Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children

Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children

Editorial by Johan van den Hout (Netherlands, SOC)

Thematic Spokesperson on Children of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

The Congress’s Strategic Action Plan to address the local and regional dimensions of the ONE in FIVE Campaign bears witness to the key responsibility authorities at these tiers of government play in protecting and promoting children’s rights and in safeguarding their welfare. At the grassroots, we implement the policies that are needed to help victims of sexual abuse. Thanks to our proximity to citizens, it is at our level that services can be best tailored to meet children’s needs and where prevention and awareness-raising measures are most effective.

The Congress’s Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children is a guide, for local and regional authorities, to the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention that they can implement. It is my role to raise the awareness of political leaders at the grassroots of this important and pragmatic tool. To do this, I am taking every opportunity to meet mayors and council leaders to present the Pact and encourage them to adopt the initiatives therein. I’m delighted that cities such as Liverpool, Rotterdam and Berlin (Land) support our Pact.

I’m very pleased that the Mayors of Nicosia and Limassol have both committed to the Pact and are willing to implement measures against sexual abuse of children. They may set in motion policies that can inform the Parliamentary Assembly’s pilot project in Cyprus to draw up policy recommendations for the national and local levels. As the Congress’s representative on the steering group, I will continue to make an active contribution to this work.
**News: 16th Network meeting, Strasbourg**

**Debate on “Sexual exploitation of girls”**

The Network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children will hold a joint meeting with the Parliamentary Network “Women Free from Violence” on Wednesday, 29 January 2014, at 2 pm during the 1st part-session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

The debate will be introduced by Ms Livia Aninosanu, Programmes Director of the NGO “Center for Partnership and Equality”, Romania and Ms Roshan Heiler, director of the Solwodi Counselling Centre, Germany. Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will give an update on the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign and on the promotion of the Istanbul Convention.

**Latest: Extraordinary meeting of the Network, Geneva**

**Debate on “Taking the fight against sexual violence against children to the world – Sharing the European experience”**

The extraordinary meeting of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children took place on 13 November 2013 in Geneva on the premises of the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU). Several experts participated: Ms Najat Maalla M’jid, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and Mr Hans Guyt, Director of Campaigns, Terre des Hommes-Netherlands, focused on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Ms Martha Santos, Partnerships Manager, UNICEF, provided feedback on how to break taboos surrounding sexual abuse of children. Finally Mr Akiyo Afouda (picture), Human Rights Programme Officer, IPU, and Ms Susanna Greijer (picture), PhD, Department of Law, European University Institute, addressed the issue of sexual violence against children in situations of war and conflict. The contact parliamentarians shared some good national practices to break the taboo surrounding sexual violence against children.
Turkey

A national Campaign to stop sexual violence was launched on 20 November 2013 at the Turkish Parliament, on the occasion of Universal Children’s Day.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

On the occasion of the visit of Mr Johan van den Hout, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, to the United Kingdom, Roz Gladden, Deputy Mayor of Liverpool, signed the Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children, on 6 December 2013. The aim of the Pact is to raise local elected representatives’ awareness of the proposals made therein, and encourage them to implement them in their own local authorities so as to prevent abuse, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, whilst ensuring full participation of children.

Conference on “Preventing sexual abuse of children”

Mr Valeriu Ghiletchi, contact parliamentarian for the Republic of Moldova, represented the PACE at this conference on 10 and 11 December 2013 in Madrid. He also participated in the 7th meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse on 9 December 2013 in Madrid.

Communication – Social Networks

In October 2013, a Facebook page dedicated to the ONE in FIVE Campaign was created. You can follow the activities of the Campaign and read articles on the subject. Moreover, the video « The Lake » was widely distributed to and by European television stations on the occasion of Universal Children’s Day on 20 November 2013, reaching an audience of 6 to 8 million Europeans in 7 countries.
**Lanzarote Convention**

**Slovenia**

By ratifying the Convention on 26 September 2013, Slovenia has become the 29th State Party to the Convention.

**Agenda**

The Network of contact parliamentarians will continue to meet in 2014:

- **17th meeting of the Network and joint meeting with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons** during the 2nd part-ses- sion (7-11 April 2014) in Strasbourg

- **18th meeting of the Network** on Tuesday, 13 May 2014 in Nicosia (Cyprus)

**Website and social networks**

Interviews, handbooks, compendia, newsletters, leaflets…

Find all information about the parliamentary dimension of the campaign at the following address:

www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive

and on Facebook: “Council of Europe One in Five Campaign”

**Contact**

**Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Jannick Devaux
Project Manager
Tel: +33 (0)3 90 21 49 03
E-mail: paceoneinfive@coe.int / Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 97