available at the Conference by the members themselves.*

*Interests for presenting best practices related to the main subject of the conference should be expressed by no later than **August 15th**.*

*Expressions of interest for vacant positions within the ENOC Bureau (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) should be notified to the ENOC Secretariat by no later than **31st of July**.*

New Website on Violence against Children

A new website of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Violence against Children was launched with the aim to promote and disseminate information on the activities and initiatives of the SRSG on violence prevention.

<http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org>

Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The 57th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child ran from 30th May to 17th June 2011. In the course of the 57th session, the Committee has worked on General Comments on health, as well as on articles 3 and 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child help lines are vital in tackling school violence

Plan and Child Helpline International (CHI) published a report showing that no country is immune from violence in schools and that it exists across all cultural and socio-economic regions.

The report shows that violence and abuse in school is the main reason why children contact a child helpline. They are therefore a vital tool to fight against this problem and help the children to be in contact with child protection services.

The report calls on governments to improve children's access to free helplines and to train those in authority on how to prevent and deal with school violence.

<http://plan-international.org/about-plan/resources/publications/campaigns/using-child-helplines-to-protect-children-from-school-violence>

The importance of a high quality early childhood education and care

On 19-20 May 2011, the Council of the European Union reached political agreement on recommendations on promoting the learning mobility of young people and on policies to reduce early school leaving.

There was a public debate where EU Education ministers discussed prevention policies to combat early school leaving aimed at the socio-economically disadvantaged. It was followed by the adoption of the "Conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow" by the Council of the European Union.

In the Conclusions, the Council emphasises on the importance of high quality early childhood education (ECEC) for all children, but particularly for those with a socioeconomically disadvantaged background.

The EU Council asked the Member States to analyse and evaluate existing ECEC and to ensure that measures aimed at providing generalised equitable access to ECEC and at reinforcing its quality are in place.

http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/122118.pdf

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/122123.pdf

Council of Europe report on "Towards a European framework convention on youth rights"

Delegation deputy member Elvira Kovacs, as rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, introduced a report titled "*Towards a European framework convention on youth rights*" before the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on 24 June 2011.

This report reminds that many of the rights to which young people are entitled are covered by existing legislation, but a stronger legal basis allowing for systematic implementation and monitoring is needed to protect them.

It highlights that a European framework convention on youth rights would increase awareness of youth rights across Europe and raise and harmonise implementation standards.

It concludes by asking for a new instrument aiming both to co-ordinate existing texts and fill lacunae with respect to specific areas not sufficiently covered.

http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/DocListingDetails_E.asp?DocID=13462

"Combating violence against children: from isolated actions to integrated strategies"

The question about how to put an end to violence against children has been discussed at the International Conference organized on 24-25 May 2011 in Kyiv, Ukraine, by the Council of Europe and the Ukrainian chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. A number of ENOC member institutions have been invited to contribute to the Conference. Thus, Ombudspersons for Children from Belgium (French community), Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Poland participated in the conference.

Ombudspersons for Children expressed unanimous and strong view on the continuous necessity of working with and involving young people in States' efforts to prevent and tackle violence against and amongst children and young people.

The participants agreed on many points such as the necessity of a sustainable institutional framework for the prevention and protection of children from all forms of violence. They also agreed on the fact that positive and non-violent forms of child-rearing should be at the heart of all children and family-related policies and that effective and child friendly counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms should be developed.

http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/News/Kyiv05-11/InternationalConferenceKyiv_en.asp

High Level Expert Meeting on “Tackling violence in schools”

A high level expert meeting on violence in schools organized by the Council of Europe, the Office of the United Nations’ Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Violence against Children, the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Education and Research, the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held in Oslo (Norway) on 27-28 June 2011.

The high level meeting aimed, among others, to share European data and research in combating violence against children in schools and to define the role that the Council of Europe could further play in addressing violence in schools via its future Children’s Rights Strategy 2012-2015.

ENOC has been represented by a Bureau member, Mr. George Moschos - Deputy Ombudsman for Children’s Rights, Greece- who presented the role of ombudspersons for children in preventing school bullying, and made accent on the constant need to seek children’s views and to involve them in planning & implementing policies and particular anti-bullying measures in schools.

Many themes were covered such as an introduction to the context of violence in schools, methods to prevent all forms of violence in school, collaborative approaches between school and parents and representatives of local communities, and a various range of actions taken by international organizations in the field.

“Zero tolerance is crucial when it comes to any abuse of children.”

In a human rights comment published in May 2011, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights recalled the scandals involving clergy in the sexual abuse of children in several countries. He also insisted on the fact that very often, sexual abuse is perpetrated within the family, by someone close to the victim, on whom the child depends in some way. He explained that women are more often perpetrators than we think.

The Commissioner underlined in his comment that training for professionals working for and with children as well as sex education in school are important tools to fight against this problem.

The Council of Europe has already adopted a treaty on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and has launched a large campaign on this topic. The Commissioner ended his comment by calling for more efforts to encourage victims to break the silence and for a zero tolerance for the perpetrators of such cruel acts.

http://commissioner.cws.coe.int/tiki-view_blog_post.php?postId=137

« Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2010 »

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights published a report about challenges and achievements in 2010 in the fundamental rights area. In the chapter dedicated to the rights of the child, the report recalls the actions taken by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and Member States to fight against violations of children’s rights.

The report first looks at developments regarding violence against children, including sexual abuse and exploitation. The Agency for Fundamental Rights regrets the fact that only little progress was made regarding the lack of data on child trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation at EU and at national level. It highlights the fact that there are differences in legal definitions of offences and non-conformity to the Palermo Protocol for criminalization of trafficking and that this remains an obstacle to systematic data collection.

It subsequently examines issues in relation to child-friendly justice, child trafficking and the situation of separated children in a migration or asylum context. The report recalls that the situation of children in the asylum context is particularly precarious and their protection is therefore of critical importance.

http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/annual-report-2011_EN.pdf

continues

EU Member States agree to tackle child poverty & to promote children’s well-being

Social Affairs’ ministers of all EU member states have agreed on conclusions to fight against child poverty and to promote child well-being.

They invited the European Commission “to consider child poverty and well-being as one of the priorities of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy” but also to ensure that work on child poverty & well-being takes a child-rights approach in line with Treaties, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the UN CRC.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122878.pdf

New Complaints mechanism for children’s rights violations adopted

After two years of discussions and negotiations at international level, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the new Optional Protocol to the UN CRC on a communications procedure for children’s rights violations. The new protocol will enable the Committee on the Rights of the Child to examine communications from children and their representatives alleging violations of their rights.

<http://www.crin.org/ngogroup/infodetail.asp?ID=25233>

Adoption of the first international convention on domestic workers

On 16 June 2011, Governments, Employers and Workers of the world adopted the First Convention and accompanying Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the 100th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Some governments attending the ILO have already indicated their willingness to ratify the Convention.

Children in domestic labour are often victims of exploitation since they have generally no social or legal protection. They have to work long hours with no time off and low wages and suffer harsh working conditions including, for example, having to handle toxic substances.

The Domestic Workers' Convention sets the minimum age of employment and prohibits children in hazardous work. The Convention regulates working hours, leaves including maternity leaves, health insurance, among other decent work standards.

http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/media-centre/press-releases/WCMS_157891/lang-en/index.htm

Update on member institutions' activities

Annual Report unanimously adopted by the National Assembly of Republic of Srpska

The National Assembly of Republic of Srpska has unanimously adopted the Annual Report of the Ombudsman for Children for 2010.

The report highlights the need for new relation towards children, better understanding of requirements and fundamental principles of the UN CRC, greater responsibility of those caring for children and the necessity for constant and effective cooperation of all the subjects of protection.

<http://www.djeca.rs.ba/uploaded/AR%202010..pdf>

Ireland's Ombudsman for Children published its 2010 Annual Report

This report concludes the first six-year period of the Ombudsman for Children's Office. It outlines the role played by the Office since its establishment in 2004 in promoting and monitoring children's rights, providing quality control of public services to children and offering an independent, impartial and free redress mechanism for children and families who are unhappy about how they have been treated.

The report insists on the fact that the Ombudsman for Children's Office has been able to provide alternative dispute resolution to families who may otherwise have been forced to take costly legal action against the State; to identify efficiencies for public bodies and to reduce the distress and hardship caused to children and families.

<http://www.oco.ie/whats-new/media/press-releases/austin-curry-launches-ombudsman-for-childrens-2010-annual-report.html>

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **12 July 2011:** EC Steering Group meeting "Rights of the Child", Brussels
- ❖ **14-16 September 2011:** 15th ENOC Annual Conference & General Assembly meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- ❖ **29-30 September 2011:** 9th Council of Europe Conference of Health Ministers, Lisbon, Portugal

The ENOC website needs your input to continue to grow. Send us information about new web resources, research or data related to Children's Rights.

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@ombudsnet.org (Re: ENOC Newsletter).

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European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

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