

7th Regional Meeting of NGOs
Children's Rights Coalitions in Europe
Sofia, 28th - 30th April 2014



AGENDA

For the 7th Regional Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions in Europe

Sofia, 28-30 April 2014

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| Participants | Representatives from EU Civil Society Child Rights Coalitions |
| Purpose of the event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the monitoring and reporting mechanism to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at international and national levels; • To enhance the joint advocacy activities at European level; • To share knowledge and best practices among children's rights national coalitions and non-governmental organizations in Europe; • To strengthen the capacity of the NGOs children's rights coalitions and non-governmental organizations in Europe regarding child rights advocacy and lobbying, Strategic and Operative management of coalitions and raising public awareness through strategic communication; |
| Facilitator | Gerison Lansdown |
| Organizing Committee | National Network for Children , Eurochild , Child Rights Connect , UNICEF Bulgaria and ChildPact . |
| Venue | Park – hotel Moscow (Moskva) |

General background of the event



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The European regional meeting of child rights coalitions involves experts and practitioners in monitoring the implementation of the UNCRC and children's rights in their countries. This meeting will be the seventh, following Berlin (1998), Stockholm (1999), Vilnius (2002), Brussels (2005), Bucharest (2008) and Florence (2010). It will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 28-30 April 2014, hosted by the National Network for Children.

Following the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the number of national coalitions of NGOs working for children's rights has increased steadily. This growth was largely in response to the opportunity for NGOs to submit information to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child when it was to consider the report of a given State party. At their initial regional meeting in Berlin in 1998, child rights NGO coalitions in Europe decided to create a periodic forum where they could share their child rights advocacy experiences and discuss how they could best promote implementation of the CRC in their countries and at European level, and strategies to maximize cooperation. Since then, the work of coalitions has grown to include reporting on the Optional Protocols to the CRC on Children Involved in Armed Conflict, as well as on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Looking ahead, the third Optional Protocol to the CRC to establish a communications procedure for children, opened for ratification on 28 February 2012. It currently has ten States Parties, including six States from the region, and will enter into force on 14 April 2014. Bringing complaints to the Committee on the Rights of the Child under this Optional Protocol will be both a new opportunity and challenge for national child rights NGO coalitions as they seek to use the Optional Protocol to influence appropriate access to justice for children at the national level.

The approach of the Regional Meeting is based on broad participation of national child rights NGO coalitions through a series of workshops, presentations and discussions aimed at sharing experiences, expertise and knowledge in the area of child rights. The meeting will also be an opportunity for national coalitions to learn about recent developments in the Committee's working methods and how to engage effectively in the activities of the Committee. In particular, NGO coalitions will discuss the engagement of children in the work of the Committee.

The meeting will strengthen the positions and common work of child rights NGO coalitions across Europe in advocating for advancements in child rights within Europe and participating in related decision-making processes. The project will promote further understanding of the CRC and its Optional Protocols and will advocate for sustained implementation of children's rights in the current economic climate. In this context, discussions will focus on the crucial role of child rights NGOs for monitoring the implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols. Two of the workshops are going to create links the EU, including the European Commission Recommendation on Investing in Children and one on mainstreaming of children's rights in EU, national, regional and local policies. One of the workshops will focus on how EU accession and neighboring countries can use EU legislation and policies to advance children's rights. This would be helpful for the national NGOs in their work both at national, regional and international level to advance child rights.



Programme of work

| Monday 28 April CONFERENCE | | |
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| Time | Activity | Facilitator |
| 09.00 – 10.00 | Welcome and Opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing Committee - Bulgarian Government | Gerison Lansdown |
| 10.00 – 10.45 | Panel: The Advancement of Child Rights in Europe | Olga Khazova - UN CRC Committee member |
| 10.45 – 11.15 | Break | |
| 11.15 – 12.30 | Panel: The Advancement of Child Rights in Europe | Alexander Hoefmans, DGJUST, EU Commission Michaela Bauer, UNICEF CEE/CIS |
| 12.30 – 13.30 | Lunch | |
| 13.30 – 15.30 | Working Groups: the Advancement of children's rights in Europe <p><u>Working group 1</u> – The implementation of the EU Commission recommendations on Investing in Children</p> <p><u>Working group 2</u> – How can the EU support the implementation of the concluding observations?</p> <p><u>Working group 3</u> – How can accession and neighboring countries use EU legislation and policies to advance children's rights?</p> <p><u>Reporting back in plenary</u></p> | Mafalda Leal, Eurochild Mieke Schuurman, Eurochild Mirela Opera, ChildPact |
| 15.30 – 16.00 | Break | |
| 16.00-17.00 | Panel: Introduction to the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC | Anita Goh, Child Rights Connect Mafalda Leal, Eurochild |
| 17.30 | Closing of the Day | Gerison Lansdown |
| 19.00 | Reception and Dinner at the Major of Sofia | |

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| Tuesday 29 April | | |
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| CONFERENCE | | |
| 9.00 – 10.30 | <p>Working Groups: the 3rd Optional Protocol to the UNCRC (OP3 CRC)</p> <p>Working Group 1 – Designing an advocacy strategy to achieve the ratification of the OP3 CRC by States</p> <p>Working Group 2 – Planning for the effective use of the OP3 CRC</p> | <p>Laure Elmaleh, Child Rights Connect</p> <p>Anita Goh, Child Rights Connect</p> |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Break | |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | Panel: Engaging with the UN CRC Committee | <p>Olga Khazova, UN CRC Committee</p> <p>Ilaria Paolazzi, Child Rights Connect</p> |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | Lunch | |
| 13.00 – 15.00 | <p>Working Groups: International Reporting on Child Rights and Follow-Up</p> <p>Working Group 1 – Working as a coalition to engage in the CRC Committee monitoring and reporting cycle</p> <p>Working Group 2 – Child participation in the CRC monitoring and reporting cycle</p> <p>Working Group 3 – Raising child rights in the UPR: opportunities, advantages and challenges</p> | <p>Ilaria Paolazzi, Child Rights Connect</p> <p>Laura Lundy, Center for Children's Rights</p> <p>Anita Goh and Laure Elmaleh, Child Rights Connect</p> |
| 15.00 – 15.15 | Break | |
| 15.15 – 16.45 | Panel : Current challenges for child rights in Europe - addressing negative campaigns against child rights | National Network for Children |
| 16.45 – 17.00 | Close of Conference and introduction to the training workshops on Day 3 | Gerison Lansdown Steering Committee |
| 18.00 | Tour of Sofia | |
| 20.30 | Dinner | |

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| Wednesday 30th April TRAINING WORKSHOP¹ | | |
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| 9.00 – 17:00 | <p><u>Training workshop 1:</u> Advocacy and Lobbying</p> <p><u>Training workshop 2:</u> Strategic and Operative Management of Child Rights Coalitions</p> <p><u>Training workshop 3:</u> Public communication for children's rights coalitions</p> | <p>Chris Stalker and Laura Lundy</p> <p>George Bogdanov and Dani Koleva</p> <p>Laura Collier and Mihail Stefanov</p> |
| 17:00 | Closing of the Training | |

¹ See the full programs of the training workshops attached