



**EUROPEAN NETWORK OF OMBUDSPERSONS FOR CHILDREN'S - ENOC-
ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
STRASBOURG
7-9 OCTOBER 2010**

**Script of the Video-recorded statement
by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on Violence against Children**

Ms. Marta Santos Pais

7 October 2010

1. Welcoming and Introduction

Dear Friends

To you all, I am sending my very warm greetings from New York!

It is with great regret that I am unable to participate in person in your annual meeting.

I know how inspired I feel each time I join hands with you!

I keep excellent memories from my participation in previous ENOC sessions and from the many opportunities I have had to collaborate closely with you – in Europe, in United Nations meetings and in so many parts of the world.

Over the past several years, your **commitment, creative agenda and influential voice in favour of the rights of the child have been a source of inspiration** for my work: during my years as a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, when I was with UNICEF, and at present as Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children. **I feel privileged to collaborate with you all!**

2. Our institutional cooperation is critical

The cooperation with national independent institutions on children's rights is a priority for my work as SRSG on Violence against Children.

Just a few days ago, some of you participated, in Geneva, in the Expert Consultation I have promoted on **Child Sensitive Counseling, Reporting and Complaint Mechanisms on Violence against Children**. As in so many previous occasions, the contribution of the ENOC members was vital.

- Your **independent mandate**, anchored in the **CRC and the Paris Principles**;
- your determination to safeguard **the best interests of the child** at all times;
- your experience as expert institutions, **available and accessible** to all children, including the most disadvantaged,
- listening to their concerns and grievances, **in a safe and confidential manner**;
- and providing an effective remedy for the breaches of their rights;
- are some crucial dimensions of your work;

- **and they are crucial to promote a culture of respect for children's rights** in each country,
- **to break** the conspiracy of silence around violence against children; **and to influence laws, policy and action** aiming at the violence prevention and response.

Ombuds for Children play a critical role in ensuring that children's protection from violence is at the centre of the **public and policy debate**; and also in acting as **spokespersons of children's voices and concerns, as you influence change with their perspectives!**

I am therefore delighted to see that, during your annual meeting,

- **violence against children will figure high** in your agenda;
- and, in addition, you will be promoting **this reflection with members of the European Network of Young Advisors.**

Warm congratulations for this initiative!

3. Child participation is indispensable to achieve change

I firmly believe in the importance of a strong partnership with children and young people.

As you know, **child participation was an essential component of the development of the UN Study on Violence against Children; it constitutes one of its overarching recommendations; and it remains a strategic dimension of the process of follow-up.**

Partnering with children is, therefore, a cornerstone of my agenda as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

In my first year of work, I have been committed to joining hands with young people and I recognize, more than ever, the importance of listening to their views and experiences. They help us:

- gain a better understanding of the **hidden face of violence**
- become **better equipped to prevent** violence,
- **develop child sensitive counseling, recovery and long lasting reintegration strategies,**
- and also better monitor progress and impact from the point of view of those most concerned – children themselves.

Child participation:

- helps to **widen the outreach of advocacy and awareness raising initiatives;**
- it empowers children and provides confidence and trust,
- **And it also helps us all feel pressed by children's impatience and determination.**

I am eager to hear about the results of your reflections with young people and to build upon their recommendations.

4. SRSB Agenda

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to see that you have decided to frame the deliberations of the **ENOC working group on violence against children** by the Council of Europe **Policy Guidelines on Integrated Strategies** for the Protection of Children from Violence.

The Guidelines are an excellent tool which I am strongly committed to helping disseminate and implement in Europe and beyond.

As you know, the Guidelines are anchored in the UN Study on Violence against Children and constitute a key reference for the **development, in each country, of a national agenda for violence prevention and response, and for children's effective protection.**

The Guidelines also promote the development of **strong legislation** to prohibit all forms of violence; and **the consolidation of data and research** to overcome social indifference and invisibility of violence, **and to build a world for children where violence has no place.**

These are core priorities for my mandate and the Guidelines are an essential instrument to move this agenda forward!

For this reason, I remain very interested in

- **hearing** about the outcomes of your discussions,
- **learning** about the good practices and promising experiences you will share, and the emerging concerns you will address.

And I am eager to joining hands with you in the follow up you will promote!

I wish you a very successful meeting and look forward to consolidating further our excellent collaboration.