

Newsletter



2009 Funding & Membership Fees

Dear Colleagues,

While our proposal for 2009 under the European Commission's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme has been successful, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that this funding is **co-financed** (to the extent of 20% of the total grant requested) by the membership fees paid by all of you which amount to €500 (minimum) per annum. Also, **this grant is conditional on the provision of a bank guarantee to the amount of € 47.500** which is set at 50% of the total grant awarded.

Your membership fees are crucial! Without them, we cannot guarantee an efficient functioning of our organisation and especially of the ENOC Secretariat. With this in mind, we ask all our members to kindly proceed to the payment of membership fees, as soon as possible.

ENOC questionnaire on disputed divorces and children

We hope you all received the ENOC questionnaire on "disputed divorces and children" kindly prepared by Peter Newell for the purpose of presenting a preliminary report during the upcoming CRONSEE Conference in Dubrovnik. We will be highly appreciating to receive your contributions no later than **May 8th**.

ENOC involvement in European activities

ENOC members participated at the EU Conference on "Child Friendly Europe" organized by the Czech Presidency in Prague on 6-7 April

The Czech Presidency of the EU brought together on 6-7 April 2009 in Prague social and family ministries' representatives from different EU countries, recognized University Professors and experts, representatives from the Council of Europe, UNICEF and NGOs.

Many ENOC members attended the Conference and participated at the Panel discussions on "Children and media", "Human Rights Education of Children and Protection", and "Positive Parenting: education without violence". The Ombudspersons (or their representatives) for Children of the following ENOC members, Sweden, Scotland, Poland, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia and Hungary participated at the meeting of the ombudspersons for children where they discussed the subject of „The Best Interest of Children“ in European child rights strategies and witnessed experiences from international cooperation in the field of children's rights.

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Liaison person for more effective communication

The ENOC Secretariat needs your constant input and involvement in order to ensure a more efficient communication between the members and the Secretariat/Bureau aiming at a better coordination of the Network.

*Therefore, each ENOC member is kindly invited to nominate (in its office) a **liaison person** (focal point) who will be able to follow and communicate on a regular basis with the Secretariat of ENOC.*

New Chair of the Sub-Group of Access for Children to International Justice

As you may recall from the February Newsletter, Ms. Maria Battle resigned from the Chairmanship of the sub-group following her resignation from the position of Assistant Commissioner for Wales. During the February meeting, the ENOC Bureau decided to approach Ms. Leda Koursoumba, Commissioner for Children's Rights, Cyprus. We would like to thank Ms. Koursoumba for having accepted to take over the chairmanship of the sub-group and we hope you will all extend your efforts to support her in this challenging work.

New Children's Rights Commissioner at the Flemish Community in Belgium

Mr. Bruno Vanobbergen will be succeeding to Ms. Ankie Vandekerckhove as the new Children's Rights Commissioner at the Flemish Community in Belgium. Ms. Vandekerckhove will perform her functions until end of May while Mr. Vanobbergen will take over his position next June.

The contact details of the new Commissioner will be communicated later on.

First meeting of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Child Friendly Justice

The Council of Europe Group of Specialists in charge of producing draft European Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice will held its first out of three (in 2009) meeting on 16-17 April in Strasbourg. The ENOC has been invited to participate at the meeting as an observer. ENOC attendance will be ensured by the ENOC Secretariat.

Launching meeting of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Platform

ENOC has been invited by the Council of Europe "Building a Europe for and with Children" programme to participate at the launching meeting of the Council of Europe Children's Rights platform on 2-3 June in Strasbourg. ENOC will be represented by Mr George Moschos (Greece) who will deliver a presentation in a session addressing "Institutional Framework essential for the protection of children from all forms of violence" and by Ms Marie Anne Rodesch-Hengesch (Luxembourg).

For further details, please follow the hyperlink: [children's rights platform](#)

Update on member institutions' activities



The Greek Ombudsman for Children has set up its first Youth Advisory Panel

The Greek Ombudsman, following the example of other European Ombuds offices, has set up its first Youth Advisory Panel that aims to offer advice on issues within his competence. During its first pilot period of operation, the Panel consists of 15 boys and 15 girls aged 13-17 years old, who were selected with a draw among 420 teenagers from all over Greece, who sent their applications, following an open invitation. Foreign children, children with disabilities and children in care were included in the Panel. Their term will last for one year and it can be renewed after evaluation of their participation. They will meet with the Ombudsman 3-4 times per year and in the meantime they will all communicate via internet or in other ways. An electronic forum has been created so that members of the Panel as well as other youngsters, who had applied to become members of it, can communicate and exchange their news and opinions on matters of common interest.

During the first meeting of the Panel, in Athens, its members became familiar with the functions of the Ombudsman, they were introduced to their role and they decided the thematic issues on which they will be focusing during the year. Their second meeting took place at a SOS Children's Village in Thessaloniki and was followed by an open discussion in which 130 pupils from 60 schools of Northern Greece presented their opinions on "The role of pupils in setting up and implementing school rules".

The event was videotaped and a summary of pupils' proposals along with a 5 minutes video report was published on the Ombudsman website and sent around to schools and educational authorities.

At the end of the year it is expected that the main proposals of the Youth Advisory Panel will be sent by the Ombudsman to the competent Ministries and authorities.



The Irish Ombudsman for Children launches the Separated Children Seeking Asylum (SCSA) Project

The OCO hosted an Open Day Event for separated children seeking asylum on the 16th of April. The office visited the 9 hostels and residential centres in the greater Dublin area that currently provide accommodation to SCSA, and invited all the young people to the office.

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Of the 128 young people currently living in these accommodation centres, 47 young people participated in the day.

It was a great success and was an opportunity to raise awareness about the role and function of the office, as well as to further inform the young people about the OCO action oriented project on SCSA, and to begin the selection process for the projects advisory group.

The project is aimed at:

- facilitating the identification of key issues by separated children;
- together with the children and young people, to explore initiatives aimed at improving those issues;
- developing recommendations for relevant authorities where required.

More complete projects aims and objectives will be developed together with the projects advisory group, but the project will ensure that we get a better sense of what it is like to be a SCSA in Ireland today, and involve these YP in trying to influence change.

Upcoming Events

- ❖ **16-17 April 2009:** 1st meeting of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists (CJ-S-CH) in charge of elaborating the Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice
- ❖ **20-22 April 2009:** "*Children and the European Union: Legal, Research and Political Perspectives*", University of Liverpool, Liverpool.
- ❖ **19-20 May 2009:** "*Children and disputed divorces. Access for children to National, International and European Justice*", South Eastern European Children's Rights Ombudspersons' network (CRONSEE) Annual Conference, Dubrovnik, Croatia.
- ❖ **2-3 June 2009:** launching meeting of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Platform, Strasbourg
- ❖ **16-17 June 2009:** Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Family Affairs on the theme of "*Public policies supporting the wish to have children - societal, economic and personal factors*", Vienna, Austria.
- ❖ **18-19 June 2009:** The 29th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Justice on the theme "*Breaking the silence - united against domestic violence*", Tromsø, Norway

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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