



## Enforcing Children's Rights

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*Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*

Extremely important that all the international bodies monitoring states' compliance with human rights do not work in isolation from each other but draw on each other's experience and knowledge.

Meeting in Strasbourg in July 2012 between the CoE, relevant treaty bodies, Ombudspersons for children and NGOs, including the chairperson of the CRC, Jean Zermatten. In follow-up letters between the Committee and the CoE after that meeting there was agreement to have an informal cooperation between the two entities on a more regular basis. A working group was to be established with two or three members from each of the two entities to meet once or twice a year to exchange information and ideas on common topics and to identify new spaces of cooperation for strengthening children's rights at the international and European level. However I understand from Mr Zermatten that such meetings were never held. This is a great opportunity to start that cooperation!

Anyway I would like to mention some ways that we can support each other in our work apart from meeting in a WG. Such co-operation is outlined in the CoE strategy for 2012-2015:

*Co-operation with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*

The Council of Europe will give specific consideration to the CRC's **General Comments** and concluding observations in all of its activities. Furthermore, in monitoring the effective implementation of European standards, the Council of Europe will build on the CRC's country reports with a view to assisting its member states ensure effective and consistent follow-up to the **CRC's recommendations**. Finally, the Council of Europe will promote, throughout its 47 members, the signature and ratification of the new **Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure** for Children's Rights Violations, enabling the CRC to examine communications from children and their representatives.

In the reporting process under the CRC, **before the dialogue** with a State Party we need to collect info from a variety of sources. As for European states, info on decisions in the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights re that country would be interesting for us, and also other info that the CoE might have. Could the CoE provide us with that kind of information? Not as an evaluation but re decisions and other formal documentation that may be relevant. We could look it up ourselves, but resources/time constraint.

**During the dialogue** the Committee could ask the states what they do to follow up various CoE initiatives – conventions, decisions, guidelines, recommendations. We do this to a certain extent, but we could do it more systematically than today.

In our **concluding observations** to the states we might also to a greater extent include references to CoE initiatives as mentioned above.

**After the dialogue** and our concluding observations: we need all the support we can get in making the states implement our recommendations. NGOs and Children’s Ombudspersons and National Human Rights Institutions are crucial in this respect, but the CoE also has a role to play in encouraging each state to comply with the recommendations and giving them advice in this respect. States should be encouraged to:

- Disseminate the concluding observations, including in Child-friendly versions and minority languages
- make a plan to deal with the recommendations, shortly after they have been received
- coordinate their efforts
- every year make a status.

Furthermore, States need concrete assistance and advice in how to operationalize our recommendations, and CoE may be of great help in that regard.

I look forward to a fruitful cooperation both with regard to establishing a working group, and in the process around our dialogues with European states.

I would also like to ask the CoE’s support for the Global Study on Children deprived of liberty. It seems to link well with the update on the CoE strategy para 30: “The situation of violence in juvenile detention institutions continues to raise concerns within Council of Europe member States.”