Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children

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

PACE Newsletter No. 13 – April 2014

Editorial by Valeriu Ghiletchi
Contact parliamentarian for the Republic of Moldova

The cause of children, and sexual violence against children in particular, are a greater priority than ever for the Council of Europe. This is especially true for the Parliamentary Assembly, which has been running the parliamentary dimension of the ONE in FIVE Campaign for almost four years now. It is a cause which is close to my own heart both in my new capacity as Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development and as contact parliamentarian for the Republic of Moldova.

In my role as the new rapporteur on the topic “Combating sexual violence against children: towards a successful conclusion of the ONE in FIVE campaign”, I shall include amongst my key proposals the extension of the campaign for a further year, until the end of 2015, and a suggestion for a European Day to combat sexual violence against children to begin in 2016. The aim would be to continue our efforts to promote legislative reform and to establish political action promoting the protection of children over the long term.

I should also like to underline the admirable work of my parliamentary colleagues, who are our “best ambassadors” in the field. By playing an active part in meetings of the network and by using the different campaign tools in their countries, they ensure that the campaign endures and is a success with citizens and local partners, while producing outstanding results.

Finally, it is also via social networks that we can continue to combat sexual violence against children, particularly by sharing the campaign’s official Facebook page (Council of Europe One in Five Campaign) and adding examples of national activities to it. I invite and urge you to do so as soon as possible.

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Lanzarote Convention
Switzerland
By ratifying the convention on 18 March 2014, Switzerland has become the 30th State party to the convention.

Appeal for funds
A big thank you to Israel, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland and Switzerland for their support of the parliamentary dimension of the ONE in FIVE Campaign this year. We have not yet reached our target, so please contact our project manager if your parliament or government would like to contribute.

Agenda
The network of contact parliamentarians will continue to meet in 2014:
- 18th meeting of the network on Tuesday, 13 May 2014, in Nicosia (Cyprus)
- 19th meeting of the network during the 2014 June part-session

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: paceonefive@coe.int / Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 97
**Network of contact parliamentarians**

**News: 17th network meeting, Strasbourg**

**Debate on sexual violence against refugee children**

The network of contact parliamentarians to stop sexual violence against children will hold a joint meeting with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on Tuesday, 8 April 2014, at 2 p.m. during the 2nd part-session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. The debate will be introduced by Mr Gert Westerveen, UNHCR representative to the European institutions in Strasbourg. 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.

**Latest: 16th network meeting, Strasbourg**

*The sexual exploitation of girls is one of the most horrendous crimes in our developed countries – but it exists and we have an important role to play in fighting this scourge.*

(Ms Stella Kyriakides, General Rapporteur on Children)

A hearing on sexual exploitation of girls was organised on 29 January by the network in co-operation with the Parliamentary Network “Women Free from Violence”. Ms Stella Kyriakides, General Rapporteur on Children, underlined the importance of spreading the word throughout national parliaments in order to effect change. Mr Mendes Bota, General Rapporteur on Violence against Women, added that it is of the utmost importance for parliamentarians to ensure that this issue is put high on the political agenda in their respective countries. The parliamentarians heard moving testimonies from Ms Livia Anonisanu, director of a Romanian non-governmental organisation, and from Ms Roshan Heiler, director of the Solwodi counselling centre in Germany, and were given an update by Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni on action being taken by the Council of Europe to fight this scourge.

**Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

**Raising the awareness of political leaders at local and regional levels**

The Congress is continuing its efforts to raise awareness of the ONE in FIVE Campaign and its Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children. Last January, meetings were held with ministers and representatives of the three communities of Belgium. Later this year, Mr Johan van den Hout, Thematic Spokesperson on Children, will undertake similar visits to Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany. To help the Congress in its efforts, the “Pact Toolkit” has been translated into 22 languages which will soon be available on the Congress’s website. Some 32 towns, regions and organisations have now signed the Congress’s pact.

**Conference on the Rights of the Child**

An ad hoc sub-committee participated in the Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015, Dubrovnik (Croatia), on 27 and 28 March 2014. On this occasion, two key proposals were presented: the extension of the campaign for a further year, until the end of 2015, and a European Day to combat sexual violence against children to begin in 2016.

**Pilot project in Cyprus**

The Steering Group of the pilot project in Cyprus held a meeting on 19 February 2014 in order to define an action plan for 2015-2016 and decided to organise training programmes, with the help of outside experts, for judges, prosecutors, psychologists, social workers, health-care professionals, police officers, educators, teachers, media and parents. During these training courses, several themes will be addressed, for instance the identification of sexual abuse, how to talk to victims or how to report on sexual abuse on children in the media.

**Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade**

As an initiative of the Incest Trauma Center, the Kiko spot was aired at the closure of the Belgrade International Film Festival on 9 March 2014. It was also played before the Golden Palm winner of the Cannes 2013 film festival, “Blue is the warmest colour”. The spot is available at www.incesttraumacentar.org.rs.
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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

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