Children’s rights campaigns in the Parliamentary Assembly

18 November: European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children can happen anywhere. It can be inflicted by someone in the child’s circle of trust or even a complete stranger and can cause lifelong damage to the child’s physical and mental health. To prevent these crimes, the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers adopted the pioneering Lanzarote Convention - a unique legally-binding instrument that obliges Parties to criminalise all forms of sexual abuse of children and spells out the ways to fight it. In 2015, the Council of Europe decided to set up the first European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Its objectives are to raise public awareness, open discussion and support the ratification and implementation of the Lanzarote Convention. Every year, the Assembly marks 18 November by holding parliamentary debates and events.

In 2017, the Council of Europe launched its "Start to talk" call for action to stop child sexual abuse in sport. By joining this call, governments, sports clubs, associations and federations, as well as athletes and coaches, pledge to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to abuse. The “Start to talk” initiative is about adults breaking the silence and lending children a voice. The Assembly supports this campaign through parliamentary activities.

The Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children (2015-2019), has worked to raise awareness of this issue in Europe and to encourage States to adopt alternatives to detention that fulfil the best interests of the child and allow children to remain with their family members and/or guardians in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved. Due to the dramatic increase in the number of cases of children confined in detention facilities for migrants in recent years, the Council of Europe decided (in January 2015) to join the Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children - launched during the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in 2012.

The Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign to fight sexual violence against children was in place from 2010-2016. The association of national parliamentarians with this Campaign to stop sexual violence against children was very successful in promoting the signature, ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention). To date, this Convention has been ratified by 45 Council of Europe member States, with the remaining two being signatories to the Convention.

Children’s rights
Reference Texts

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has its permanent headquarters in Strasbourg, France. By statute, it has two constituent organs: the Committee of Ministers, composed of the ministers of foreign affairs of the member states, and the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), comprising delegations for the 47 national parliaments.

The 648 women and men who make up the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (http://assembly.coe.int) come together four times a year to debate topical issues and common challenges, to request action from Europe’s governments, and to hold those governments accountable for their acts. They speak on behalf of 830 million Europeans whom they represent on any subject they choose, and Europe’s governments – represented in the Council of Europe by the Committee of Ministers – are obliged to reply to them. They are greater Europe’s democratic conscience.

This leaflet provides an overview of the Assembly’s texts and campaigns on children’s rights.

Updated on: 4 February 2020
Parliamentary Assembly Reports, Recommendations and Resolutions

1) Adopted texts

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Doc. 14835 | Resolution 2135 | 2016
Female genital mutilation in Europe

Doc. 13158 | Resolution 1927 | 2013
Ending discrimination against Roma children

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

Doc. 14417 | Recommendation 2172 | Resolution 2324 | 2020
Missing refugees and migrant children in Europe

Doc. 14905 | Recommendation 2160 | Resolution 2195 | 2019
Stop violence against, and exploitation of, migrant children

Doc. 14626 | Recommendation 2141 | Resolution 2243 | 2018
Family reunification of refugees and migrants in the Council of Europe member States

Doc. 14524 | Resolution 2220 | 2011
Integration, empowerment and protection of migrant children through compulsory education

Doc. 14434 | Recommendation 2117 | Resolution 2195 | 2017
Child-friendly age assessment for unaccompanied migrant children

Doc. 14142 | Resolution 2136 | 2016
Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe

Doc. 13597 | Recommendation 2020 | Resolution 2056 | 2014
The alternatives to immigration detention of children

Doc. 13458 | Recommendation 2044 | Resolution 1995 | 2014
Ending child poverty in Europe

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media

Doc. 14448 | Resolution 2314 | 2019
Media education in the new media environment

Doc. 13500 | Recommendation 2167 | Resolution 2313 | 2019
Role of education in the digital era: from "digital natives" to "digital citizens"

Doc. 13934 | Resolution 2097 | 2015
Access to school and education for all children

Doc. 13155 | Resolution 1930 | Recommendation 2014 | 2013
Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge

Doc. 12513 | Resolution 1803 | Recommendation 1965 | 2011
Education against violence at school

Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Doc. 14574 | Resolution 2233 | 2018
Forced marriage in Europe

Doc. 14499 | Resolution 2207 | 2018
Gender equality and child maintenance

Doc. 14337 | Resolution 2177 | 2017
Putting an end to sexual violence and harassment of women in public space

Doc. 14294 | Resolution 2159 | 2017
Protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence

Doc. 14260 | Recommendation 2101 | Resolution 2162 | 2017
The protection of the rights of parents and children belonging to religious minorities

2) Texts in preparation

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Doc. 14947
Inaction on climate change – a violation of children's rights

Doc. 14946
Best interests of the child and policies to ensure a work-life balance

Doc. 14890
Vaccine hesitancy: a major public health issue

Doc. 14806
Giving a voice to every child: promoting child participation as a foundation for democratic societies

Doc. 14537
Impact of labour migration on left-behind children

Doc. 14489
Supporting people with autism and their families

Doc. 14480
Addressing sexual violence against children: stepping up action and co-operation in Europe