

HIGHLIGHTS



# Fundamental Rights Conference 2010: ensuring justice and protection for all children

Brussels, 7-8 December 2010



**FRA**

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS







# **Fundamental Rights Conference 2010: ensuring justice and protection for all children**

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The Fundamental Rights Conference 2010 was held with the support of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

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# Fundamental Rights Conference (FRC)

The Fundamental Rights Conference (FRC), the **flagship annual event** of the FRA, was launched in 2008 to create an opportunity for policy makers, experts and human rights defenders to focus on key fundamental rights issues. The FRC challenges them to develop innovative approaches and practical proposals that best guarantee the protection and promotion of fundamental rights in the EU. The FRC intends to act as:

- **A forum** to pool knowledge on fundamental rights and to share experience on developing good practices;
- **A catalyst** for developing an evidence-based approach to decision-making and practice;
- **An opportunity** to build strategic partnerships in the field of fundamental rights.





# Executive summary

The Fundamental Rights Conference (FRC), the flagship annual event of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), was devoted in 2010 to **ensuring justice and protection for all children**. Although all European Union (EU) Member States have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), children's rights continue to be violated across the EU, with the rights of certain groups – such as child victims of domestic violence, separated asylum-seeking children, child victims of trafficking and children with intellectual difficulties – under particular threat. The conference therefore focused on promoting and safeguarding children's rights, while respecting the interdependence and indivisibility of those rights. For it is vital that the work of ensuring children's rights be tackled in a comprehensive manner, employing policies and programmes that both react to challenges and promote solutions, thereby creating effective, overarching children's rights policies.

The conference, which was organised in cooperation with the Belgian EU Presidency, brought together over 300 participants. Senior officials and experts from national governments, EU bodies, intergovernmental organisations, local authorities, civil society and specialised human rights bodies engaged in debates on how to further the rights of children at various levels, sharing information on promising practices, projects and research in the field. Young people contributed their views through the 'Children have their say workshop'.

The first day started with a presentation of the messages from the youth workshop and focused on **TAKING STOCK** of challenges. Following the welcome address by the Chairperson of the FRA Management Board, Ilze Brands Kehris, the

keynote speakers Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Morten Kjaerum, Director of the FRA, introduced the main children's rights issues to be discussed during the conference and underscored the commitment of both the EU Commission and the FRA to help solve challenges in these areas. Other major players on the international level, the Council of Europe and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, issued a clear call to action, stressing that legal obligations towards children must be fulfilled. In the working groups, participants contributed to identifying the challenges that vulnerable groups of children face, focusing on child victims of domestic violence; separated, asylum-seeking children; child victims of trafficking; and children with intellectual disabilities.

The second day was dedicated to a **SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS**, starting with Belgian Minister of Justice, Stefaan De Clerck and the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, Hilde F. Johnson, who touched on the need for the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be the starting point for the EU's agenda on the rights of the child and for comprehensive national policies. The ensuing workshops aimed to identify **evidence-based solutions** and strategies to respond to challenges as well as synergies between justice systems and child protection services and more integrated and child-friendly approaches.

The working days were summarised by Lena Karlsson, Director of Save the Children International's Child Protection Initiative, and Ankie Vandekerckhove, former Flemish children's rights Commissioner and consultant for the Council of Europe Guidelines on child-friendly justice, who presented an outlook on further action needed.



# 1

## Fundamental Rights Conference 2010: ensuring justice and protection for all children



The FRC 2010 was devoted to the rights of the child, with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups of children. Conference participants explored avenues for state authorities to better protect the rights of vulnerable children, in part by promoting an integrated and evidence-based approach to enhance the implementation of rights. They examined the benefits of integrated approaches for such children. Special attention was paid to the need for improved coordination between justice and child-protection services.

The FRC 2010 built on EU progress in strengthening the legislative and policy framework to address the challenges faced by vulnerable children and the growing appreciation of the importance of more integrated, system-based approaches to child protection and justice. The Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union together create an historic opportunity to advance the child protection agenda. The duty of the EU to promote the protection of the rights of the child, enshrined in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union, raises to a new level the EU's engagement in this particular aspect of human rights protection. In addition, the Charter, now legally binding, devotes Article 24 specifically to the rights of the child, stating, among other things, that children have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. Article 32 contains an explicit prohibition on child labour and the obligation to protect children from economic exploitation.

The European Council gave substance at the policy level to this legal progress with the adoption of the Stockholm Programme. This programme, which sets forth the guidelines for EU action from 2010 to 2015, has put children, and especially the

most vulnerable among them, at the forefront of the EU's political agenda. It says that children in particularly vulnerable situations should receive special attention, explicitly referring to children who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or trafficking and unaccompanied minors in the context of immigration policy. The programme not only addresses child protection as 'a component' of main EU policy areas, such as migration policy or cooperation in the field of criminal law, but it also creates linkages between children's rights and the fundamental 'global' principles of international human rights and humanitarian protection. Together with the EU Communication on the Rights of the Child, this creates a new framework for common action to ensure that all children in the EU enjoy the protection of their rights.

Based upon its mandate and a request from the European Commission, the FRA has launched work to develop indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the EU. This work provides an initial toolkit to evaluate the impact of EU law and policy on children's status and experience. It highlights the limitations and gaps of current data, and provides a platform for future legal, policy and research development. The indicators are based on a distinctly child-focused approach, anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and are formulated to reflect the existing EU framework. They cover the areas of: family environment and alternative care; protection from exploitation and violence; adequate standard of living; and education, culture, citizenship and participation in activities relating to school and sport. In doing so, they identify as crucial such aspects as the existence of child-sensitive family justice processes, the adaptability of immigration processes to the vulner-

abilities of separated children, and the identification and protection of victims of child trafficking, sexual and economic exploitation and violence.

For its indicator development work, the FRA initially identified and focused on two situations of particular vulnerability: trafficked children; and third country nationals or stateless children separated from both parents or primary carers arriving at EU Member States. The respective FRA reports on *Child trafficking in the EU*<sup>1</sup> and on *Separated, asylum-seeking children in European Union Member States*<sup>2</sup> contain detailed considerations regarding these fields. While pursuing this work, the FRA is also set to focus on Roma children and prepare a survey on violence against women in which childhood experiences will be a specific object of attention.

Against this background, the FRC 2010 focused on **INNOVATION, PRACTICE** and **IMPACT** by:

- **developing innovative proposals** to address challenges faced by vulnerable children in the EU in realising their rights and ensuring that the child's best interests are the primary consideration in relevant judicial and administrative procedures;
- **sharing good practice** on child-friendly approaches applied by state authorities at all levels and learning from innovative practices that contribute to better protection of vulnerable children and coordination of the systems that protect children;
- **strengthening the impact** of policies and strategies related to the rights of the child in the EU by promoting an integrated and evidence-based approach to their implementation.



1 FRA (2009), *Child Trafficking in the European Union, Challenges, perspectives and good practices*.

2 FRA (2010), *Separated, asylum-seeking children in European Union Member States*, November 2010.



# 2

## Conference proceedings: day 1



### 2.1. Opening

A group of children and young people opened the 2010 FRC by presenting conclusions from a two-day 'Children have their say!' workshop, which was co-organised with Eurochild and took place in Brussels from 5 to 7 December 2010.<sup>3</sup> Thirteen adolescents of different characteristics (in terms of gender, nationality, religion, language and culture) and backgrounds with respect to migration, asylum and exclusion, worked together and discussed the main problems they had experienced or witnessed.

They opened the conference with a clear message: "We are here, we have rights, we should be heard and protected, and [...] we are not so different from other children and young people!" Unaccompanied and separated asylum-seeking children and migrant children are all children first, and all states should take their commitments to the rights of the child seriously.

The children's **key messages** were:

- **Governments** should fulfil their responsibility to protect separated children;
- Children **should be listened to and allowed to contribute and participate** in decisions that affect them;
- **Access to education** is important for separated children;



- Detention is **damaging to children**;
- Asking children to repeat the reasons why they have come to Europe and delays in the decision making process concerning their future further **traumatise children**;
- Governments should **take steps** to address racism and cherish cultural diversity;
- **Peer support**, including by children from the local population, is important for separated children;
- **Good guardianship** is important;
- **Return** should only happen when it is absolutely safe to do so and steps should be taken to ensure that a child is protected if reunited with his/her family;
- **Age assessments** should only be undertaken **when there is no alternative** as these too often traumatise children;
- Separated children **should not have to live with adults** who are not responsible for their care.

<sup>3</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/frc10\\_wg\\_children.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/frc10_wg_children.pdf).

## 2.2. Welcome address

In her welcoming speech,<sup>4</sup> the Chairperson of the FRA Management Board, **Ilze Brands Kehris** referred to the children's message and urged everyone – policy makers, experts, young people, NGOs – to join forces and work hand-in-hand to eliminate violence against children and to protect the rights of vulnerable children. While professional knowledge and experience is important, the experience of children and young people should also feed into the work on children's rights. Therefore, the facilitation of child participation is crucial. The international legal framework is in place and this should be to the benefit of all children in the EU.

Ms Kehris also highlighted that the rights of the child do not stand alone but are instead interrelated and need a comprehensive and sustainable approach. Even though this conference is focusing on some specific categories of vulnerable children, all children should enjoy their fundamental rights. She also expressed her hope that the results of the conference would translate into real change for the better.

*"We need to join forces to ensure that we move from paper to practice, to ensure that we make these legal tools work for ALL children in the EU, including the most vulnerable."*

*Ilze Brands Kehris, Chairperson of the FRA Management Board*

## 2.3. Keynote speeches

**Viviane Reding**, Vice-president of the European Commission, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

**"Marking the coming of age of the Charter of Fundamental Rights: ensuring justice and protection for all children"**<sup>5</sup>

Ms Reding reminded conference participants of the importance of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which became legally binding with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. She referred to the comprehensive and modern characteristics of the Charter and stressed the role of the FRA in



*"It is important to get on the right track at the very beginning of the EU legislative process."*

*Viviane Reding, Vice-president of the European Commission, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship*

supporting the EU in its implementation. She also stressed the importance of mainstreaming fundamental rights in all EU policies and of conducting compliance checks from an early stage in the lawmaking process. In addition, the development of a methodology for impact assessment and a new strategy for Charter implementation should move all Member States to action. The upcoming accession of the EU – as the sum of all Member States – to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is a major step in strengthening the protection of all EU citizens from violations of their human rights.

Focusing on those citizens who are under 18 years of age, she referred to Article 24 of the Charter which enshrines the right of the child to be protected, to express his/her views freely and to have these taken into consideration, as well as the principle of the child's best interests, which must be a primary consideration in all actions relating to children. Like the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Charter endorses the concept that children are not just persons in need of protection but holders of rights in their own independent capacity.

She also mentioned that the European Commission was in the process of developing a new Communication on the Rights of the Child. In this context, she highlighted the need to make sure that children have effective access to justice. This means looking closely at how they can participate in proceedings and how children are represented. It also means ensuring that children receive relevant information in an appropriate way. Services for children can be improved by training professionals dealing with children and by promoting the exchange of best practice.

<sup>4</sup> The full text of the speech by Ilze Brands Kehris is available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Speech-I-Brand-Kheris-FRC10\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Speech-I-Brand-Kheris-FRC10_en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The full speech of Viviane Reding is available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Speech-V-Reding-FRC-2010\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Speech-V-Reding-FRC-2010_EN.pdf).

**Morten Kjaerum**, Director of the FRA

**“Turning rights on paper into rights in practice: increasing the protection of the rights of children in the EU”<sup>6</sup>**

Mr Kjaerum began his address with examples showing the lack of adaptation of EU justice systems to the needs of children, even though an ever increasing number of children are coming into contact with the justice system, often long before they reach their majority.

*“We should ensure that the vulnerability of children does not overshadow their capacity as rights holders.”*

Morten Kjaerum, Director of the FRA

Mr Kjaerum stressed the urgent need to facilitate and improve children’s access to protection services, while ensuring that officials working in the administration of justice – judges and other relevant actors such as defence lawyers – are adequately trained in child-friendly working methods. There is an inherent contradiction in the fact that many procedures, designed and set up to protect children, actually contribute to their re-traumatisation and re-victimisation. Worse still, not all children gain access to these proceedings. In order to develop more effective policies and measures, there is a need to research these issues and collect more data to ensure awareness and a better understanding of the problems that children actually face.

He suggested the conference follow a six-track path forward, by:

- **Taking a child-centred approach** (relying on instruments such as the Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice and the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child);
- **Tailoring the provisions of services** to respond to the individual needs of each child;
- Investing in **coordinated and interdisciplinary working mechanisms**;
- Collecting and making available more and **better quality data**;

- Guaranteeing that children’s rights do not fall victim to the **economic crisis**;
- Listening to what **children have to say**.

**Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe (speech delivered by Philippe Boillat, Director General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs)

**Heading to the “Justice for children decade”?**

In this address, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe noted that children’s rights have been incorporated into European legal systems and policies over the last 20 years and they must now be guaranteed through the justice systems. The Council of Europe has put child-friendly justice and access to justice at the top of the agenda in its Strategy on the rights of the child 2009-2011. In November 2010, the Committee of Ministers adopted Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice, which aim to transform ivory tower justice into the home of children’s justice.<sup>8</sup>

*“Justice cannot achieve its balance if the needs and rights of the children aren’t put on the scales [...] The first thing to do is to move away from the perception that child-friendly justice is a luxury we cannot afford.”*

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe

The guidelines define what child-friendly justice means: a system which guarantees the respect and effective implementation of all children’s rights to the highest attainable level, giving due consideration to the child’s level of maturity and understanding and the circumstances of the case. It is, in particular, justice that is accessible, age appropriate, speedy, diligent, adapted to and focused on the needs and rights of the child. It respects the rights of the child, including to due process, to participation and to an understanding of the proceedings. It also respects private and family life as well as integrity and dignity.

During the drafting process, almost 4,000 children and young people were consulted and their input led to stronger accents on several issues,

<sup>6</sup> The full speech of Morten Kjaerum is available at: [fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/MK-speech-FRC-2010\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/MK-speech-FRC-2010_EN.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> The full speech of Maud de Boer-Buquicchio is available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_speech\\_Maud%20de%20Boer%20Buquicchio.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_speech_Maud%20de%20Boer%20Buquicchio.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> For more information, background and documents, see: [www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/Documents\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/Documents_en.asp).

such as the right to: access confidential counsel and enjoy independent representation; be heard and receive information; and access an independent and effective complaints mechanism. This first exercise in child participation can surely be improved upon methodologically. The Council of Europe plans to invest in consultations such as these and hopes to improve the participative strategies and methods. The guidelines focus not only on elements of child-friendly organisation of courts, child-friendly interviewing techniques, access to courts and principles of the rule of law, but also on the importance of children's rights education and multidisciplinary work.

The Council of Europe calls for the implementation of these guidelines to be prioritised. This does not require large financial resources, but mainly a change of mentality and attitude towards children and young people in judicial settings. The explanatory memorandum attached to the guidelines contains references to both ECHR case law and good practices which prove that child-friendly work is possible.

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**Yanghee Lee**, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations<sup>9</sup>

According to Ms Lee, although we have just celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its two Optional Protocols,<sup>10</sup> there is growing evidence that the rights-of-the-child honeymoon has drawn to a close. While there is a higher degree of consensus that children are indeed bearers of rights and Member States have been incorporating children's rights into their legislation and policies, there are signs of backsliding. Discrimination, poverty, exclusion, repressive trends in juvenile justice, trends of demonising children and young people, abuse and exploitation are still elements of the daily lives of millions of children. Member States need to invest in developing and implementing preventive measures and child-friendly policies and services. The Committee's Concluding Observations and General Comments provide guidance for Member States to advance their implementation of the rights of the child.

She shared her concerns about trends and shortfalls in the EU in the area of children's rights. She pointed out that there is a need to mainstream chil-

dren's rights in order to obtain more coherent policies. Child participation mechanisms are too weak and often merely tokenistic, ad hoc or considered an extra. The rights of asylum-seeking, migrant and separated children are too often disregarded and policies on these issues are often not sufficiently child sensitive. A painful example of this is the keeping of some of these children in detention with no access to legal assistance or support. Child poverty is another issue that the EU should prioritise. A wealthy continent should not accept



*"Full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional protocols is a continuous process, involving all stakeholders."*

Yanghee Lee, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations

child poverty rates of up to 20%.<sup>11</sup> Member States should support high-quality, inclusive and lifelong education with opportunities for all, while devoting particular attention to early childhood education, life skills, children's rights and peace education. These are sound and necessary investments with powerful long-term economic and social returns. On a more methodological level, strengthening data collection as well as professional training in children's rights would be beneficial.

Ms Lee made a strong plea for the EU to set up independent and child-friendly mechanisms for children, to which children could turn when their rights are violated. She also called for the further development of positive approaches and effective methods of child participation in all policies affecting them.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The full speech of Yanghee Lee is available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_speech\\_Yanghee%20Lee.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_speech_Yanghee%20Lee.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> The Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) and the OP on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). On 25 May 2010, a campaign for universal ratification was launched.

<sup>11</sup> See also Unicef Innocenti Research Centre report card no. 9: *The children left behind: a league table of inequality in child well-being in the world's richest countries*, Nov. 2010.

<sup>12</sup> On this issue, see General Comment, no. 5 (CRC/C/GC/2003/5, paragraph 24) and General Comment no. 12 (CRC/C/GC/2009/12, paragraph 46).



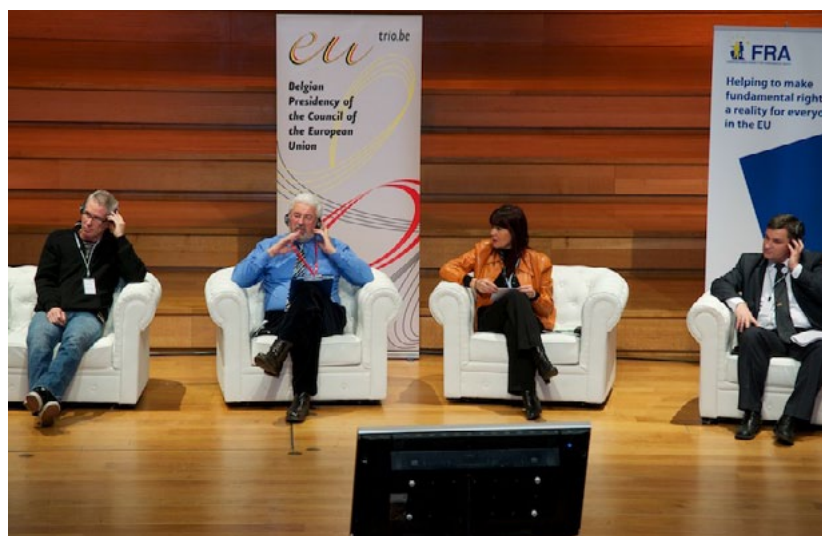
## 2.4. Panel debate: challenges in protecting the rights of vulnerable children in the EU

During the panel debate, challenges in protecting the rights of vulnerable children were discussed by the following expert panel members: General Delegate for the French Community for the Rights of the Child, Bernard De Vos; Terre des Hommes Representative, Bernard Boëton; Spanish Councilor for Equality and Social Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalusia, Micaela Navarro Garzón; and Hungarian Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs, Imre Nyitrai. Some of the issues at stake were:

- It is **not only unaccompanied children** who need to have their rights protected and their well-being secured. Many children arrive in the EU with their families, looking for asylum. When their parents are denied access to such procedures or are not granted asylum, then these children have no protection at all. One of the panellists indicated that in Brussels many families have been living on the streets. This causes several serious breaches of rights, including to shelter, care, food, health and education;
- It is worth exploring, as one of the panellists noted, the reasons why many undocumented children **abscond** from shelters and institutions, thereby increasing their potential exposure to violence and exploitation;
- **The issue of the minimum age of criminal responsibility** is a hotly debated one, with scientific data and legally binding rules often clashing with public opinion and political rhetoric. Policies on juvenile justice in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child imply that responses to juvenile delinquency need to respect all children's rights and that detention should be the last resort;
- The **theoretical approach to children's rights** should be transformed into a practical one, with a focus on implementation. The instruments are there, including within the Europe 2020 strategy, for the EU to start taking appropriate action. It is also important to continue harmonising the national legal systems, for example with regard to the status of unaccompanied and separated, asylum-seeking children, with the understanding that this harmonisation should aim for the highest attainable standard

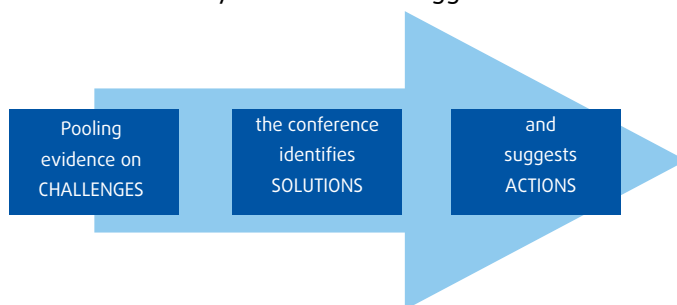
and not the lowest common denominator;

- While **the Convention on the Rights of the Child has created the use of a certain common language**, diverging interpretations and misreadings are still too frequent. For instance, regarding child participation, there is still the danger of rhetoric and lip service rather than action. The right to be heard is not, and should not, be limited to children above a certain age, although age may influence the 'due weight' accorded the child's views and opinions.



## 2.5. Working groups: meeting the challenge

The FRC aimed at creating an opportunity for interactive debate and discussion, thereby ensuring that the outcomes of the conference draw on the diverse experiences and expertise of the many participants. Working groups were at the core of this approach. The interactive process was designed to **pool knowledge** of existing challenges and good practice, upon which the conference could identify **solutions** and suggest **actions**.



On the **first day**, working groups sought to identify the **challenges** faced by children in particular situations of vulnerability: child victims of domestic violence; separated, asylum-seeking children; child

victims of trafficking; and children with intellectual disabilities.

On the **second day**, working groups tried to identify **evidence-based solutions** and strategies to respond to challenges faced by children in obtaining protection and fulfilling their rights. Special attention was paid to the need for the coordination of interventions in the context of the justice and child-protection systems.

**Results** of the working groups were summarised by the two conference rapporteurs: Lena Karlsson, Director of Save the Children International's Child Protection Initiative, on the first day; and Ankie Vandekerckhove, an independent expert on children's rights, on the second. The working group chairpersons presented the main highlights and conclusions of the discussions, and responded to questions and interventions from the other conference participants.

### 2.5.1. Child victims of domestic violence

**Chairperson: MARTA SANTOS PAIS**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

#### Speakers:

- **Peter Adriaenssens**, Child Psychiatrist, Director of the Confidentiality Centre Leuven, Belgium. Presentation on **"Domestic violence & children: from protected object to lawful subject"**
- **Nicole Cochet**, Magistrate, Vice-Chair of the European Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ) – Council of Europe Observer at the Ad hoc Committee on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIQ), France. Presentation on **"Physical and mental abuse: answers and remedies"**<sup>13</sup>
- **Julie Taylor**, Head of Strategy and Development – Children in High Risk Families, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), United Kingdom. Presentation on **"Exploring potential interventions to reduce harmful effects of domestic abuse on children"**<sup>14</sup>

The high and still rising number of children reported as victims or witnesses of domestic violence is a pervasive source of concern. Within the family home, where children should feel most secure, safe, loved and respected, the most horrid violations still occur. Precisely because this happens within the privacy of family life, it is a difficult problem to tackle. There is often a conspiracy of silence. As we witness more and more scientific proof of the devastating effects of domestic violence, both in the short and long term, the quest for an effective response becomes more urgent. This issue has a number of facets: physical and direct violence as well as mental and indirect violence, the latter of which often remain unseen but may also scar children for life. The responses also follow different approaches: a strictly legal response, where the lack of evidence is often problematic, or a medico-social response, including family therapy and counselling.



However, neither response will prove successful on its own. Hence, the working group participants discussed combinations of approaches aimed at reducing the negative effects of domestic violence on children. Short introductions delivered at the start of the working group presented data, illustrations of the effects of violence and trauma on a child's mental development, legal and procedural difficulties as well as some examples of good practices.

<sup>13</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_speech\\_Nicole%20Cochet.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_speech_Nicole%20Cochet.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Julie\\_Taylor.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Julie_Taylor.pdf).

The working group discussions on child victims of domestic violence concluded with the following suggestions:

- **Implementing** existing rules and regulations;
- Increasing **human and financial resources**, especially in preventive programmes. Aim at harm prevention, not just harm reduction;
- Continuing to **invest in professional training** on how to communicate with children and how to deal with their problems; and avoid pre-judging children;
- **Investing in education on the rights of the child**; train children on how to break the circle of violence;
- Continuing **research on violence and its effects** (including the major social cost for society);
- Organising **public campaigns** on children's rights in general;
- Valuing **the role of children**. A child's participation should be seen as a sharing of power, not just asking for an opinion;
- Working in a **multi- and interdisciplinary fashion** across the spectrum of the relevant actors. Combine the strengths of legal framework, communication with children and psycho-social interventions;
- Investing in **supportive, and non-judgemental, programmes** for families, responding to their calls for help.

### 2.5.2. Separated and unaccompanied, asylum-seeking children

**Chairperson: Jozef de Witte**, Director of the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Belgium

#### Speakers:

- **Alexandros Anastasiou**, Head of Social Service, Council of Refugees, Greece. Presentation on **"GCR's process in identifying and addressing the care needs of separated children"**<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_WG2\\_Alekos%20Anastasiou.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_WG2_Alekos%20Anastasiou.pdf).

- **Blanche Tax**, Senior Policy Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Presentation on **"Providing separated children with information – challenges and good practice examples"**<sup>16</sup>
- **Kasia Lach**, DG Home Affairs, European Commission and **Maria Amor Martin Estebanez**, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Presentation on **"Relevant EU policies and the situation of the children in EU Member States"**
- **Marjo Mäkelä**, Senior Adviser, Immigration Service, Finland. Presentation on **"Procedures and support services for dealing with unaccompanied and separated asylum seeking children – an example from Finland"**<sup>17</sup>

Discussions in the working group revealed the complexity of issues related to separated and unaccompanied, asylum-seeking children in the EU Member States. Reference was made to the deficient implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the fact that the Statement of Good Practice of the Separated Children in Europe Programme<sup>18</sup> is largely insufficiently reflected in state practice. The FRA comparative report on *Separated, asylum-seeking children in European Union Member States*, published at the FRC, pointed to many deficiencies in protecting the rights of these children. These deficiencies concerned both their living conditions, including accommodation, education, access to health and social care, and the legal procedures that concern them, such as age assessments, the asylum procedure, guardianship, family tracing and reunification.<sup>19</sup>

For unaccompanied and separated, asylum-seeking children, obtaining support upon entering the EU is of the utmost importance. In Finland, for example, authorities immediately appoint a representative for the child. In Greece, an NGO must assume this role since the immigration and asylum offices do not provide individual support. The limited legal capacity of these children makes the immediate appointment of a legal guard-

<sup>16</sup> More information available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG2-B-Tax-presentation.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Marjo\\_Makela.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Marjo_Makela.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF Separated Children in Europe Programme – Statement of Good Practice 4th revised edition, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> See FRA, Separated, asylum-seeking children in European Union Member States, conference edition, November 2010.

ian indispensable. The Commission representative highlighted the relevance of the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors,<sup>20</sup> which supports the adoption of common standards for guardianship and legal representation and recommends that a decision on the future of each child be taken by the competent authorities as soon as possible, preferably within six months. The Plan requires that, as a priority, Member States trace the families of the children and carefully monitor their reintegration in their country of origin. If it is in the best interest of the child, Member States should find alternative solutions, including the granting of international protection status and resettlement in the EU. According to the Commission, the child's

The working group discussions on separated and unaccompanied children concluded with the following suggestions:

- Incorporating the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** into national law – and also in constitutions in the longer term;
- **Setting up guardianship systems** which provide children with an independent, representative to protect his/her rights (to education, housing, protection from discrimination, leisure etc.) and to take care that the needs of the child are met;
- Providing **suitable and safe accommodation**: foster care for younger children and for independent or semi-autonomous living arrangements for older children;
- Ensuring that officials and carers responsible for a child are **properly trained** to respond to their specific vulnerabilities;
- Guaranteeing **periodic monitoring** of the care services provided children, including guardianship;
- **Providing information** that children can understand and ensuring child participation in decisions concerning him or herself;
- Setting up **complaint mechanisms** and informing children how to use them;
- **Giving the benefit of the doubt to a child** when medical age assessments need to be conducted given the margin of error characterising these assessments.

return is identified as only one of the options “because the issue is much more complex and multidimensional and there are clear boundaries to the Member States’ freedom of action when dealing with unaccompanied minors”.

Several national procedures and NGO activities were presented. Good practices were also discussed such as: sensitive interviewing techniques, quality legal advice, accessible information, provision of appropriate housing, adequate education, leisure activities, health, counselling services and social care.

The building of a trusting relationship with authorities and child carers and a feeling of safety were considered as crucial for this particular group of children, especially to ensure that they do not abscond from state care as this may place them in an even more vulnerable condition. Participants said that measures aiming at family reunification need to be revisited, and efforts aimed at tracing the children’s families increased. If it is in the best interests of the child that he/she be returned to the country of origin, this should only be done after guarantees of safety, adequate care and support are in place, including in the long term, so that the well-being of the child can be guaranteed.

### 2.5.3. Child victims of trafficking

Chairperson: **MARIA GRAZIA GIAMMARINARO**, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

#### Speakers:

- **Diana-Florentina Tudorache**, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, specialised police officer/psychologist in the Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, Romania. Presentation on “**Working with trafficked children: the singularities of Eastern Europe trafficked children and the work with the most vulnerable groups, such as the Roma**”<sup>21</sup>
- **Alessia Altamura**, International Associate Expert on Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes, ECPAT. Presentation on “**Ensuring a child-friendly justice system for trafficked children: challenges and good practices**”

<sup>20</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2010) 213 final, Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_WG3\\_Diana%20Tudorache.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_WG3_Diana%20Tudorache.pdf).



- **Gerald Tatzgern**, Head of Central Service for Combating Human Smuggling/Human Trafficking, Criminal Intelligence Service, Federal Ministry of Interior, Austria. Presentation on **“Crime investigation on trafficked children”**<sup>22</sup>
- **Joanna Goodey**, Head of Department Freedoms and Justice, FRA. Presentation on **“A rights-based response to trafficked children”**<sup>23</sup>

The discussions in the working group focused mainly on the development of effective tools for the protection of child victims of trafficking. Trafficking is a widespread form of organised crime inside and outside EU borders to which a growing number of children fall victim. Several challenges and good practices were presented during the working group discussions. For example, a number of cases concerning the trafficking of young Romanian girls revealed the difficulties in prosecuting traffickers. The participants also pointed at the need for specific victim protection provisions, as required by the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings<sup>24</sup> (2005). The discussions also included age vulnerability, the relationship with the trafficker, the disadvantaged background of the victims, and their need to find someone whom they can really trust.

Furthermore, the global ECPAT campaign against sex trafficking and its research highlighted the fact that only a small number of child-friendly measures have been taken so far and that children’s best interests are usually not the primary consideration in most cases. The FRA has been looking into rights-based responses to trafficking which move beyond crime control.<sup>25</sup> However, some of the challenges that remain are the lack of final convictions of traffickers, the criminalisation and detention of victims, the weak assistance to victims and the high level of absconding from shelters.

The working group participants agreed that there is a need to equip specialised police forces to effectively deal with trafficking. Participants in the working group also highlighted the fact that child victims of trafficking need specific and specialised forms of protection and care.



The working group discussions on child victims of trafficking concluded with the following suggestions:

- **Addressing root causes** of trafficking, such as poverty, social exclusion and discrimination;
- **Assisting, supporting and protecting the victims**, as prosecution of the perpetrators is not enough;
- Ensuring that all actions aim to **protect the best interests of the child**;
- Developing and applying **child friendly interviewing** techniques;
- Ensuring the appropriate **training** of the professionals dealing with the children;
- Providing **professional therapeutic services**;
- Reducing the **risk of re-victimisation**;
- **Developing a coordinated approach** among Member States;
- Offering care to victims **unconditionally**;
- **Extending protection** when the child can return to the country of origin.

22 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Gerhard\\_Tatzgern.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Gerhard_Tatzgern.pdf).

23 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Jo\\_Goodey.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Jo_Goodey.pdf).

24 More information available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=197&CM=1&CL=ENG>.

25 FRA (2009) ‘Child Trafficking in the European Union, Challenges, perspectives and good practices’.

#### 2.5.4. Children with intellectual disabilities

**Chairperson: Jan Pfeiffer**, Lumos, Chair of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based care.

##### Speakers:

- **Malin Ekman Aldén**, Deputy Director, Division for social services, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, governmental focal point on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Sweden. Presentation on **“Time and commitment – the right to be heard”**<sup>26</sup>
- **Camille Latimier**, Human Rights Officer, Inclusion Europe, Czech Republic. Presentation on **“The implementation of the CRC from the perspective of children with intellectual disabilities – experiences from the Czech Republic and other European countries”**<sup>27</sup>
- **Dainius Pūras**, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Head and Associate Professor, Centre of Child Psychiatry and Social Pediatrics, Vilnius University, Lithuania. Presentation on **“Challenges and opportunities for protecting rights of children with intellectual disabilities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe”**<sup>28</sup>

Children with intellectual disabilities are at a heightened risk of suffering violations of their rights, in part because of their ongoing dependence and underestimation of their capacities. Hence, for children with disabilities, the right to freely participate and give views on decisions affecting them is often at stake, as is the right to protection in residential care settings. Access to justice for children with intellectual disabilities was also identified as an issue as was their protection from crime and maltreatment.

Consequently, the development of inclusive policies aimed at the more efficient protection of the rights of children with intellectual disabilities was at the centre of this working group’s debate. Participants acknowledged the need for a new approach, starting from the child as a rights holder

rather than focusing on the disability as such. The discussions also highlighted that implementing a true children’s rights approach requires a shift from a culture of institutionalisation and medicalisation towards a culture of autonomy, participation, trust and respect in the spirit of the CRPD and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Participants noted, however, that currently children with intellectual disabilities or their advocates (often parents) are hardly involved in designing or empowering inclusive policies. Lack of children’s rights training was also identified as an issue. All participants agreed that social integration and inclusive education of children with intellectual disabilities is necessary as well as awareness raising with respect to the benefits of inclusive education.

The working group discussions on children with intellectual disabilities concluded with the following suggestions:

- Improving **children’s rights implementation** for children with intellectual disabilities;
- Eliminating and **preventing inequalities** based on a child’s health and other forms of discrimination, as well as neglect and abuse;
- Developing and using adequate **quality standards** of service provision;
- **Supporting families** who choose to establish more autonomy for their children;
- Investing in **participation methodologies** adapted to the age and disability of the child;
- Raising **public awareness** about rights of children with disabilities;
- Organising **training** within justice systems on how to interact with children with intellectual disabilities.

<sup>26</sup> More information available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/fundamentalrightsconference/speakers.html>.

<sup>27</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Camille\\_Latimier.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Camille_Latimier.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Dainius\\_Puras.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Dainius_Puras.pdf).



# 3

## Conference proceedings: day 2



### 3.1. Opening<sup>29</sup>

The Belgian Minister of Justice, **Stefaan De Clerck**, expressed his appreciation for the choice of the conference theme and said that both the protection and the promotion of children's rights need to remain at the heart of Europe's fundamental rights policy. He referred to the Treaty of Lisbon as yet another strong impetus to work on children's rights, not only for the most vulnerable, but for all children in Europe.

*"We must also underline the importance for Member States to continue to prioritise support for children and young people in crisis and to their families, despite economically challenging times."*

Stefaan De Clerck

Referring to the principles underlying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Mr De Clerck touched on the challenges of: finding integrated and systemic ways of involving children; enhancing co-operation between social services and justice – as this may prove difficult at times; and having in place legal and social support and guarantees for unaccompanied minors, refugees and migrant children in Europe. Again, the importance of multidisciplinary work among different professions was emphasised.

He also pointed to the **'4 P's' in the Stockholm programme on trafficking (Prevention, Prosecution, Protection and Partnership)** and called for a child-centred and victim-centred approach which respects children's cultural background. He emphasised the crucial role of both governments and civil society in the continuous work of awareness-raising on children's rights.

### 3.2. Keynote speech<sup>30</sup>

While applauding the EU's commitment to children's rights, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, **Hilde F. Johnson**, also touched upon the international picture and the binding nature of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols. Dealing with children's rights violations is difficult as they are often difficult to detect. Apart from finding better ways to collect data and evidence, it is also necessary to look beyond the facts and try to understand why so many violations are either tolerated or kept in the dark. It



<sup>29</sup> The full speech of Stefaan De Clerck is available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_speech\\_Stefaan %20de%20Clerck.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_speech_Stefaan%20de%20Clerck.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> The full speech of Hilde F. Johnson is available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Speech-HF-Johnson-UNICEF-FRC10.pdf>.

is only by looking into the background of social norms that we can start developing strategies to combat children's rights violations such as female genital mutilation.

Ms Johnson stressed that child protection has always been high on UNICEF's agenda but that a change of vision has slowly taken place. Instead of working vertically on specific issues, UNICEF has now shifted to horizontal approaches and programming. This shift reflects the fact that children are often caught in a mixture of problems for which fragmented, issue-based responses will never provide a comprehensive solution. She also pointed out that a culture of child protection needs to be established in order to guarantee a continuum of care, concerning diverse issues and settings in which children live and which are beneficial for all children, not just for particularly vulnerable groups. This comprehensive work needs to be delivered both proactively and reactively and needs to involve many sectors – including education, social services, health and justice. UNICEF has

*"[...] No continent can claim to be free from child rights violations."*

Hilde F. Johnson

formulated specific strategies and developed a Child Protection System Mapping and Assessment Toolkit as helpful instruments for governments. UNICEF recalls the EU's commitment to work with upcoming instruments in this comprehensive way. The 2011 EU Communication on the Rights of the Child, upcoming legislation on sexual exploitation and trafficking and the Action plan on unaccompanied minors provide ample opportunities and ideal building blocks to do so effectively. To include even the most marginalised and forgotten children, these instruments should be linked to the EU 2020 strategy, addressing child poverty and promoting child well-being in all Member States.

### 3.3. Panel debate: ensuring justice and protection of rights of the most vulnerable by ensuring justice and protection of rights of all children

Ensuring justice and protection of children's rights was the topic of the second panel debate in which the following speakers took part: the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament, Kinga Gal; UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Hilde F. Johnson; European Court of Human Rights, Judge Ann Power; and the Director for Fundamental Rights and Citizenship in the European Commission, Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea.



- The **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, as a legally binding document, constitutes the basis of the Communication, which is also rooted in the Stockholm programme's requirement that an ambitious EU strategy on the rights of the child be developed. The strategy is to cover such issues as violence, participation and child friendly justice.
- The Communication should also aid the **mainstreaming of children's rights into EU policies** by identifying best practices and requiring Member States to respond to outstanding challenges.
- The EU should use the existing **binding standards on the rights of the child** not only in its external policies and in the screening of candidate states but also internally (e.g. regarding the financing of institutions in EU Member States where children are placed).



- The European Court of Human Rights has delivered key judgments on the protection of the rights of the child<sup>31</sup> and would like child protection to be real and effective. However, more efforts are needed by States to **ensure enforcement of the Court's judgments.**
- **Involvement of NGOs** within EU forums is not always easy, but opportunities are increasing and the EU is interested in civil society input. The draft EU Communication on the Rights of the Child was opened for consultation during the summer of 2010. The input of several NGOs and involved citizens provided a useful contribution to the process.
- **The EU should also demonstrate a firm children's-rights based approach** to juvenile justice, so that Member State practice follows the advice contained in General Comment No. 10 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child,<sup>32</sup> avoiding repressive measures which, as research has shown, do not provide long-term solutions.
- **Till Starke**, Family judge at the district court, federal Ministry of Justice, Germany, presentation on **"Safeguarding the interests of children in family court proceedings"**<sup>34</sup>
- **Liedewij de Ruijter de Wildt**, legal advisor, Nidos Foundation, the Netherlands, presentation on **"Guardianship in the Netherlands: how a guardian sees to the protection of separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children"**<sup>35</sup>

Children and young people are involved in civil, criminal and administrative court proceedings in many contexts, including: in family procedures, as victims or witnesses of crime, as perpetrators, as asylum-seekers. Yet, courtrooms and judicial proceedings can be intimidating for children and legal jargon is often incomprehensible. Children often barely have a role to play even though many cases deal directly with their daily lives and their immediate interests. Notwithstanding, access to justice is a fundamental human right and should also be implemented with regard to children.

The working group discussed the development of child-friendly judicial and administrative procedures that would take into account the best interests of the child and guarantee fair and equal treatment from the child's first contact with the respective authorities. The working group participants also stressed that it is time to incorporate children's rights in justice settings, to fill the gap between law and practice. However, all agreed that this would require a new set of measures for professionals and a shift towards more child-sensitive working methods within the Courts, during pre-judicial proceedings and in other related settings.

During the working group session, three achievements were presented: the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice,<sup>36</sup> the German Special Representative for children in family cases and the Dutch guardianship institution for unaccompanied minors. All examples lent support to the need for qualified support which can independently defend children's rights and best interests.

## 3.4. Working groups: learning from innovative practices and strengthening impact

### 3.4.1. Child-friendly judicial and administrative procedures

**Chairperson: Renate Winter**, former president of the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates, Austria

#### Speakers:

- **Ruth Farrugia**, Advocate and senior lecturer, Faculty of law, University of Malta, member of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Child Friendly Justice, Malta, presentation on **"Council of Europe Guidelines on child friendly justice"**<sup>33</sup>

31 Cases to be consulted on [www.echr.coe.int/echr/en/header/case-law/hudoc/hudoc+database/](http://www.echr.coe.int/echr/en/header/case-law/hudoc/hudoc+database/), such as *T. v. UK* (24724/94, dec. 16th 1999), *V. v. UK* (24888/94, dec. 16th 1999), *Mubilanzila Mayela and Kaniki Mitunga v. Belgium* (13178/03, oct. 12th 2006) and *Bouamar v. Belgium* (9106/80, june 27th 1988).

32 More information available at: [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.10.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.10.pdf).

33 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Ruth\\_Farrugia.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Ruth_Farrugia.pdf).

34 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Till\\_Stark.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Till_Stark.pdf).

35 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Liedewij\\_de\\_Ruijter\\_de\\_Wildt.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Liedewij_de_Ruijter_de_Wildt.pdf).

36 Background material and documents available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/Documents\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/childjustice/Documents_en.asp).

### 3.4.2. Participation of vulnerable children and access to support and complaints structures including children’s ombudspersons

**Chairperson:** Sarah D’Hondt, President, National Commission for Children’s Rights, Belgium

#### Speakers:

- **Patricia Lewsley**, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, chair of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), United Kingdom, presentation on **“Taking Part, Taking Care”**<sup>37</sup>
- **Ursula Kilkelly**, Senior expert lecturer at the law faculty, University of Cork, expert consultant for the Council of Europe child-friendly justice working group, Ireland, presentation on **“Supporting children’s access to justice”**<sup>38</sup>
- **Maria Keller-Hamela**, Director, Nobody’s Children Foundation, Poland, presentation on **“Challenges of protecting children victims of crime”**<sup>39</sup>

The child participation provisions contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights pose a daily challenge throughout the EU, because the child’s level of competence is called into question. In addition, children sometimes cannot access the forums where decisions are made. They also often lack correct information and do not know where and to whom to turn for support.

The working group discussed how to ensure participation and adequate access to support and complaint mechanisms for vulnerable groups of children. The participants agreed that over the past 20 years many projects have been set up and many services established to promote and support the child’s right to participation. Children’s rights commissioners, or ombudsmen, are often endowed with broad powers and competences applicable in this field. Many of them do actively involve children and young people in their work and some can actually defend children’s rights in court.

In addition, the participants acknowledged that more and more children and young people are being involved in policy making. During the drafting process of the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice, for example, some 4,000 young people documented their experiences with the justice system and added weight to several key guidelines. Many of the young people said, for example, that they turn to parents, family and friends much more than to targeted services for children and young people. This is a strong message. There can be no participation without information and children are reluctant to participate when there is no trust. It also shows that not only children and young people should be provided with better information about their rights, but so should their parents, teachers, the police, social workers and the general public.

The working group discussions on children’s participation concluded with the following suggestions:

- **Organising awareness-raising programmes**, including peer-to-peer education and children’s rights education which are absolutely necessary;
- Ensuring that information is **child friendly and understandable**;
- Embedding work on **creating trust and enhanced outreach** in services for children and young people;
- Enabling children to **access (social) services autonomously**, with their right to privacy guaranteed and without their parents knowing;
- Ensuring that **the role of ombudspersons** is not underestimated and that they should have the legal competence to defend the rights of children and young people. They should also be more accessible to children and embedded at a more local level.

<sup>37</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_WG6\\_Patricia%20Lewsley.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_WG6_Patricia%20Lewsley.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10\\_WG6\\_Ursula%20Kilkelly.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10_WG6_Ursula%20Kilkelly.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> More information available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Keller-Hamela-M-presentation.pdf>.



### 3.4.3. Joined-up governance

**Chairperson: Irma Ertman**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the Council of Europe, Thematic co-ordinator on Children, Council of Europe Committee of Ministers

#### Speakers:

- **Bragi Gudbrandsson**, Director General, Government Agency for Child Protection, Iceland, presentation on **“Child friendly justice – The Children’s House in Iceland”**<sup>40</sup>
- **Susan Gallagher**, Deputy chief executive, Victim Support Scotland, United Kingdom, presentation on **“Cooperation across Member States to ensure effective service delivery and policy promotion”**<sup>41</sup>
- **Ro Kartodirdjo**, manager of the ‘Safety house’, Breda, the Netherlands, presentation on **“Veiligheidshuis (The Safety House): linking up to meet the needs of children”**<sup>42</sup>

The working group discussed ways to improve the cooperation, coordination and referral processes among authorities, in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to the protection of children’s rights. The discussions focused on two specific issues: ensuring an adequate response to sexual abuse and the treatment of victims of crime.

The often hidden and complex nature of child (sexual) abuse and the extremely vulnerable position of child victims of such crimes have made it difficult to find the best way to deal with the issue. The child’s account is often the only piece of evidence in these ‘silent’ crimes. The Icelandic system of ‘Children’s houses’ and the Dutch system of ‘Safety Houses’ illustrated examples of multi-agency cooperation which combine in one setting the prosecution of the perpetrator with child-friendly care and therapy for the children, avoiding as much as possible the harmful consequences – such as re-traumatisation and re-victimisation – of multiple interviews. Opportunities for family support and counselling provided were also discussed.



A member organisation of the network Victim Support Europe presented its work to promote the rights of victims and support their place and involvement in justice systems. It shared experiences and good practices on effective referral, effective information and support, listening to children’s needs and standing up for those who remain invisible in court proceedings.

Participants agreed that positive effects and experiences so far call for the joining up of efforts of different actors and disciplines. The joined-up approach improves efficiency, case management and can reduce harmful consequences for child victims. Furthermore, coordinated actions do not only secure the judicial and therapeutic interventions, but they can also increase discovery rates, which in turn can strengthen the necessary feeling of trust.

The working group discussions on joined-up governance concluded with the following suggestions:

- Securing good communication, good planning and **coordination in case management**;
- **Balancing privacy rights** and the need for exchange of information;
- Having a **clearly formulated legislation** on the division of functions, responsibilities, mandates and powers, **including delegation of responsibilities** and empowering of professionals;
- Investing in **specialist support**, such as knowledge centres and telephone hotlines;
- Clarifying and simplifying **combined administrative procedures**.

40 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-bragi\\_gudbrandson.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-bragi_gudbrandson.pdf).

41 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-susan\\_gallagher.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-susan_gallagher.pdf).

42 More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG7-Ro\\_Kartodirdjo.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG7-Ro_Kartodirdjo.pdf).

### 3.4.4. Data availability and indicators

**Chairperson: Arnoldas Abramavicius**, member of the European Committee of the Regions, Mayor of Zarasai district municipality, Lithuania.

#### Speakers:

- **Anne Claire Luzo**, Senior Regional Advisor, Monitoring and Evaluation, UNICEF, presentation on **“Child protection indicators in the global context”**
- **Cecilia Ljung**, Public Health Strategy Officer, municipalities of Karlskoga and Degerfors, Sweden, presentation on **“Children Condition Index in the municipalities of Karlskoga and Degerfors”**
- **Cedric Foussard**, Director, International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJJ), presentation on **“Juvenile Justice Systems in Europe: current situation, trends in applicable models and good practices”**
- **Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos**, Head of Department Equality and Citizen’s Rights FRA, presentation on **“The FRA’s development of indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the EU”**<sup>43</sup>

The working group discussed the importance of measuring how the rights of children are respected, protected and fulfilled. Policies are more effective when they are designed on the basis of reliable data and information. However, such data is not always available. An important factor that contributes to the lack of data is ‘underreporting’ – in regard to violence, for example, children and young people often do not report such incidents or they do not know where to turn for help.

The working group discussed the need to develop precise and easy-to-use indicators allowing systematic and efficient data collection and proper monitoring. UNICEF and the European Branch of the European Juvenile Justice Observatory presented their experiences in connection with the elaboration of indicators. The methodology and main elements of the FRA activity in developing indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the EU – as presented in the report published during the conference – were also presented and discussed. Finally, the working

group discussed the Swedish research project ‘the Children Condition Index in the municipalities of Karlskoga and Degerfors’, in which children contributed to data collection through creative methods such as drawing and theatre in order to provide a more detailed insight into how the children feel and think about their life surroundings.

The working group participants highlighted the importance of gathering data with a clear goal and expectation in mind, in order to increase the willingness to obtain them, to be clear on what analyses need to be performed and how the results will be used. They also agreed that it is important to be attentive to needs for data desegregation, regarding different age groups and in order to better illustrate local differences.

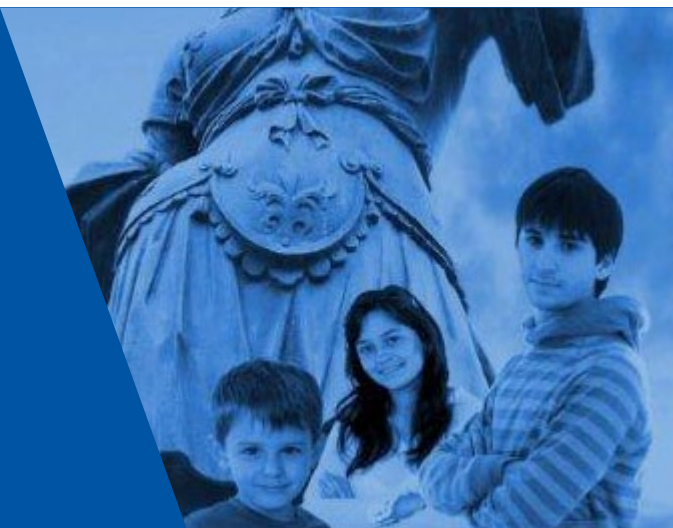


The working group discussions on data collection and developing indicators concluded with the following suggestions:

- **Improving communication** between data collecting institutions;
- Heightening **awareness** of the purpose of **data collection** and its **outcomes**;
- **Including children** in the process, e.g. in setting priorities and outcomes and in collecting data and developing indicators;
- Incorporating particularly **vulnerable groups** of children;
- Providing **feedback** to children as to **how the data are used**;
- **Standardising data** collection systems;
- Collecting data at the **local** level, so that it relates more closely **to local needs**;
- Developing **scoreboards** based on the involvement of children in assessment activities.

<sup>43</sup> More information available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Ioannis\\_Dimitrakopoulos.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRC10-WG-Ioannis_Dimitrakopoulos.pdf).

## Summary of conclusions



The presentations of the working group chairpersons were followed by an interactive panel debate. Common conclusions and issues requiring swift actions were identified and recommendations put forward:

- Children and young people are and should be treated as active holders of rights, and not just as **objects of protection**.
- The **international legal basis** is already in place, making useful legal tools available. The implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, can gain strength through the implementation of such instruments as the Treaty on European Union, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the upcoming Communication on the Rights of the Child, as well as Council of Europe instruments, including the ECHR and its case law, the revised Social Charter, the Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice and others.
- **A shift in paradigm towards rights-based policies** has taken place over recent years. Fundamental rights, including children's rights, are becoming key criteria in designing policies and in conducting quality checks;
- **Good policies need reliable, complete and comparable data** which is not always available. More energy needs to be devoted to developing appropriate methodologies and to involve children and young people in data collection activities. Lack of data, on the other hand, should not be an excuse for inaction.
- There is **a need for initial and continuous children's rights training** of professionals dealing with children. Interdisciplinary work should be encouraged. Psycho-social and legal work should be combined for mutual enrichment while respecting the respective contributions and values;
- **The rights of the child need to be incorporated into school curricula.** Periodic information campaigns on these rights should also be conducted to inform the general public. The media, NGOs and research centres can be key partners in achieving this;
- **The rights of the child should not come under attack in times of economic crisis.** The protection and realisation of children's rights and prevention of violations of those rights is not only a duty for states but also an economically sound choice;
- Drafting of legislation and policies should encompass child impact studies from an early stage. **Monitoring and evaluation** of the implementation of legislation and policies are also crucial;
- The rights of the child are **not only an issue when children come into conflict with the law but should permeate** the everyday life of every child;
- **Participation of children and young people improves the quality of policies affecting children.** Participation should be genuine, respectful and move beyond mere tokenism. The involvement of children and young people can add great value to legislative work, data collection, analysis, monitoring and the implementation of activities;

- Children and young people **should get better access to social and educational services**, to child-sensitive reporting mechanisms and, even autonomously when necessary, to the courts. To do so in an informed and supported way, they need independent counsel and they should be allowed to rely on support persons that they can trust. Children's services and ombudsmen should invest in more outreach;
- **Detention of children and young people** in all contexts should be avoided and used only as a measure of last resort;
- **Children and young people** often **turn to their parents and families** for support. Parents also need to be informed about children's rights and supported in their role.

These combined recommendations, comments and suggestions highlight the breadth of the children's rights agenda. In view of the legal instruments, expertise and variety of good practices available, the conference voiced a strong appeal for real political will and support at all levels as well as their translation into policies and financial and human resource allocations where the best interests of children and their rights are at centre stage. We cannot afford to wait for further violations of children's rights or to sit back until problems become unsolvable: we can only prevent child rights violations if we continuously promote the respect of those rights.



# Annexes



## Annex I

### THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Brussels, 7-8 December 2010

#### TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER

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- 09.15 – 09.30**      **Opening - “Children have their say!”**  
Report from children’s workshop, held in cooperation with Eurochild
- 09.30 – 09.40**      **Welcome**  
**Ilze Brands Kehris**, Chairperson of the Management Board, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- 09.40 - 10.30**      **Keynote addresses**  
**Viviane Reding**, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship  
**Morten Kjaerum**, Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- 10.30 - 11.00**      **International perspectives on the protection of the rights of the child**  
**Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe  
**Yanghee Lee**, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations
- 11.00 – 11.30**      *Coffee Break*
- 11.30 – 13.00**      **CHALLENGES in protecting the rights of vulnerable children in the EU**  
Panel debate and plenary discussion with policy makers and practitioners  
**Bernard De Vos**, General Delegate of the French Community for the Rights of the Child, Belgium  
**Bernard Boëton**, Terre des Hommes  
**Micaela Navarro Garzón**, Councillor for Equality and Social Welfare, Regional government of Andalucía, Spain  
**Imre Nyitrai**, Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs, Ministry of National Resources, Hungary
- 13.00 – 14.30**      *Lunch*

- 14.30 – 16.30**      **MEETING THE CHALLENGE Practical proposals to address the challenges faced by children in situations of particular vulnerability**  
(Parallel working group discussions)
- **WG 1: Child victims of domestic violence**
  - **WG 2: Separated and unaccompanied, asylum-seeking children**
  - **WG 3: Child victims of trafficking**
  - **WG 4: Children with intellectual disabilities**
- 16.30 – 17.30**      **SHARING 'GOOD PRACTICE'**  
**Marketplace of Ideas: Networking and good practice sharing**
- New developments, ground-breaking reports, tools and initiatives in the field – Interactive presentations by: Amnesty International, Terre des Hommes, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNICEF, Council of Europe, Belgian network of child rights NGOs, FRA
- 17.30 – 18.00**      **Summary of Day 1 and food for thought for Day 2 by**  
Lena Karlsson, Director of Save the Children International's Child Protection Initiative

### **WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER**

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- 09.30 – 10.00**      **LINKING JUSTICE AND CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES**  
Opening by: **Stefaan De Clerck**, Minister of Justice, Belgium  
Keynote address by: **Hilde F. Johnson**, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- 10.00 – 11.00**      **ENSURING JUSTICE AND THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS of the most vulnerable by ensuring justice and the protection of rights of all children**
- Panel debate and plenary discussion with institutional stakeholders:  
**Kinga Gál**, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, European Parliament  
**Hilde F. Johnson**, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF  
**Ann Power**, Judge, European Court of Human Rights  
**Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea**, Director, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, European Commission
- 11.00 – 13.00**      **LEARNING FROM INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND STRENGTHENING IMPACT**  
**Identification of proposals for practical action at EU, national and local levels to ensure justice for children** (Parallel working group discussions)
- **WG 5: Child-friendly judicial and administrative procedures**
  - **WG 6: Participation of vulnerable children and access to support and complaints structures including children's ombudspersons**
  - **WG 7: Joined-up governance**
  - **WG8: Data availability and indicators**
- 13.00 – 14.00**      Lunch
- 14.00 – 14.50**      **Summing up - Interactive panel with working group chairs (Day II)**  
Comment and suggestions for way forward by Ankie Vandekerckhove, independent expert on children's rights, Belgium
- 14.50 – 15.00**      **Closing Remarks**  
**Morten Kjaerum**, Director, FRA





## Annex II

### Marketplace of ideas

*Interactive presentations on new developments, ground-breaking reports, tools and initiatives in the field*

At the Marketplace of ideas, key organisations in the field of children's rights presented their activities at information stands. For one hour, the stands were transformed into interactive workshops. The organisations illustrated how their work aims to ensure **justice and protection for all children**, through presentations, interactive question and answer sessions and live discussions. These workshops aimed at facilitating networking and good practice sharing. The Marketplace included the following organisations: The Separated Children in Europe Programme, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch, Terre des Hommes, UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, FRA, ECPAT, Council of Europe, Amnesty International, and the Belgian network of children's rights NGOs.

#### Separated Children in Europe Programme

**What are the rights of separated children? What is the reality they face in Europe? How can Europe make sure they receive better protection?**

The Separated Children in Europe Programme, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch, UNHCR and UNICEF work closely together to improve the protection of separated children in Europe.

A joint presentation by these five organizations provided an overview of separated children's rights, the protection gaps they face in Europe; the EU's response to date, examples of best practice, and an outline of the way forward.

#### Speakers:

Blanche Tax, UNHCR  
Lise Bruun, Separated Children in Europe Programme  
Margaret Wachenfeld, UNICEF  
Rebecca O'Donnell, Save the Children  
Simone Troller, Human Rights Watch

#### Ensuring justice and protection of all children in the wider Europe – Focusing on the most marginalised, particularly Roma

The presentation began with an overview of the most marginalised children in Europe, providing a brief snapshot of inequality in well-being of children across Europe, drawing on just released figures from a major UNICEF report. The presentation then focused on one of the most marginalised groups of children in Europe – Roma, with a brief overview of the present situation that highlighted key fundamental rights issues. It concluded with a specific focus on a particular group of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. The key child protection issues in Germany and Kosovo (state of return) were discussed.

#### Speakers:

Margaret Wachenfeld & Beate Dastel, UNICEF

#### Working together to improve protection of children

The presentation highlighted key conceptual developments and programming innovations from UN agencies to improve child protection in the EU and its neighbours.

#### Speakers:

UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR, OHCHR)

**Unaccompanied minors disappearing, departing and running away from institutions in Europe: recommendations to authorities and civil society to cope with the problem**

In 2009, Terre des Hommes Foundation launched a survey in four countries (Belgium, France, Switzerland and Spain) on the disappearance of unaccompanied minors from the institutions where they have been placed by authorities. Although data are difficult to collect, it seems that at least hundreds, if not thousands of children disappear every year from European institutions. How to assess the situation? Who is actually responsible? How to adapt judicial and administrative procedures to reduce this flow?

#### Speaker:

Bernard Boëton, Terre des Hommes

### **Welcome? The life of young refugees in two very different European countries**

Half of the worldwide refugee population are minors, many are young adults. They leave their countries because of war, persecution, poverty or a lack of perspectives. Taking a look at some case studies from Malta and Germany, the presentation focused on the obstacles that confront young refugees.

**Speaker:**

Andreas Meissner, Terre des Hommes

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### **Developing indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the European Union**

The Child Rights Indicators developed by the FRA provide an initial toolkit to evaluate the impact of adopted EU law and policy on children's status and experience across various fields. The presentation will describe the four indicator areas and groups highlighting some limitations and gaps in current provision of data.

The four areas covered by the indicators are: Family environment and alternative care; protection from exploitation and violence; adequate standard of living; and education, citizenship, cultural and sport activities.

**Speaker:**

Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, FRA

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### **Separated, asylum-seeking children in EU Member States**

The report Separated, Asylum-Seeking Children in EU Member States is based on interviews with 336 separated, asylum-seeking children and 302 adults responsible for their care in 12 EU Member States. The report examines their experiences and views addressing the need to incorporate children's perspectives into work that seeks to inform policy action. The two main areas covered by the report are 'living conditions' and 'legal procedures', dealing with issues such as: accommodation, health care, education, social workers' support, religion, recreation and leisure, social interaction and experiences of racism, maltreatment and abuse, legal guardianship, family reunification, detention, age assessment, the asylum procedure and other legal procedures.

**Speaker:**

María Amor Estébanez, FRA

### **Campaign on sexual exploitation of children (ECPAT End Prostitution of Children, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes)**

Children worldwide need to be protected against all kinds of sexual exploitation. Therefore ECPAT, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Service for Criminal Policy, the Federal Police, Plan Belgium, the Samilia Foundation, the Belgian Carriers Foundation, Child Focus, the Belgian national railway company and the Tourism Industry have decided to work together in a concerted effort to end sexual exploitation of children.

[www.stopchildprostitution.be](http://www.stopchildprostitution.be)

**Speakers:**

Ariane Couvreur

Katlijn Declercq

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### **Combating violence against children – from isolated actions to integrated strategies**

The exposure of children to one form of violence increases their vulnerability to other forms of violent behaviour. Therefore, effective prevention of and reaction to violence, as well as effective safeguarding of the rights of the child, call for a strategic and multidisciplinary approach. The Council of Europe Policy Guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence aim to be a source of inspiration for states striving to adopt a holistic approach to violence against children and to guarantee their children a childhood free from violence. The guidelines contain detailed proposals on how to develop an integrated national strategy on the rights of the child and the eradication of violence against children and include such key building blocks as the legal, policy and institutional frameworks, a culture of respect for the rights of the child and child-friendly services and mechanisms.

**Speaker:**

Liubov Samokhina, Council of Europe

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### **Council of Europe (CoE) Campaign to stop sexual violence against children**

Available data suggest that about one out of five children in Europe might be victims of some form of sexual violence. The entry into force on 1 July 2010 of the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ('Lanzarote Convention') represents a significant advance in the prevention



of sexual violence, the protection of children and combating impunity. In Rome on 29 November 2010, the CoE launched a campaign to stop sexual violence against children. Its main objectives are:

- to promote signature, ratification and implementation of the Convention;
- to equip children, their families/carers and society with the knowledge and tools to prevent sexual violence against children and in so doing raise awareness of the full extent of sexual violence against children.

**Speaker:**

Tiina-Maria Levamo, Council of Europe

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**END Female genital mutilation (FGM) European campaign**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of violence against women and children that can amount to torture. The European Parliament estimates that 500,000 girls and women living in Europe are suffering with the lifelong consequences of female genital mutilation. The END FGM European Campaign is run by Amnesty International Ireland, in partnership with NGOs across the EU. The campaign is committed to ensuring that the EU adopts concrete measures to end FGM and provide protection to women and girls who flee their countries for fear of mutilation. This session will present the campaign and invite you to take action.

**Speaker:**

Christine Loudes, END FGM Campaign

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**Fight discrimination in Europe campaign**

Discrimination is one of Europe's most pressing human rights concerns, affecting the lives of millions of people.

Amnesty International aims to ensure that all individuals enjoy protection against discrimination through:

- The introduction and effective implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at the regional and national level;
- Campaigning against discriminatory policies and practices - and for the introduction of effective

measures to promote equal treatment;

- Combating the prejudices underlying discrimination.

Among the most vulnerable groups, AI focuses on Roma children, namely on their rights to education and adequate housing. This session presented the campaign and invited people to take action.

**Speaker:**

Veronica Scognamiglio, European Campaign on Discrimination, Amnesty International

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**Strategies for de-institutionalisation and community-based approaches to child protection**

Save the Children introduced its global child protection initiative and two publications: What are we learning about protecting children in the community? An Inter-agency review of evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms and the publication and Keeping Children out of Harmful Institutions. Why we should be investing in family-based care.

The introduction was followed by an example of how Save the Children works on deinstitutionalisation in Georgia followed by a presentation on community-based approaches to child protection and key findings from a recent evaluation on community-based child protection mechanism.

**Speakers:**

Lena Karlsson, Save the Children Child Protection Initiative

Leslie Wilson, Save the Children United States, Georgia

Gabriella Olofsson, Save the Children Sweden



## Annex III

### List of participants

Name	Surname	Organisation	Job Title
Arnoldas	Abramavicius	Committee of the Regions	Member
Andreas	Accardo	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Stakeholder Strategy Coordinator
Peter	Adriaenssens	Confidentiality Centre Leuven	Director
Knut	Albrecht	Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte	Membre comité directeur, Chargé des droits de l'enfant
Altamura	Alessia	ECPAT International	Europe Associae
Alexandros	Anastasiou	Greek Council for Refugees	Coordinator of the Social Services Department
Suzanne	Andersson	European Commission	Policy Analyst
Eleni	Apousidou	Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, Central Authority of Intercountry Adoption	Supervisor
Linnéa	Arvidsson	United Nations Human Rights (OHCHR)	Human Rights Officer
Polina	Atanasova	ENOC	Responsible Secretariat ENOC
Julien	Attuil-Kayser	Council of Europe	Adviser to the Commissioner for Human Rights
Christine	Bakker	European University Institute, Florence	Research Fellow
Pierre	Barge	Association pour la Défense des droits de l'Homme (AEDH)	President
Franck	Barrau	Secrétariat international permanent «Droits de l'Homme et gouvernements locaux» (SPIDH)	Secrétaire général
Adriana	Barreiros	Office of the Ombudsman	Adviser in the Cabinet of the Ombudsman
Elisa	Bedin	Municipality of Venice	Project Coordinator - Psychologist
Audrone	Bedorf	Institution of the Ombudsman for Children of the Republic of Lithuania	Adviser of the Ombudsman for Children
Nicolas	Beger	Amnesty International	Director of AI EU Office
Nancy	Bleys	Kabinet Minister van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin Jo Vandeurzen	Raadgever
Bernard	Boeton	Terre des Hommes Foundation	Child's Rights Department

Ludmila	Bojkova	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director of the Directorate of Human Rights
Elona	Bokshi	European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)	Project officer on Return of Minors
Maria Elisabeth	Boone	Parket-Generaal Brussel	Criminoloog-Coördinatrice «jeugd en gezin»
Jan	Braat	Municipality of Utrecht	Senior policy advisor
Ilze	Brands Kehris	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Chairperson of the Management Board
Jan	Broers	Payoke	President
Lise	Bruun	Save the Children Denmark/ Separated Children in Europe Programme	SCEP Coordinator
Gordana	Buljan Flander	The Centre for Child Protection	Principal
Dominika	Bychawska-Siniarska	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights	Lawyer
Cristiana	Carletti	Italian MFA - Interministerial Committee of Human Rights	Legal consultant
Dario	Carminati	International Institute of Humanitarian Law	Special Advisor on Refugee, Migration and Human Rights Law
Ricardo	Carvalho	Comissão Nacional de Protecção das Crianças e Jovens em Risco	Executive Secretary
Roberta	Cecchetti	Save the Children	Advocacy Manager - Child Protection
Pascale	Charhon	IRFAM	European Affairs Manager
Patrick	Charlier	CEOR	Coordinator Department Discrimination
Peter Tai	Christensen	The Equality Ombudsman	Development Officer
Aurel	Ciobanu Dordea	European Commission, DG Justice	Director Fundamental Rights and EU citizenship
Nicole	Cochet	Council of Europe	Vice Chair of the CDCJ
Alpha	Connelly	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Member of the Scientific Committee
Ariane	Couvreur	ECPAT Belgique	Chargée de projets
Jaime	Craig	British Psychological Society	Consultant Clinical Psychologist - Children and Young Person Policy Lead, Division of Clinical Psychology
Anastasia	Crickley	NUI Maynooth	Head of Department
Charline	Daelman	KUL Institute for Human Rights	Junior Academic Staff
Borislava	Daskalolva	Bulgarian Network for Child and Youth Trafficking Prevention	Program Coordinator



Helene	David	European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)	Project Officer
Stefaan	De Clerck	Ministry of Justice	Minister of Justice
Christel	De Craim	Public Federal Service Justice, Service for Criminal policy	Head of Unit Juvenile Affairs
José Miguel	De la Rosa Cortina	Fiscalía General del Estado	Public Prosecutor
Heidi	De Pauw	vzw PAG-ASA asbl	Director
Patrick	De Rond	Centre pour l'égalité de traitement	President
Liedewij	de Ruijter de Wildt	Nidos	Legal advisor
Vicky	De Souter	Ministry of Justice	Attaché
Amaury	De Terwangne	ADDEF - Associations des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Enfant en Francophonie	Vice président
Guy	De Vel	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Member of the Executive Board
Bernard	De Vos	Délégué général de la Communauté française aux droits de l'enfant	Délégué général
Carine	De Wilde	Departement Welzijn, Volksgezondheid En Gezin (Flemish Community Belgium)	Staff worker Integrated Youth Care
Jozef	De Witte	Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism	Director
Katlijn	Declercq	ECPAT	-
Geert	Decock	Unie van Jeugdadvocaten	Advocaat
Ellen	Desmet	Children's Rights Knowledge Centre	Staff Member
Patrick	Devlieger	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Member of the Scientific Committee
Sarah	D'Hondt	National Commission for the Rights of the Child	Chair
Zuzana	Di Falco	Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Government Council for Human Rights	Lawyer
Ioannis	Dimitrakopoulos	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Head of Department Equality and Citizen's Rights
Gianina Cristina Valentina	Dimitrescu	Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, General Direction for Child Protection	Senior Adviser
Georgia	Dimitropoulou	Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights - Juvenile Custody Service of the Court of Minors in Athens	Juvenile Guardian
Tone	Dolcic	Human Rights Ombudsman	Deputy Ombudsman
Barbara	Donovan	Home Office - UK Border Agency	Professional Advisor
Pamela	Downham	NI Commissioner for Children & Young People	PA to Commissioner

Till	Dr. Starke	Federal Ministry of Justice, Germany	Examiner, Judge at a Local Court (Family Court)
Krzysztof	Drzewicki	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Minister counsellor
David	Duculot	Commission Nationale pour les Droits de l'Enfant	Attaché
Valentín	Dueñas	Spanish Permanent Representation	Counsellor
Malin	Ekman Aldén	Ministry of Health and Social affairs	Deputy Director, Division for social services
Irma	Ertman	Permanent Representation of Finland to the Council of Europe	Ambassador
Jon	Exton	Bongo Films	Director
Jacquemine	Farge-Benhamou	Ministere de la justice	Inspectrice
Ruth	Farrugia	University of Malta	Advocate and Senior Lecturer
Hugues	Feltesse	Defenseur des Enfants	Délégué général
Maria	Fernandez Molinero	European Commission	Policy Officer
Sabrina	Ferraina	European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD)	Research & Development Officer
Gordana	Filipovic	Republic of Croatia Ombudsperson for Children	Legal Adviser
Katrin	Fischer	Austrian Foreign Ministry	Desk Officer
Benoit	Florence	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Member of the Scientific Committee
Cedric	Foussard	International Juvenile Justice Observatory	Director
Nele	Fraeyman	FOD Justitie	Attaché
Heinz	Fronek	Asylkoordination Österreich	Project Manager
Kinga	Gál	European Parliament	Vice-Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Susan	Gallagher	Victim Support Europe	Deputy CEO Victim Support Scotland
Astrid	Ganterer	ODIHR	Advisor on Anti-Trafficking Issues
Ada	Garriga	IFFD	Advocacy
Beatrice Irene	Gemma	CIFA ONLUS	Networking Officer
Sonata	Gendvilaite	The Ministry of Justice	Chief Specialist
Bernard	Georis	SPF Justice	Conseiller Chef de service





Maria Grazia	Giammarinaro	OSCE	Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Ana	Gomes	European Parliament	Member of European Parliament
Joanna	Goodey	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Head of Department Freedoms and Justice
Kristine	Goossens	Cabinet Politique de Migration et d'Asile	Conseiller
Laurene	Graziani	DEI Belgique	Membre
Jonas	Grimheden	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Project manager legal research
Anne	Grostad	EUROJUST	Contact point for child protection, Liaison Prosecutor for Norway to Eurojust
Bragi	Gudbrandsson	The Government Agency for Child Protection	Director General
Marina	Gunnmo Grönros	Children Ombudspersons	Researcher
Ingrid	Haas	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Conferences and Events Organiser
Yianna	Hadjihanna	Law Office of the Republic	Legal Officer
Jana	Hainsworth	Eurochild	Secretary General
Mária	Herczog	Eurochild	President
Catherine	Hodder	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children	Parliamentary Adviser
Alexander	Hoefmans	Ministry of Justice	Human Rights Advisor
Dagmar	Horna	Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	Directress of Human Rights and National Minorities Department
Prerna	Humpal	Amnesty International END FGM European Campaign	Media and Networks Officer
Aagje	Ieven	EuroHealthNet	Research & Knowledge Development Coordinator
Bente	Ingvarsen	Save the Children Denmark	-
Magdalena	Irzycka	FPS Interior	Attaché, International Unit
Maria Elena	Isabel Ruiz	Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality	Head of Legal Area of the Childhood
Milica	Janculova	Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	State advisor
Jan	Jarab	OHCHR	Regional Representative for Europe

Regina	Jensdottir	Council of Europe	Head of the Children's Rights Policies Division
Hilde F.	Johnson	UNICEF	Deputy Executive Director
Séverine	Joliat	Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice	Coordinatrice
Varughese	Joseph	HFC «Hope For Children» UNCRC Policy Center	Director-General
Nico	Juetten	Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People	Acting Head of Policy
Lilla	Jutkusz	Ministry of Public Administration and Justice	senior advisor
Razia	Karim	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Senior Lawyer
Lena	Karlsson	Save the Children	Director Child Protection Initiative
Ro	Kartodirdjo	Veiligheidshuis Breda	Manager
Natacha	Kazatchkine	Amnesty International EU Office	Executive Officer
Maria	Keller-Hamela	Nobody's Children Foundation	Director for International Cooperation
John	Kellock	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Head of Department External Relations and Networking
Anette	Keloneva	EUROPOL	Operations Department, Criminal Finances & Technology
Jean Anne	Kennedy	IFCO-International Foster Care Organisation	IFCO Board Member
Päivi	Keskitalo	Ombudsman for Minorities	Senior Officer
Naureen	Khan	NSPCC	European Advisor
Liga	Kikute	Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia	Legal Adviser
Ursula	Kilkelly	Faculty of Law, University College Cork	Dr, Senior Lecturer
Brenda	King	European Economic and Social Committee	Rapporteur, Child Poverty & Child Well-being
Morten	Kjaerum	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Director
Agnes	Knopper	Federal Ministry of Justice	Referentin
Lukasz	Knurowski	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	III Secretary
Edo	Korljan	Council of Europe	Administrator
Leda	Koursoumba	Commissioner for Children's Rights Office	Commissioner
Renata	Kowalska	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Counsellor



Kasia	Lach	European Commission	Policy Officer
Cathrin	Larimian	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	Communication & Awareness Raising
Camille	Latimier	Inclusion Europe	Human Rights Officer
Laurens	Lavrysen	Human Rights Centre (Ghent University)	Assistant
Mafalda	Leal	Eurochild	Policy officer
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