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ENOC NEWS

ENOC 28th Annual Conference

The ENOC 28th Annual Conference on "The Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children in Alternative Care" took place on 18-19 September 2024 in Helsinki, Finland.

This key event in ENOC's annual calendar brought together Ombudspersons and Commissioners for Children from across Europe, 13 ENYA Young Advisors and representatives from European and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, alongside stakeholders and experts in the children's rights area.

Hosted by **Elina Pekkarinen**, Ombudsman for Children in Finland, the conference featured valuable insights from speakers such as **Caroline Vrijens** (ENOC Chair, Commissioner for Children in Belgium/Flanders), **Johanna Suurpää** (Ministry of Justice, Finland), and **Sirpa Rautio** (EU Fundamental Rights Agency). Video messages were shared by **Ann Skelton** (Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) and **Regina De Dominicis** (UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia).

Key contributions on children's rights in alternative care were provided by **Katrin Uerpmann** (Council of Europe) and **Marta Tarragona Fenosa** (European Commission). Helena Inkinen highlighted the work of the **Finnish NGO Pesäpuu ry**, followed by **Jenni Repo** (University of Tampere), who discussed quality and monitoring in alternative care.

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Publication - ENOC 2024 Policy Position Statement

The ENOC 2024 policy position statement, "[Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Children in Alternative Care](#)," was officially endorsed by the 28th ENOC General Assembly on 20th September 2024 in Helsinki and published later that month.

This position statement draws on the recommendations of Young People involved in the 2024 ENYA project, as well as research conducted by **Tarja Pösö** (Prof. Emerita, University of Tampere) and **Terhi Tuukkanen**, Senior Researcher at the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Finland, on behalf of ENOC.

The research surveyed 34 ENOC member institutions, identifying both shortcomings in the implementation of children's rights and the quality of alternative care, while also highlighting diverse practices and legislation designed to support good care standards.



Publication - ENYA 2024 Activities and Recommendations Report

The report detailing the work of the European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA) in 2024, aligned with the ENOC Annual theme, is now available!

This report highlights the recommendations stemming from ENYA's 2024 activities, capturing the perspectives and expectations of young people on enhancing the protection and promotion of the rights of children in alternative care. This year, the ENYA Project engaged 208 Young Advisors, including 140 with care experience.

All recommendations proposed and voted on by young people during the ENYA Forum are included in the report and reflected in the ENOC 2024 policy statement on "The Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children in Alternative Care."



[Click here to access the statement](#) 



ENOC 28th General Assembly

The ENOC 28th General Assembly was held on 20 September in Helsinki. ENOC members endorsed the 2024 policy statement, elected the new Bureau, the ENYA 2025 Coordination Office, and approved the Network's accounts for 2023.



SAVE THE DATES !



International Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
18 November 2024



Brussels
5th meeting of the EU Network for Children's Rights
19 November 2024



International Children's Day
20 November 2024



Brussels
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council
Council of the European Union
25 November 2024



Strasbourg
CDENF Plenary and PACE Conference
6 December 2024



Geneva
Global Conference on Justice for Children Deprived of Liberty
17-19 December 2024






EU Children's Participation Platform Holds First Working Meeting: Create, Plan, Participate

On June 2024, the EU Children's Participation Platform hosted its inaugural working meeting in Brussels, bringing together 36 children aged 10-17 from across Europe. The meeting was co-organized by the Platform's Children's Panel, with participants actively involved in session co-chairing, media support, and fun warm-ups.

Over two days, Children reviewed the past two years' efforts, discussing successes and areas for improvement, and shared their hopes and brainstormed topics for future work, prioritizing issues like poverty, education, safety, and climate change, with guidance from adults from the European Commission.

Find out more [HERE](#).

The meeting also included the presentation of the 2024 Annual Activity Report and a brainstorming session on the ENOC 2026 annual work topic. The new ENOC Bureau 2024-2025 was elected and is represented as follows:

-  Elina PEKKARINEN - current Chairperson (Finland)
-  Vasile COROI - Chairperson-elect (Moldova)
-  Caroline VRIJENS - past Chairperson (Belgium, Flanders)
-  Andres ARU - Secretary (Estonia)
-  Solaÿman LAQDIM - Treasurer (Belgium, French Community)
-  Aida C. GÍMENEZ - Ordinary Member (Catalonia, Spain)
-  Niall MULDOON - Ordinary Member (Ireland)



EU & INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS FIELD

CoE - Lanzarote Committee to Evaluate Child Protection Measures Against Online Sexual Offences

On 2 October 2024, Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention) were invited to submit information regarding their compliance with the Lanzarote Committee's second monitoring round recommendations.

These recommendations focus on protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies, particularly concerning the issues surrounding child self-generated sexual images and videos.

Parties have until 1 March 2025 to provide the requested information, which will be published on the Lanzarote Committee's dedicated webpage. The Lanzarote Committee initiated a compliance procedure in February 2024, addressing 35 recommendations that require Parties to take action to meet their obligations under the Lanzarote Convention.

Find out more [HERE](#).

CoE - Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine Addresses Trafficking Risks

The Council of Europe's Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine convened for its third plenary session (1-2 July) to focus on the risks of trafficking for Ukrainian children due to Russia's ongoing war. With millions of children displaced and hosted in Council of Europe member states, the meeting included a special hearing on the threats of human trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation.

Key discussions highlighted the urgent need to raise awareness about these risks across member states. The group also explored initiatives from Thematic Dialogue Groups addressing transnational cooperation, guardianship, and trauma-informed care, as well as the challenges of dual guardianship arrangements. Additionally, a mapping study on Ukrainian children's access to education in member states was reviewed, emphasizing the collaborative efforts with the Council of Europe's Education Department.

Find out more [HERE](#).



CoE - Group of Experts Calls for Renewed Efforts to Combat Child Trafficking

On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons (30 July), the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) emphasizes the urgent need for coordinated efforts to reduce children's vulnerability to trafficking, provide specialized support to child victims, and eliminate trafficker impunity. Highlighting the "Call for accelerated action by 2025 to prevent and end child trafficking," GRETA notes that children make up 1 in 3 identified trafficking victims globally, indicating that current prevention measures are inadequate.


The statement underscores that the prevention of child trafficking and protection of child victims must be integral to child protection systems, particularly during conflicts and crises, focusing on unaccompanied and separated children.

Read the press release [HERE](#).



UN - UNCRC 97th session-concluding observations on country reviews

In September 2024, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has concluded its 97th session after adopting observations on reports from six countries, including ENOC Member Armenia.

 **Armenia** was praised for the 2021 law on the rights of persons with disabilities and the 2023-2027 Programme for Social Inclusion. However, the Committee expressed concerns that children with disabilities still struggle to access services, and recommended developing a harmonized system for disability assessment to improve access to education, health, and social protection.



INHOPE - Global CSAM Legislative Overview Report

INHOPE has released the second edition of its Global CSAM (child sexual abuse materials) Legislative Overview, covering legislation in 61 countries, with support from the Council of Europe and insights from 48 Lanzarote Convention Parties. The report emphasizes the need for collaboration to remove illegal online content, though differing legal definitions and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence present challenges.

Read the report [HERE](#).



UNCRC Finds Finland Violated Sámi Children's Rights

On 10 October, 2024, the UNCRC found that Finland violated the rights of three Sámi Indigenous children by granting mineral exploration permits on their land without proper consultation.

It stressed that Indigenous children must be included in processes affecting their rights and environments. The lack of consultation was deemed a violation of their rights to enjoy their culture and amounted to discrimination. The Committee called on Finland to provide reparations and ensure proper review processes.

Read the decision [HERE](#).



EU Extends Protection for Ukrainian Children Amid Ongoing Conflict

Nearly one-third of the 4.2 million Ukrainians with EU temporary protection are children fleeing the Russian war. The EU has provided critical shelter, with the largest numbers hosted by Germany, Poland, and Czechia.

Children and families fleeing conflict face new challenges as they adapt to life in host countries, where integration efforts are ongoing.

The EU recently extended protection until March 2026, ensuring continued security and access to services for displaced children and families.

Find the article [HERE](#).



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ENOC Secretariat

Council of Europe «Agora Building»
Office n° B5 07V
67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Web: www.enoc.eu
Tel: +33 3 90 21 54 88
e-mail: secretariat@enoc.eu

If you have any suggestions or if you would like to include any information or upcoming events in our newsletter, please send the details to secretariat@enoc.eu

The Committee also noted declining school enrolment, especially in upper secondary education, urging Armenia to ensure equitable, quality education for all children.

The Committee's 98th session will take place in January 2025, reviewing reports from 7 countries, including two ENOC Members : Spain and Slovakia.

Find out more [HERE](#).

UPDATE ON ENOC MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

SLOVENIA - Summary of the Work of the Human Rights Ombudsman for 2023

The Slovenian Ombudsman has published the 2023 Summary of the Human Rights Ombudsman's work, highlighting key children's rights issues addressed over the year. The report covers diverse topics, with a particular focus on child health, mental health, support for children with special needs, and fostering children's participation in decision-making processes.

The full report is available [HERE](#).



ITALY - New Guide for the Active Participation of Girls and Boys

In September 2024, the Independent Authority for Children and Adolescents, led by Carla Garlatti, has launched a practical guide aimed at minors to encourage their active participation.

Titled "Guide for the Active Participation of Girls and Boys: An Orientation Compass," it answers key questions such as "What does it mean to participate?", "What are the obstacles to participation?", and "Why is my participation important?".

It also provides guidance on where and how children can begin participating.

Find the guide [HERE](#) (in italian).



Welcome !

Two new Ombudspersons for Children have been appointed in the last months :

- **Juno Blom**, Ombudsman for Children, **Sweden**
- **Mina Gerhardsen**, Ombudsman for Children, **Norway**

And a new member has officially joined the Network :

- **The institution of the Ombudsman for Children in Poland**

A warm welcome to everyone!