

# ENOC NEWS

## ENOC Spring Seminar

On June 3-4, 2024, ENOC held its annual Spring Seminar in Tallinn, hosted by the Office of the Chancellor of Justice in Estonia.

**Day 1** of the 2024 Seminar was dedicated to the issue of "**Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Children in Alternative Care**" in the format of a working session. The Minister of Social Protection of Estonia, **Signe Riisalo**, introduced the theme by highlighting the challenges faced by institutions, foster families, and children in alternative care.

On the same occasion, the ENOC 2024 expert, **Prof. Emerita Tarja Pösö** from the University of Tampere and **Terhi Tuukkanen**, Senior Researcher at the Ombudsman for Children's Office in Finland, presented the preliminary findings of the ENOC mapping survey on the annual theme. This was followed by a learning café, where ENOC members had the opportunity to share knowledge and experience on this issue.

**Day 2** of the Seminar was devoted to the theme of "**The rights of children affected by parental imprisonment**". Among the experts who participated were **Ewelina Startek** and **Katharine Philbrick**, members of Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE), as well as **Justina Dzienko**, Deputy Director of the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris).

A panel with representatives and Ombudspersons for Children's Offices from Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, and Italy **shared good practices and experiences** regarding children affected by parental imprisonment in their countries.



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## ENOC Bureau Statement (April 2024) on continuous massive violations of the rights of children in Gaza

After its [first publication in November 2023](#), the ENOC Bureau issued a 2nd statement in April 2024 addressing continuous massive violations of the rights of children in Gaza. Since the war began in October 2023, children in Gaza have endured unimaginable hardships, including violence, injury, famine, and displacement.



[Click here to access the statement](#)



The situation remains urgent, with over 13,000 children among the civilian casualties (by April) and thousands more injured or missing, according to UNICEF. Many children are **separated from their families** and suffer from **psychological trauma**.

The ENOC Bureau urgently **called for a humanitarian ceasefire to protect children's lives** and ensure the delivery of vital aid. They emphasized the need for all parties involved to prioritize the safety and well-being of children, respect international humanitarian law, and work towards a sustainable peace.

Furthermore, **the Bureau urged the international community to take immediate action** to save lives and protect the rights of Palestinian children. This includes increasing funding to UN agencies providing life-saving aid and ensuring the safe passage of humanitarian workers.



### ENYA Forum 2024

As part of the ENYA (European Network of Young Advisors) 2024 child participation project, **children and young people from across Europe have been actively involved in ENOC's annual policy work addressing the rights of children in alternative care**, ensuring their voices and experiences are heard at the European level.

This year, the **ENYA Forum took place in Bratislava on 1-2 July 2024**, hosted by the Office of the Commissioner for Children in Slovakia.



The Commissioner, Jozef Miklosko, and the ENYA 2024 Coordinator, Andrej Peter led the Forum and supported **15 participating teams of young people** to agree on common recommendations aiming to strengthen the **Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children in Alternative Care**.



**SAVE THE DATES !**



**Geneva**

**UNCRC 97th session**

26 August - 13 September



**Helsinki**

**ENOC 28th Annual Conference**

18-19 September 2024



**Helsinki**

**ENOC 28th General Assembly**

20 September 2024



### A “one roof” approach to support children with a parent in prison: the role that Ombudspersons for Children can play

COPE (Children of Prisoners of Europe) released in April 2024 a briefing paper on [the role that Children’s Ombudspersons across Europe can play for children with imprisoned parents.](#)

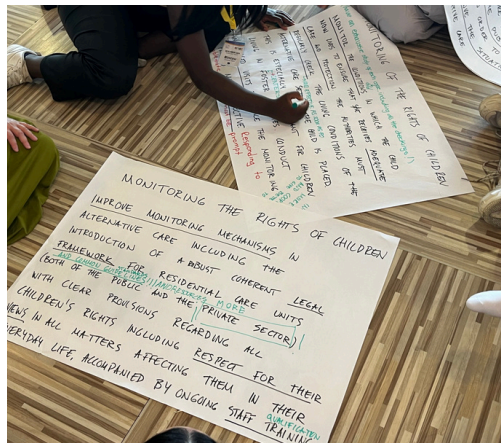
It offers an overview of some of the challenges that children impacted by parental imprisonment can face, and delves into the cross-sectoral support required to safeguard their rights, meet their needs and promote positive outcomes.

This theme was also highlighted at ENOC’s Spring Seminar 2024.

The 30 Young Advisors represented Andalusia/Spain, Armenia, Basque Country/Spain, Catalonia/Spain, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Northern Ireland/UK, Ukraine and Wales/UK.

The recommendations they agreed upon will be presented at the **ENOC 28th Annual Conference** in September in Helsinki and reflected in the 2024 ENOC Policy Statement on the rights of children in alternative care.

Find out more about the ENYA Forum [HERE!](#)



## EU & INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS FIELD

### EU – Adoption of the European Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems

The European Commission adopted in April 2024 a [Recommendation aiming to foster the development and strengthening of integrated child protection systems](#) in the EU, which aligns with its commitment under the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.

As all EU Member States are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this Recommendation aims to support and assist them in strengthening their child protection systems. The Recommendation draws on the input from over 1,000 children gathered through the new EU Children's Participation Platform.

Since the adoption of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child in 2021, the Commission has **fulfilled several commitments outlined** within its six thematic areas of action, such as **child participation, combating child poverty, and improving education and healthcare.** This last recommendation serves to complement the thematic focus on child protection and **the fight against violence targeting children.**



### CoE - PACE Calls for Action to protect children online

In April 2024, PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE) urged for **actions to safeguard children from harmful online content**, that balance protection with internet access opportunities.

It emphasized **the importance of the "best interests of the child"** in shaping policy, and advocates collaboration with the tech industry to develop anti-cyberbullying, harassment, and online hatred policies.

PACE urged **states to join CoE Convention combating child sexual abuse and cybercrime**, fostering information exchange on such cases via Interpol.

Find the PACE resolution [HERE!](#)

## Key recommendations

- Put children at the centre of integrated child protection systems adapting protection systems to children's needs and including children when taking decisions that impact them.
- Support Member States in adapting their systems to protect any child from any form of violence using EU tools such as legislation, policy, or funding.
- Improve coordination and cooperation across sectors and competent authorities through the training of professionals, starting at the local level.
- Establish comprehensive and coordinated support actions in cases of violence against children, from prevention and early identification to reporting and cross-sectorial support.
- Respond to children's safety needs online and offline by improving children's digital literacy, promoting the safe use of digital technologies and training families and carers.
- Protect children's integrity and mental health, prevent and fight (cyber)bullying by encouraging Member States to develop national mental health strategies, with children as the priority target group.



## CoE - Guide to children's participation in decisions about their health

In April 2024, the CoE Steering Committee of the Rights of the Child released a Guide underscoring the importance of respecting children's rights in healthcare, particularly regarding their involvement in decision-making processes. The Guide was elaborated in cooperation with the [Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child in the fields of Biomedicine and Health](#) (CDBIO).

Key concepts such as consent, assent, and best interests are discussed, along with common healthcare scenarios where involving children in decision-making may pose challenges. Therefore, examples and links to good practices are provided throughout the guide.



[Click here to read the guide!](#)



## CoE - New E-learning Course for Professionals Working with War-Affected Children

On July 4, 2024, the Council of Europe launched an online course titled "Specificities of the work of social psychologists with children who have psychological difficulties related to the war."

Developed through the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme, this course aims to enhance the skills of social psychologists working with war-affected children, based on international scientific methods and practices.



## New report - 5Rights foundation

[5Rights foundation](#) is an association which advocates for a **digital environment that protects and promotes the rights of the child** by design and by default.

The foundation released in March 2024 a report entitled "**The best interests of the child in the digital environment**" which provides clarity on when a "best interests" determination is required and what it entails, specifically focusing on the digital environment.

Read the report [HERE](#).



## CoE Lanzarote Committee - Adoption of Opinion on Limitation Periods for Sexual Offences Against Children

The Lanzarote Committee (Committee of Parties to the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse) has adopted in June 2024 an opinion to clarify the interpretation of the Lanzarote Convention regarding limitation periods for **sexual offences against children**.

The purpose of issuing this opinion was to **strengthen the implementation of the relevant provisions**.

Read more about its 42nd plenary meeting [HERE!](#)



## UN Committee on the Rights of the Child - New members :

5 new members have been elected and 4 members have been re-elected to the UNCRC. They joined the other nine members, forming a total of 18 committee members.

The [newly elected members](#) include representatives from all over the world:

- Moldova (Mariana Ianachevici)
- Malta (Juliana Scerri Ferrante)
- Kenya (Timothy P.T Ekesa)
- Zambia (Cephas Lumina)
- Mauritania (Zeinebou Taleb Moussa)

Congratulations to the new and re-elected members!



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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](mailto:secretariat@enoc.eu)


The course is also useful for other professionals working with this group of children, including educators, civil society representatives, and students.


Find more about the course [HERE!](#)



## UN - UNCRC 96th session-concluding observations on country reviews

In June 2024, the UNCRC released findings from its 96th session, evaluating Estonia and Georgia among other countries.

 **Estonia** was commended for adopting the Green Paper on Mental Health in 2021. The main concerns include rising child suicide rates, a shortage of mental health specialists, and inadequate support for incarcerated children. The UNCRC Recommendations include expanding mental health training, suicide prevention programs, and developing open institutions and rehabilitation services.

 **Georgia** was praised for the Code on the Rights of the Child and the National Human Rights Strategy for 2022-2030. The main concern include the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence and potential negative impacts on child rights organizations. The UNCRC Recommendations include protecting LGBTI children from discrimination, and raising public awareness about equality and non-discrimination.

Find out more [HERE!](#)

# UPDATE ON ENOC MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

## LATVIA - Annual Meeting of Ombudspersons for Children's Offices

On April 9-10 2024, representatives of Ombudspersons for Children's offices from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland met in Riga (Latvia) to discuss current issues in the children's rights area and strategies to address legislative and practical shortcomings. This annual meeting, rotating among the participating countries, facilitates the exchange of experiences and practices between the offices.

Key discussions included children's healthcare and social support in addiction treatment, safety in educational institutions, and the provision of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive education and information.

Find out more [HERE!](#)



## LUXEMBOURG - Presentation of OKaJu's 3rd Annual Report to the Chamber of Deputies

Charel Schmit, Ombudsman for Children and Young People (OKaJu), presented in April 2024 OKaJu's third annual report to the Chamber of Deputies. The report highlights several key recommendations for improving the rights and care of children in Luxembourg, including pediatrics, mental health, and the better provision and acceleration of medical care for children.

Read the Presentation [HERE!](#)